

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TIPS FOR TECH HEADS

www.alamopc.org

February 2006

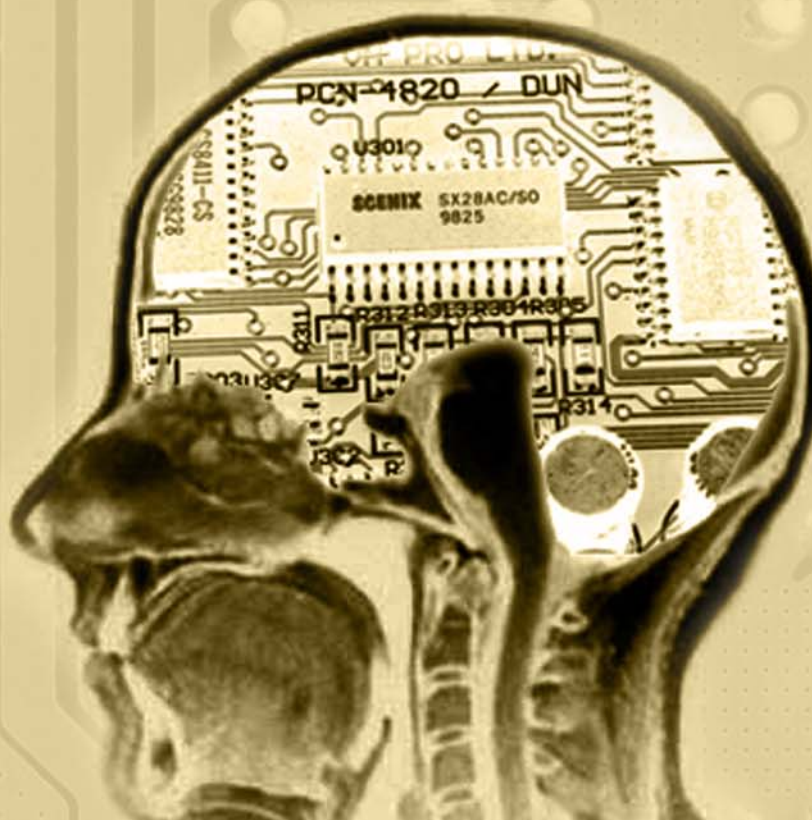
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Alamo PC Organization

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:

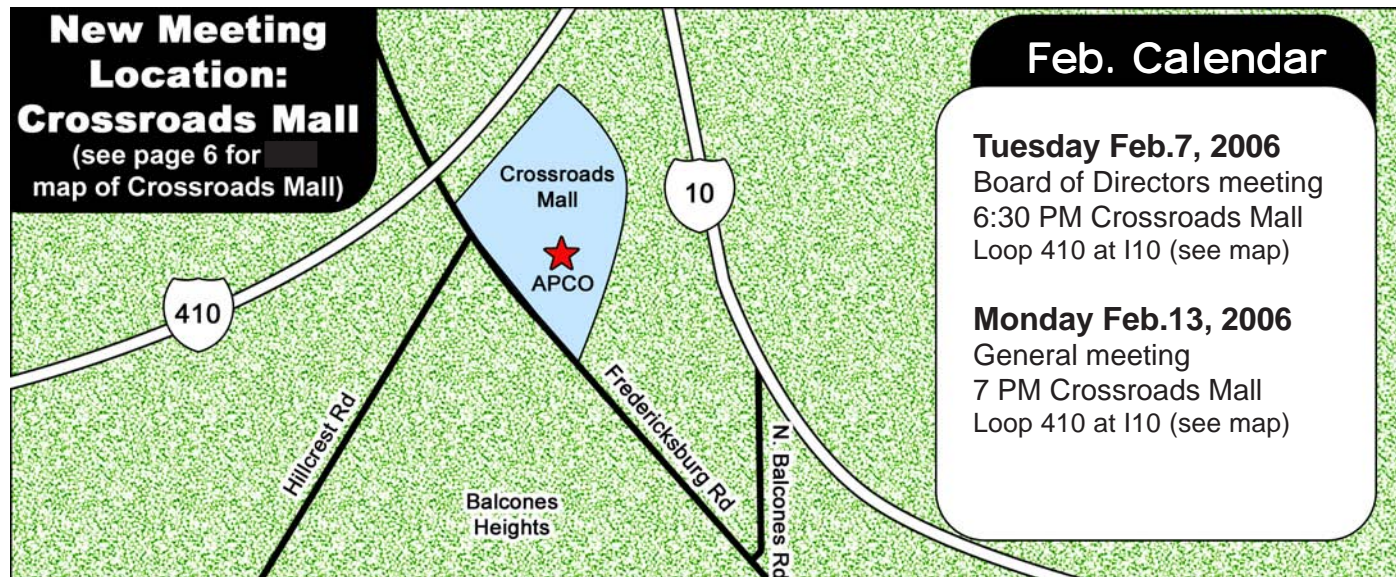
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



Feb. Calendar

Tuesday Feb.7, 2006
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Feb.13, 2006
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 2006 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of PC Alamode may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and PC Alamode. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

Periodical postage paid at San Antonio, TX and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PC Alamode, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180.

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Ad rates effective January 2005

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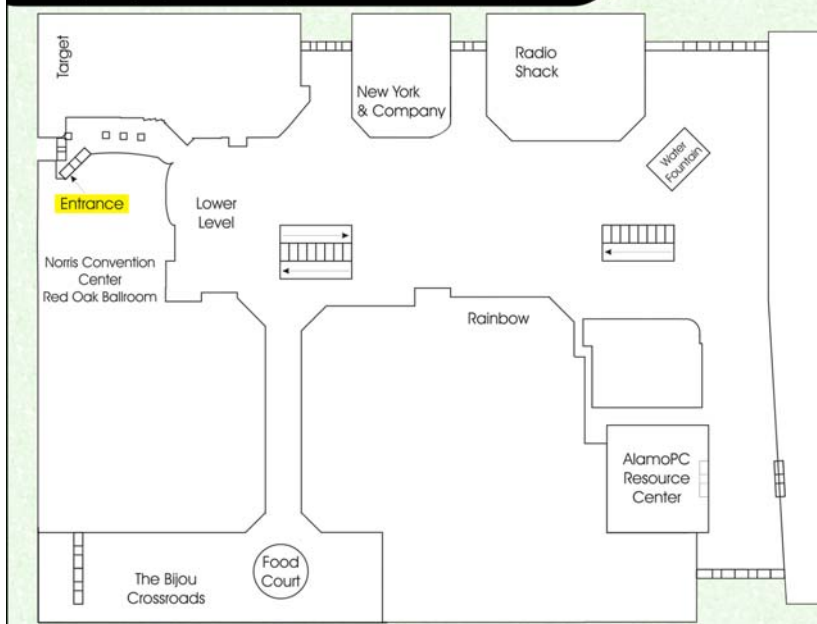
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For Study Groups and Classes or for SeniorComp classes, phone: 736-0080

Crossroads Mall (lower level)

(See page 3 for map to Crossroads Mall)

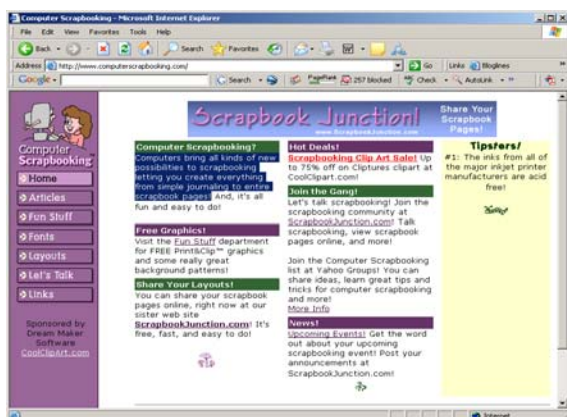


New Meeting Location

We are now meeting in the lower level of the mall near Target in the new Crossroads Convention Center. The new meeting location is on the opposite side of the mall as the Learning Center.

For more information, call the Learning Center at 736-0700.

PC Alamode Links List



Computer Scrapbooking

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

Computers bring all kinds of new possibilities to scrapbooking letting you create everything from simple journaling to entire scrapbook pages!



Cyber Tech Help

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

Cyber Tech Help is a community providing free computer help to anyone. With a vast variety of downloads, tutorials, and news articles, Cyber Tech Help could help you with your next computer problem.



PC Alamode Wins First Place

This publication has been honored by APCUG with a first place award in the Large Groups category for 2005. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in newsletter and Web site design. Second place went to North Orange County Computer Club. Melbourne PC User Group took third place.

Congratulations to all the contributors of PC Alamode for producing such great content!

New Meeting Location

Alamo PC general meetings are being held at a new location. We are still at Crossroads Mall, but the convention center has moved across the mall by Target. See the map on page 6 for details.

If you have not been to a general meeting recently, you're missing out on some great member benefits.

Meet other members, enjoy quality programs, register for a door prize and check out review software and books.



WhatsUp.Doc Logs off

I am sad to report Joyce McDonald of WhatsUp.Doc will no longer be joining us as a columnist. Read her farewell message on page 16.

Joyce has been a contributor to the PC Alamode for more than 13 years.

She has been promoted to a more challenging contract and is now busier than ever.

While Joyce enjoys technology she will be spending her "spare" time teaching Tai Chi.

We wish you the best of luck Joyce!

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

Joseph has worked in the graphics industry for 8 years and teaches graphics and web classes at San Antonio College.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"Increasing Momentum!"

By now we should be well on our way to "climbing the hill" for 2006. Many view it from the perspective of the year up hill until mid-summer, and down hill until the end of the year. Those in school tend to look at it somewhat from the opposite view down hill until summer, level off, then start climbing the school year hill. Either way, momentum must be increased at the beginning or "the hill" will defeat us.

For me, momentum (the power of a body in motion) is one of the key ingredients in just getting any job done. The other things in our life the friction (things that conflict with what needs doing) tend to regulate the momentum. Good intentions alone are never enough.

The resolutions (about how things will be different) have been made, and we are almost free to go about our daily lives. I said "almost free" because if we do not address the momentum issue, well intended resolutions will fail to be accomplished, and soon we will be saying, "Where did the year go?"

Think about it for a moment. We are already into February (the "Hearts and Candy" month), with Valentine's Day on the 14th. How is your momentum for the year, regarding your resolutions for the year? Something, on any give day, seems to be in conflict with something else. Only those who can manage the "daily conflicts of direction" tend to manage the daily momentum.

I am resolved...

I hope that some of your resolutions for 2006 were "to learn more about technology (computers in particular), to continue my relationship with the Alamo PC Organization, and to share a little of my time and talent with others." Hopefully, you might consider being a board member. Of the seven board positions authorized, there are only five filled. That causes additional responsibilities to be assumed by those willing to serve, but still leaves vacancies. Once again, I am asking for others to help share the responsibilities.

Members can also help

Besides sharing a little "time and talent" with others, please renew your membership when it is due or before (on the website in the members area or call the Learning Center [736-0700] for the answer). Also, talk to former members and see if they will rejoin. Talk to new prospects to see if they will join. And, when you are considering giving a gift, consider providing a membership gift to someone you know who would benefit from reading the online magazine and/or taking some classes at the Learning Center. (An early graduation present could benefit an individual now, if the individual will be attending school in another area this fall.)

Planning Meeting

The Alamo PC Board of Directors (BOD) and Officers agreed to hold a planning meeting on January 21st. It will address as many areas as possible, but will primarily focus on how the organization can grow the membership. I will include a review of the meeting in next month's message.

Consumer Electronics Show (CES)

As I mentioned last month, "the first CES took place in New York City in June of 1967 with 200 exhibitors and 17,500

attendees. Since then, CES has grown more than seven-fold. Nearly 2,500 exhibitors, filling 1.5 million net square feet of exhibit space, showcased their latest products and services to more than 130,000 attendees at the 2005 International CES." This year there was about .15 million square feet of additional exhibit space.

I have a rough outline of an article about the 2006 International CES, but it is unlikely that it will be finished in time for this issue. (Too many "conflicts," in too short a period, only allows for so much to be accomplished.)

Improve your computer skills

Again, I ask each of you to consider taking a free class or two early in 2006. (You may also be interested in one of the fee based classes.) There are many classes to choose from (call the Learning Center [736-0700] or check the website <alamopc.org> to get the latest information). If you have one in mind that is not listed, let the Learning Center Desk folks know so we can try to meet your needs or send an E-Mail to the person handling classes & schedules <education@alamopc.org>.

Keep Alamo PC informed

Make sure that your member info is current, especially your E-Mail address (update both on the web-site, via "members" password protected section). That will allow us to send out a renewal reminder about two months early, without cost to the organization. Again, please try to keep track of when your membership expires, and renew well in advance, to save the organization a notification expense and someone's time preparing the correspondence. Attend some of the monthly general meetings where presenters provide information about current and future computer related issues. (This will be addressed at the Planning Meeting.) By attending, you also have the opportunity to go home with free product that is distributed by the presenter and/or receive limited time discounts.

Membership renewals remain a concern. We still are 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 account <president@alamopc.org> or privately <wlklutzjr@juno.com>. Also, if you have anything (comment, question, statement, concern), please make someone aware of it (preferably me). I welcome all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

I hope everyone had a very nice beginning so far. Hope everyone can increase their individual momentum in every area, but especially with regard to trying to help the Alamo PC Organization, in some way.

February Program

David Steward

No presenter has been confirmed.
Visit <www.alamopc.org> for details.

News Brief

Larry Lentz, Past President of Alamo PC, Receives Microsoft MVP Award

The Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) Program recognizes and thanks outstanding members of technical communities for their community participation and willingness to help others. The program celebrates the most active community members from around the world who provide invaluable online and offline expertise that enriches the community experience and makes a difference in technical communities featuring Microsoft products.

MVPs are credible, technology experts from around the world who inspire others to learn and grow through active technical community participation. While MVPs come from many backgrounds and a wide range of technical communities, they share a passion for technology and a demonstrated willingness to help others. MVPs do this through the books and articles they author; the Web sites they manage; the blogs they maintain; the user groups they participate in; the chats they host or contribute to; the events and training sessions where they present, as well as through the questions they answer in technical newsgroups or message boards.

Microsoft MVPs are simply an amazing group of individuals. We are excited to recognize and award MVPs as our way of saying "thank you" for their demonstrated commitment to helping others in technical communities around the globe.

News Brief

Microsoft Previews IE7

Internet Explorer's program manager, Eric Lawrence, recently posted a blog that said IE7 plans to support the Transport Layer Security protocol by default. He also explained how IE7 will behave differently from earlier versions when it encounters potential security problems. From an HTTPS page, users will be forced to access insecure content via the information bar, since only the secure content will be rendered by default. IE7 is also rumored to have tabbed browsing similar to competitor Firefox.

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Volunteer of the Month

W.J. Crain



News Brief

A Computer for Every Kid

A \$100 laptop? A global effort is underway to make it happen by next year. It was a pipe dream only a few months ago but soon will be reality. An ambitious effort from MIT Media Labs to put a \$100 portable in the hands of every child in the world is picking up big corporate partners, top engineering talent, and interest from several countries. One Laptop Per Child (OLPC), a nonprofit venture, is expected to start distributing machines late next year and to produce 100 to 200 million in 2007.

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

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

90 Minute Cherry Lattice Coffee Cake

2 pkgs yeast
1 cup warm water
6 Tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt
4 Tablespoons margarine
2 eggs
4-1/2 – 5 cups flour
1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds.

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

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

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

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

Fresh Fruit Smoothie

1 cup orange juice
1 cup apple juice
1 banana, diced
1 cup crushed ice
1 cup sliced fruits (peaches, strawberries, etc.)

Whir in blender and served immediately.

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

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

News Brief

No More Textbooks?

Students at Empire High School in Vail, AZ started class this year with no textbooks. Instead, the school issued laptop computers to each of its 340 students, becoming one of the first U.S. public schools to turn away from printed textbooks. Empire High, which opened for the first time this year, was designed specifically to have a textbook-free environment.



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.

*It's All About The Squeaky Wheel

I was in line at Staples early Friday morning after Thanksgiving for some specials, but too far back to get all but one, a 512 meg USB Flash Drive for \$19.95 before a ten dollar mail-in rebate. That night, I plugged it into the hub I always use and it gave me an error, but after a couple of minutes, it worked OK. However, soon another message told me there was not enough power from the hub and to plug it into the computer directly. I did that and still got an error message, but it worked after a couple minutes and I could write to it. I have several USB flash drives and have never had that problem using that hub so I wanted to return it to Staples for an exchange. The manager told me he would not exchange it at that price and that I would have to take the problem up with PNY who made it. When I insisted it was not right since that was the only one I had the problem with, he said I would have to pay the difference between the sale price and the posted price if I wanted another one, so I gave up.

When I got home, I called PNY whose tech support took an indifferent attitude about it and said there was nothing wrong with it if it would eventually work. However, he did finally admit that some might work better than others, not that there would be anything wrong. I then called Staples Corporate office, and was transferred to the President's office of customer relations who was sorry to hear what had happened at the Staples store, and apologized saying "that is not the way we do business" and kept me on the line while calling the store. When he returned, he said the manager was "apologetic" and assured me they would exchange my unit for a new one, which that manager had stated they did not have when I was in the store earlier for an exchange.

Returning to the Staples store for the exchange, nobody seemed to know about it, but after my insistence, a lady went looking for the one they would hold for me. When she finally returned several minutes later, she did indeed have one and the exchange was short and sweet, but cool ("here"). The squeaky wheel syndrome worked. The new flash drive worked just fine, even in the hub, as I thought it would. I have since read that it is not recommended to use Flash drives in a hub, but I have used as many as two at one time in my hub, even with the power for it unplugged, with no problem because it is much easier than plugging them into the computer.

*Time To Do Your Taxes

Remember that you can find out where the AARP volunteers are working on income taxes and get yours done there absolutely free, except under certain circumstances. It is admirable that those folks work for free on your behalf when they are actually mostly professional people who are taking time off from their normal job to help us. On the other hand, you can go to <<http://www.taxact.com>> and download Second Story Software's free version of Tax Act for doing your own tax return. It will pester you to upgrade to the paid version while you are inputting data, but it will still do yours free and will now also do the e-file for you free. Personally, I use the Deluxe version because I like the price at \$12.95, and it includes other very helpful features, one of which saves time on data input if you used it last year (important to me).

Judy Taylour from APCUG notified most member user groups that Second Story Software will offer user group members a

discount for purchasing Tax Act products. I can't include the procedure here because they don't want it posted on the Web, but I believe the Deluxe version would be just \$9.95. Simply contact your group's APCUG rep for the procedure for downloading Tax Act to the discounted shopping cart. Double check the prices including the Ultimate Bundle, depending on whether you need the state version or not.

*Build Your Own Web Site For Free!

A friend, who said he had not tried it himself, but that it was well recommended, referred this Web Site freebie for me to try. I have not downloaded it yet, but hope to check it out one of these days. I was a bit skeptical when I was told that one professional Webmaster chose it over the high end product he was already using, but what's to lose when it's free? Check out <<http://www.nvu.com/>> and see if it is anything you might like. They have versions for Windows, Mac and Linux, making it pretty versatile. They say they are supported by Linspire and encourage you to support Linspire products.

*Worth a Look

This URL has been sent to me more than once in the last few months, but I didn't feel it fit the criteria of my DealsGuy column. However, since I had room this month, I thought I would include it because of the referrals. <www.infopackets.com/windows+newsletter.htm> You'll find all kind of things there and even a deal every so often, I'm told. I saw one last time I looked although not this time, but I didn't spend a lot of time there. There are all kinds of articles about many things so I hope you get something out of it. Editors might be able to use some of the reviews posted there.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.

E-mail and the Stored Communications Act

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

The question of e-mail privacy is a continuing concern for many users of the Internet. Recently, the New York Times reported that the Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston ruled that "federal wiretap laws do not apply to e-mail messages if they are stored, even for a millisecond, on the computers of the Internet providers that process them – meaning that it can be legal for the government or others to read such messages without a court order."

"The ruling was a surprise to many people, because in 1986 Congress specifically amended the wiretap laws to incorporate new technologies like e-mail. Some argue that the ruling's implications could affect emerging applications like Internet-based phone calls and Gmail, Google's new e-mail service, which shows advertising based on the content of a subscriber's e-mail messages."

Interception of messages via a wiretap is legally prohibited. Wiretaps of telephone conversations require a court order in criminal cases and cannot be used in civil cases. Wiretap laws have generally been applied to e-mails while in transit. In 1986, Congress created a new category called "stored communication." The Stored Communications Act applied to messages that had been delivered to a recipient's inbox but not yet read. Prosecutors have access to the inboxes with a search warrant. There are stricter standards for litigants in a civil matter. However, a different standard applies if the message is read and then left of the server of the ISP.

George Kerr of the George Washington University Law School says, "The federal statute that protects the privacy of stored Internet communications is the Stored Communications Act (SCA), passed as part of the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 and codified at 18 U.S.C. sections 2701-11. But courts, legislators, and even legal scholars have had a very hard time understanding the method behind the madness of the SCA. The statute is dense and confusing, and that confusion has made it difficult for legislators to legislate in the field, reporters to report about it, and scholars to write scholarship in this very important area."

The 4th Amendment to the US Constitution affords protection from unreasonable searches regarding a person's physical home. But, can the 4th Amendment be extended to the Internet, a "virtual home in cyberspace?" In general, the answer is "no" for multiple reasons. The first reason is that the architecture of the Internet makes it unclear whether Internet users can retain a "reasonable expectation of privacy" in information sent to network providers, including stored e-mails. A second reason is that the information is not sought to be obtained by a direct search of the home of the person but the subpoena is directed to a third party possessing the information. A third reason is that the ISP is a "private actor." The private actor doctrine states that the 4th Amendment "is wholly inapplicable to a search or seizure, even an unreasonable one, made by a private individual not acting as an agent of the Government or with the participation or knowledge of any governmental official."

Messages that have been read but remain on the computer system of the Internet service provider have little protection. Prosecutors can generally get to these messages with a simple subpoena. Litigants in civil cases also subpoena these messages.

The Boston case began in 1998 when an online bookseller offered e-mail accounts to book dealer clients. The Boston bookseller then proceeded to secretly copy e-mails received in the dealer inboxes from Amazon. Indictments resulted for wiretapping and, in 1999, the bookseller and one employee pleaded guilty to wiretapping. However, one employee of the bookseller contested the wiretapping charges. The employee alleged the e-mails were stored communications and reading a client's stored communications does not constitute wiretapping.

The federal district court agreed and dismissed the case in 2003. In early July, 2004, the First Circuit Court of Appeals, in Boston, agreed.

The First Circuit case is in conflict with a 9th Circuit case in San Francisco. The 9th Circuit case involved an Internet service provider who responded to a civil subpoena and provided copies of 339 e-mail messages for two of its customers. The customers claimed that the subpoena was overly broad and that it violated wiretap and stored communications laws.

The 9th Circuit ruled that e-mail stored on the server of an Internet service provider is covered by the Stored Communications Act, after it has been read. The court said that the Act applies to e-mail before and after reading. The court opined, "An obvious purpose for storing a message on an ISP's server after delivery is to provide a second copy of the message in the event that the user needs to download it again – if, for example, the message is accidentally erased from the user's own computer."

Thus this writer is still digesting the import of the Stored Communications Act and the apparent inconsistencies between the 1st Circuit and 9th Circuit opinions. Perhaps they are consistent and can be distinguished after further thought.

The interesting aspect of this line of thought is Google's new service, Gmail. Apparently Google's policy of "reading" the e-mail of its customers and directing targeted advertising to the sender (and or recipient?) may be permissible under the law. Although I am certain that Google's "terms of use" regarding the Gmail service addresses this issue.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-63.

2005 Computer Equipment Recalls

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>

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the following recall in voluntary cooperation with the firm below.

Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of Product: Rechargeable batteries for iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 computers.

Units: About 128,000 units (in the United States) Computer Manufacturer: Apple Computer Inc., of Cupertino, Calif.

Battery Manufacturer: LG Chem Ltd., of South Korea

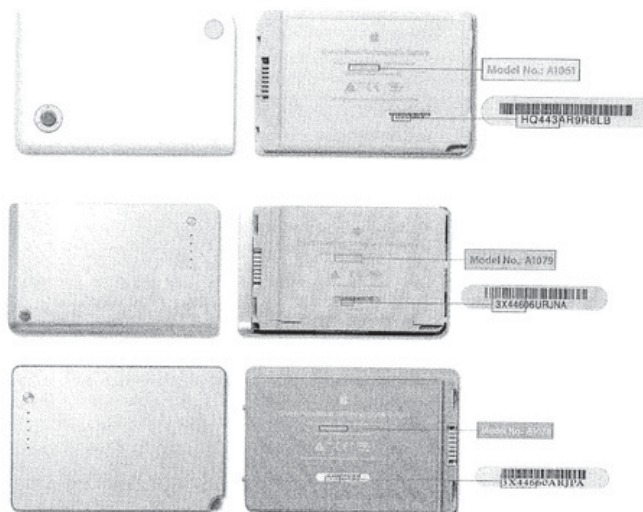
Hazard: An internal short can cause the battery cells to overheat, posing a fire hazard to consumers.

Incidents/Injuries: Apple has received six reports worldwide of batteries overheating, including two reports in the United States.

Description: The recalled lithium ion batteries are used with the following computers: 12-inch iBook G4, 12-inch PowerBook G4 and 15-inch PowerBook G4.

The recalled batteries include those with model numbers A1061, A1078 and A1079 and serial numbers that begin with HQ441 through HQ507 or 3X446 through 3X510. Consumers should remove the battery from the computer to view the model and serial numbers labeled on the bottom of the unit. No other PowerBook or iBook batteries are involved in this recall.

Sold At: National and regional resellers, catalogers, and Apple's online and retail stores sold the computers with the batteries from October 2004 through May 2005 for \$900 to \$2300. The batteries also were sold separately for about \$130.



Assembled in: Taiwan and China

Remedy: Consumers should stop using the recalled batteries immediately and contact Apple to arrange for a replacement battery, free of charge. After removing the recalled battery from their iBook or PowerBook, consumers should plug in the AC adapter to power the computer until a replacement battery arrives.

Consumer Contact: Contact Apple at (800) 275-2273 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. CT Monday through Sunday or log on to Apple's web site at www.apple.com/support/batteryexchange to check your battery's serial number and apply for a replacement battery.

News Brief

Fujitsu Laptop Batteries Recalled

Batteries in some notebook computers from Fujitsu Siemens can overheat, with a risk of fire. The company has recalled the batteries in some of its Amilo notebook computers, and will replace affected batteries free of charge.



WhatsUp.Doc Logging Out

K. Joyce McDonald, Alamo PC

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

I put off writing this article because I resisted the inevitable. I knew that my days as a columnist for PC Alamode would some time run out, and for reasons more sentimental than practical, I let that time run perhaps too long, thinking that retirement would allow me all the time I needed to write. Retirement, however, didn't happen. A promotion at work, freelance writing, tai chi teaching and two websites have left me with scant little discretionary time. After 13 years and two months as a PC Alamode columnist, I have to admit that my current schedule makes it impossible to do a good job of writing enlightened copy for this magazine's "New Technology" beat.

I hope that I have served you well and that my faithful fans will stay in touch. My e-mail address, by the way, changed recently because of our switch to DSL from cable. Please record my new e-mail in your address book as sales@jbmcdonaldandson.com. I will still be able to answer your questions, and I apologize to anyone who wrote me recently at my old e-mail address and got it bounced back. With the rest of this column, I want to tie up some loose ends before I say goodbye.

One issue I am still grappling with is spam. I tried Mailwasher Pro™ for a year, but was not completely sold on the product. My biggest objection is that I often switch back and forth between my laptop and my desktop computer. I didn't want to fire up my laptop to get my mail, so I installed Mailwasher Pro on my desktop. This meant, however, that when I was using my laptop I had to preview my mail and delete the spam through my desktop, then open Outlook® on my laptop and retrieve my mail there. At one point, I tried to move Mailwasher to my laptop, however, Mailwasher, for reasons I was never able to understand, did not put my filters and blacklists in the directory that I defined in my options. Instead, it hid them in the Programs directory no matter what options I set up. I never knew where to find or put the lists, since what I observed was contrary to the instructions given for the program.

My other complaint with Mailwasher was that no matter what I did, I kept getting more and more spam. I quit using Mailwasher and went back to maintaining my "blocked senders" list in Outlook. What really helped me get away from spam? Changing my e-mail address. I would never have done this deliberately, but when we changed from Cable to DSL, I was forced to. Now I get very little spam. My only suggestion is to give your e-mail only to people and organizations that you trust implicitly. Don't respond to surveys, and don't allow vendors with whom you deal to put you on their mailing lists (which means, pay attention to the little checkboxes near where you enter your e-mail address that allow you to opt in or out of their mass mailing list.) It might reassure you that I suspect that the bulk of my spam comes from scumbags who find my e-mail address via my domain name registration for my websites. No wonder the Domain Name Registration vendors charge extra for anonymous registrations.

Another issue I on which this column expended a lot of electronic ink is household appliances. A year ago, we replaced the refrigerator, cook top and oven. We recently replaced the dishwasher and clothes dryer. The lessons we learned last year figured strongly in our choice of appliances this year. The most expensive lesson we learned last year is that high dollar appli-

ances are more about style than function. You pay a lot for looks—sometimes for exceedingly cranky appliances that cost you more in repairs after the sale. When we purchased the dishwasher and dryer, we went for the more basic appliances—good looks but not jazzy. We also went back to Conn's to buy our new appliances because their knowledge of the products and their excellent customer service (including their helpful delivery persons) was such a joy last year. One interesting appliance now offered is a top loading dryer. This product might not be for everyone, but I can envision having one when I build my retirement home in a few years. My front loading washer and front loading dryer require me to stand on my head way too often, moving heavy wet clothes from one to the other. Two top loaders might make more sense for a senior citizen with arthritis.

More recently, I talked about my iPod. I'm still enjoying it, although I am disappointed with the battery life. I am unable to coax more than about three hours of listening time from it, although it advertises "up to 14 hours". It appears also that game playing drains the battery even more quickly, much more quickly than game playing does on my PalmOne™ PDA. Of course video watching drains the battery so quickly that I am not certain that I could get more than 2 hours of video watching time without a charge. Not that charging the iPod is all that difficult. But I have read that the iPod goes to iPod heaven after about 5000 charges and the battery is not replaceable. Be that as it may, I am enjoying it. I got a Trans-Pod device for my car (available at Circuit City and Best Buy, among other places). I plug the iPod into the Trans-Pod, which plugs into my cigarette lighter. The Trans-Pod display shows me an FM frequency to which I should set my radio. Then I plug in my iPod and listen to my music as the iPod charges.

I discovered a couple more features that make the iPod fun. One is the "On the Go Playlist." Last month I mentioned that the iPod was only passively interactive. The On the Go Playlist is the exception. When I'm out for a walk and hear a song that is the perfect tempo for walking, I display the listing with the song name highlighted. I press the center button and the song name flashes. This installs the song into the On-The-Go Playlist. When I synchronize with my PC, the On the Go playlist is displayed with the rest of my playlists. I can then examine the songs in that playlist and move them to another playlist (such as my "Walking" playlist), delete them, or make a new playlist from the listing.

The other feature I like is the ability to play games while listening to songs. I play a song, click the menu button (top of the wheel) till I get to the main menu, select a game and play it. Don't ask me what this does to the battery life.

Do svidania (Russian for "till we meet again.")

A New Kind of Music Label

40 years ago Jac Holzman changed music distribution with the release of The Doors' album on his independent Elektra music label. He's introducing a similar change with Cordless Recordings – the first all-digital music label operated by a major record company, the Warner Music Group, which is launching on the Web and on digital music services such as iTunes and RealNetworks' Rhapsody.

Music from the label's first six bands is being sold only online in 3-song "clusters" instead of albums. The bands will be promoted on blogs and sites like MySpace. Artists get to keep ownership of the master recordings they release under Cordless. If they want to release their music elsewhere after a short contract is up, they are free to do so. The Cordless Recordings labels is an experiment for Warner Music, which has increased its focus on digital distribution, and a bet that inexpensive Internet distribution and marketing may give labels a cost-effective way to nurture new bands.

On the label side, it's an attempt to reach out to a music-consuming world that is deserting radio and record stores for iTunes and MySpace.

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The Ten Net Commandments

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 52.

Like a Policeman seeing the crime and stopping the bad guys, as a Computer Service Technician I see a lot of the seedy side of the computer world, spyware, viruses, and other mischievousness of "hackers." My job is to eliminate the problems they cause so that computer users can go about their business on their computers. Time after time I am asked "but how do I prevent these problems from happening in the first place?" In this article I will explain the best ways to keep these evils from infecting and affecting your computer.

Live by these simple rules and ye shall compute with less problems:

Thou shall not buy merchandise from pop-up ads or spam – making purchases from pop-ups is only asking for trouble as pop-ups are normally generated by some type of spyware. Therefore you are encouraging spyware and yes, you guessed it, replying to spam spawns more spam. So, counsel your friends, neighbors and relatives and the world will be a much better place to compute in.

Thou shall not post thy email address, phone number, address or social security number to the internet, nor shall thou post anyone else's – This one is a little trickier because as we know to join any "group" or to conduct some business on the Internet you may be required to submit certain information such as your email address. Bottom line here, just as in life giveth only when necessary and only to those you trust.

Thou shall not forget to update thy Windows every second Tuesday – It is recommended that you update Windows whenever you get a notice to do so. These updates are how they say "for your own good". You should ensure that you have automatic updates enabled on your computer. In Windows XP you can enable (or ensure they are enabled) by clicking on [Start] Right click [My Computer] Click [Properties] The System Properties Property Sheet will open. Click the [Automatic Updates] tab and make your selections to enable automatic updates. Click [Apply] and [OK]. These updates are as a result of new found bugs, holes and security flaws. Kind of like when they come out with vehicle recalls, they need to be taken care of. Just do it!

Thou shall not connect to the internet without installing an antivirus, nor shall thou begin a scan without checking for updates – Word on the street is that it takes less than 5 minutes to contract an ITD (Internet Transmitted Disease) from just being connected to the internet without proper protection. Some people think that because they just use their dialup connection to download email they don't need an antivirus program – wrong! The first step in protection is a dependable antivirus program running at all times with it's most recent update. Don't compute without it.

Thou shall not connect to the internet without installing a firewall – Think of a firewall on your computer just as you would a firewall on an automobile. The firewall on an automobile is meant to protect you from a fire in the engine compartment while you are in the driver/passenger compartment. A firewall on a computer is meant to protect you from the evils lurking outside your computer. Two of the most com-

mon questions asked regarding the necessity of a firewall are: Doesn't Windows XP come with it's own firewall? Yes it does, however this firewall only protects you from inbound traffic. If you have some evil vermin lurking inside your computer it may be transmitting outbound traffic causing more havoc.

The next question is if I have a router doesn't that have a built in firewall? Routers are used to connect more than one computer to the Internet using the same connection and generally routers provide the same security that XP provides. Most experts recommend both a hardware (router) and software firewall.

Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's credit card number, nor his bank routing number, nor his social security number – This is pretty self explanatory. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Thou shall not enter thy credit card number without seeing the tiny padlock icon on thy status bar – if you need to conduct business on the Internet that requires you to enter your credit card number, social security number or other personal information look for the little padlock in the bottom right hand corner of your browser. This tells you that you are on a secure site.

Thou shall not reply to the email from the Nigerian banker – ah yes, the Nigerian Banker. He is the man that sends you an unsolicited email (spam) telling you that his homeland has been besieged and he needs your help to get his family's fortune out of the country. If you help him you will gain a substantial fortune yourself... deleted this and any email like it immediately if not sooner and go about your business.

Thou shall not forward chain letters to thy friends and family – When you get one of those emails telling you to forward it to all your friends and family don't! This is usually a chain email with the intent, knowingly or not, to jam up ISP (Internet Service Providers) email servers. While the intent of your friend may be to inform you of some new virus or scam, check it out at a site such as Snopes.com (<http://www.snopes.com>) You may find that it is merely some hoax being spread thought out the World Wide Web.

I would also recommend that you ignore those emails that tell you to forward it to 10 people immediately or you will have bad luck. Just delete it and go out and buy yourself a lottery ticket.

Thou shall not use "password" as thy password, nor thy birthday, nor thy children's names – This is also pretty self explanatory. Don't make it any easier for anybody to guess your password. Just don't forget whatever password you come up with.

Stay vigilante and happy computing.



Recipe for Disaster

Russell James, Alamo PC

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

Preventive Maintenance

ALAMODE COLUMNS

I am amazed at how many people are not prepared for problems that might occur with their computer. If you not prepared for a problem, then that is the time that a problem will most likely occur. This is my rendition of Murphy's Law and it is one that we can all live with. Your car comes with a jack in case you have a flat tire. Most of us have a plunger in the house in case the toilet stops up. Some of us even keep an ice scraper in our vehicle just in case we have to move to Boston. Why would you have a computer and not be sure that you have the tools to get you out of a jam if it occurs? The first thing you need is to know what you need in case you cannot start your system.

This most important item would be a startup disk for the operating system that you are using. If you are using something other than Windows 95, 98, or ME then you are on your own. The easiest way to make one is to go into the Control Panel and click on Add/Remove Programs. The third tab will be labeled Startup Disk. Put a disk that does not have anything critical on it into your floppy drive. Click on the button labeled Create Disk and the process will begin. Do not use disks that came with drivers for your system. This disk will be formatted and system files will be copied to it for you to use to start and possibly correct errors on your system. This disk could also be called a system boot disk but it contains other files that are not needed to boot your system.

If you are familiar with the startup disk from Windows 95, there have been a few changes for the better with the Windows 98 version. You now have a couple of options available when booting from the disk. The most notable difference is the Multi-Config Startup menu that appears. You have the option to start your computer with or without real-mode CD-ROM support, and there is a help file that is available. The help file is actually the contents of the Readme.txt file that is on the floppy disk and can also be accessed by typing help after the computer boots as well as thru the third option on the menu. The CD-ROM drivers that try to load will start most of the standard drives that are on the market that connect to the IDE controllers of your motherboard or some of the more common SCSI drives. They will not start CD-ROMs that are connected to sound cards or proprietary controller cards.

After you make your selection, the config.sys loads the CD-ROM driver, if selected, and then loads a 2MB RAM drive that is used to hold the files that you would need to troubleshoot some of the more common problem. Most of these files are included in the ebd.cab file from the boot disk. This is a compressed file that is similar to a zip or rar file. The cab file and the creation of the RAM drive are necessary because otherwise the files would not all fit on one floppy.

The table below, from the readme.txt on the startup disk, identifies the files in the Ebd.cab file and gives a short explanation of what the file is used for. You can get a more detailed definition of what most of the files will do as well as some of the different switches or options that are available by typing the name of the file followed by /?. Be sure that you know what you are doing before attempting to use any of the files that are here. The fdisk and format commands are used to prepare a disk to hold an operating system and they can also be used to wipe an entire operating system from the face of your little world if you answer one question wrong. This is especially true if you

are using any type of disk compression or management software. You have been warned.

Scandisk is probably going to be the most common file that you would need to use from the boot disk. Sometime when the hard drive is beginning to fail you might have problems with your computer hanging while booting into Windows. This could be because a file that Windows needs to use to start is located on a section of the hard drive that has developed what is called a bad sector. Scandisk will attempt to move the file from the bad area of the disk to a good area, and then mark the bad area so that Windows will not write any more data to it. If you have these types of problems very often, then you should think about changing the hard drive.

Sys.com is one file that comes in handy when there has been some spring-cleaning in the file system. Sometimes a customer will bring his computer in because he is receiving an error message such as Invalid System Disk or Missing or Corrupted Command.com. These errors are sometime caused because they were trying to make some room on their hard drive for a new program that needed to be installed. For the record, the files that you definitely need in the root directory of the C drive are, io.sys, msdos.sys and command.com. These are the main files that allow your system to boot. There are other files that may be needed because of the software that you are running, but these are must have files for a MS DOS based operating system and they should not be deleted or changed for any reason.

A new file that is included on the boot disk is ext.exe. This is a simpler version of extract.exe. It is used to extract files from the cab files that are contained on the Windows setup disk. It does not require that you type all of the parameters to correctly extract files. After typing ext at the command prompt you will be asked to enter the path to the Windows cab files. If you have the Windows 98 CD that would be X:\Win98, where X is the drive letter of your CDROM drive. Some of the older systems did not come with a Windows CD and the files were placed in c:\windows\options\cabs. After entering the path to the cab files you are asked for the name of the file or files that you would like to extract. If you have multiple files to extract, enter a space between each of the names. You are then asked for the path that you would like the files to be extracted to. You are then given a summary of the options that you entered and asked if they are OK. If you find that one of the entries is not correct you would answer no and you will be taken back to the first question about the location of the cab files.



Preventative Maintenance Part IX

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

Bill is retired military and an intermediate computer enthusiast who has been an APCO member for seven years. He has contributed for the past six years.

If you received new software/hardware for Christmas, you can upgrade computers running WinXP with them. XP is the first version of Windows to require activation. This process was instituted by Microsoft to block counterfeiting, and to keep buyers from using the same disk on multiple machines. When you originally installed WinXP, it took a snapshot of 10 hardware characteristics on your computer. These were: video system; SCSI (Small Computer System Interface) adapter; IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) adapter; MAC (media access control) address of the network adapter; range of RAM (for instance, 64MB-128MB); the type of microprocessor; the microprocessor's serial number; the hard drive; the hard drive volume serial number; and the CD or DVD drive.

This snapshot is run through an algorithm and a number, which Microsoft calls a "hardware hash." It is stored on the hard drive, and is part of the activation process. For desktops, each characteristic has one vote, except the network adapter, which has three. To maintain activation, seven votes must remain the same. If the network card is the same, only four other characteristics must remain to maintain activation. If you are using a laptop, and it can be hooked to a docking station, Windows is more liberal. Only four characteristics must remain. If you do not change the network adapter, only one other characteristic must remain unchanged. With either type of machine, you could make extensive changes.

For example, you could add RAM, upgrade the video card and install a new CD drive, and you would not have to reactivate. When you start your computer with the new equipment, Windows will create a new "hardware hash." It will compare the new hash with the old one. If you have thoroughly overhauled the computer, or reformatted the hard drive, you'll have to call Microsoft to reactivate. The window informing you of the need to reactivate will include a telephone number. Reactivation cannot be done via the Internet. If you fail to reactivate, Windows will work for 30 days before failing. Windows can be reactivated as many times as necessary. The XP Upgrade Advisor is at: <<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/upgrading/advisor.mspx>>.

Once you have downloaded and install it, this program will tell you if your current software and hardware matches with XP.

Associations

WinXP uses a system called "associations" that automatically opens a file when you click it. WinXP associates certain file types with specific programs. If you don't want it to open your photos, for example, in one of WinXP's associated programs because you prefer another one, you can change the association by clicking open any folder, selecting Tools from the menu items at the top of your screen, going to Folder, Options, and clicking on the tab File Types. You'll see a long alphabetical list of file extensions, such as JPG, TIF, and TXT. You now need only to scroll down to your preferred extension and click on it and then on the Change button. You'll see a list of programs. Now select the one that you want to use when opening these files.

Bells and Whistles

Windows provides many options and animations that let you customize the looks of the operating system (OS). These features may enhance the looks of your OS, but they use many of the OS resources. To use your computer without all of those fancy background pictures and special effects, right-click the Desktop, select Properties, the Desktop tab, and choose (None) at the top of the Background list. Click the Appearance tab and then the Advanced button. Choose Desktop in the item drop-down list and use the Color 1 drop-down menu to pick a color for the screen background. Click OK twice to close the dialog boxes and then right-click My Computer and select Properties. Next select the Performance tab, and under Performance click the Settings button. In the Performance Options dialog box, choose Custom and deselect all of the sliding, fading, and animation options. You will still get an attractive user interface but without the time-wasting special effects. Click OK twice to close the dialog boxes.

Computer Speed/Performance

If your computer seems to have lost its initial rapid performance, the PC is probably using too many background resources. The first step to correct this problem is to run your anti-virus and spyware programs. Next run your Checkdisk and Defrag programs. Now type in msconfig in the Run dialog box found in the Start menu. Once there you will see all of the applications which run in the background every time the computer is turned on. To understand which of the applications can be turned off upon initiation of your computer, go to www.answerthatwork.com where there's an excellent Task List. This list should assist you in turning off multiple applications which open whenever you boot up your computer. Finally, you should ensure your computer has plenty of Random Access Memory (RAM). If you need more memory, it can now be purchased at a reasonable cost. If after installation of additional memory, you still have a slow performing computer, then it may well be time for you to start over with a fresh installation of Windows.

Connecting with Wi-Fi

Your laptop probably has the built-in capability to find any available Wi-Fi hotspots that allow you to use the Internet. Because these locations are Wi-Fi, they are wireless connections. To use this feature, first, make sure that the hardware can connect. Most newer laptops have a button or switch that

enables a Wi-Fi connection. The switch may be on the side of the laptop or the keyboard somewhere. Once enabled, it's time to find a network. WinXP includes a Wireless Network Connection feature that was very much improved with the release of Service Pack 2.

To access it, right-click the wireless network connection icon in your taskbar and click View Available Wireless Networks. When the Wireless Network Connection dialog box appears, if no networks appear, click Refresh Network List in the upper-left. Now select a network by clicking on its name and click Connect. You'll see the network's connection status change to "Acquiring Network Address." When it says "Connected," close the Wireless Network Connection window.

The resulting list may well include other people's personal networks. Many people simply do not protect or secure their networks. Wireless signals can extend far beyond their homes, thus you may find that you have access to neighbors' systems. You can move your home network to the top of the Preferred Networks list by clicking Change the Order of Preferred Networks in the Wireless Network Connection window. Using someone else's system might slow down their surfing, or otherwise penalize them. Ask permission before you surf on someone else's wireless system.

Assuming you have your own wireless network, you should find it in the list. If you will be using the computer on the road, the Wi-Fi search is handy. There are many commercial hotspots, and a few free ones, located at airports, hotels, coffee shops and other business establishments. Your computer will find the commercial hotspots, but you must pay before getting an access code. Road warriors often subscribe to a hotspot service. These organizations typically have a number of plans. The biggest are Boingo and T-Mobile. You can find more information on them at: <<http://www.boingo.com/>>, <<http://www.t-mobile.com/hotspot/>>.

There are now more than 56,000 hotspots around the world, according to JiWire, a provider of hotspot information. London is the most wired city, according to the site. It is followed by Tokyo and New York City. Filling out the top 10 are Paris, Singapore, Hong Kong, Berlin, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle.

Most hotspots are located in hotels and restaurants. JiWire has more information at: <<http://www.jiwire.com/>>, but it certainly is not the only site where you can find hotspots. Google's location search, <<http://labs.google.com/location/>>, can help, too. Enter Wi-Fi in the first box and the ZIP code in the second. If you need more places to find a hotspot, go to: <<http://www.wifihotspotlist.com/>>, <<http://www.wififreespot.com/>>, or <<http://www.ezgoal.com/hotspots/>>.

Date and Time in System Tray

If you want the date, time, and day of week in your System Tray, then right-click a blank spot on the Taskbar and see if there's a check mark next to the menu item titled "Lock the Taskbar." If one is there, then click that menu item to remove the check mark. Now use the mouse to drag the top edge of the Taskbar upward until it snaps to twice its normal height. When the Taskbar is in this higher position, the clock displays three lines rather than one showing the current time, the day of the week and date. You also have more room for Taskbar buttons representing active applications. Of course, increasing the height of the Taskbar makes it occupy more screen space.

Dog Animation Figure

Some people love cartoon animation, but there are others who think it has no place on a computer desktop. If you tend to fall into the latter category, the cute little dog that appears at the bottom-left side of the Search Results dialog box might tend to drive you crazy. To delete this dog, click Change Preferences, and then choose Without an Animated Screen Character. The dog will trot off the screen.

Movie Maker

If you want to synchronize your trip or special event slides to the beat of your music on a CD for the benefit of your family/friends, try Movie Maker. It happens to be included with WinXP. It can handle a slide show complete with transition effects. But more importantly, it allows you to precisely edit the timing of your slides and your music. To open Movie Maker, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, Entertainment, Windows Movie Maker. Next you'll need to load raw materials like photos and music files into Movie Maker. To load a file into Movie Maker, click File, Import into Collections. At the bottom of the Movie Maker window is a timeline. You can drag the photos and music clips to the timeline to set the order you'd like, and you can adjust the duration of each slide and edit the music. You'll have to match the duration of the slides to the beat of the music manually. You may have to play back the music repeatedly to note where each beat strikes the timeline.

Here are some options for your consideration should you buy a new computer and update to WinXP.

You can pass your old computer to your children. Others donate them to charities. If that's an option for you, then make sure it is working and has a good monitor. You could throw it in the trash, but an increasing number of cities and states are outlawing this option because of hazardous wastes in the landfills. California, Texas, and other states ban some computer equipment from its landfills. You can recycle it. Dell, for instance, will recycle your old computer when you buy a new Dell machine. Even if you're not buying Dell, visit the recycling page <<http://www.dell.com/recycling>> at Dell's Web site for lots of general recycling information. Ask your IBM dealer about its recycling plan as well. It's wise to keep an old computer around for several weeks as you use your new computer.

New Class Starting

Student Practice Lab - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700



Intelligent Message Filter

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

As everyone knows, spam is the scourge of the Internet. There are many solutions to help filter out spam. Some work, others don't. Microsoft recently came out with IMF (Intelligent Message Filter). This is an add-on for Exchange Server 2003, an integral part of Small Business Server 2003. This one appears to work fairly well. And it allows the end-user some control as well. And the price is right - FREE!

Installation & Configuration

Installation of IMF is fairly simple. Just double-click on the downloaded ExchangeIMF.MSI installation file, accept the EULA (End User Licensing Agreement), and follow the prompts. The installation adds a new tab to the Message Delivery tab in System Manager. To access it, open the Exchange System Manager, expand Global Settings, right-click Message Delivery and select Properties. Then click on the new Intelligent Message Filter tab.

IMF calculates a SCL (Spam Confidence Level) which is a rating from 1 to 9 with a 1 representing a very low probability that the message is spam while a 9 means it most likely is spam. IMF allows you to trap spam on the gateway server at one SCL threshold. Messages with an SCL below the gateway threshold are sent on to the Information Store. A second configurable threshold determines whether a message is delivered to the user's Inbox or to their Junk E-mail folder.

You may also configure what to do with messages trapped at the gateway. There are four possibilities, Archive, Delete, No Action, and Reject. Archive stores messages in a folder called UCEArchive under the Exchange folders. These messages can be read using Outlook Express or Notepad. This is a form of quarantining that allows retrieval of messages trapped at the gateway. Messages can be released to their intended recipient by moving them to the Pickup folder.

Delete simply deletes the message without any notification to either sender or recipient. No Action assigns the SCL to the message and passes it on to the mailbox store. Reject rejects the message and sends a non-delivery report to the sender. I generally don't think sending a non-delivery report to a spammer is a good idea. It tells the spammer your server/domain actually exists and it adds more traffic to the Internet. While I'm evaluating IMF, I've got it configured for Archive. Once I'm done, I'll probably set it to delete.

There is one other step to configuration, enabling IMF for each Exchange SMTP Virtual Server. There is typically only one virtual server in a Small Business Server installation, but you may have created more. To do this use Exchange System Manager to open Servers, then your specific server, Protocols, SMTP, and then right-click the new Intelligent Message Filtering and select Properties. Under the General tab (the only tab) you will see a list of your SMTP virtual servers (probably just one). Check the checkbox, click on Apply and OK and it's done.

Results

So, how does it work? Pretty well, actually. I started out with the gateway threshold at 9, which is as wide open as it goes. Even at that level, messages started populating the UCEArchive folder. I set the Junk E-mail threshold to 8 and although I got a fair amount of spam in my inbox, messages were being directed to the Junk E-mail folder. I gradually tightened my thresholds and now they rest at 7 for the gateway and 4 for the Junk E-mail folder. A few spam messages seem to get through but not many. However, I do have a few false positives, messages that are not spam but are considered to be by the filter. For instance, recently my daughter asked me if I had received a message she'd sent. Nope. I hadn't. But since she alerted me, I checked the Junk E-mail folder and sure enough there it was. Nice thing about a spam filter is that it sends suspected spam to the Junk E-mail folder. The user can check their own junk folder to retrieve false positives. Once found, the sender can be put on the safe senders list. Naturally I did this with my daughter's e-mail address. Conversely a user can place a sender of spam that sneaks past the spam filter on the blocked senders list. Either way, the user has control over the process.

How does IMF stack up against the competition? Not bad. Not perfect, but not bad. I usually use and recommend Sybari Spam Manager, which does an excellent job. It uses a number of approaches including a spam engine that can be updated over the Internet periodically. I have mine set to update automatically every 90 minutes. IMF uses a relatively fixed algorithm to assign the SCL. Over time the spammers will learn how to get around it. I suspect when they do Microsoft will issue an update. Sybari Spam Manager allows the system administrator to send spam to a quarantine area. But unlike IMF, a log is maintained which makes it easy to search the quarantine for false positives. However, as mentioned earlier, sending suspected spam to the user's Junk E-mail folder allows the user to search for falsely trapped messages without having to involve the administrator. The downside of this is that the users' Junk E-mail folders will fill up with, well, junk. We all know users aren't real good about cleaning up their mailboxes as it is. But there are some tools available to the system administrator to help alleviate this problem.

Conclusion

Is IMF a good spam filter? Absolutely! Are there better ones on the market? Again, absolutely. But did I mention that IMF is FREE?!? At that price it should be the first anti-spam filter to try on your SBS 2003 server. You can always upgrade to another third-party solution if IMF doesn't work out for you. If you're still running SBS 2000, maybe it's time to consider upgrading anyway.



Cyber Security?

Collected by Pim Borman,

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

As more and more computer users gain fast, always-on, broadband access to the Internet via cable or ADSL telephone lines, computer security becomes a critical issue. This was convincingly illustrated in an article in USA TODAY (11-30-2004, thanks to Duane Morrow). The paper teamed up with Avantgarde, a tech marketing and design firm, to see what kind of attacks were attracted by variously equipped computers hooked up to a broadband DSL connection. Relatively unprotected computers, wide open to the Internet, underwent attacks at a sustained rate of 340 per hour, or once every 10 seconds on average. These computers consisted of a Dell Windows XP with Service Pack 1, and an Apple Mac X. Most of the attacks were no more than "door knob rattlers" and did not result in actual penetration. Nevertheless, out of 139 thousand attacks in two weeks nine managed to take over the Windows XP computer and started to tie it into a larger network of hijacked systems. Another computer, equipped with Windows Small Business Server, underwent 25 thousand attacks in two weeks, 61 per hour on average, of which one managed to take over the system. The Apple computer was not compromised, probably because it uses an operating system not targeted by most intruders.

Computers protected by an active firewall underwent far fewer attacks, from 2 -- 4 per hour, because firewalls hide the presence of a computer on the Internet from casual passers-by. These computers used Windows XP with Service Pack 2, Windows XP with the ZoneAlarm firewall, and a Microtel Linspire (Linux-based) computer with a basic firewall in the operating system.

Note that these "honey pot" systems were totally passive. Attacks did not depend on users' actions, such as visiting infected Web sites or downloading email attachments that might cause infiltration by worms and viruses. It is also clear that fairly simple protection measures, such as a firewall, thwarted the vast majority of malicious attackers.

The foremost obstacle to achieving a safer Internet is the ignorance and/or indifference of too many computer users, especially those with a broadband connection; but notice that with an attack rate of once every 10 seconds even Internet browsers using a limited telephone connection can be vulnerable!

Here are the important safety measures once more:

A firewall, stand-alone as in ZoneAlarm, or part of a package as in ZoneAlarm Plus, Windows XP SP2, or Norton Internet Security (combined with anti-virus and more). Optimally also a hardware router, even if you don't need one for a home network, to add additional firewall protection.

An anti-virus program, if not already included in the firewall software. Norton is good, or you can use a free program such as AVG from www.grisoft.com. It is essential to update the virus data files weekly or more often.

Regular updates of your operating system and Office programs with newly issued patches from the providers (e.g. Microsoft).

A spyware blocking/removal program such as AdAware (free) or AdAware Plus (extra features), or the excellent, free Spybot Search and Destroy.

Disconnect from the Internet when not needed, or turn the computer off altogether when not in use for a longer period (use Hibernate with Windows XP for faster start-up).

Use common sense! Don't trust e-mail attachments unless you expect them. If you have any doubt whatsoever, ask the sender

to confirm that it is OK. Even then, be skeptical. Delete obvious chain mail unread.

Knoppix to the Rescue! Sooner or later something is likely to go wrong with your computer. A nasty virus or spy program may take over and lock you out, or Windows starts acting weird and refuses to be of service any longer. Maybe the Knoppix rescue disk can help you to recover your precious data files, at least, and maybe to remove a virus or restore Windows to good health.

Knoppix is the brainchild of Klaus Knopper, a guy who makes it his business to go around fixing peoples' computers. In doing so he uses a variety of software tools that he carries around on CDs and floppies for use on the affected systems. He also carries a boot CD to start computers that won't start up because of a nasty virus or other problems. Knopper eventually added his repair tools to this boot CD, running Linux. The CD includes programs to detect peripherals, including networks, USB ports, Internet connections, sound and graphics cards, as well as Open Source programs such as OpenOffice and The Gimp to make it possible to access and copy text and graphics data on the infected computer. In the spirit of Open Source programming, he invited others to join in the effort. The resulting CD goes way beyond being a technician's repair tool; with the addition of numerous utilities, games, emulators, sound and graphics programs, the current CD, called Knoppix, is a full-fledged Linux distribution for non-Linux geeks, comparable to Linspire and Xandros. The difference is that the whole program can run from the CD without using the computer drives.

Some 1700 MB of programming is contained in compressed form on a single 700 MB CD. The latest version of the program can be downloaded for free or you can order a CD from a variety of vendors for \$5.00 and S/H. Booting the program takes only a few minutes; as many of the essential features of the program as possible are copied to RAM. As a result, the programs run surprisingly fast. The Linux-based KDE windows program is a clone of MS Windows and easy to use by non-Linux users.

Next time your computer suddenly goes on the blink, you might be able to continue some work and copy your data to a safe location simply by booting from the Knoppix CD-ROM. I have recently received a review copy of the book "Knoppix Hacks" by Kyle Rankin from its publisher (O'Reilly, ISBN 0-596-00787-6, \$29.95, user group member discount available) and I hope soon to discuss more details of this interesting program.



Are you an E-mail addict?

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

I can't decide who really has the problem: me or my wife. It takes a lot of work sorting through all the e-mail messages that drop into my Inbox each day. She, on the other hand, tends to "manage" her e-mail by allowing new messages to stack up. As of this writing, her Inbox sits at just over 2000 unread messages. Over the holidays, we took a trip to Las Vegas and we jointly decided this would be a "No Computers Allowed" vacation. Surprisingly enough, I discovered that the world did not come to an end just because I skipped reading e-mail for three or four days. My reaction reminded me of a question that AOL recently polled.

The E-mail Addiction survey, as it's referred to at AOL, asked Americans about their e-mail habits. This included such questions as how often they check personal e-mail at work, and even included a question on whether they've ever checked e-mail in church!

The results are probably not too surprising to readers of this publication. E-mail users today rely on e-mail as much as the phone for communication (I know that's true for me), spend about an hour a day on e-mail (an underestimate for me), and that 77% of e-mail users have more than one e-mail account (I know I manage somewhere around 10 different accounts myself).

My name is Shane Hicks. I'm an e-mail addict.

If you find yourself admitting the same, read on. There's hope. AOL recommends that you follow their simple 14-Step program to regaining control of your life.

1. Set a "No Later Than" time for checking e-mail. In other words, if the message comes in after 8:00PM, it can wait until tomorrow.

2. Do NOT read e-mail during meetings. You need to focus on the task at hand. I can verify there've been times that I've missed some important information because I was managing e-mail when I should have been listening to a presentation. This also applies to e-mailing while eating. Take meal time as time to unwind, or to spend time with family and friends. E-mail will still be there after you digest.

3. If it takes more than three messages to sort something out, use the phone.

4. If you're sitting next to someone, DON'T send them e-mail. One of my bosses used to send message after message to his counterpart, then look across his desk at the other guy and ask, "Did you get the message I just sent?" This might sound ridiculous, but it happens too often.

5. Make sure you aren't the CAUSE of receiving too much e-mail. The more that you send out, the more you're likely to take in.

6. If a message doesn't require a reply, odds are you don't need to send one. Don't fill someone else's Inbox with one liners like "Got it!" or "Okay."

7. In order to avoid getting tons of return e-mail on messages that you send, limit the number of CC's that you include in your messages. If you find yourself CC'd by someone else, don't feel compelled to reply.

8. Your biggest problem is most likely NOT with new e-mail coming in. Instead, it's probably the number of messages (sometimes ranging in the thousands) that you already have. Use an orderly filing system of subfolders to store IMPORTANT messages. Don't be afraid to delete the ones that are trivial (or telling you to buy Viagra).

9. Take care of messages as they arrive: Open then Delete, Forward, Respond, or Flag it to take care of later.

10. Do your best to maintain a SINGLE screen of e-mail in your Inbox, so you don't have to scroll endlessly through your messages. Odds are, if you're scrolling too far down the screen to find a message, you'll forget it's there anyway and not address the message in a timely manner.

11. If you don't read the messages from different newsgroups or mailing lists you've subscribed to, remove yourself from those lists (unsubscribe).

12. If you haven't declared an e-mail free vacation (like we did to Las Vegas), at least limit yourself to 10-minutes a day while on vacation.

13. Consider taking an entire day off, at least once per week. Can you imagine giving yourself E-MAIL FREE WEEKENDS?

14. Take care of Spam! This is one of the most important parts of managing your e-mail these days. My mail server and client block an average of 400 junk mail messages to my Inbox each day. Most ISPs provide spam and virus filtering for personal e-mail accounts. Most companies provide their own. Check with your own provider to ensure that this is being done.

I can't say that it's every day that I find AOL has something useful to say, but I think the steps they've outlined above make a lot of sense. Managing your addiction is a day-to-day process and will require a LOT of self-discipline. Just remember, you're not alone. Stick to the program and you should soon find yourself with more spare time and a lot less stress in your life. I'd tell you to e-mail me about all the success you'll have with this program, but that would just add to your problem

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The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Running OS X on an Intel processor

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

With Apple's announcement that all Mac machines will be Intel-based by the end of 2007, there's been a lot of buzz in the industry about seeing a version of OS X running on an established Intel platform. Since Apple's EULA for OS X states that the OS can only be installed "on an Apple-labelled or Apple-licensed computer," the ability to LEGALLY do so is limited to official members of Apple's developer team. However, it can theoretically still be done using emulation (and installing the present PowerPC version of OS X) or by stumbling across your own copy of Apple's x86 version of OS X (which is intended solely for developers to use on custom Intel-based systems provided by Apple).

The Emulation Way (PearPC)

In May 2004, two developers published PearPC (<http://pearpc.sourceforge.net>), a PowerPC emulator that allows one to install any OS that presently supports the PowerPC, which would include native versions of Mac OS X 10.1 and later, on PC hardware. Early releases of this open source project (PearPC is currently on version 0.4.0) are fairly stable, but slow. An older set of benchmarks found on the PearPC forums (<http://forums.pearpc.net>) show it 4 to 20 times slower than an actual 1GHz G4. The death of one of the developers slowed progress on the project, but (even after Apple's announcement of their own x86 native version of the operating system) development appears to be going strong.

The Native Way (x86 OS X 10.4)

In order to evaluate the present build of OS X 10.4 (recently released to developers), the first thing one would need is a system compatible with the drivers included with that build (since you obviously can't just go out and download drivers for an OS that doesn't technically exist).

Of course, there are a few catches. First, this build is only intended for those who've paid the \$1,000 for a developer license. Thus, the OS looks for the Trusted Platform Module (TPM), a chip included with the Intel-based machines Apple sent developers. Without this chip, the build won't run. However, a group of hackers cracked the built in protection, and a copy of the unprotected build may be found on the Internet.

You'll only need the second hard drive during installation. Once you're done, you can take it out. It really doesn't matter what you use, as the current build only requires 6GB of space on the installation drive.

The choice of motherboard is your biggest concern. You NEED to use Intel's D915GAVL, which contains four on-board SATA ports, dual-channel memory slots, x16, x4, and x1 PCI Express slots, and the GMA900 video chipset. These are the components that Apple provides drivers for.

Installation

While there are many methods of installing the software, perhaps the simplest way is to install Windows, blast the Mac OS X image to a second drive, and then reboot the system with the second drive. Begin by obtaining the image of the build you wish to use (either place it on your hard drive or on a DVD). You can write the image to the second drive using dd.exe, a freeware utility that can be downloaded from sourceforge.net.

Recommended Hardware:

PART	NOTE
Intel Pentium 4 CPU	Single-core 5xx or 6xx series
Intel D915GAVL board	Use this exact model
1GB PC3200 DDR	Use 2x512MB of name brand
2 Hard Drives	Makes for easy install
Optical drive	Any DVD-ROM drive
Keyboard and Mouse	USB only
Case and power supply	An ATX model for D915GAVL

Step-by-step (from ExtremeTech):

1. Open a command prompt.
2. Navigate to the directory containing the build.
3. Type `dd --list`.
4. Find the volume string that describes the drive and partition you want to image (most likely `\\?\PhysicalDrive1`, as `\\?\PhysicalDrive0` is where your current OS probably resides).
5. Type `dd if=<filename of image> of=\\?\PhysicalDrive1`

Do not otherwise create a partition or assign a drive letter as the image file requires you to use the entire disk. Since the current build only requires 6GB, you don't need to waste a huge drive on this project since the rest of the space on the drive will become unavailable. Once the image is written to the drive (which can take several minutes), reboot the machine with the second drive as your boot drive. The system should boot into OS X 10.4.

Some house cleaning may be required after reboot. First, delete two files, `AppleTPMACPI.kext` and `AppleIntel830.kext`, from `/System/Library/Extensions`, and reboot. Next, you may have to apply a patch the `CoreGraphics` file. The developer build only supports SSE3 processors. While hackers created a patch to support SSE2, the build most commonly found on the Internet is half-patched. If your processor uses SSE2, you have to complete the patch. If your processor uses SSE3, you need to back off the patch.

There's a ton of development work going on out there. You can find an entire community online at www.osx86project.org discussing various hardware and software projects. Take a look if you're curious about the future of OS X on Intel.



Obsessing about Type

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!

Although I am lazy in most things, I sometimes obsess about typesetting. I know, I know, we're not really setting type on the Web and because of the fluidity of the medium we will never get the precision that we get with printed text. However, there are things we can do that take a little more time but make our pages look better. More professional. More trustworthy.

We live in a town where many names and words use — or should use — the Spanish alphabet. Jalapeño. César Chávez. ¿Qué pasó? Including diacritical marks is important. It shows respect for the language and makes the words easier to pronounce. Mañana does not rhyme with banana and it's the tilde over the n that clues us onto this.

If you type your documents in MS Word, you can easily add the special characters and symbols from within the program. Go to the insert menu and select symbol. Highlight the symbol or special character that you want to use, then press the insert button, then OK. If you cut-and-paste a Word document into your HTML file (or save the Word file as HTML) the formatting should trot along with it.

Another way to get the special characters is to use the character map. The character map is hidden under Program Files – Accessories – System Tools – Character Map. Select the character you want to use, click on copy, then go into your word processing or HTML document and paste it in (Ctrl-V will paste.) ASCII HTML

An alternative is to use ASCII codes or HTML formatting. Just type one or the other of these codes instead of the letter or symbol in your HTML document. Mañana would be typed: mañana or maÑana. If you need a grave accent rather than an acute, just substitute grave where it says acute in the chart:

Now, being lazy, I don't actually type these codes. The HTML editor I use, HomeSite, has a special character tab that creates the code for me. If you are too cheap to spring for HomeSite, Ace HTML is available free from acehtml.com. It has a similar feature.

Now here is my next bugbear. Punctuation.

It is more elegant to use opening and closing quotes. The quote key on the keyboard produces, by default, closing quotes. They look funky when used to open a quotation, don't they? MS Word senses whether you need opening or closing quotes and produces the correct one automatically. HTML doesn't.

Another punctuation refinement is dashes. They come in two flavors — en dashes and em dashes. En is the small dash that you would use as word divider. For example: cut-and-paste. 9 a.m.-noon. The em dash is bigger and is used to set off a parenthetical expression — like this one. If you want to get technical, an en dash is half the point width of the font size and the em dash is the full width. I am typing this in 12 point; the en dash is 6 points and the em dash is 12 points. Here are the HTML codes: Opening single quote ' ‘

ASCII	HTML
á	á or &acacute;
Á	Á or &Acacute;
É	É or É
é	é or é
Í	Í or Í
í	í or í
Ñ	Ñ or Ñ
ñ	ñ or ñ
Ó	Ó or Ó
ó	ó or ó
ú	ú or ú
Ú	Ú or ú
¿	¿ or ¿
¡	¡ or !

I'm sure that you have deduced two things. First, these rules apply as much — if not more — to the printed page as they do to Web writing. Second, there are many more symbols than I have described here. Do you ever have a need for any of these?

¢ £ © ® ± ¼ ½ ¾ ÷

That's just a sampling of what's available. Not all symbols are available with all fonts. Many free display true type fonts won't even contain punctuation. But a full font set will have all this, and more.

For printed work, use the MS Word insert-symbol feature or the character map. For HTML there is a good guide.

Two final notes. HTML uses the greater-than and lesser-than signs as tags. If you use them straight from the keyboard they will not display on the screen and will mess up your code. Instead, use < for lesser than < and > for greater than >.

If you need superscript or subscripts, you use a tag. The tag for superscript is which will render like this: 104. Subscript is which will render like this: ABC3. The code puts it in the right place and makes it smaller. In MS Word, the super- and subscript are controlled from the Format-Font menu. The Word formatting, in this case will not transfer to HTML.



In Love with Layer Comps

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>.

Valentine's Day has just passed and I am once again reminded what a great tool Adobe Photoshop is and how much better it continues to get. Take one subtle feature found Photoshop CS – Layer Comps. This new tool extends the functionality of Photoshop's layers, letting you create multiple versions of your artwork without making multiple documents. This month, I'll show you how you can use Layer Comps to get even more power from Photoshop. Unfortunately, this feature is not in Photoshop Elements, but if it seems like something you need you can add it to the list of reasons to invest in the professional version of the program. Layer Comps are also supported in Photoshop's sister program ImageReady.

I sat down to make my Valentine cards. I created my design in Photoshop, with each element on its own layer. I added effects and ran a couple of filters until I was satisfied with the results. I then added the text "For Ruth, My One True Love", sized it and added an outer glow Layer Style (Fig. 1). This is all well and good, but I am fortunate enough to be blessed with more than one true love. So I turned to the Layer Comp feature to help out.

A Layer Comp saves the state of all of your Photoshop document's layers: layer visibility – whether they are on or off and what their opacity is, layer position, and layer appearance – whether a Layer Style has been applied and what compositing mode it is in. When you create a new Layer Comp (comp in this case is short for composition) you save the current state of the layers in your Photoshop document.

Once I had the first design the way I wanted it, I opened the Layer Comps palette (Window > Layer Comps) and clicked the Create New Layer Comp button at the bottom (it looks like a document) (Fig. 2). This brings up the New Layer Comp dialog box (Fig. 3). Here you need to fill out the name of the Layer Comp, what of the three options you want it to control and any comments you may have. Comments appear in the palette by clicking a dropdown triangle next to the Layer Comp's name.

This first Layer Comp, which I labeled 'Ruth', records the document as it now stands. If I make any changes to the document, I'll need to note that by clicking the Update Layer Comp button. At this point, I needed to start on my next design. I copied the text layer I



Figure 1

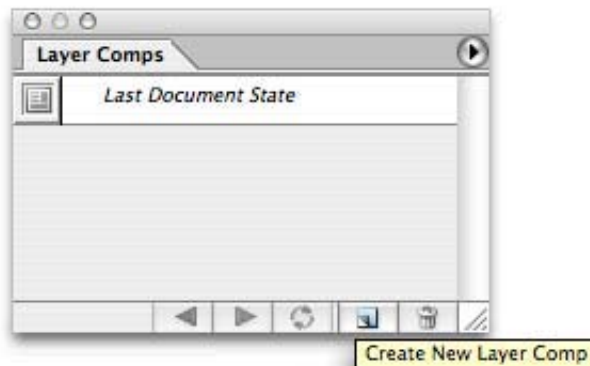


Figure 2

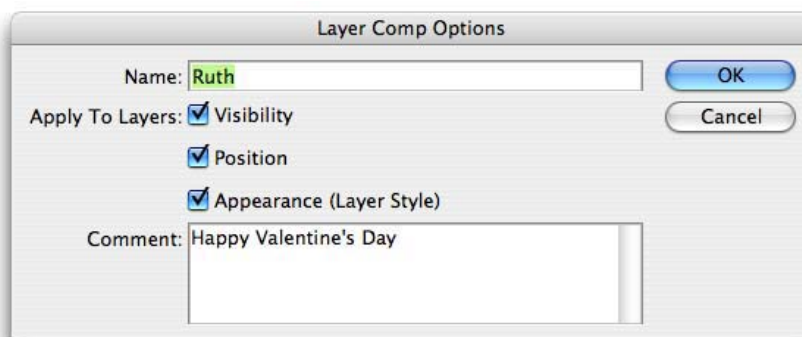


Figure 3

had created, turned off the original one and changed the name in the text. I wanted the card to look a little different so I swapped the design elements on left for the ones on the right and changed the opacity settings of the heart layers. Once again, I created a new Layer Comp, naming this one 'Alaina' (Fig. 4).

You can toggle back and forth between the Layer Comps by clicking in the open square to the left of the Comp's name in the Layer Comps palette. Satisfied with the results, I pressed on to make my third card. Wanting it to look more like the first one, this time I selected the 'Ruth' Layer Comp and dragged it to the Create New Layer Comp button to make a duplicate. Double-click the new comp to change the properties as needed; I renamed mine 'Heather'.

On this new comp, I changed the Layer Styles on the heart (Layer > Layer Style), adding an Outer Glow and increasing the black Inner Glow. I finished by clicking the Update Layer Comp button.

You can cycle through the Layer Comps by clicking the arrow buttons at the bottom of the Layer Comps palette. If you want to only cycle through some of your Layer Comps, you can select them and then the arrow buttons will only cycle through the ones that are highlighted. You can delete a Layer Comp by dragging it to the Trash icon.

Note that at the top of the Layer Comps palette is a comp called Last Document State. Clicking the box next to this will return the document to the most recent version regardless of what Layer Comp you have selected.

There are times when you may see a caution icon next to one or more of your Layer Comps (Fig. 5). This happens when you delete a layer, convert a layer to the background or change the color mode of the document. When this occurs, you can either update the Layer Comp or right-click (control-click for one-button Macs) to clear the warning flag without changing the Layer Comp.

Now that all the Layer Comps are completed, I can export individual flattened files of each design for output. This is easily accomplished by selecting File > Scripts > Layer Comps to Files (Fig. 6). This script lets you select the file type and output options you want and then proceeds to duplicate and flatten your various compositions without altering your original Photoshop file. You can also find scripts here that will convert your Layer Comps to a multi-page PDF or a Web Photo Gallery. This is a brilliant way to share multiple design concepts with colleagues or clients...just email them a PDF file or a link to a web gallery.

As Adobe Photoshop continues to evolve, it is the little touches like the addition of Layer Comps that keep users excited about the program. This is my favorite new feature in Photoshop CS. I think I may be in love.

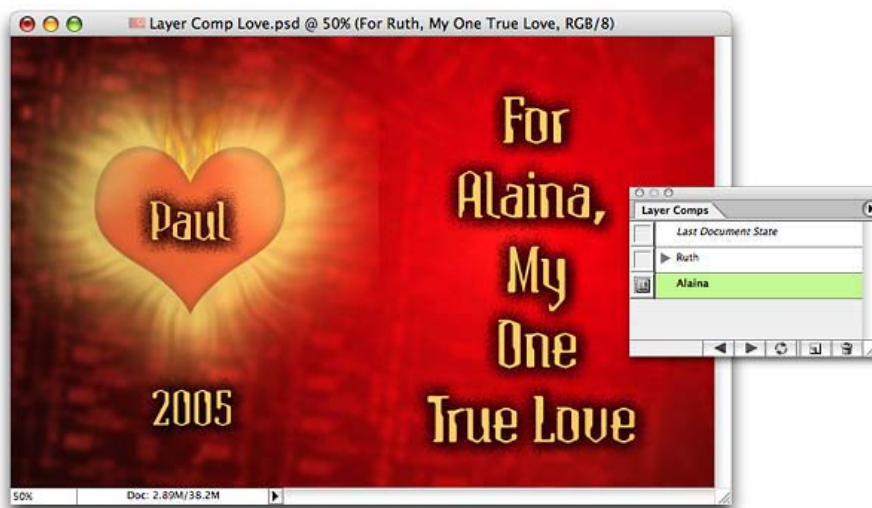


Figure 4

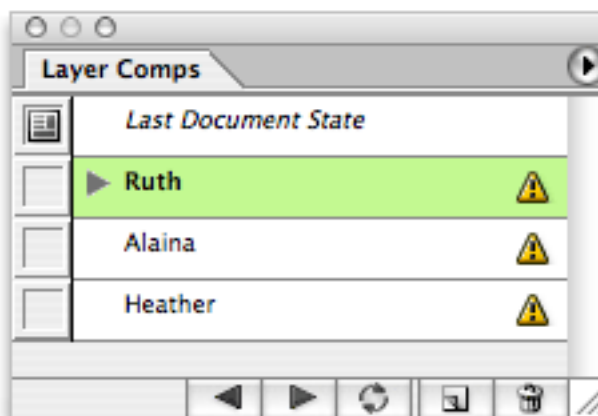


Figure 5

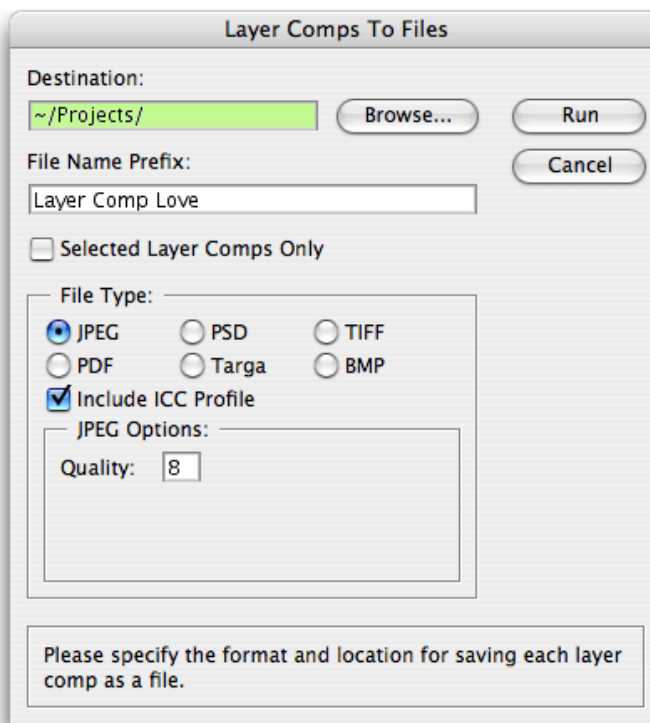


Figure 6



Internet Explorer - Managing Favorites

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>

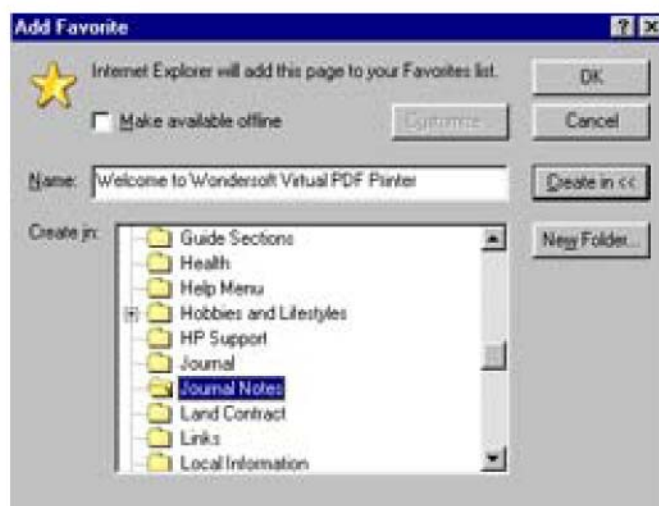
I imagine most of us have a list of Favorites as long as my arm. It's a good idea to save URLs to your Favorites list as you come across sites that you think you'll want to return to some time in the future. It can be very frustrating to try to remember the URL for such a site, or for that matter how you even found it in the first place.

My problem in this regard has been the lack of organization in my Favorites list. As you can see from the graphic below, I have 60 folders, and even more individual listings. Each of the folders has multiple



items, accessed by clicking on the arrowhead at the right of the column. In case some of you aren't yet familiar with the process of saving your favorites, I should perhaps begin there.

When you are online at a site you wish to save, this is how to go about it. While the page is open and the URL appears in the Address line, you may either click on the Favorites menu or the Favorites icon on the Toolbar. This action will produce the window at the left from the menu bar, or add a similar list on the left of your Explorer Window. Each of these has two choices, Add to Favorites or Organize Favorites. We'll begin with Add to Favorites. Clicking on it produces



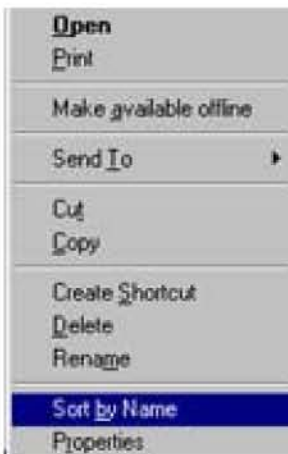
the Dialog Box above. For simplicity's sake, I have already scrolled down to the folder in which I wish to save this page. You can see in the Name window the name of the open page, Welcome to Wondersoft Virtual PDF Printer. Since I plan to use this reference in a Journal article, I selected an existing folder, Journal Notes. With the folder selected, all I have to do is click on the OK button, and the URL is entered. If you haven't decided into which folder to save your page, when you click Add, only the top portion of the box above will open. The Create in >>> button appears like this and will open the rest of the box to allow you to scroll thru the folders to select the one you wish to use. Once selected, pressing the OK button will place your URL in that folder. If you don't have an appropriate folder, you may use the New Folder button to create one.

I should point out that if you don't Add to a folder, your URL will appear in the general listings below the

folders. This list is alphabetically arranged, but as you



add new Favorites, they go to the bottom of the list. To shift a listing to the appropriate alphabetical location, right-click in the open grey area of the list and select the Sort by Name option.



I should point out that you are offered the option to make the page available offline at any stage of this process. Selecting this option will place the page in a cache location from which it maybe retrieved while you are offline. You must realize that if the active site changes, your cached page will not reflect the current changes.

This covers the essentials of Adding Favorites. Now let's

look at Organizing them.

In a classic "Do as I say, not as I do" situation, you should pay attention to keeping your Favorites organized from the git go. If however, you have a mess such as mine, there is still hope. Selecting Organize Favorites opens the window below. The options



available are included in the buttons. To my knowledge, there is no practical limit to the number of subfolders you can create under any given folder. So if you have a lot of similar, but not necessarily matching items, you may move them into subfolders of your making. In the example above, with Computers and Tech selected, clicking on the Create Folder button will make a subfolder which you may name as you wish. Then as you select items you wish to shift to the new folder, you are offered the choice of folder.

This process may be repeated as often as necessary. You may shift items between folders, subfolders to different folders, or arrange the loose items in the general list to appropriate folders.

It's the same old story, whether you're dealing with Favorite web pages or data files, the Windows file system functions in the same manner in most instances. Picture your hard drive as the filing cabinet, perhaps with multiple partitions which may be thought of as file drawers. These drawers may then have as many folders and subfolders as you wish to set up. The whole idea is the arrange the system in whatever fashion will allow you to store and retrieve the data you accumulate without having to rummage through a pile of files in the process. Only you can know what system will work best for you.

Now you have all the information you need to get your Favorites saved and Organized. The impetus to do something with it will have to come from within. Perhaps just seeing the process outlined will induce you to give it a shot. Good luck!

HandiApped Independence: Part 4

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

(This is part four of a continuing series to help disabled geeks and everyday surfers set up their computers, give advice on where to set up their computers and what products could be most beneficial to them.)

Your first assignment was to keep a diary of your habits and routines, and make notes as to where you spend most of your time, where your paths intersect most and such. This determines the best place to place your computer.

Your second assignment was to take measurements of your room. Make a list of what furniture and equipment you need to accomplish this. That didn't necessarily mean purchasing new materials, but possibly tweaking current things that you own.

Your third assignment was to decide what manner of Internet connection you were going to choose due to either preference or financial situation.

Part Four: Today, for a change of pace, we're going to stop and check on our progress thus far. And by "our," I, of course, I really mean "my" progress this far.

This is the end of the first concept. It has become an organic process. Originally, I was going to run a countertop along the entire back wall. Then I was going to take the dinette in the picture and place it front and center. But I thought it best that if I was going to move all of my paperwork, why not file it properly? So, that's what I began to do.

Half way through my filing, I realized that my original concept was not going to work. So, I sat down with my daughter and we brainstormed a different design altogether. So, we cracked open the IKEA catalogue and found a component desk set up that wouldn't brake the bank, would allow me to run my work space along the right wall and have a little extension up front which will face the window, so that I can have my meals while looking outside.

So, there's the new plan. I've already purchased the components and I'm going to assemble them this weekend with the help of my daughter. I'll transfer the remainder of my paperwork to my new desk. I'll put off mounting my 17" monitors to the wall until my new video card comes in.

Hopefully, I'll start picking up the pace. However, I'm interviewing for a full-time job that may slow down my project even further. But, where the benefits go, so go I.

How have you made out? Send your pictures and/or letters to phrankymac.com so we can see how we're making out compared to everyone else. Maybe someone else can use your plan for a launching point.

As for the surprise I mentioned last month, I've decided to take this topic and give it its own website. To start with, there'll be forums about computers, disabilities and activism, a links page and an articles page. And if all goes well, I have several other ideas in mind. And I'll bet you do, too. So email me with any suggestions you have.

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

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Microsoft Word

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\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour
\$150 per student for 10 hours

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

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

New Class Starting

Student Practice Lab - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

Fearless Forecasts for 2006

By Rick Altman

I want a piece of the action. I want the opportunity to make embarrassing predictions, be ridiculed by our peers, and live in shame until next January. Here, therefore, is our annual contribution to the landscape of bold, prophetic statements that will surely come back to haunt us...

1. Microsoft has trouble with Office 12



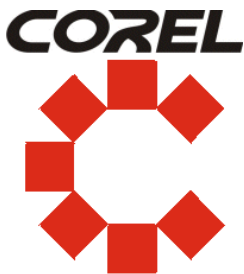
The new version of Microsoft Office will not be plagued with bugs or security vulnerabilities. It will install without incident and run with acceptable or better performance on a majority of Windows boxes. The pundits will laud it and we commentators will

speak of how the new interface will greatly improve productivity through all of the applications.

But the public will not embrace it. More set in their ways than any other type of PC user, daily users of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint have spent the past 48 to 60 months likening these apps to their toasters or microwave ovens: not every task is easy, but the mechanics of using the appliance is a no-brainer. That will not be the case at first with the freshly-designed Office 12, and many will find themselves retreating to Office 03 to get today's project out the door "until I have time to sit and play with it." We all know when that time comes -- December 32.

Consequently, Microsoft will consider a compatibility mode to keep the new Office from becoming shelfware.

2. Corel products trade places



The Corel Graphics Suite (aka CorelDraw and PhotoPaint) will play to increasingly narrow niche markets, but Paint Shop Pro will hit its stride. It will become the most prominent alternative to Adobe Photoshop and work its way into more and more bundles with digital camera manufacturers.

PhotoPaint will begin to lose its identity and Corel officials will talk seriously about moving PSP into the CGS bundle.

3. Two lenses are better than one



The CES show in early January scooped me on this one: cameras with two lenses. Kodak debuted this at CES with a single 5MP sensor being mated to a pair of lenses, one fixed at 23mm and the other a 37-117mm zoom. My prediction was going to be that this would appear

in 2006; now we will forecast that it will become commonplace this year.

4. Hand-held movies in high-resolution?

iPod devotees already speak of watching movies in their hands, but it is not my contention that you will ever watch feature-length movies on your iPod or mobile phone and actually enjoy it. We're getting closer, though: the digital videos that we create at our PhotosToMemories web site will all play quite well on video-enabled handhelds, only requiring about 30MB apiece.

But that's not the same as watching a two-hour movie on your phone, and we know it. Technology cannot create comfort or compensate for lack of same, but there is no reason why your phone cannot be the movie player. A two-hour movie can be delivered in satisfactory 4:3 resolution in about 2GB and many phones, music players, and Palm devices can routinely accept a file of that size. What we will see in 2006 is the widespread support for those devices to connect directly to a television for playback.



5. Batteries...oy vey...

Whenever Prediction No. 3 becomes a reality, this one will be about six weeks behind: Batteries for handhelds will need to be about twice as good as they are now. Or the entire industry goes to hell!



6. Wither TiVo

Perhaps the most painful prediction in multimedia for 2006 will be our beloved TiVo, which will continue to fight to gain traction...and lose the battle. TiVo will become a technology, not a product, and those of us who bought in back in 2000 will be traumatized. For about a day...read on...



7. Television...directly to your PC

The networks will deliver us from our trauma by offering services whereby you can subscribe to a television show and have it automatically download to your PC, with no restrictions or DRM issues. With relatively simple software, and more

notably cooperation from the networks at a level not seen before, entirely new life will be breathed into the Windows Media Edition and to PCs billing themselves as media centers.

Before the year is over, I will walk into a house that I have never been in before, take out my mobile phone and wirelessly play a network broadcast on the television there.

8. Every company will see the light...

...and train all of its employees so that nobody delivers obnoxious and annoying presentations and commits Death by PowerPoint ever again.

Well, seven out of eight won't be too bad.



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News Brief

New TIVO Product Promotes Targeted Ads

After introducing a generation of television viewers to the joys of skipping over ads, TIVO plans to launch a new service to let its subscribers seek out the advertisements they've cut loose from their TV viewing. Digital video recorder (DVR) maker TiVo is positioning the new service, scheduled for a mid-2006 launch, as a way for subscribers to find targeted ads in categories that interest them. The opt-in technology will let TiVo subscribers use keyword searches to look for information on specific products or services. The ad service will be free for subscribers; pricing for advertisers is still being determined.



What Your Computer Really Does When It's Idle

by Vinny La Bash, <vlabash@home.com>

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

You're sitting at your machine, thinking about what to do next, when your disk drive starts whirring and the light flashes, indicating that something is going on. What is your machine doing? Your hands are nowhere near the keyboard or the mouse, and you can be relatively certain that neither telepathy nor telekinesis is at work.



One possibility is that your system is loading automatic updates from Microsoft.com because you set your system to download updates automatically. The same could be true for anti-virus programs, firewalls or any application software that offers this type of automated service.

The Task Scheduler may be running a background utility. Your automatic backup may be kicking in, or an online subscription service is delivering requested information as part of a service it provides. Any number of similar operations could be going on. There is a dark side to this. You may be infected by a spyware program reporting back to its master over the internet. Most spyware blabs about your web surfing habits to a commercial entity so that it can tailor ads to your individual tastes. Many people consider this annoying or intrusive. Nevertheless, the designers of these programs have no desire to hurt you. They want only to sell you something.

However, something far less benign could be going on. A program could be attempting to steal your banking information, PIN numbers, credit card records, social security information, and other financial data with the intention of draining your bank account.

A Trojan horse program may be downloading spam to retransmit from your machine, making it look to recipients that you are the spammer. Other programs make your machine a "zombie" or a node in an array of machines designed to launch a Denial of Service (DOS) attack on a web site.

Worst of all, there have been instances reported of stealth programs downloading child pornography and retransmitting it to another machine. These programs make it look like you are the culprit, making you subject to arrest and incarceration. This kind of frighteningly malicious activity has been rare, but the danger is real.

If you are concerned about this, and you should be, Windows XP offers a solution:

1. Click Start.
2. Click Run.
3. In the text portion of the Run dialog box, type `cmd` and click OK.

This brings you to the Command Interpreter, which starts out by displaying the Version of XP that's running on your machine and some copyright information. Now enter the command `netstat -o`, which displays network statistics about your current active connections.

There are five columns of information displayed. The Proto column tells you what communication protocol is being used for a particular process. In most instances this will be TCP (Tele-Communications Protocol). This is irrelevant for our purposes. Local Address is your machine.

Foreign Address is the IP address and port number of the machine the process is communicating with.

State informs you if the communication session is sending or receiving, waiting, acknowledging or finished.

PID (Process Identifier) is the piece we need, because it identifies the process (program) that is controlling the communications session from your computer.

4. Perform the Ctrl+Alt+Del keystroke sequence to bring up the Windows Security window.

5. Click Task Manager.

6. Click the Processes tab.

7. Click the PID column. This sorts the information, making it easier to find the program you're looking for.

Note: If the PID column is not displayed, you can activate it from the View menu.

Examine the PID list until you find the PID number(s) you found with the `netstat` command. If it's `msnmg.exe` or `iexplorer.exe`, there is nothing to worry about. These are normal Windows XP processes and no cause for concern. There are many other legitimate Windows XP processes that are likely to be listed in the Task Manager.

How do you tell the good from the bad? Unfortunately, Windows itself isn't much help in showing what any given process is doing and you can't shoot them all and "let God sort them out". A search of Microsoft's web site won't yield useful information.

A great place to find valuable information about common Windows processes is:

<http://www.liutilities.com/products/wintaskspro/processlibrary/>

This site contains information about all common Windows processes, and the site administrators do an excellent job of keeping posted information current.

Knowing what's going on in your system is good, but the best protection against intruders is to keep your anti-virus, firewall, and other specialized protection programs up-to-date.

Tips for Locating Misplaced Files

*By Dave Gerber, APCUG Advisor, Region 5; Dave's Bits & Bytes, A Periodic Newsletter for the Members of the Sarasota PC User Group and the World!!
Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida (dave_bytes@comcast.net)
www.spcug.org / http://davebytes.com/*

Losing files on your PC is a lot like misplacing your car keys in a cluttered apartment. You know the things you're looking for are close by, but actually finding and using them can be a challenge. Unlike your apartment, though, Windows has a helpful feature that can locate wayward items and save you a good deal of frustration. In Windows 95/98 (Win9x), this feature is called Find. In Windows XP and Windows Me, it's called Search. There are also third-party programs that can ensure that you never have to endure the loss of an important file again.

In this article, we'll show you one of the more popular ways to find lost files and some techniques to keep you from losing files in the future. We'll start by covering the Find feature in Win9x. The WinMe and WinXP version of this feature is significantly different and warrants a separate explanation. Note, however, that many of the tips included in the Win9x section apply to later versions, so don't skip ahead.

Find It In Windows 95 & Windows 98

There are two fast ways to access the Find feature in Win9x. One method is to click Start, point to Find, and click Files or Folders. Shortcut keys also work for this feature; press Windows-F to display the search program instantly. If you're certain a file is in a specific folder, don't use the Find feature from the Start menu; a faster way is to press the F3 key in Win9x (or CTRL-F in WinMe) when you're already at the right folder window or have the folder displayed in Windows Explorer. This will display the search window already set to search the current folder.

Whatever technique you use to launch the Find utility, you end up with a dialog box named Find All Files. It has five menu options: File, Edit, View, Options, and Help. The Name & Location tab is the most commonly used area of the Find command, as it includes the Named and Look In text boxes. Win98 also has a Containing Text text box listed here. (In Win95 this option is on the Advanced tab.) If you know the name of the file you want to locate, just type it in the Named text box, make sure the Look In path is directed at the correct drive location, and click Find Now. You'll know the search has started because the magnifying glass icon begins to move in circles.

When the search is complete, matches appear in the results window. This window shows all relevant information about the file, such as file name, type, size, location, and date modified. Remember that you don't have to let a search complete its examination; click the Stop button to bring things to an immediate halt. This is especially useful when you accidentally start a search over a gargantuan hard drive that takes several minutes to inspect. There are many variables that can help you narrow your searches and save time.

If you're fairly certain of the folder in which a file is hiding, click Browse on the Name & Location tab and specify the correct folder. On the other hand, you might not have a clue as to which folder to look in; in that case click the Include Subfolders checkbox to investigate a folder hierarchy from top to bottom.



In all Windows versions, there are some other options that let you control the search. The Date and Advanced tabs in Win9x let you find files by type and size. The Containing Text text box lets you constrain results to those with specific phrases in them. In Win9x an Include Subfolders option lets you widen your search. (In WinMe click Advanced Options, which lets you Search Subfolders or look for file names using the Case Sensitive option.)

Search Windows Me & Windows XP

WinMe and WinXP have their own version of the Find command, called Search. To get started click Start, point to Search and click For Files Or Folders, or press Windows-F. You will see a Search Results dialog box that's laid out like a Web browser, complete with Back and Forward buttons.

In WinMe type the name of the file you need in the Search For Files or Folders Named text box. The Containing Text option is listed just below, as are the various search options, such as Date, Type, Size, and Advanced Options, all of which work similarly to Win9x.

In WinXP you will need to select the type of file you are looking for before you can begin a search. We recommend selecting the All Files And Folders option because it will search your entire hard drive for the file. If that takes too long, the other

options, such as Pictures, Music, or Video, will narrow the search parameters and likely make the search more efficient.

Once you've outlined the parameters of your search, click Search Now or Search. After Windows completes a search, you can press F3 or CTRL-F to alternately shrink and enlarge the Search Results window, providing more (or less) information about selected files on the left side of the screen.

Both operating systems have useful extras on the left side the Search Results window, including image file preview. In the past when you wanted to know what was in a mysterious graphics file (usually with a file name extension such as .JPG, .BMP, or .TIF), you had to open the file with a separate program, which takes time. With WinXP and WinMe, you can use the Preview function instead. Just click the file, and a tiny version of the image appears in the Search Results area. To see thumbnails in WinXP, from the View menu, click Thumbnails to make image thumbnails appear.

If it takes too much time to complete searches, you may want to streamline the search process in WinXP by using the Indexing Service feature. With this feature, your computer will maintain an up-to-date list of the files on your hard drive, which makes subsequent filename searches much faster.

To use the Indexing Service, in the Search Results window, click Change Preferences in the left pane. Click With Indexing Service and then click the Yes, Enable Indexing Service radio button. Click OK, and your PC will run the service when the computer is sitting idle.

Find files with dates. If you don't find your files with an initial search or WinXP index searches, you might want to search for files by date. In Win9x from the Start menu, point to Find and then click Files Or Folders. In the Named Or text box, type *.xls (or *.doc, or whatever file type you most often use). Click the Date Or Date Modified tab and click Find All Files Created Or Modified. Click the During The Previous option and then adjust the number of days you'd like this search to work for. (A week is probably a good starting point.)

You can do this in WinMe by clicking the Date checkbox. Select Files Modified, Files Created, or Files Last Accessed from the drop-down menu. Then click the In The Last option, followed by the number of days you want the search to cover.

In WinXP after you click All Files And Folders, you can enter part of the file name and then click When Was It Modified? to narrow your search to a range of dates. You can also use What Size Is It? and More Advanced Options to make searches more specific; you can even include hidden files in the search if you prefer. After you set the parameters in your OS, run the search by clicking Find Now, Search Now, or Search.

Windows Me's Search feature works like the Find option in previous Windows versions but has some extra power under the hood.

Saving a search. Once your PC completes its file hunt, you may want to save your search settings to reduce the amount of data entry you have to complete for your next complex search. After a search ends, from the File menu, click Save Search. This saves a shortcut on the Windows Desktop or a folder of


your choice with a name that refers to the search. When you want to do a speedy search for commonly accessed documents, just double-click the shortcut and the search parameters will load automatically.

Win9x will also let you keep the results of searches, plus the parameters that created those results. From the Options menu, click Save Results. To create a shortcut to these results, click Save Search from the File menu.

More search options. More archaic computer skills also sometimes come in handy for searches, the best example of which is the use of older DOS commands to aid your search. The easiest to use is probably the asterisk symbol. It acts like a wildcard, standing in for at least one character in the name of the file or folder you want. For instance, if you know you want to find a file that ends in .INF but aren't sure what the first part of the file name is, you'd type *.INF, which instructs the search utility to display every file ending in .INF.

The question mark is also useful; unlike the asterisk, it replaces only one character in a name. For example, entering Sysfile?.DOC would find every file with one character following the Sysfile name that ends with .DOC. The search variable can also be used together in flexible combinations. For example, enter *dos?.* to locate file names with any filename extension and that start with any number of characters, following by "dos," and then any single character.

Searching by file type is another useful parameter. Select this option, and you'll see dozens of file types from which to choose. The best thing about this option is that file types aren't displayed with cryptic extensions. Instead, there's a short description of the type (an AOL email, for instance).



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Windows Recovery or Restore Disks: Problems and Alternatives

By Vic Laurie, Princeton PCUG, New Jersey
victor@vlaur.com



Once upon a time you received a copy of a full Windows installation disk when you bought a computer. This allowed you to reinstall individual system files or Windows components if anything went wrong. But no longer. These days the best you can hope for from many vendors is a so-called “recovery” or “restore” disk”. And many major vendors do not even provide that much. Instead they put stuff on a hidden partition on the hard drive. This is all the backup that you get, and if the hard drive crashes, the hidden partition goes too. Then you have no way of reinstalling Windows on a replacement hard drive without getting a disk from the original PC vendor. From what I read on the Web, this last process can take some time and effort, if you succeed at all. If you are out of the warrantee period, you may be completely out of luck.

Some vendors may provide a Windows disk when you buy a PC if they are prodded hard enough. However, there may be some kind of “handling and shipping” fee. Note that, if you do finally get a disk, it will probably be an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) version and may lack some features of a full-fledged version. Also OEM versions of Windows are often not eligible for upgrades.

The failure to provide an actual Windows installation disk with new computers is convenient for Microsoft and the computer vendors but can be a real problem for the PC user. There are many problems that can be fixed by copying a single system file or reinstalling small portions of the Windows operating system. Without an installation disk, PC users need to have some other source for these files. If you put a recovery disk into your CD drive, it will want to reformat your hard drive and reinstall an image of your computer that is a replica of the way your system was on the day you bought it. Any changes that you have made will be wiped out. All those programs you installed, all those Microsoft patches, XP SP2, all of it will be gone. The same thing applies when you restore from one of those hidden partitions.



Therefore, an alternative is needed. At the very least, a source of files for adding and removing Windows components and restoring corrupted files should be available. Sometimes the vendor will have put the Windows installation files in the root of your hard drive or in the Windows folder. In Windows XP look for a folder named "I386" (without the quotes). If you do have one of these folders, burn a copy to a CD for backup. This CD will not have all the functions of an installation CD since it will not auto-run nor will it boot. However, reinstallation can be initiated by clicking the file Winnt32.exe (assuming that you can get your system to boot). If you have a FAT32 disk and can use DOS, Winnt.exe is the appropriate file to access from a DOS boot disk.

A problem is that you will have a disk that lacks any of the multitudes of patches and updates that will have come out since you bought your computer. Therefore, you need to "slipstream" with the XP SP2 update. Slipstreaming is a way of merging updates with the original files so that everything is updated. This is not a quick job but it is worth doing. An excellent detailed step-by-step procedure is given at the Elder Geek site. If you can borrow a Windows XP installation disk (almost any

version will do) you can extract the image that is needed to make the CD bootable and add that to the disk. Details for using common CD burning software to do all this is given at the reference cited above.

One more problem can be getting the Windows XP product key for your system. It may be pasted or written somewhere in the documentation that came with your computer. Be sure to make a permanent record of it. If you cannot find the product key, there are several free applications that will retrieve it from your system. One is ViewKeyXp and is available here. Another is Keyfinder, which is available here. Also, system information applications like Belarc Adviser can reveal the key.

At the end, you will still have something that provides backup only for the Windows operating system. Since I want to be able to restore everything, including software that I have installed, I prefer to spend a few dollars and use disk imaging software. It makes keeping up-to-date backups on CDs or other external media very easy. Norton Ghost, BootIt Next Generation or Acronis True Image are all reasonable choices.



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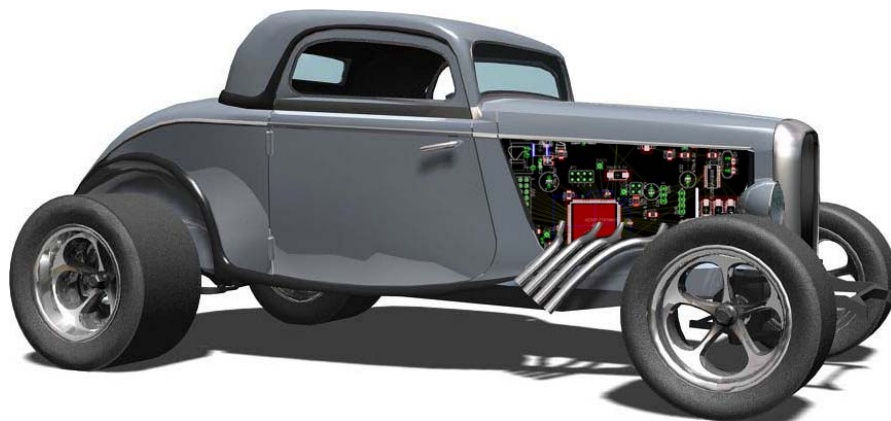
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Speed-up Your Computer – Clean Your “Startup”

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;
Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; radio & TV show host
iwilsker@apcug.net



I recently received several questions on my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM, Saturdays 1-3pm) and my TV show (KEBQ-TV22, cable 99, Saturdays 4-5pm) about computers that were slow to boot, and had obvious performance degradation. While there are many causes of this inadequate performance, such as a fragmented hard drive, and other problems, one of the most common causes of slow booting and poor performance is having too many programs automatically load when the computer is booting.

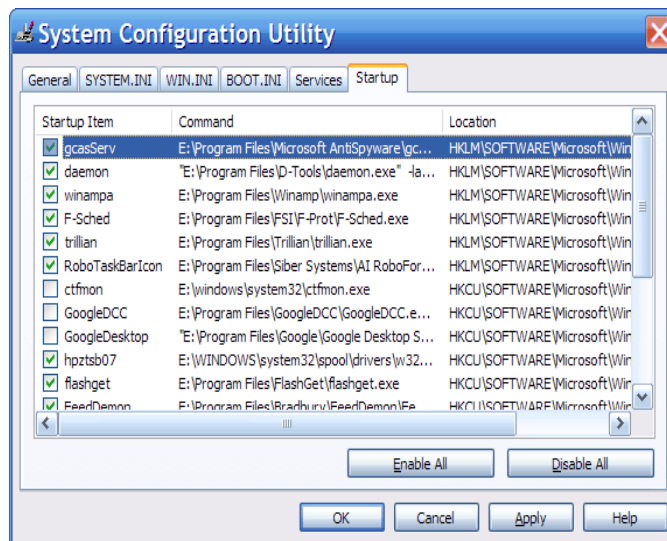
Fortunately, there are several good solutions and resources that can speed the boot problem and improve performance. The manual solution, available on most but not all versions of Windows from Windows 98 to XP is to utilize the integrated command MSCONFIG.

If available, MSCONFIG can be accessed by clicking on START – RUN and then typing “MSCONFIG” (no quotes, and it is not case sensitive) in the box, and then click on “OK”. A window will open showing several tabs, one of which will be labeled “Start” or “Startup”. This will typically be a white window with black print, showing a checkbox followed by a program name or path. Boxes that are checked indicate a program that will load when the computer is booted.

Unfortunately, as the computer is used, and more software is installed, many programs like to have themselves unnecessarily load at boot time, and many viruses and Trojans also utilize this method to load each time the computer is turned on.

While there are countless thousands of legitimate and illicit Windows programs which want to load at boot, there are several resources, some of them free, which can identify programs as necessary or unnecessary at boot.

Once identified, unchecking the appropriate box on the MSCONFIG – STARTUP list may stop that program from loading. An excellent and fairly up-to-date website which



The System Configuration Utility also known as MSConfig is a helpful tool that will help you troubleshoot your Windows system.

lists most of the items that may show up in the startup box, is Paul Collins (a.k.a. "Pacman") startup list available at www.sysinfo.org. The user of this website can enter either a program name from the startup list (without the path; c:\directory\program.exe would only use "program.exe").

Once the item is found on the web list, it is clearly described, and labeled as: "Y" – Necessary, leave it alone; "N" – not required and could be started manually if needed; "U" – Users' choice; "X" – Definitely not required, a resource hog, virus, spyware, or other item that should not be loaded at boot; "?" – Unknown, not listed. If the file listed adjacent to the checkbox is listed as a "Y", leave it checked, and if listed as "X", then uncheck the box. Items marked as "N" should be unchecked, unless they are frequently used shortly after the computer is booted.

Many users are not comfortable performing such tasks manually, but there are several utilities available that contain a startup manager to ease the process of deciding what to allow to run, and what to stop.

One free utility that actually is intended for another function, but contains an easy to use startup manager is the popular anti-spyware product Spybot Search and Destroy <www.safer-networking.org>.

Since many spyware products install themselves in the startup list, Spybot allows the user to control those malware programs as well as all other startup programs at boot. Download the Spybot, install and update it, and then open it.

Click on "Mode" on the menu bar, and select "Advanced". On the left side of the window will be a choice of utilities. Go to "Tools" and click on "System Startup". This will load a list of programs loaded at boot, along with their corresponding checkboxes.

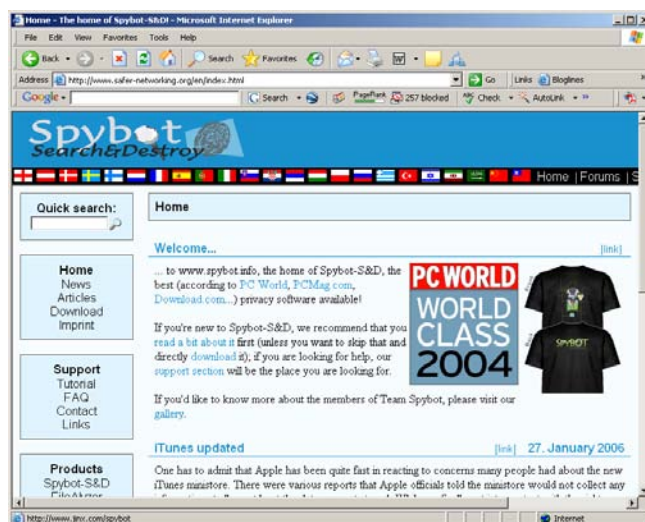
The right edge of the window has a narrow gray bar with two triangular arrows, one right (close) and one left (open); click on this bar and the data from Paul Collins' startup list (mentioned above) will be shown as each listed item is clicked on. Necessary items are highlighted in green, and users' choice items are highlighted yellow.

Dangerous and unnecessary items are highlighted in red, and white items are unknown to "Pacman". Unwanted items can have their corresponding "check" removed by clicking on the checkbox; this will stop the item from loading at boot. Items can also be deleted using the red "X" at the top of the window. When Spybot is exited, the changes to the startup will be saved, and should not load at the next boot.

A reasonably priced (\$20) commercial program that offers greater power and flexibility to control what loads when the computer boots is a British program "The Ultimate Trouble Shooter" available at <www.answersthatwork.com>.

Open the program and click "Startups". Initially, startup programs will be labeled in the traditional red (remove), yellow (personal choice), green (leave it alone), and white (not listed). Upon clicking on any startup item a detailed description is displayed on the bottom half of the window. Unchecking a box will stop the item from loading at the next boot.

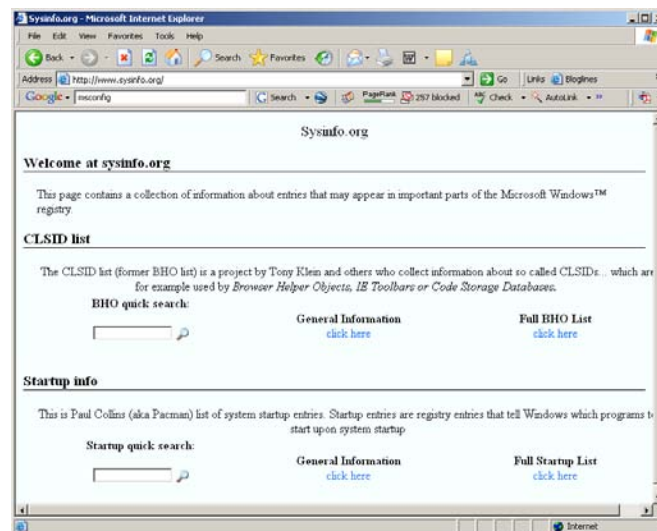
There are several other utilities that contain startup managers, and most will do a satisfactory job. By cleaning the files that load at boot, the computer will boot faster, have fewer software conflicts, run faster, shutdown faster, and increase your computing satisfaction.



Search & Destroy can detect and remove spyware of different kinds from your computer.



<http://www.answersthatwork.com> touts itself as "the ultimate online Self Help, the home of computer support."



A collection of information about entries that may appear in important parts of the Microsoft Windows™ registry.

Network

Your Home or Office Internet

**By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner,
Beaumont, TX; radio & TV show host**

On my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM 1-3pm Saturdays) I am frequently asked questions about connecting an internet source to a home network, such that several computers can simultaneously share the internet connection. This type of home networking is typically only practical if there is a broadband source, and generally impractical if the source is dialup, and a voice phone line is to be shared for internet access.

Basically, there are three good options available, and each has its relative advantages and disadvantages, and varies in terms of cost effectiveness based on individual circumstances. The three basic methods or technologies available for home or small office networking are wired, wireless, and "homeplug".

Wired networking is a viable choice if it is practical to run a network cable between computers. The cable, which can be relatively inexpensive if purchased in bulk from electronics or home/hardware stores, but somewhat pricey if purchased in pre-cut sections at retail stores. Cable can be run through an attic, suspended from cup hooks along a ceiling, run along baseboards, or other methods that comply with appropriate safety and electrical codes.

Other than running the cable, the installation of the network is fairly simple, and requires readily available and generally inexpensive hardware, manufactured by countless companies. A device called a router is connected to the broadband input, and the computers are connected via network cable to the router.

Most wired routers come with a floppy or CD with simple configuration utilities that allow the network to be setup and functioning within minutes of connection. Wired routers can be purchased from discount stores, electronics stores, office



A router is an electronic device that connects two or more networks and directs incoming data to the appropriate computer.

supply stores, and a variety of other sources. Since almost all contemporary computers, both desktop and notebook, come with an integral network connector, generally no other hardware is required other than the router and cable. In terms of security, wired is generally the most secure method of networking. Many of the inexpensive wired routers include some type of hardware firewall to protect the network from intrusion, but it is still generally a good idea to have a software firewall on each computer.

One of the most popular methods of home or small office networking is wireless, often referred to with its industry standard designation, 802.11, with a letter suffix, such as an “a”, “b”, or “g”. The suffix indicates which version of the standard hardware complies with in terms of frequency, and bandwidth. Generally, the least expensive and most widely used type is the 802.11b, which shares the same 2.4 GHz digital frequencies of many cordless phones and other household electronics, which may possibly cause some interference with the wireless connection. Under ideal conditions, 802.11b can transfer data at a rate of up to 11 megabytes per second (Mbps). The newer 802.11a and 802.11g standards offer higher transmission speeds, and will likely encounter less interference from household appliances, but some interference is always a risk.

To connect computers to a wireless network requires a wireless router, and a device called an “access point” for each computer. The main advantage to a wireless network is the ease of installation, and the flexibility of not being connected to a wire while surfing the net. The wireless router is connected to the broadband input, and an antenna on the router broadcasts the signal to the access points.



An access point is the connection that ties wireless communication devices into a network. Also known as a base station, the access point is usually connected to a wired network. Most Wi-Fi networks have a range of up to 150 feet but the access point range can be extended through the use of repeaters, which can amplify the network's radio signal.

Range is a function of building construction and interference, but at typical household and small office distances and construction, a single router is typically adequate. Users should be sure to follow the instructions included with the router in terms of placement in order to maximize the signal. Many wireless

routers include some form of hardware firewall, but again a software firewall on each computer is generally recommended. “Access Points” are generally small devices that attach to a computer either through a USB port, or to the network input on the computer.

As they are radio transceivers, placement will affect performance. It is imperative to note that unless the integral encryption and other security options offered by the router and access points are implemented, there can be some serious security issues with wireless connections, in that it is easy for unauthorized persons to access the network.

Wireless routers and access points are readily available wherever electronics are sold, including discount stores, warehouse clubs, office supply stores, and other retailers. As the technology has been improving, prices have been plunging. Some provisos are in order at this point; first, be sure that whatever wireless hardware is purchased, be sure that it is compatible, in that the suffix “a”, “b”, or “g” match, although much of the hardware available today will work with any standard, often listed as “a/b/g”.

A second proviso is the “weakest link” factor, in that a wireless (or any other network) connection is only as fast as the slowest segment. If a broadband connection is running at 2Mbps, a faster wireless connection may be wasted unless files or hardware (such as printers or video) are being shared among the network. It should also be noted that many of the new home theater devices now coming on the market utilize the same wireless interconnectivity and hardware as computers, and may require the newer and faster standards of connectivity.

There is a third technology available for home and small office networking that is still in its infancy, but holds a promising future, and most of the major networking hardware manufacturers such as Belkin, Linksys, GigaFast, IOGear, Netgear, and others are producing compatible hardware. This technology is called “Homeplug” (www.homeplug.org) that can safely utilize the existing household electrical wiring as an already wired network.

Homeplug compatible hardware is priced about the same as wireless, but is not yet as readily available as traditional wired or wireless hardware, but it may be worth the effort to shop for it. The standard, which meets UL and other safety requirements, is possibly the easiest to configure, has a 14Mbps bandwidth, and is more secure than wireless. To connect broadband to Homeplug, the broadband input is plugged into a Homeplug input device (similar to a router), and that device is then simply plugged into a standard wall electrical outlet.

Any computer in the home, as well as many of the newer entertainment devices, are then connected to any other electrical outlet in the house via an adapter that connects to the computer with a traditional USB or network plug. In terms of security, the broadband signal does not typically pass through the household junction box, making it extremely difficult for neighbors and others to access the connection or network. As with all other forms of networking, a software firewall is still necessary on each computer.

If a user is bearing the cost of broadband, and has more than one computer in the home or office, then one of these networking technologies may be a useful method to connect those computers to the internet.

GIF, JPG, TXT, DOC, HTML, WAV, BMP

The Mystery of File Extensions Explained

By **Dave Gerber**, Advisor, Region 1, Dave's Bits & Bytes, A Periodic Newsletter for the Members of the Sarasota PC User Group and the World!!
Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

GIF, JPG, TXT, DOC, HTML, WAV, BMP

You'll see them over and over again as you encounter manuals, web sites, and anything related to your computer. Tons of file extensions. Whole pickup truck loads of 'em running back and forth on the info highway. File extensions are easy enough to understand, and with just a bit of history, you'll know everything you need to know about files, and not a bit more.

Back in the DOS days (DOS stands for Disk Operating System), before the invention of Windows, every file had to be named with a maximum of 8 characters, and could include a three letter "file extension."

For example, lets say you want to save that recipe for Quevos Rancheros. You were forced to use a maximum of 8 characters. So you call it queranch.

Hmm, in Spanish, that's like, "What ranch?" Or that's a loose translation, at least.

You were limited. Severely. So along comes the long file name. You can use a whole mess of characters now, calling your file "My greatest recipe using eggs and tortillas since the invention of the wheel." The sentence between the quote marks is the name of the file, or "filename."

The stated character limit is 255, but in reality it comes in just a tad under, like 253 or something. The techies can quibble over that. Regardless, it's l-o-n-g. And more than adequate to describe the content of your creation!

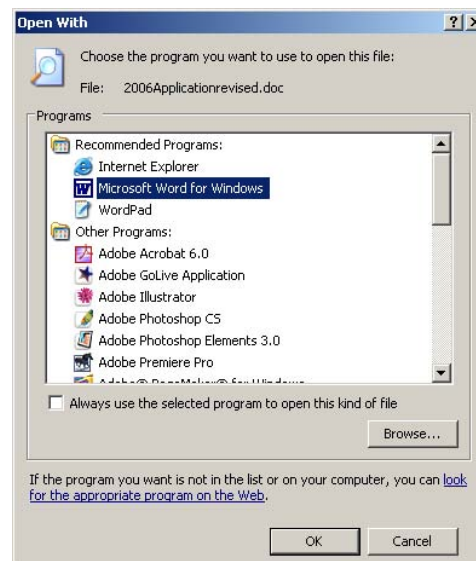


Figure 1

Now, notice that many files have extensions. They all do, really. In fact, your computer doesn't know what to do with a file if it doesn't have an extension.

The extension is the three letter part following the main name. (You didn't see an extension on my quevos rancheros example, because I left it off.)

Here's an example:

My Word processing report.doc

The ".doc" part of the file's name tells Windows to use the program that's associated with .doc files to open it. So, let's say you've got Microsoft

Word installed. Whenever the Windows operating system realizes you've clicked a file with the extension ".doc" it fires up Word, and Word opens the file.

Presto.

There are lots of file extensions. Here's a table for you that includes a few common file types you may encounter during your web travels.

If you try to open a file extension that's unregistered (unregistered means Windows doesn't know what to do with it 'cause there's no association in the Windows Registry), Windows throws the Open With dialog box at you

The dialog box in Fig. 1 lets you decide what program to open the file with. For example, I tried to open the file named 'java.usj' and I got this screen as a result. Since nothing on my computer is set up to edit or open a '.usj' file, I have to locate and use a program that "understands" that type of file extension. Now that's another trick altogether!

Commonly, people will send Power Point presentation files or Microsoft Publisher files as attachments to people who don't have Microsoft Office installed on their computer. So those files cannot be viewed unless the appropriate software is installed.

Extension Type of file

txt	Text File, such as Notepad produces Commonly used for Web editing and e-mail.
doc	Document File, for example, MS Word The most common word processing file format
gif	Graphics Interchange Format (graphics) A Web graphic format that supports animation. Limited by a color table of up to 256 colors, which gives it a small file size. Ideal for drawings with large areas of a solid color.
jpg	Joint Photographic Experts Group (graphics) A Web graphic format ideal for photographs.
pdf	Portable Document File A file interchange format ideal for transmitting text and image data, such as the PC Alamode, to be printed on viewed on the Web.
tif	Tagged Image Format (graphics) A lossless (no loss in quality) graphic file format designed to move images between Windows and Macintosh computers.

GIF, JPG, TXT, DOC, HTML, WAV, BMP

Care and Feeding of Compact Discs

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

I read an interesting article in the September 2005 issue of Popular Photography written by David D. Busch titled, "The Truth About Disc Rot." It paralleled some other magazine and news articles I have read on the same subject. The following is what we should know and understand about CD (and DVD) discs as storage devices. For the purposes of this article, CD's and DVD's are considered the same as far as backup media is concerned. The only difference is that DVD's can hold more data.

We save things that are important to us. Those of us who take digital photos know that simply storing them on the hard drive of our computer is not a wise or safe thing to do as the disc may crash and we will lose everything. Thus, we copy the photos to a CD or DVD disc so that they will be always available for a long period of twenty or more years. However, will they really be there when we look for them?

The media of choice for backup and storage purposes less than ten years ago was tape backup. Some commercial enterprises continue to use digital tape for backup purposes. Tape is rarely used, if at all, for home use anymore. Actually, the backup media of choice for commercial use is moving toward external hard drives. Where does the CD fall into all of this?

There are hosts of backup utilities that utilize the CD for backup purposes. Most CD manufacturers advertise that CD media is good for 20 to 100 years depending on the depth of marketing they are trying to offer. The National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST) tests products for longevity. The catch is that longevity is available if the user adheres to very strict rules and standards. Let us look at some interesting facts.



A Compact Disc is a storage media based on a 4.75" reflective optical disc. A CD can hold up to 650,000,000 bytes of data, that is equivalent to 12,000 images or 200,000 pages of text.

Handling

When a CD is burned, a laser shoots through the bottom of the disc into the dye layer located under the top protective plastic covering on at the top of the CD. This is the layer where the laser burns pits into the dye layer to allow the compute to interpret what is being written by the computer. When the bottom side of the disc becomes scratched or soiled, the laser is dif-fused and the data is not clearly written.

Secondly, if the top layer becomes damaged, moisture can pen- etrate the surface and cause the layer to slowly disintegrate and is the beginning of what is called “Disc Rot.”

How often have you watched someone open a CD case and directly pull on the edges of a CD until it is released from the case? Notice how the CD is bent while it is being removed? This bending is causing tiny cracks to develop in the reflective (protective) layer of the CD. To properly remove a CD from the case, press down on the inside of the retaining plastic that holds the CD in place. This causes the retaining ring to become slightly smaller so that the CD slides off easily with out bending forces.

When handling, always pick up or carry the CD by the outer edge. Avoid placing your fingers on the read (bottom) side of the disc as this will cause acid penetration of both protective layers to begin.



Reliability

CD-R is a disc that that can be written to once while CD-RW are discs that can be written to many times reportedly 1000 times. CD's that the least reliable for archival purposes are the CD-RW's. These discs include a layer that is altered by the CD

burner each time it is rewritten. Experience has shown that when these discs are used with another computer, it is a com- mon for the second computer to be unable to read it.

I burn a new music CD monthly for each show that I do. (I entertain at nursing and retirement homes.) I burned and placed the CD-RW into my karaoke player, it would not recog- nize it. In addition, my second computer would not recog- nize it either. Only the computer that originally burned the CD was able to read it! Imagine if I had saved all of my music and photo images on a CD-RW. When the computer would eventually be replaced, the disc would likely be un- readable. It is better to save data on CD-R discs, as they are readable with any computer with a CD player.

CD-R's aren't permanent either. The organic dyes layer that the burner works with are similar to dyes in film. When ex- posed to sunlight, heat, cold and humidity and UV exposure the dye layer changes over time. How often have you watched someone place a CD on the dashboard of a car or keep it in a glove box? Proper storage of CD's is critical to their useful longevity.

Dyes

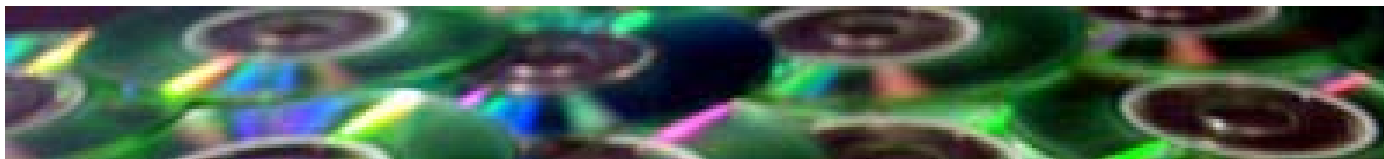
There are many types of dyes used for the production of a CD. To quote the above mentioned author, “Under the NIST's accelerated “stress test,” which includes exposure to very bright light, high temperature and humidity, recorded CD discs using phthalocyanine dye combined with a gold/silver allow reflective layer proved to be considerably more stable than all other types of CD-R media. Discs using azo dye as the data layer had less stability under light, temperature and humidity testing. Media using cyanine dye performed well when exposed to light, but had longevity problems under tem- perature and humidity stress.

DVD's, which generally use a modified form of a stabilized cyanine dye for the recording layer, are less predictable in terms of longevity. NIST data suggest that, despite lower data capacity, you might be better off in the long run using pre- mium CD-R's instead of DVD+/-R discs.”

The author went on to say that it's not always possible to tell what kind of dye was used for the manufacture of the disc because the dyes can be tinted. Cyanine based CD's (most common) have a light green or blue tint on the data side. Phthalocyanine dyes are often light green while the azo dye tends to have a blue color.

While it's possible to tell the dye type by reading the specs from the manufacturer, a better indicator might be the refle- ctive layer. If a gold reflective layer was used then the likeli- hood of using a good quality dye is increased. Be aware,





some cheap discs appearing to have a gold layer may be simply paint. Buyer beware!

Recommended brand discs are Fujifilm, Imation, Kodak, Maxell, TDK, Verbatim and Mitsui/MAM-A.

Protection and Care of CD's

Manufactures recommend storing CD's vertically in a cool, dry area instead of horizontally. The reason is to prevent warping and damage from humidity.

Also, never use solvent based pens to write on them similar to permanent felt tipped pens. The solvent can penetrate the protective layer and damage the reflective layer below. The only safe place to write on the top of a CD is in the clear center portion of the hub when using a felt tipped pen.

It is better to apply a label to the top of the disc for identification purposes. Never write on the label with a ballpoint pen when it is applied to the disc. The tip of the pen can cause stress cracks in the protective layer.

When using CD-RW discs, I use removable labels — www.digitalinnovations.com.. They can be written on many times and then removed and replaced as necessary.

For discs that I intend to keep for archival purposes I print the contents on the label with an ink jet printer — www.fellowes.com.

When cleaning to remove fingerprints or smudges on the read side on the read side of the disc, always use a CD or lens cloth wiping radially out from the center. Never clean using small circular motions on small portions of the disc as it can cause diffusion of the laser beam. Isopropyl alcohol or clear or soapy water can be used to clean a grimy disc. Never use acetone, anti-static agents or wood based products such as toilet paper or facial tissue to clean a disc.

When applying labels, be sure to center the label on the disc to avoid "off balance" condition when the disc is being used. When the disc is rotated at high speeds, the "off balance" condition can unbalance the disc and cause problems with high speed readers. For this reason I purchased a label applicator that perfectly centers the label each time versus putting the label on the disc "by eye."

The Future

Like the 1.4 MB floppy drive, tape drives, Zip discs and LS 120 disks that are no longer being used, the CD as we know it will likely bite the dust in about ten years. I predict the media of choice for backup and archival purposes will be that of external drive media similar to USB jump drives and flash card burners or other external drive sources. Personally, I use a 160 GB external hard drive to backup my computer data including music and photo files. Because of transportability, I also backup my music and photos on CD's and store them at an offsite location in a safety deposit box.

Compact Disc Killer?



A flash drive consists of a small printed circuit board encased in a robust plastic or metal casing, making the drive sturdy enough to be carried about in a pocket, as a keychain, or on a lanyard. Only the USB connector protrudes from this protection, and is usually covered by a removable cap. Most flash drives feature the standard type-A USB connection allowing them to be connected directly to the port.

Flash drives are active only when powered by a USB computer connection, and require no other external power source or battery power source; key drives are run off the limited supply afforded by the USB connection (5 volts and up to 500 mA). To access the data stored in a flash drive, the flash drive must be connected to a computer.

A USB Primer



By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.
Sarasota PCUG, Florida

By now most computer users are familiar with the term USB or Universal Serial Bus. This connection port on your computer is designed to replace the older serial, parallel and PS2 ports. Probably within a year you won't find any new computers with these older ports. They will have only USB. There are some things you might find useful about USB ports and hubs which could reduce or eliminate problems in dealing with them.

USB ports have a number of advantages over the old system of parallel/serial ports. They do not require I/O memory space or individual IRQ lines. Anyone who has had to work with older computers and operating systems will remember the problems of trying to prevent IRQ conflicts when connecting external devices such as scanners or modems. How many times did the sound card manage to steal IRQ's that you had to have for another device?

USB also allows for automatic device configuration and hot-plug capability. The hot-plug or hot-swap function means that you don't have to power down the computer and go through a restart when you want to connect a new device. Instead, you simply connect or disconnect the USB cable. The computer will recognize the device and connect to the proper driver. That is assuming this isn't the first time you have used the device and that the driver has already been installed. You commonly have to install drivers for external hard drives, printers, scanners, card readers, etc. You generally don't have to install drivers for mice and keyboards that connect to the USB ports.

Next, consider that USB operates at three possible speeds: low speed or 1.4 megabits/second, full speed or 12 megabits/second, and high speed or 480 megabits/second (mbps).

Low speed and high speed can be used with either USB 1.x or USB 2.0 hosts. The high speed can be used only with USB 2.0. The host is the computer that provides the USB connections.

IRQ (Interrupt Request level) - In IBM-PCs, a setting given to peripheral devices like soundcards and CD-ROM drives that identifies them to the computer's CPU. When the peripheral needs to communicate with the CPU, it will send an interrupt with that value. Problems will result if two or more peripherals are set to the same IRQ value.

Driver - A set of software that contains instructions that allows the computer to communicate with its peripheral devices.

USB (Universal Serial Bus) - A connection on a computer that allows external devices to be connected simply and easily. USB is a relatively new standard for peripheral connection, however the benefits of simple installation and high-speed data transfer make it an attractive option.

For USB 2.0 operation the host computers “root port hubs” must support USB 2.0. That means the computer must have USB 2.0 drivers that are supported by the operating system. Windows XP (service pack 1.0) and Windows 2000 both support USB 2.0. The root port hubs are the USB connectors on your computer and are usually connected to the motherboard. You can also identify them in the Device Manager where they will show under the USB Host Controller.

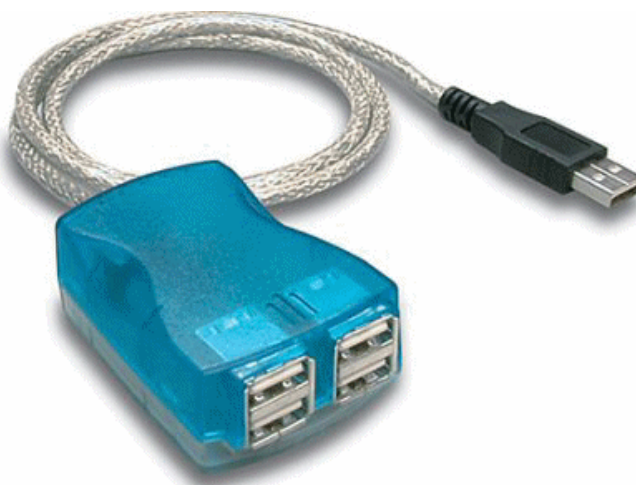
Although the USB specifications indicate you can daisy-chain up to 127 devices from one port, this is not likely to happen because of the power drop that occurs over long connections. You can get external hubs that allow you to connect 4 – 7 devices to a single root port hub. The external hubs are repeaters that relay transaction information from the computer to a device connected to the hub's port. There is a catch to this as well. Some USB 2.0 hubs will decrease their maximum output if you have a USB 1.x device attached to a port. This means that any USB 2.0 device attached to the hub may not function or will function at a lower speed. I learned this the hard way with an external USB 2.0 hard drive. I thought the problem was the drive, but it was the hub. I had a USB 1.0 card reader attached to the hub and as a result the current output to each port was reduced to the point that it was not sufficient to run the drive. This occurred even though the hub and the drive had external power supplies.

An ample power supply is necessary to operate USB devices. Root hub ports can provide 5 volts and up to 500 milli-Amps (mA) of current. The USB power specifications state the USB ports should provide between 100 mA and 500 mA. Devices connected directly to the computer are able to obtain the maximum current. So let's take a situation where we have a hub connected to the computer's root port hub. The hub is receiving 500 mA of current at about 5 volts. If only the current received through the connecting cable powers the hub, the output from each of its four hubs will be only 100 mA. This is referred to as a “bus-powered” hub because it receives its current solely from the USB bus in the host computer. However, if the hub has its own power supply and is receiving at least 1.6 Amps from this supply, then it can provide a 500 mA output at each port. In this case, the hub should be able to support high-speed USB 2.0 devices.

On some computers you will find an icon in the system tray that is a “hardware disconnect”. In this instance, you need to double click the icon and wait for it to permit you to disconnect the hardware device. This icon does not appear with all USB devices. Since installing SP2, I haven't seen this icon in my system tray. There are some reports of computers with SATA drives showing this icon. Since the SATA drive is supposed to be hot-swappable like USB devices, I'm not surprised that the icon shows up. However, with my Seagate SATA drive, I still don't see this icon. That may be because my motherboard doesn't support the hot-swap function even though it supports SATA drives.

When you plug in a USB device to either a hub or a computer port, there is an initial identification process referred to as the “configuration” step that occurs. During this configuration process the device can not draw more than 100 mA. If it does, the process will fail and it will appear that the device failed to work. The configuration process identifies the device, its drivers, and its power requirements. Only after this process is complete will the device be able to draw more than 100 mA current. Since this process is not instantaneous, some time must be allowed by the user before attempting to use the device. In addition, this configuration may not occur if the device is plugged into the computer before the computer is

USB Hub



BPH-021 is a highly integrated 4-port USB hub. Use this hub to conveniently connect up to 4 serial port adapters. The complies with USB 1.0/1.1 specifications and supports both full (12Mbps) and low (1.5Mbps) data rate speeds. Compact, light-weighted, and requiring no external power, the BPH-021 is ideal for mobile computing.

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turned on and booted. In these cases, it may be better to connect the USB device after the computer is fully operational. Most of the time, the computer will identify and configure the device during the startup.

Microsoft has a knowledge base article on trouble-shooting USB problems (#310575). Typically the problems relate to drivers or power problems. However, they also point out that high-speed devices should be connected with high-speed cables only. The low speed cables may distort the signal as a result of their reduced amount of shielding. Another really complete source of trouble-shooting information can be found at: <http://www.usbman.com/winxpusbguide.htm>. This has references for Windows ME as well as XP and Windows 2000. However, anyone who hasn't dumped Windows ME should seriously consider doing so as soon as possible. WinXP is such a tremendous improvement over ME and will really make your computing experience much more enjoyable. My computer hasn't locked up or crashed in more than six months, probably longer. I really don't keep track anymore.

So what devices are typically high speed and require USB 2.0? Let's start with external USB hard drives. Seagate has a very interesting technical paper on external hard drives. In this paper they state that most 2 1/2" external drives require 1000 – 1100 mA during the start-up cycle and then can function at the 500 mA maximum current available from the USB port. They also state that most USB ports can support up to 700 mA on a continuous basis. This is something I have not found elsewhere. Consequently, my recommendation is that when looking for an external drive, pick one with its own power supply. I wouldn't want to depend on one that drew all its power from the USB bus.

Other high-speed devices include laser printers, scanners, and multi-function printers. All of these should have their own power supply. Other devices that operate at full-speed and don't need external power are blue-tooth adapters and card readers. This is only a partial list of what is available in USB devices. Just remember when you are looking at them that the term full-speed does not 480 mbps, instead it is the slower 12 mbps.

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: <bwsail@yahoo.com>.



External hard disk drives are the perfect solution for desktop and notebook users running out of space. It provides an easy way to add disk storage without removing the internal hard disk drive. They can be used to backup your internal hard disk or for multimedia storage such as photos, MP3s, streaming video, CD/DVD burning and imaging.

The Zoom Xtreme is an extremely well-designed casing to handle high capacity disk storage for extended use. Its integrated cooling system ensures reliable operation and long life for the hard disk drive. This model connects to your computer via the USB port and requires an external power supply.

News Brief

A Computer for Every Kid?

A \$100 laptop? A global effort is underway to make it happen by next year. It was a pipe dream only a few months ago but soon will be reality. An ambitious effort from MIT Media Labs to put a \$100 portable in the hands of every child in the world is picking up big corporate partners, top engineering talent, and interest from several countries. One Laptop Per Child (OLPC), a nonprofit venture, is expected to start distributing machines late next year and to produce 100 to 200 million in 2007.

Anti-Spyware Basics

By **Dave Gerber**, Dave's Bits & Bytes, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
 <www.spcug.org> <http://davebytes.com/>

You've just come home with your new computer. How delightful! Now you're ready to surf the web and download some music -- legally of course -- and send out a few emails to family and friends. As you're about to plug in the networking cable you remember something the sales associate mentioned.

"Be sure and get some anti-spyware and security stuff".

"Bah," you figure. The guy is just trying to sell you more that you don't want or need, right?

Onward you go, dismissing the comment and salivating as Google pulls up page after page of amazing information about things you never knew existed. Need to know about livestock birthing? No problem! Have a hankering for finding just the right flap settings for your Cessna? Piece of cake!

But wait, what's with these 'extra' windows that keep popping up and obscuring your view? And why is it that your homepage is now set at www.somePornSite.com?

"Hmmm," you wonder, thinking back to what the sales associate said...

Welcome to the Net! You have just been hijacked and had your first "drive-by" install. No -- not the type of drive-by from the gang downtown, guns a' blazing, tires screeching - it appears to have come from that "friendly" website who just happened to be pushing some 'extra' software onto unsuspecting users such as yourself.

The scenario above is an all too common occurrence -- though, more than likely, excluding both of those searches via Google. And if you did actually perform those searches, you are indeed unique to say the least. Just don't write me if you're a farmer transporting a pregnant cow in a Cessna. ;-)

And so, some basic security info is at hand. At least, enough to get you down the road to securely surf the Web with confidence.

Here's a list of things you should do before plugging into the Net:

1. Be sure you have both a firewall and anti-virus protection. Without either, it could be literally only 10 or 15 minutes before your system is compromised. Typically, free products give you bare bones applications, which is fine if you're not going to do any heavy surfing. Going to be online 3, 4, 5 hours a day? Make the investment and get a few extra perks.

2. Now that you have a firewall and anti-virus installed, you can go online. Make sure the operating system that came installed by the reseller has all critical patches from Microsoft installed. This single event, should it be skipped could be the most damaging. You see, malware writers know all the exploits and vulnerabilities in the OS, and write accordingly to take advantage of them to deliver their bundles of joy.

3. Find a dependable source for anti-spyware. Many of the most respected applications on this category are free, with some very nice paid versions as well.

Now doing those three simple basic things will get you started. You still need to read up about tweaking Internet Explorer, to help tighten its out of the box security (kind of like adding extra stuff to a new car). Then deciding what kind of security settings or software to use for email.

Hopefully you're not overwhelmed just yet. My purpose is to inform on a basic level for the new user. Once you're up and running, other subjects delving deeper into technical issues can be addressed.

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News Brief

Past President Receives Microsoft MVP Award



Larry Lentz was named MVP for outstanding community involvement.

The Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) Program recognizes and thanks outstanding members of technical communities for their community participation and willingness to help others. The program celebrates the most active community members from around the world who provide invaluable online and offline expertise that enriches the community experience and makes a difference in technical communities featuring Microsoft products.

MVPs are credible, technology experts from around the world who inspire others to learn and grow through active technical community participation. While MVPs come from many backgrounds and a wide range of technical communities, they share a passion for technology and a demonstrated willingness to help others. MVPs do this through the books and articles they author; the Web sites they manage; the blogs they maintain; the user groups they participate in; the chats they host or contribute to; the events and training sessions where they present, as well as through the questions they answer in technical newsgroups or message boards.

"Microsoft MVPs are simply an amazing group of individuals. We are excited to recognize and award MVPs as our way of saying 'thank you' for their demonstrated commitment to helping others in technical communities around the globe," a Microsoft press release reads.

News Brief

Hands-Free Text Messaging to be released soon

For people fed up with pecking out text messages on their mobile phone, Samsung Electronics may have an answer. The South Korean electronics maker has developed what it is calling the world's first mobile phones that can convert spoken words into text messages. 11 three handsets will be released in the U.S. sometime during the first quarter.

David's Essential Domains



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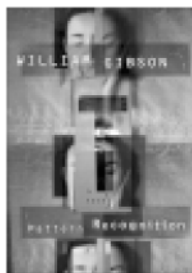
<http://www.davidsessentialdomains.com>

Computer Crimes

Susan Ives

Pattern Recognition, by William Gibson

Paperback, Berkley, 2003, 356 pages, \$14.00



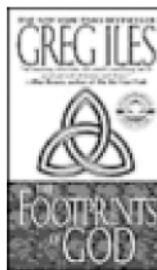
Cayce Pollard, a market researcher with uncanny intuition and a physical allergy to name brands, is hired by a tycoon to uncover the source of "the footage," video snippets that appear on the Internet a disjointed clip at a time, attracting a cult following. Her search takes her to London, Tokyo and Moscow, following a trail of marketing, globalization and terror.

William Gibson is an iconic writer: he invented the word "cyberspace." This is his first novel set in the present day,

although there is something futuristic in his depiction of everyday objects, events and relationships. Lots of technology – mostly Internet centered – but also a thoughtful, deep analysis of the human condition. Beautifully written, with an engaging plot and delightful characters. Highly recommended.

The Footprints of God by Greg Iles

Paperback, Pocket Star Books, 2003, 528 pages, \$7.00



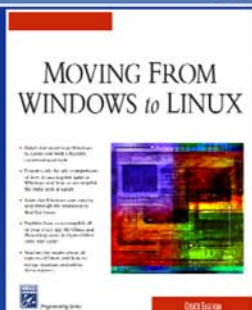
Medical ethicist David Tennant works for Project Trinity, a secret government organization attempting to build a quantum-level supercomputer. Using advanced magnetic resonance imaging techniques, six top scientists have supplied Trinity, the experimental computer, with molecular

copies of themselves as models for a neurological operating system. When the scientists start suffering neurological malfunctions from the high-level MRI they underwent to map their brains, he is forced to flee.

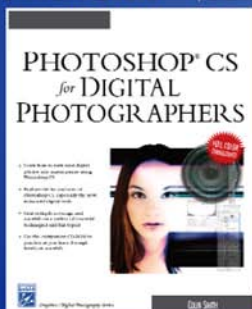
There is a bizarre subplot of Tennant having mystical visions in which he inhabits the body of Jesus, which Iles just manages to bring off. There is lots of technology, bordering on sci-fi, most interesting in its exploration of the ethical and religious implications of technology. This is a good techno-thriller, trying to be more profound than it really is.

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 and Lockhill-Selma), (210) 344-7776, tries its darndest to keep the recommended books in stock.

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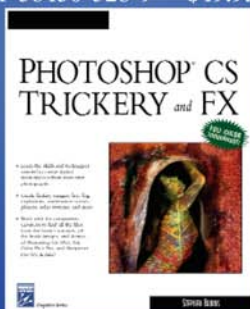
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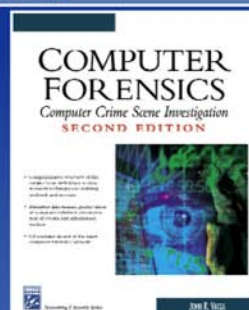
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Book Review

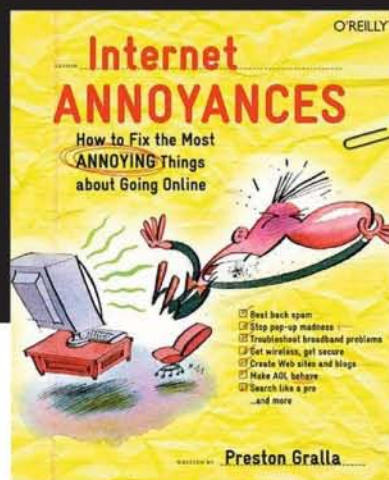
Internet Annoyances

\$24.99

by Preston Gralla

Published by O'Reilly

Review by Catherine Haenze



This month I had the fun of reviewing the book “Internet Annoyances” by Preston Gralla. This book opens up the wealth of problems we’re all having just trying to play and work in free space.

First of all, the internet is a ball of tangled yarn! Secondly, this book is fun to read, play with, and try out all the neat ideas.

Here is a rundown on the chapter headings (they all have the word “Annoyances” after them): eMail and Spam; Connection; Wireless; Webhosting, Design, and Blog;

Browser; AOL; IM; Searching; Security; and Shopping and Online Auctions.

The first tryout was on page 4—eMail. How many of us have gotten a forwarded eMail with these >>>>?

How many of us have sat using up minutes we could be cruising the net taking out all those >>> and cleaning up those misbegotten sentences before we send it on? da de DAH de da! Text Monkey to the rescue! Easy download. Easy to use. Easy to really like. You get a banana on the bottom right tool bar, and a monkey sound when used or opening up the computer for the day. Right now, I’m still getting a kick out of that monkey, so haven’t tried to squelch it. I’m keeping it for the price of FREE! You can get an upgrade that costs \$29.99 (why don’t they just say 30 bucks?). The upgrade does magical things like “stripping out HTML tags, converting tabs to spaces, deleting duplicate lines, and a lot more.” Haven’t tried that yet. Still playing with the monkey.

One other thing I learned from reading this book: solve a problem, get a problem. One of the problems discussed in the Making a Connection chapter was the speed of connection, with which we are all frustrated. Face it, people, that’s what we all want, speed. It’s a battle we are not going to win until speed is instantaneous.

I don’t use WIFI, but enjoyed reading about the problems. It seems to me that when you use WIFI, you might as well get on the rooftop with a megaphone and shout out all your business. But then, if you’re traveling, I’m sure it’s handy. Just don’t think you have any secrets.

Then there’s Webhosting, Design, and Blogging. I certainly could have used this before I did my website. I’ve been trying to get that picture exactly in the center for months. And here’s the how-to. Alright!

The one discussion on the website I felt was shorted was coloring your pages. Mike Bianchi in his HTML class taught us how to use your MSPaint and the calculator in the science mode to get all the colors. I have much more fun playing with that. It’s easy, quick, and already in your computer. Make sure you write down the Dec numbers for the color you choose in an unloseable spot. I never have found just that shade of beige again.

Turning to the chapter on Browsing, you can learn how to bypass Site Log-ins. Yes! It works. Find out why you can’t get a picture to download in gif or jpeg. Also works. Amazing what a few hundred Cookies will do. Tells you how to set your Cookies to block more from downloading into the file. Reset mine, again. My philosophy is, the fewer, the better.

Searching Annoyances: there’s the “Wayback” program that helps you find a site you thought lost forever. Learned how not to lose track of where the heck I am in all those links, but could have used this early on.

One of the more recent annoyances (unless it’s your website and you’ve learned how to work it) is searching for something and having all these weird sites come up before what you’re looking for. I’m not annoyed enough to buy a program for it. I just jump down the page, and continue on. But if you spend a lot of time searching, this program looks interesting.

Looking at Security, we are certainly encouraged to toss those Cookies and clear out the Temp Internet file daily. Not covered, was that you need to check your programs on the Control Panel frequently. I’ve found a couple I never downloaded lurking in the list. Also, before you finish a download make sure there’s an “uninstall” listed. I’ve turned down a couple of freebies because that wasn’t included, and I’ve learned the hard way they can be real tough to get rid of—sort of like cockroaches....there’s always one more.

Last on the list is Shopping a favorite for everyone. A couple of quick observations: there’s a BBB on the net; buying is easy, returning can be a nightmare; finding Amazon without a search engine; and lastly (in my list) how to get the last bid in. Thanks, Mike, for teaching us this in HTML too.

Some sites I still want to try: looking for cars, area codes, trends, how to buy from the police auctions on line as well as other government auctions. How to Phish. I now have info on how to search Amazon and the web at the same time. Yeah.

This book is fun, engaging, and easy for almost anyone, even my 86 year old mother. Believe me, you will find answers to problems you didn’t know you had, and how to avoid ones you don’t want. This book is available at Barnes and Noble and Borders in SA, and on the Net. It costs \$24.95.

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

Software Review

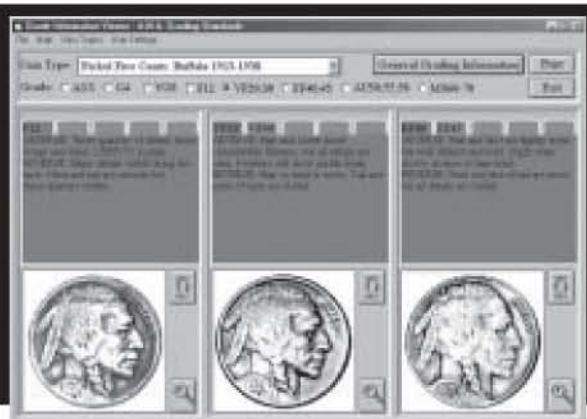
Coin Collector's Assistant Plus

\$69.99

By Paul Whitehead

Published by Carlisle Development Company

Review by Dr. Nancy White Kelly,
nancykelly@oldmoneycommerce.com,
 Tampa Bay Computer Society, American Numismatic
 Assoc #R-208768



Coin Collector's Assistant Plus is a comprehensive, user-friendly program for cataloging coins. Besides modern coinage, the standard edition includes complete database information in pull-down menus on pre-1954 coins, modern commemoratives, mint sets, proof sets, and bullion coinage. Add-on's are available for numismatic collectibles including the Euro Coin & Currency Database, the United States Currency Database, the World Coin Database, and the World Currency Database. In addition, the publisher, Carlisle Development Company <<http://www.carlisledevelopment.com/>>, has other inventory software to catalogue just about any popular collectible, i.e., Star Wars, Barbie Dolls, books, autographs and DVD's.

I have been a coin collector/dealer for almost four decades. Like many in this field, my interest is sometimes sporadic, often intense and frequently time-consuming. Occasionally, however, records and coins are put away because of the tyranny of the urgent.

One major difficulty for me was picking up where I left off. Reading my hastily written notes was sometimes difficult. Remembering where I purchased a coin and, more importantly, where I stored the coin was frustrating. I attempted paper trailing many times, but all I had to show was ledger logs and scraps of paper that were slightly organized, but incomplete. There had to be a better way to keep a ready list of what was in my collection. I needed to know all the pertinent details of each item in my total collection by type, date, grade and value history, including where I purchased a coin and to whom I sold it. You never know when IRS might knock at the door. Collector's Assistant has collector and investor modes for tracking purchase and sales information. And, because I am at Stage 4 with cancer, it is important to me to have this information available to my heirs. They have no clue to the variety and value of what I have accumulated through the years.

This new edition of Collector's Assistant, Version 5.1.4, follows several version 4's, the last of which won the 1998 Numismatic Literary Guild Award for Best Software. Though I used the older version for a while, there were a few bugs that caused my screen to lock. I don't like for my screen to lock. The new Collector's Assistant is practically flawless. It is easy to see that Collector's Assistant properly deserves honors for providing the complete, yet easy-to-use software that numismatists have been missing.

Version 5 is intuitive. Installation was simple and trouble-free. I also installed Grading Assistant at the same time with no problem. The helpful menus and drop-down boxes that appear at the top of the Collection Manager screen make the program user-friendly enough for novices. Just click through boxes and choose a coin category. A built-in database is available with every common coin listed along with mint ID and date. Current values of coins in various grades are available by subscription though I was unable to verify this component.

While entering data for each and every coin in a collection is tedious, Collector's Assistant makes the process go quickly with its pre-populated database. The software automatically provides mintage, coin weight and size. Though stock images are available for the program, my preference is to upload pictures from my actual collection which was easily accomplished with a scanner.

Interesting historical data, such as the engraver or designer of a coin, is provided. Should you want customized fields, Collector's Assistant allows the user to do so.

While it used to take me hours to locate numismatic data from books and the internet, I am now able to find most of what I am searching for with a few keystrokes.

Carlisle didn't overlook documentation. It has a very helpful electronic user's manual written in HTML, which permits printing of all, or a portion of the lengthy documentation. I lost some data a couple of times before I found the backup/restore icon in lieu of a save command. The manual is printable from the "printed.doc" file in the installation directory.

The Grading Assistant CD is a must-have component to Collector's Assistant Coin. This interactive compact disk contains the Official A.N.A. Grading Guide, the standard for grading coins. Over a thousand excellent quality photographs are included beginning with coins minted in 1793. Images and general grading information are included from the base grade of AG-3 to uncirculated. Especially useful is the side-by-side comparisons of closest grades. Pictures can be magnified for even greater detail.

Grading Assistant Illustrations

Coin Collector's Assistant excels with its report writing features. Can't remember where you put something? Print out customized reports such as storage, location, and container specifics. Need labels, index cards, flips? These are easy tasks with Collector's Assistant. This software can arrange your stored numismatic information in any standard format: landscape, portrait, sorted, single or multi-lined item reports.

Carlisle, located in Carlisle, Maine, has a nicely designed website with useful information on its products, plus news and tips for collectors. <<http://www.carlisledevelopment.com>>. Credit Card orders can be placed on-line or by phone: 800-219-0257. Currently some combination packages are on sale, but if you can't get them all, be sure to get Coin Collector's Assistant Plus and Coin Grading Assistant. These two programs meet every categorizing need I have as a numismatist, both as a collector and as a professional. I rate it 5 stars.

Hardware Review

Konica-Minolta magicolor 2400W

Color Laser Printer

\$411.99

Reviewed by Vade Forrester, Alamo PC



Laser printers have always commanded respect. My first, a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet II, was a slow black and white printer that cost \$1300, took up lots of space, and weighed a ton. But it's still cranking out printed copies, and will probably outlive us all. Laser printers have gotten dramatically smaller, cheaper, and faster. Even color laser printer had dropped in price to around \$500. That's still a lot more than a really good inkjet printer, which probably does a better job printing photos. But when a local office store offered the Konica-Minolta magicolor 2400W for \$300, it caught my interest. My venerable Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 970CSe inkjet printer was starting to jam a lot, and its rubber rollers looked a bit cracked. So I took the plunge and bought a magicolor 2400W.

The magicolor 2400W is a four-color (cyan, magenta, yellow, black) laser printer, which happens to be PC Magazine's top choice for a personal laser printer. What's a personal laser printer? It's one designed for a home or small office environment, and lacks any networking capabilities. In this case, the only input connection is a USB 2.0 port. A heavy-gauge power cord is the only other cable used.

Toner cartridges are shipped installed, so all you have to do to get the printer ready to use is remove some tape used to hold various pieces in place during shipment, open the output tray, and place some paper in the supply tray. Plug in the cables, install the printer driver and you're ready to print.

A word of caution: don't use paper designed for inkjet printers. Inkjet paper is often coated to hold ink while it dries, and you don't want the coating to come off on the printer's drum. It proved quite challenging to find glossy photo paper, since virtually all photo paper nowadays is made for inkjets. Finally, after a service call to Konica-Minolta, I located a laser photo paper from NCR that was certified to work with Konica-Minolta printers. NCR High Gloss Photo Paper for Color Laser Printers seems to get the best possible photos from the printer. It's available directly from Konica-Minolta via their web site - <https://www.q-shopusa.com/scripts/wgate/zc20/~f1N0YXR1PTMxNjk2LjAwMy4wMi4wNA==?~okcode=SEAR&~target=_top&~forcetarget=yes>. The only other color laser photo paper I found was by Xerox, but it's a bit too thick for the printer, and the printer's rollers tend to crease the paper.

So how does the magicolor 2400W work? Very well for some things, not so well for others. Lasers have always excelled at printing well-formed text, and the magicolor 2400W is no exception. I compared business cards I had printed with my Hewlett-Packard printer to the same design printed with the magicolor 2400W, and the text from the latter was clearly superior. However, on the same card, the color graphic on the inkjet version was much clearer, although not as bright. Full-page color photos with the magicolor 2400W are good, but not as good as my Hewlett-Packard inkjet printer. But (and this was the main reason for my choice), the overall printing speed, for both color and black and white documents, was much faster with the magicolor 2400W. My wife and I are both educators, and we print out a lot of materials for our students. The magicolor 2400W does that faster. If I really need a first-class printed photo, I can

always upload it to an online printing service (I use Sam's Club), where they will print it on a professional photo printer for a very small sum (Sam's currently charges 17¢ for a 4 by 6 print). The finished print can be picked up at the local store of your choice. Their prints are superb, although I sometimes think they try to adjust colors a little. And the prints from the magicolor 2400W are good enough when I need a print immediately.

Color from a laser printer is a bit different from an inkjet. The colors are dependent only on the toner, and tend to be brighter than an inkjet's, especially on cheap bond paper. Moving up to higher quality paper can mean the inkjet will surpass the laser. Both Office Depot and OfficeMax offer color laser paper that produces a beautiful output for a lot less money than photo paper.


I ran into trouble when I tried to upgrade the printer driver. After I installed it, the computer would not recognize the printer. I e-mailed the online tech support, but got little help. Finally, in the face of my increasingly critical comments about the quality of support I was getting, Konica-Minolta assigned a technician to help me. He was very knowledgeable, and stepped me through the process needed to remove the old driver and install the new driver. So now the printer works fine, again. I fault Konica-Minolta's install wizard for making me go to all that trouble and suffer poor printer performance for several weeks.

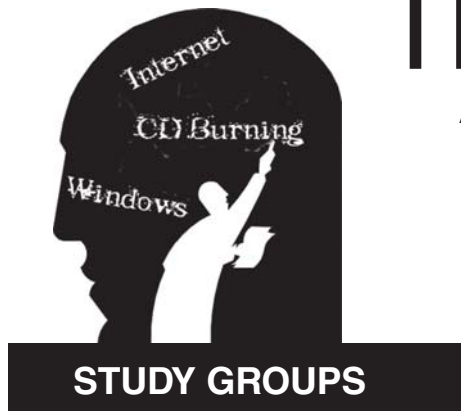
The magicolor 2400W will print envelopes, but it makes you remove the letter-sized paper first and insert the envelopes in the print tray by themselves. The printer tends to crease the envelopes when it pulls them through its print path, so be sure you use heavy-duty envelopes. The printer driver shows the wrong alignment for envelopes in the tray, unless you like to have your letters open at the bottom of the envelope.

The magicolor 2400W is not a duplex printer, but it makes it easy to print on the front and back of pages. Click the Duplex/Booklet button in the printer properties dialog box, and the printer will print the odd pages, along with a guide sheet that helps you complete the duplex printing process. Then you insert the printed pages with the blank side up (the guide sheet instructs you how to do this) and click Proceed on the window that pops up on your screen. The result is an excellent copy of the document printed front and back. I think it's almost as fast as a true duplex printer; and much faster than the duplex feature built into my Hewlett-Packard inkjet printer. That makes you wait 30 seconds between pages while the ink dries.

The bottom line: within its design parameters, the Konica-Minolta magicolor 2400W is an excellent and very inexpensive color laser printer that is fast, prints fabulous text, decent color graphics, and acceptable photos. That's precisely the feature set I wanted, but if your interest is more oriented towards printing fabulous color photos, a good inkjet printer is a better choice.

February 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Class 4 of 6 *PRR* Senior Comp. Basic Intro To Windows 10:00 AM - Noon Class 4 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 PM.	2 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM. (a/r) HGSI 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Net Web Development 7 - 9 PM.	3 *PRR* Small Business Server 2003 8 - 10 A.M. Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM. *PRR* PC Alameda Magazine Adobe PDF 7 - 9 PM.	4 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 PM.
5	6 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows 1 - 1 - 3 P.M. Genealogy 7 - 9 PM.	7 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows II - 10 - Noon Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows I - 1:30 - 3:30 PM. BOD 6:30 PM. Microsoft Excel Intermediate 7 - 9 PM. Microsoft Word 2000/3 7 - 9 PM.	8 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 6 *PRR* Senior Comp. Basic Intro To Windows 10:00 AM - Noon Class 5 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 PM. Home Page Jumpstart 5:30 - 7 PM.	9 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM.	10 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM.	11 *PRR* Intro. to Photo Editing 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Intro. to Photo Editing 10 A.M. - Noon Commodore 1 - 4 PM.
12 Class 1 of 2 *PRR* Internet Jumpstart 2 - 5 PM.	13 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows I - 1 - 3 P.M. General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 PM. Norris Convention Center R.O.B. Presenter.	14 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows II - 10 - Noon Class 4 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows I - 1:30 - 3:30 PM. Microsoft Word 2000/3 7 - 9 PM. Microsoft Excel Intermediate 7 - 9 PM.	15 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Senior Comp. Basic Intro To Windows 10:00 AM - Noon Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 PM.	16 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 7 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM.	17 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 7 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM.	18 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 PM.
19	20 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon 	21 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows I - 1:30 - 3:30 PM. Microsoft Word 2000/3 7 - 9 PM. Microsoft Excel Intermediate 7 - 9 PM.	22 (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 PM.	23 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 8 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM.	24 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 8 of 8 *PRR* Photoshoph 7 Class B 1 - 5 PM.	25 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 PM.
26 Class 2 of 2 *PRR* Internet Jumpstart 2 - 5 PM.	27 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon CorelDRAW 12 6 - 8 PM.	28 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Sr. Comp. Intro to Windows I - 1:30 - 3:30 PM. Microsoft Word 2000/3 7 - 9 PM. Microsoft Excel Intermediate 7 - 9 PM.			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

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, MCDDBA, 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 ★★ ★★

Advanced Access Study Group

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

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

When: Fourth Thursday, 7-9pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★★ ★

C/C ++ Study Group

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

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

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

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

When: First and Third Saturday, 2:30 pm

Where: Learning Center.

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

Commodore Users of SA

Contact: Diana Jones
830-303-1220

When: Second Saturday, 1-4 pm

Where: Learning Center.

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

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

Power Internet Study Group

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 Center, 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: ★

New Class Starting

Student Practice Lab - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

FREE CLASSES

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

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

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolute-power-computing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on <APCORETRO@yahooogroups.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

<stephentechjr@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 - Basic

This class is intended for people who want to do significant projects or develop skills for the workplace. As such it moves at fairly brisk pace and includes homework assignments. Students will become familiar with Excel 2000's basic functionality, menus, toolbars, icons and shortcut keys. Learn how to create, format, save and print an Excel spreadsheet. Also, understand and use formulas, work with worksheets and workbooks, and learn the basic productivity elements of Excel. The Excel 2000 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 ★ - ★★★★★

Excel 2000 Class - Intermediate

This class is follow-on to the Excel Basics Class and is intended people who want to do significant projects or develop skills for the workplace. It covers conditional formatting, absolute addressing, sorting, subtotaling, filtering, charting, functions and other subjects as time permits. The Excel 2000 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 Feb., June and Oct. 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 ★

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Media Center

Learn all about computers with hundreds of books and dozens of video tapes. Enjoy our large selection of techno-fiction.

A comfortable seating area is available.

Call (210) 736-0700

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, Jan. 21; 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 ★ - ★★★

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.

New Class Starting

Student Practice Lab - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

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.

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: ★

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

Keyboarding/Typing
Basic Computer Skills
Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour

\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour

\$150 per student for 10 hours

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

Call or visit the Learning Center to register

(210) 736-0080

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: ★★

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 Introduction 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; Jan 11, 18, 25, Feb 1, 8, 15; 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

Senior Comp Introduction 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.

Choice of two class sessions:

When: 6 weeks, Mondays Jan 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb 6, 13; 1 to 3 pm

Instructor: Don Robinson

OR

When: 6 weeks, Tuesdays Jan 24, 31, Feb 7, 14, 21, 28; 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Instructor: Audrey Henkin

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

Senior Comp Introduction 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 Jan 10, 17, 24, 31, Feb 7, 14; 10 am to noon

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

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 Jan 11, 18, 25, Feb 1, 8, 15; 1 to 3 pm

Instructor: Don Robinson

Where: Learning Center

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

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

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)

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

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

