

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

ONLINE COMPUTING ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

May 2006

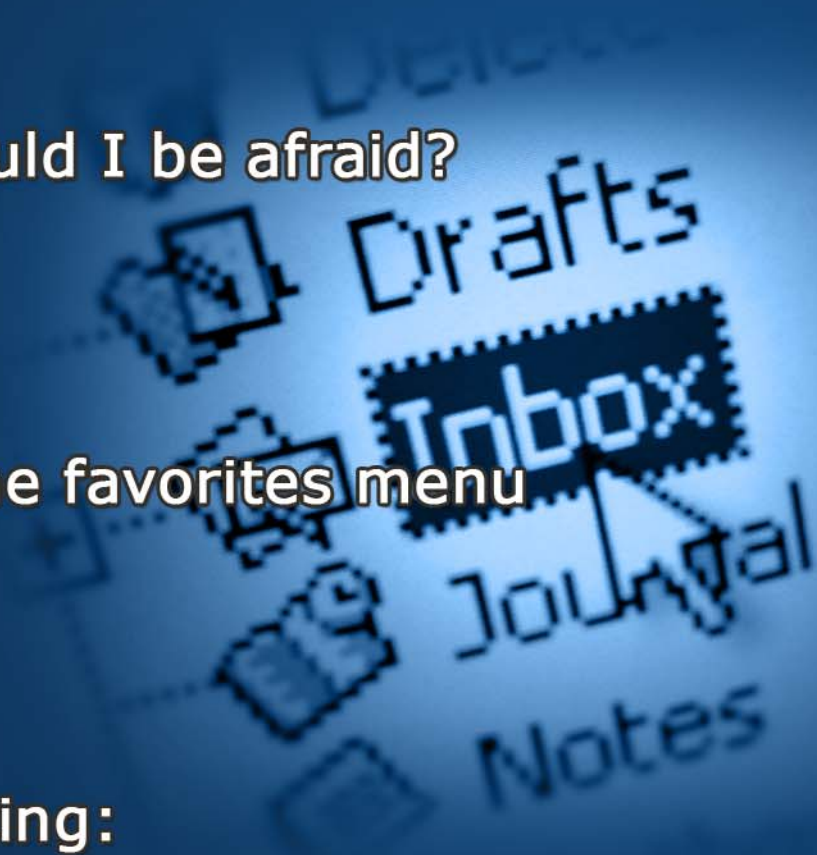
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Alamo PC Organization

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:

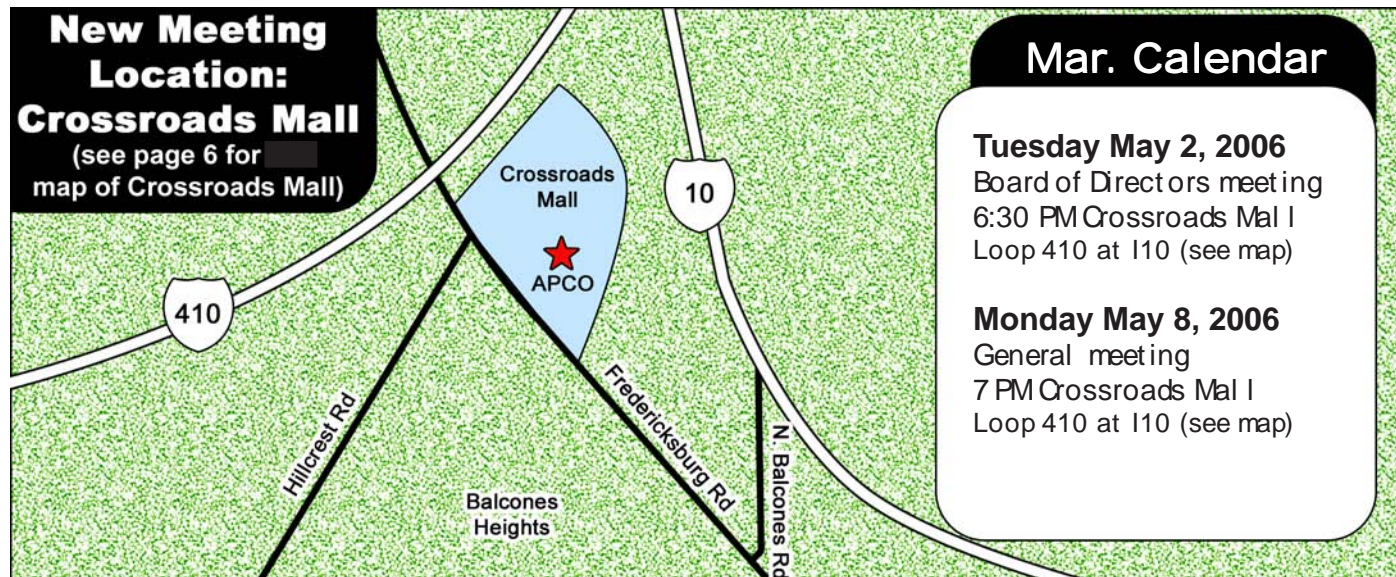
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



Mar. Calendar

Tuesday May 2, 2006
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday May 8, 2006
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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PC Alamode

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PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 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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PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS: Please check with the editor regarding submitting ads. **Deadline for submissions is the first of the month preceding publication.** e-mail to:

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Ad rates effective January 2005

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Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

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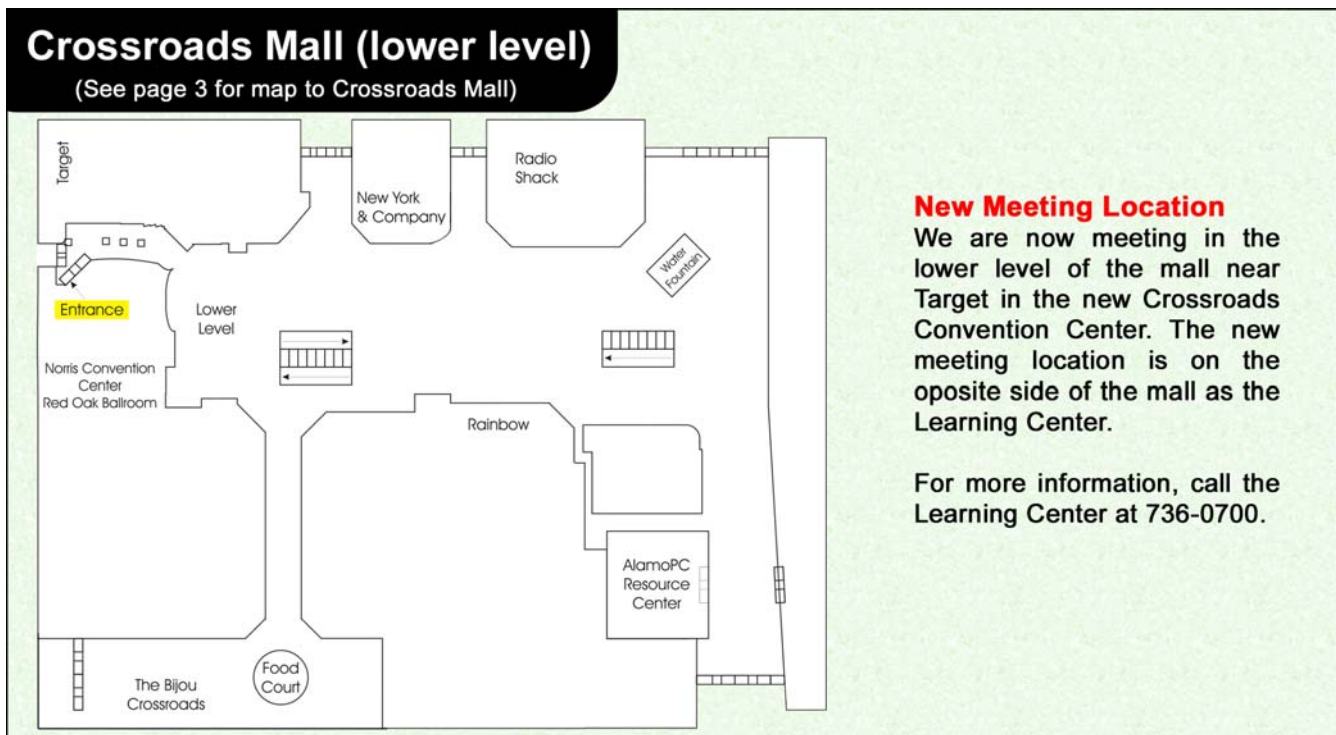
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

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FAX 736-0032

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



PC Alamode Links List



Repro Depot

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

A cool collection of retro fabrics for the do-it-yourself sewer.



Yahoo! Launch

<<http://music.yahoo.com/>>

Get free music streamed to your desktop from dozens of genera. Also music videos and more.



New Content

There are several new additions to this month's PC Alamode. On page 12, Funny Bytes is taking the place of the Geeky Gourmet. Funny Bytes will feature technology cartoons by artists such as Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen. You will also notice a new column.

Business Solutions on page 22 covers business topics using Microsoft Access. James Duncan is a CPA and a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City. This month, James writes about placing a cursor in a text box in Access.

Learning Center Section

The Help Numbers portion of the Learning Center Section has been updated. Take a look at the topics our members will support. All you have to do is e-mail or call your questions for member-to-member support. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Linda Bianchi.

It has been several issues since the PC Alamode has featured any new classified ads. Please remember, members may place an unlimited number of classified ads to help sell, buy or trade any computer-related items. There is no charge for this service, so please take advantage!

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

"May I Please Have Your Attention!"

Since becoming President in October 2004, I have made an almost monthly appeal for renewed memberships, volunteers, and the filling of vacant positions on the Alamo PC Organization's board of directors. I have also addressed the monthly declining membership and highlighted the fact that many other groups are also having similar problems. But, the appeals have appeared to fall on closed ears, as little has changed.

I used the Coastal Area Users Group (CAUG) as a comparative example in several of my previous President's Messages (PMYrMo):

PM0506> "CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS, By David Burke, Pres CAUG (written in late 2004). For ten plus years I have served as president ... Recently we have lost several of our officers to illness and burn out ... I like to call the board, chair, SIG leaders etc. the 'CAUG Action team'", as these are by far the hardest working CAUG volunteers. The reason for this open letter is our action team is fast collapsing. CAUG needs a webmaster, program chairperson, secretary, and membership person just for a start. It also needs someone to assume the position of President ... The Vice president and Treasurer [husband and wife fill the respective positions - WLK] are soon going to retire and are already shopping for their retirement location. That would leave me and one other as a team of two. That will just not work. If we do not get some folks to offer to take these positions I am afraid CAUG will fold. I will wait till December and if at that time we do not have, at the very least a membership chair and secretary, I will resign from CAUG reluctantly and with a very heavy heart."

PM0507> "LIFE SUPPORT, By David Burke, Past Pres CAUG (written in May 2005). This is an important appeal...." The first of this year I stepped down as president, I did so for a number of reasons, the least of which having served for ten and a half years, I was positive one of our caring, responsible members would step in to take over. Much to my surprise and the boards' nerves, that has not happened ... CAUG desperately needs a President, Membership, and Program person ... So it was decided by the board (May BOD meeting), that I would write this one last plea for volunteers, and if none step up by our July social, we the board (I am on the board as past president and registered agent with the IRS and State Secretary of Texas even though I have stepped down as president) will put CAUG on 'Life Support' until such time we get members willing to take some of these key offices ... we will need members even more if we go to life support, because then all that will be keeping this organization alive are your dues, which for benefit received ... is a very meager amount, have you been to the gas station or grocery lately?"

PM0509> "Starting effective August 2005, the Board of Directors of the Coastal Area User's Group (CAUG) have decided to go the 'life support mode.' Since there were no takers for vacant officer positions to this date, despite repeated pleadings by the board, the decision was made...."

PM0510> "Recently, we (CAUG) have had to restructure how general meetings are held, and some have taken that to indicate CAUG is dead or dying. I am here to tell you not hardly, the only thing that can kill CAUG is the lack of support by you the members ... I hope you will send in your dues, volunteer when you can, and keep CAUG going strong. Computers are constantly changing so why would your user group be any different. As long as CAUG has your continued support the changes will be for the better."

CAUG's Latest News

March 2006: "CAUG needs you' but you might be saying 'I barely know how to turn on my computer, how can I help?' Well, come to the general meeting next month and find out. This is a vitally important meeting to attend.

For many years members, Jack and Sharron Hord, have done huge amounts for CAUG ... and a host of others have served as CAUG action team members.

Sharron has been one of CAUG's most vocal supporters, always willing to take the ball and run when and where needed, she has often changed offices to where CAUG needed her most.... Jack will retire in August. What does this mean for CAUG and its members? A LOT!

Jack is VP and sits on the board which consist of five members as incorporated in Texas, and is an integral part of our non profit status. Jack does yeoman service in publishing the newsletter, it is only because of his participation, his church allows us to use their equipment to print the newsletter. Jack runs the Graphics SIG and did I mention he is VP and has duties on the board. Sharron sells our advertising for the newsletter, she has been running membership in one form or the other as long as I can remember, she steps in where we need her ... she works hand in hand with Jack.

I hope by now you understand, I am not asking anyone to follow in their foot steps it would take a great deal of dedication to do so, a lot of time and sacrifice. If we can get 4 members to take over for Jack and Sharron, then I assure you it would be easier on all.

Please, Please attend the next meeting, bring some good Questions as we will have an extended Q&A session, and learn how to help CAUG continue. We have been around since 1982 helping thousands of members over the years, I am praying you will want to be part of that legacy and history. Sincerely, David A Kerr Burke, CEO and Past President."

Note: CAUG Board positions (status as of March 2006) are as follows: President: NEEDED; VP: Filled until Aug 2006; Treasurer: Temp filled until Aug 2008; Membership: NEEDED; Secretary: Filled. Also needed by CAUG is a fill for the Programs position.

As I previously stated (PM0509), "This appears to be a user group traveling the 'down hill' road to the end. I remain hopeful that we are not on that road, but with the interest level being shown in the Bylaws voting [Aug 2005] and the number willing to serve as a director, we may be flirting with traveling that road." With my past appeals appearing to have fallen on closed ears, as little has changed, I must regrettably conclude that we are almost mirroring CAUG and traveling down hill. Only a renewed interest by our members can change where we are, and where we will be in the future.

Continued on page 9

April General Meeting

A post card announcing the April general meeting presenter was mailed to our members. COREL (home based in Canada) was here and showed off the latest versions of CORELDraw X3 and WordPerfect Office X3 (a suite of software). There were lots of valuable prizes and the Secret Code that can get SpecialUserGroups a Deep User Group Discount when buying software from the COREL Web site. Much to the dismay of the BOD we only increased our average monthly general meeting attendance by about sixty (60). Member interest does not appear to be very good.

Before much longer the BOD will have to address changes that the organization will be required to make, if we are going to continue to have an organization. Remember, this is our organization. If you want to have your voice heard, attend a BOD meeting, General Meeting, write or call someone.

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. Please consider attending some of the monthly general meetings where presenters provide information about current and future computer related issues, plus other things that may be related to computers and computer users. By attending, you may also have the opportunity to go home with free product that is often distributed by the presenter and/or receive time limited discounts. If you know of someone who may be able to provide a presentation on computer related issues, let me know. It may be of great value to you and other members of this organization.

Membership renewals

We still are not retaining members at the level we need. If you do not choose to renew, please let us know "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 will be receiving a good Tax Refund and will be rejuvenated enough to come to the next BOD and/or General Meeting.

May Program

David Steward

A program has not been confirmed for May.
Please visit <http://www.alamopc.org>
for more information

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Student Practice Lab

Polish those new skills - 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



Volunteer of the Month

Sandy Brown



News Brief

Cell Phone Helmets for Bikers

Motorcyclists are now able to talk and ride by using a mobile-phone headset for crash helmets, demonstrated at the CeBit trade show. The headsets (full-face, open-face and flip-up), have audio capabilities at speeds up to 62 miles per hour.

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:

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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:

June 10, 2006
more info at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



News Brief

Do the walls have ears?

The experimental system--which consists of a series of sensors under a baby's mattress and a camera mounted on a wall--will monitor a child's heart rate, temperature and movement; stream video of the infant; and even take pictures. Captured data is sent to a parent's PC. In another experiment, researchers have tagged all of the items in a person's house with RFID sensors that effectively will tell a remote computer whether the occupant has moved a spoon or turned on the television. Though it might sound Orwellian in the abstract, the system is being designed to provide relatives or professional caregivers information on the daily habits of the elderly.

Volunteers Wanted

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes. For more info, call 736-0700.



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.

We enjoyed attending the spring FACUG <<http://www.facug.org>> convention. I was told that 149 attendees enjoyed it, down just a bit, and 29 of them were first time attendees. About 44 user groups were represented. As you might have guessed, sponsor support was down, as is the trend. I feel we should stop asking for free meals at these events so sponsors can afford to help us. After a number of conversations with attendees, I am of the opinion that while a few would probably no longer attend if they didn't get the freebies; most still would if the hotel and meal price was kept reasonable. The Tech Session roundtables were always well attended, which gave us a good chance for exposure to some fine products. I was feeling bad at that time, but since it was only an hour drive from my home, I really needed to see my friends. It was well worth the effort.

*A Reminder

Gene and Linda Barlow were at the FACUG convention and Gene did his usual great job. They have long been user group people's best friends and now offer some 18 outstanding products at great prices. They also have bundles that reduce those prices. Check their secure Web site at <<http://www.ugr.com>>. Order code is UGFEB06.

I mentioned to Gene my unorthodox backup plan to put certain files on a flash drive and just copy them to my other machines at times to update certain Eudora and other files, and he told me about a product he offers called SmartSync Pro 2.10 that will automatically sync designated files to other machines once you put them on the flash drive. He also stresses his personal tech support for the products along with the vendor support, but sometimes you must be patient. He described their new home location in south Utah, and it sounds like a dream spot. He said they got tired of "snow" in northern Utah. Their new home is not far from a wealth of beautiful national parks and it rarely snows in St. George.

*Name Your Drive

Have you tried putting a label on a flash drive? Good luck keeping it on! Memorex has introduced TravelDrive ID that has a small LCD screen good for eleven characters to name the drive or its contents, and shows how much memory remains <<http://www.memorex.com/>>. (Click on Travel Drives) Prices start at \$80. I only mentioned this product because it is unique.

*Automate Your Tasks

Make Any Manual Operation on Your PC A Fun Ride with RoboTask 2.4!

NeoWise Software releases RoboTask 2.4, a Windows-based application that automates routine operations. It now offers new features and enhancements suggested by end users. Set up automations right out of the box without the need to create complex scripts or batch files. RoboTask provides a visual interface and over a hundred actions that can be selected and combined into a task in a point-and-click fashion.

RoboTask has acquired a new plug-in for work with a POP3 server and analysis of email messages, and its actions let you easily organize, for example, a server that will receive commands by email. Also added are "Import Registry" and "Export Registry" actions that expand the backup abilities. Customers will discover new actions to synchronize a task with other tasks and processes called "Wait for File", "Wait for Process."

You can automate file operations like copy, move, rename; manage automatic backups; also schedule and run FTP and Web server operations. These jobs may be launched manually, scheduled to run automatically, or can be configured to be triggered by a wide array of changes in your PC.

Read more information at <<http://www.robotask.com/forum>>.

RoboTask 2.4 runs under Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/2003 and costs \$99.95 (USD) for a single-user license. NeoWise will provide a 25% discount to user group members at <<http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=75129&pc=7043J>> (3.26 Mb). Registered customers are entitled to free upgrades to minor versions, considerable discounts on upgrades to major versions, and priority technical support. <<http://www.robotask.com>>.

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



Patent Wars - Friend or Foe?

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

In the United States, a patent for an invention is the grant of a property right to the inventor, issued by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Generally, the term of a new patent is 20 years from the date on which the application for the patent was filed in the United States or, in special cases, from the date an earlier related application was filed, subject to the payment of maintenance fees. U.S. patent grants are effective only within the United States, U.S. territories, and U.S. possessions. Under certain circumstances, patent term extensions or adjustments may be available.

The right conferred by the patent grant is, in the language of the statute and of the grant itself, "the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, or selling" the invention in the United States or "importing" the invention into the United States. What is granted is not the right to make, use, offer for sale, sell or import, but the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, selling or importing the invention. Once a patent is issued, the patentee must enforce the patent without the aid of the US Patent and Trademark Office.

There are three types of patents:

- 1) Utility patents may be granted to anyone who invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, article of manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof;
- 2) Design patents may be granted to anyone who invents a new, original, and ornamental design for an article of manufacture; and
- 3) Plant patents may be granted to anyone who invents or discovers and asexually reproduces any distinct and new variety of plant.

The owner of a patent who thinks his/her patent has been infringed can sue the alleged infringer under the provisions of the US Code. There have been some recent high-profile cases alleging patent infringement.

The patent infringement case involving the Blackberry device received a great deal of publicity recently. NTP is a company based in Arlington, Virginia, and was co-founded by Thomas Campana Jr., an engineer.

In 1990, Campana created a system to send e-mails between computers and wireless devices. Campana died in 2004 and was survived by his wife, who owns a large stake in NTP. NTP alleged that Research in Motion, Ltd. (RIM), was infringing on the NTP patent with RIM's Blackberry device. NTP sued.

The federal judge assigned to the case urged the parties to settle their differences outside of the courthouse. The parties agreed to settle. It is reported that RIM paid NTP \$612.5 million to fully settle any and all claims.

On March 27, 2006, the New York Times reported the US Supreme Court will hear a patent infringement case involving eBay. MercExchange sued eBay in 2001.



"The patent in question surrounds the "Buy It Now" feature that eBay uses to allow processing of transactions for the Web site's fixed-price purchasing option. The Supreme Court will decide whether a federal appeals court was correct in reversing a district court's decision to deny an injunction against eBay's use of the feature. In doing so, it will reconsider a precedent from 1908, which suggested that injunctions were always an appropriate remedy for patent infringement.

Supporting briefs from third parties, including some unlikely ones, have piled up for each side. A pharmaceutical industry trade group filed a brief in support of MercExchange, as did General Electric, Procter & Gamble, the University of California, a group of venture capitalists and the United States government. All argued in favor of injunctions against those who infringe patents.

A brief filed jointly by Oracle, Microsoft and Intel in support of eBay argued that the injunction rule "has transformed patents into a powerful tool for litigation abuse" and "stifles innovation." eBay has hired Juleanna Glover Weiss of the Ashcroft Group, a lobbying firm in Washington founded by John Ashcroft, the former United States attorney general, to help with communications efforts related to the case and patent issues in general.

The issue that is before the Supreme Court is whether the federal circuit court's ruling correctly interpreted federal patent law, which authorizes judges to grant injunctions but does not re-

Continued on page 15

quire them to do. An issue that is germane to this battle is that the holder of the patent may not be actually using the patent in commerce but is "sitting" on the patent. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case after the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, a specialized court in Washington that hears all appeals in patent cases, overturned the lower court's decision and ruled that MercExchange was entitled to an injunction. The appeals court said that injunctions were the "general rule" in patent infringement cases, and should be withheld only in such "rare instances" as "the need to use an invention to protect public health." In his decision to withhold the injunction, the district court judge noted that MercExchange "exists solely to license its patents or sue to enforce its patents, and not to develop or commercialize them."

Patent litigation is expensive. One report estimates that the expenses of a patent infringement case average \$5 million, per side. Due to the volume of litigation, lobbying groups are urging Congress to revise the patent laws. Some observers tend to use the term "reform." The term "revise" is more appropriate. "Hundreds of patent infringement cases are pending against computer software and hardware manufacturers," Emery Simon, a lawyer for the Business Software Alliance trade group, said in testimony last year before the House Judiciary Committee. He argued that the problem has become endemic in the technology industry.

One thing is certain; industry lobbyists will probably persuade Congress to modify current patent laws. Business tends to get its way with the current Congress. Will the end result be beneficial to the consumer? The answer to that question is reserved.

News Brief

No IE7 for Win 2K

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

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Free Bible and Bible Study Software for 2006

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>

When I was in High School I could not wait to get out. I was committed; once I was out I would never go back to school. The thought of taking another class was probably my worst nightmare. But as a few years past my attitude softened and I enrolled in college. Well, I guess something clicked, (or snapped), because I have now attended eight colleges and universities and have degrees from four of them - and I do not think that I am finished yet! After dozens of professors and classes I have learned two very important lessons: first, college is obscenely expensive and second, read the primary sources.

It is amazing how many times honest, trusting folks just plain got it wrong. They would misquote or claim a text said something that was not there because they relied on hearsay rather than go to the source.

As we slip into April much of the world will be celebrating Passover, Good Friday and Easter. Much will be said about these events by the "experts" and much will be printed. But how do you know what they say is correct? Well, this is an excellent time to go to the source and read it for yourself. This is a time when the Internet shines! Thanks to a group of committed individuals who have thankfully made available the original sources we can read it for ourselves without ever leaving home. Read it or download your own copy for free, there are dozens of free Bible translations and study resources available. No registration, no credit card, no banner ads, no cost.

Some of my favorite readings come from the early Church Fathers. Reading such authors as Polycarp, Ignatius, and Irenaeus, can be fascinating reading as they were contemporaries of the Apostles.

Definitely don't miss out on the free Bible software. These programs that I have listed below are excellent and a wealth of information - so go ahead, settle in and read a 2500 year old text and marvel at the fact that they are so readily available and for free. And then when the experts come again, you might just have done something that they have not and that's read the source!

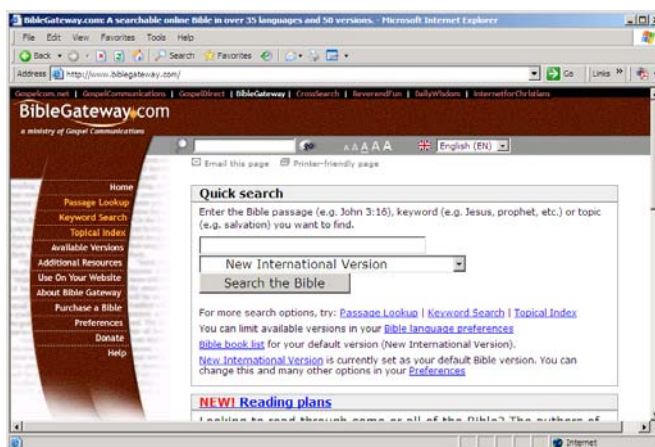
Free Bible and Bible study software:

The Free Christian Software Directory
<http://www.seriousd.com/freeware.htm>

Bible Gateway

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

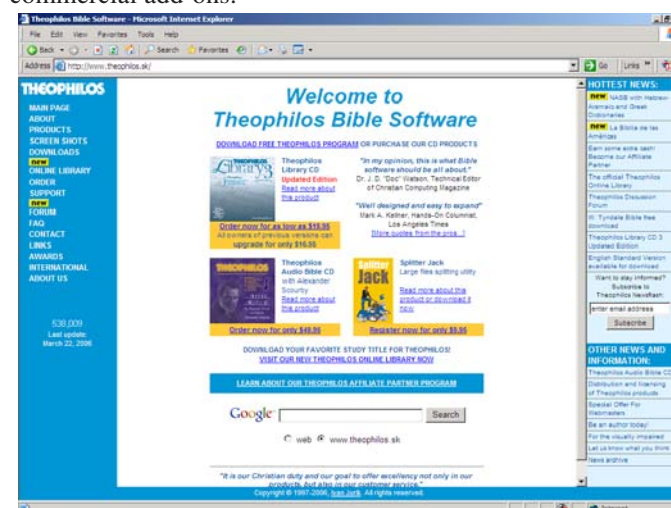
Look it up on-line



Theophilus Bible Software

<http://www.theophilus.sk/>

A polished multimedia presentation with numerous free and commercial add-ons.



Computer Experts



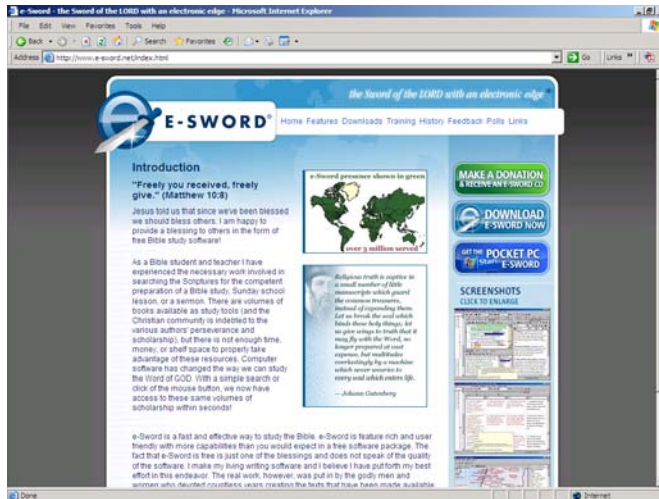
Is your PC acting strange?
 Wonder if it has a virus?
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 since 1995. For PC or Mac
 solutions, Call the experts...

Computer Experts
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e-Sword Bible Software

<http://www.e-sword.net/index.html>

Free Bible software with a seemingly endless list of free add-ons including maps and graphics.



Sword Project Bible Software

<http://www.crosswire.org/sword/software/biblecs/index.jsp>

This free software is covered by the GNU Public License and has a terrific list of free and commercial add-ons.



Bible Plus by Contact Plus Corporation

<http://www.contactplus.com/products/freestuff/bibleplus.htm>

If you want a small, simple and quick program to just look up a verse then this free utility if for you. While you are there, also check out some of the other products, both free and commercial, Stats is one of my favorites.

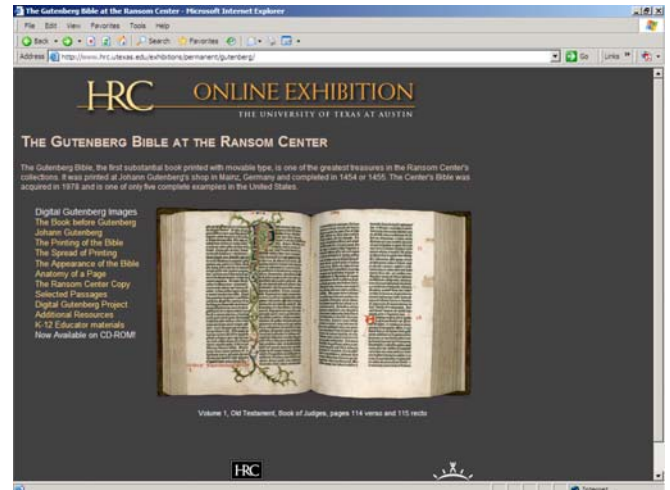
Bible Database

http://bibledatabase.com/free_bible_software.htm

Christian Web Hosting + FREE Bibles, Bible Study Software

The Gutenberg Bible

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/gutenberg/>
The first book printed with movable type 1454-55



Got a Question?

Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry

<http://www.carm.org/>

Answers to some tough questions.



Volunteers Wanted

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Continued on page 18.

Probe Ministries

<http://www.probe.org/>

Lots of answers to common and some uncommon questions.



Christian Research Institute

<http://www.equip.org>

Home of The Bible Answer Man radio program.



Reasoning from the Scriptures

<http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/>

Dr. Ron Rhodes, some tough questions answered.

Stand to Reason

<http://str.org/index.htm>

Greg Koukl and Stand to Reason radio program.



The Early Church Fathers at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library at Calvin College

<http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/>

Read the writings of the early Church Fathers and other figures in Church history

Early Church On-Line Encyclopedia

<http://www2.evansville.edu/ecoleweb>

“Early Church On-Line Encyclopedia (Ecole) Initiative is a cooperative effort on the part of scholars across the internet to establish a hypertext encyclopedia of early Church history (to the Reformation) on the World-Wide Web.”

Related Links

Free Koran

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

Get a free copy of the Koran mailed to your door. This service is intended only for non-Muslims. Practicing Muslims should ask a local mosque for a copy of the Koran.

Koran software

<http://www.yildun.com/quran.html>

The Koran (Holy Qur'an) software is beautifully animated for Windows 95/98/2000/NT; it is FREE for use in the name of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala.

Jewish virtual library

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

A collection of resources including The Tanakh, glossary, history of Israel and a bookstore.



Choosing an Antivirus Program



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 56.

When it comes to looking for a good antivirus most people go with what they know, or what their friend or neighbor knows. Times have really changed from when there were only two or three programs to choose from when selecting an antivirus program. Times have also changed in respect to the amount of viruses that they are out there these days. In a report by Sophos Labs, maker of antivirus solutions for businesses, it was reported that new threats increased by 48% in 2005 over the previous year and that 1 out of 44 emails contained a virus. Sophos has some good information regarding viruses and malware which you can read online at <http://www.sophos.com/sophos/docs/eng/comviro/viru_ben.pdf>

In today's world of computing weather you connect to Internet or not, dial-up or broadband, the issue is not weather or not you need an antivirus program but which one to choose. I have seen many computer users faced with the problem of an ineffective, disabled or inadequate antivirus program. If you've searched for "the best antivirus" online you are invited to an onslaught of information, some with an obvious bias towards one product or another. How do you cut through the sales pitches and mumbo jumbo? A little detective work may help in the hunt for your next antivirus program.

Unfortunately some of the better independent reports on antivirus programs are buried deep in the bowls of the Internet and some want you to pay for a subscription to their reports. Virus Bulletin is one mark most AV venders strive for to market their wares. Their latest summary can be found here <<http://www.virusbtn.com/vb100/archive/results?display=summary>>

ICA Labs is another independent study group and you can view their latest test here <[https://www.icsalabs.com/icsa/topic.php?tid=d538\\$5b726a90-9fc5fd83\\$c47c-869278e7](https://www.icsalabs.com/icsa/topic.php?tid=d538$5b726a90-9fc5fd83$c47c-869278e7)>

These reports only tell you if the software vendor has passed their test and not any detailed information about the programs functionality or features. A company out of Austria called AV Comparatives has produced an impressive report <http://www.av-comparatives.org/seiten/ergebnisse_2006_02.php>. While it still does not talk about functionality or features it gives a breakdown as to what the programs detection rates are in the different virus categories.

If you are searching online using Google you can skip the "Sponsored Links". At the top and to the right side, these are links that advertisers pay to have included in searches. While that isn't necessarily a bad thing I find that anybody can pay to have their ad placed at the top of the search results list. After clicking on some of these links I find their claims to way off the mark and obviously bias. Another problem I find is that many reviewers only review the names you already heard of – Symantec, McAfee, TrendMicro and so forth and don't review some of the up and comers that have gained notoriety by offering better detection rates and using fewer resources. Much of this is probably due to the fact that reviewers are looking for the all-in-one security suite programs. However most experts



will tell you that you should look for the "best of the breeds" – meaning a separate and independent antivirus, antispysware and firewall. Some pure breed antivirus programs have incorporated malware scanning into the virus scanner. While this is a good thing it is still highly recommended that you have a separate malware or spyware scanner in your arsenal.

Here are some places you might look to investigate your next antivirus program:

<<http://antivirus.about.com/od/antivirussoftwarereviews/>>

<<http://www.software-antivirus.com/>>

<<http://www.firewallguide.com/anti-virus.htm>>

<http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6600_7-6379091-1.html?tag=cnetfd.sd>

Just a few words on the free antivirus programs that are available. Free is good in most cases but from what I have read these programs always rank at or near the bottom of most independent tests if they rank at all. So yes, you get what you pay for.

All in all it is up to you as to what antivirus program you use. The "What to look for" features in an antivirus program are all covered by any antivirus program that I know of. But for the record here they are:

Starts automatically with Windows

Updates automatically or prompts you to update it

Scans incoming and outgoing emails

Scans real time (meaning it is scanning as activity is happening, i.e. Internet downloads)

On demand scanning (gives you the opportunity to scan files and folders at your discretion)

On access scanning (scans files as they are accessed)

Antivirus software - don't compute without it.



Windows XP, Part XII

Win9x/Me/XP Computer tips & tricks

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.

Editor's note: Last month I accidentally ran *Keyboarding* by mistake, interrupting the *Windows XP* series. Here is what should have run in April. My apologies to Bill Beverley.

Phishing is computer slang for attacks where criminals pretend to be a bank or other institution. They try to trick you into giving up your password and user name. The criminals send you a spam e-mail. When you open the e-mail, a small program called a script runs on your computer. Thus, you only need to open the e-mail; there is no attachment.

The scripting program goes to your HOSTS file located deep in your computer. The actual path in WinXP is: C:\Windows\System32\Drivers\Etc\HOSTS. It enters your bank's Web address, for instance, www.YourBank.com, in the HOSTS file. It also enters an Internet Protocol (IP) number for the criminal's address.

The next time you surf to your bank and enter that address, or any other address, the browser first goes to the HOSTS file to find the IP number. If the IP isn't there, it goes to a special computer on the Internet to find the number. However, the criminal(s) have put your bank's address in the HOSTS file, along with their IP number. As a result you are automatically sent to that IP number, which is the criminal's computer. It looks like the bank's Web site so you enter your user name and password. Now the criminals have the information they need to enter your account and steal your money.

However, you can protect yourself. Some anti-virus programs guard against phishing. To be safe, you must disable your computer's scripting ability. In WinXP, click Start, My Computer, Tools, Folder Options, and select the File Types tab. Next click File Types, scroll to and click VBScript Script File, then click Advanced. In the Actions box, click Open and click Remove. If you need to restore scripting, click New and put "Open" in the Action box. In the next box, click Browse, find wscript.exe in C:\Windows\System32, and double-click it. In Win ME/2000, the procedure is similar. If you need to restore scripting in WinME, the wscript.exe file is in C:\Windows. In Win98, you must disable Windows Scripting Host, click Start, Settings, Control Panel, double-click Add/Remove Programs, select the Windows Setup tab, double-click Accessories, and click the box next to Windows Scripting Host to deselect it. Finally click OK, Apply, OK.

Add-ons and Hijackers

Win XP Service Pack 2 has a new ability to stop Web sites from sneaking software onto your computer. But unfortunately, Internet Explorer (IE) can't tell the good downloads from the bad ones, therefore it leaves the burden of proof to you. But, if you see a message that IE has blocked a program and you haven't requested a download, the chances are that the site is trying to harm you. Don't try to thwart the warning and download the add-on or ActiveX program. If a bad add-on creeps into your computer, you're not completely out of luck. IE's Add-on Manager lets you disable it. To see all the add-on programs installed in IE and remove any that you know are bad, follow these steps. First, choose Manage Add-ons from IE's Tools menu. The Manage Add-ons window

appears, showing all add-ons used by the currently viewed page. Next click the Add-on that gives you trouble and choose Disable. Now repeat the process for each add-on you don't want and then click the OK button. You probably need to restart IE for the change to take effect. Not all add-ons are bad. Many good ones let you play movies, hear sounds, or view special content on a Web site. Don't delete an add-on simply because it's listed in the Add-on Manager. On the rare instance that disabling an add-on prevents a page from loading, click that add-on's name in the second step of the preceding ones and click the Enable button to return it to working order. Although IE's Add-on Manager disables add-ons fairly easily, it's quite difficult to entirely remove them. Look for the add-on's name in your Control Panel's Add or Remove Programs area. If it's listed, you can remove it just like any other program. Unfortunately, there's no sure way of telling how to tell the good add-ons from the bad ones. But, the name listed under Publisher provides one clue. The best way is to avoid being hijacked in the first place is by not installing any files/programs IE has tried to block from your computer.

Print Screen Button

To print a copy of the window on your computer, first, press the Print Screen key. It is in the upper right of your keyboard. You'll notice that nothing seems to happen at this time, although it would print if you were using DOS. But, you have actually taken a picture of the screen and stored it in the computer. Next, open a blank document in a word processor, or use Wordpad, which is part of Windows, by clicking Start, All Programs, Accessories, Wordpad, and then press Ctrl+V, which is the paste command. The picture of your screen appears in the word processor. Now save the document. This process works less well if you have more than one window on your screen. In that case, the result is hard to read. But you can avoid that problem by clicking Alt+Print Screen and only the active window will be copied by this command. You can also paste the picture into a graphics program. That allows you to edit the picture. Windows includes a limited graphics program, Paint. To find it, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, and Paint.

Screen Saver

You don't need software to put a personal picture on your computer as a Window Saver. WinXP/Me let you use your photos as screen savers. To do this change, click Start, Control Panel, double-click Display, select the Screen Saver tab, select My Pictures Slideshow in XP, or My Pictures Screen Saver in ME, from the menu box under "Screen saver." Now click the Settings button next to the menu box. Under "Use pictures in this

folder," you should click the Browse button and then find and select the folder that you used for your photos. At this point you must click OK and then click the next OK. You should be back to the Screen Saver tab again. To test your new screen saver, click the Preview button. Your screen saver will run on the monitor representation until you press a key or move the mouse. If you're satisfied with your new screen saver, click OK.

If you're unhappy with it, click the Settings button. There you can adjust the speed of the slide show. You can also set the size of the slides and add transitions to it. You can share your creation with your family. One way is to e-mail photos in bulk to them along with the above instructions. But there are some programs that help simplify this process. One such program is Easy ScreenSaver Studio (\$50). It lets you create a slide show with music and flashy transitions. Then you can e-mail it as a complete screen saver. Other, similar programs include Active ScreenSaver Builder (\$30) and SCR Builder (\$20). If you would like to build a custom slide show, but you don't have photos, check out WebShots. This site boasts millions of photos. You can get to the photos with a free membership. WebShots also has tools to turn photos into slide shows and wallpaper. The extra tools come with a premium membership at \$30 per year.

Speech Recognition

Speech recognition isn't part of WinXP. However, some computer manufacturers install Microsoft's speech recognition software with XP. This software will turn spoken words into text. You can also execute commands by voice. To find out if the speech software is on your computer, click Start, Control Panel, and then double-click the Speech icon. If there's a Speech Recognition tab, it's already installed. You can "train" the software from this dialog box. If it isn't on your computer, you have two options. First, you can buy Microsoft Plus! for WinXP. You'll find this software at your local computer store for about \$30. Your other choice is to purchase Microsoft Office or Microsoft Word. The version you need is XP 2002 or 2003. A full version of Word is about \$200. Full versions of Office start around \$400. If you're a student or teacher, look for the Academic version of Office. It's about \$150. Learn more from Microsoft.

To make matters more confusing, Office and Word don't always install speech recognition. You must opt to install it. To install the speech recognition component in Word, click Tools, Speech, and click Yes when asked if you want to install the speech software. Have your Office/Word disk handy because you'll probably be prompted to use it. If Speech isn't on the Tools menu, you must use your Office/Word disk. Select Add or Remove Features, click Next, click "Choose advanced customization of applications," click Next again, click Office Shared Features, Alternative User Input, click the arrow beside "Speech," select "Run from My Computer," and finally click Update. After the installation is complete, click Tools, Speech to "train" the software. You will be given a passage to read.

This reading will help it learn your particular speech patterns and pronunciation. A profile must be created for each user on the computer. When you train the software, speak as you normally would because over or under enunciation will cause problems. Keep in mind that speech recognition is far from perfect. You'll have to make lots of corrections when first using it. But you can do more training with the software to increase accuracy in time. Also, you need a good microphone with the noise-canceling headset. Make sure you read the packaging to ensure it is suitable for speech recognition. Microsoft recommends at least 128MB of RAM and a 400MHz computer, but it is recommended that you have a minimum of 512MB of RAM and at least a 1.5MHz processor.

When your computer's having problems, System Restore provides a magical way to go back in time to when your computer was performing without difficulty. System Restore works by taking a daily snapshot of your computer's settings as well as an automatic snapshot before you install a new computer part that may become a problem. The problem is finding the magic restore point that corrects all of the problems with your operating system.

WinXP simply slaps a date onto its automated System Restore points along with the boring name System Checkpoint. To maximize System Restore's potential, you will need to create your own restore points and labels. When your computer's running to maximum performance, you should call up System Restore by going to the Start menu's All Programs menu. From there, pop open the Accessories menu and then the System Tools menu to find System Restore. When the Welcome to System Restore window appears, choose Create a Restore Point and then click Next.

When Windows asks you to describe your new restore point, type in something that helps you remember why you made the restore point. You needn't add the date in your description because Windows automatically gives it a date stamp. Finally, you must click the Create button, and then you're done with this process.



STUDY GROUPS

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



Access 2003: Cursor Placement In a Text Field

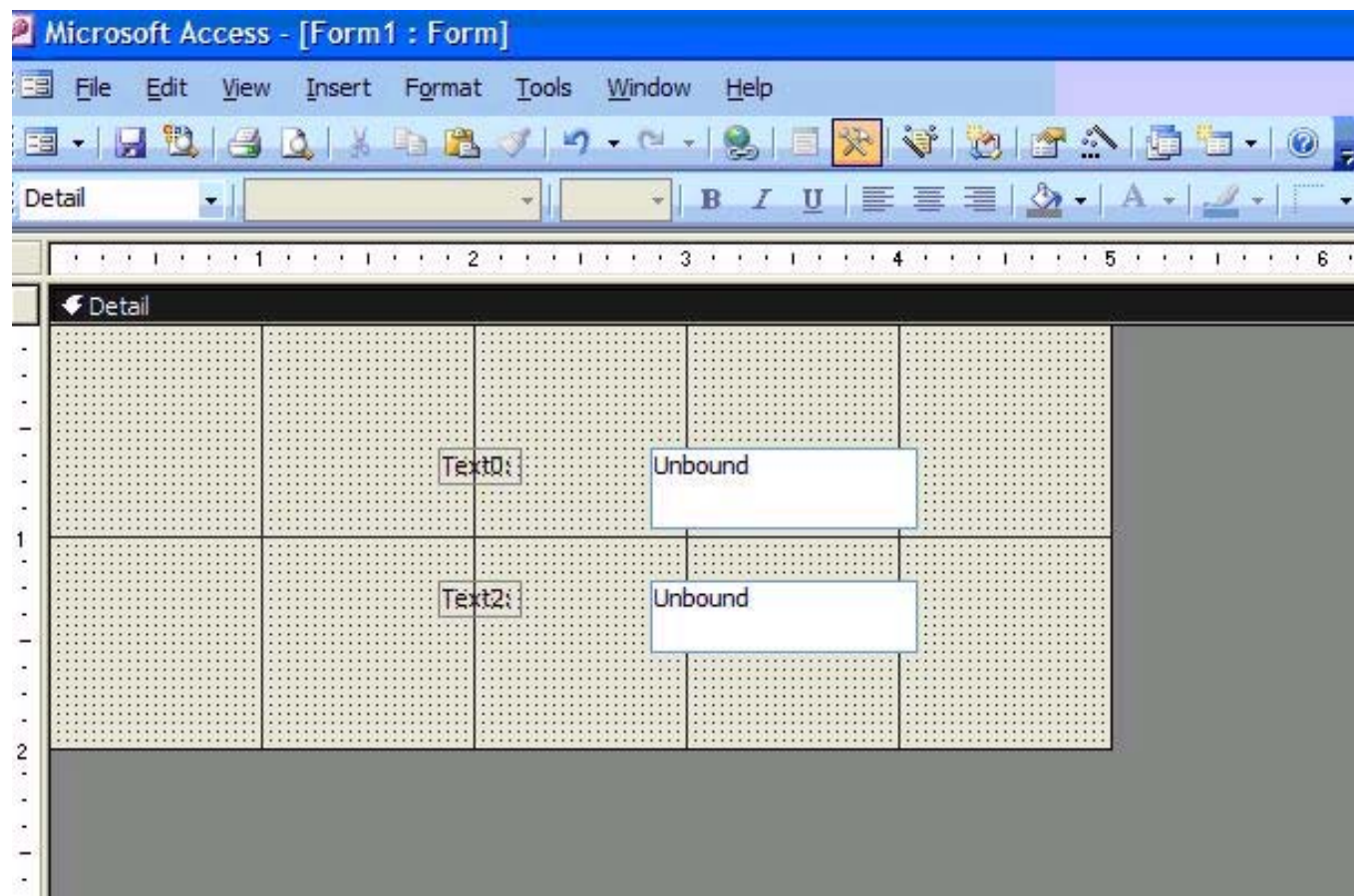
by **James D. Duncan, CPA**

James is a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and an expert in Access and Excel. He can be contacted at bj4duncan@aol.com

I had a program fail after years of use by one of my clients. They changed personnel and the new person had a problem. Actually I had a problem, but that is just semantics. The problem was that the new person likes to mouse into some of the fields and the program was made to tab into the fields. If a text field has "cats" in it and you mouse into the text box, the cursor lands where you place it. It may land between the "a" and the "t". Well, we want it to move to the first position.

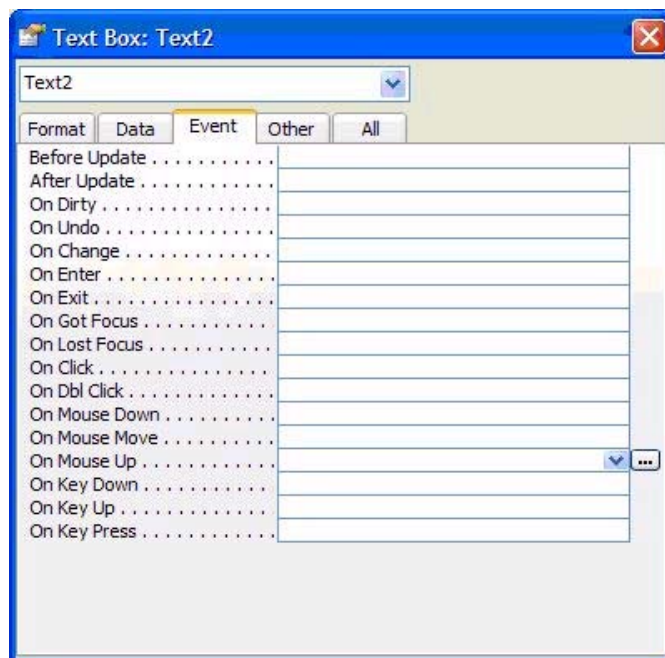
I thought this would be a 5-minute fix. Well, 5 hours is a better guess. I thought I had a routine to do this. It is on one of the 5 or 6 machines I work on. I looked on 3 and gave up. Checked with my normally-reliable programmer friends and they gave me what they liked for the solution. I am presenting to you the end result of this collaboration.

Make a screen with two text boxes and we will begin.

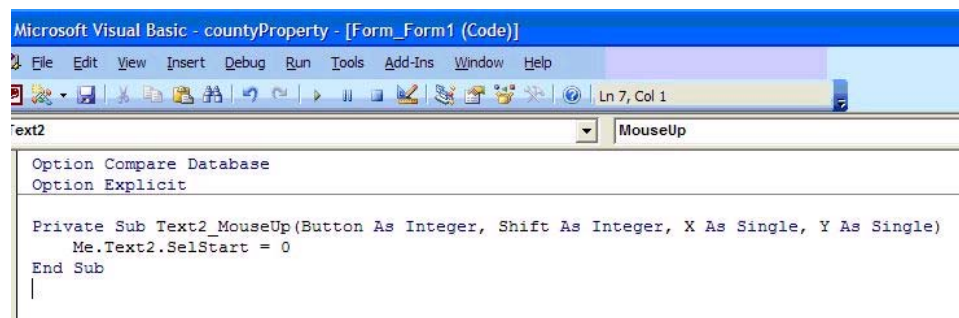


Continued on page 23.

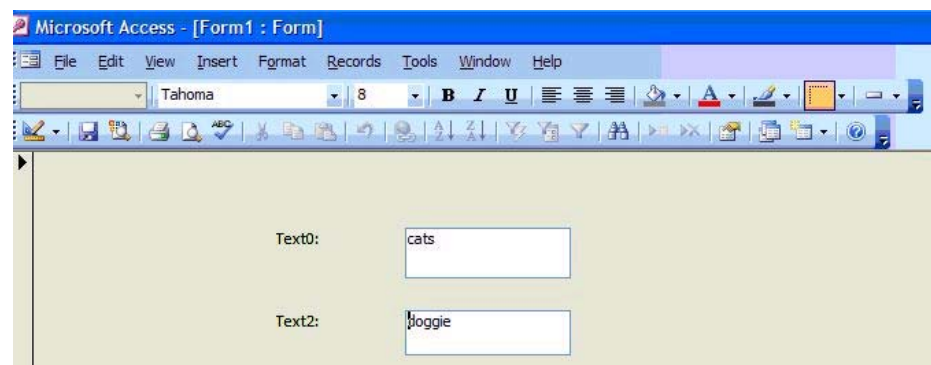
The solution is so simple that it is embarrassing it took so long to figure it out. Open the properties on the second text box. Click on the event tab and move to the “On Mouse Up” and click on the three ellipses on the right.



Then enter “Me.Text2.SelStart = 0” in the body of the procedure. That is all there is to it. When they enter the text box, by tab or mouse, the cursor will move to the right position. The 0 position if you will.



Now run the form and enter text into the two text boxes. Mouse into the first box and it stays where ever you click. Then mouse into the second text box and the cursor will jump to the first position to the left. You cannot see that here (but I bet in some future version you will).



Not a long article but I hope it is helpful to anyone who has the same problem and does not have to spend all the time I did on it. Help and I did not get along very well on this. I just was not looking for the right words. But thanks to my programming friends the appropriate words were found.

As usual, I encourage you to help your friends; you may need their help someday. Help a stranger, you may be a stranger in need of help someday. Volunteer your time to help an agency, you will see what riches you have and just never noticed.



Commercial Spyware & the Xbox 360 Controller for Windows

PowerTalk

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

Shane uses a PC. E-mail him at <shane@vpwn.com.>

Sony BMG Music Entertainment upset a large number of people last November when it started selling copy-protected compact discs that planted "rootkit" software on computers that played them. Sony's CDs installed a program that hid its copy protection tools deep inside your system. Even though Sony agreed to recall nearly 4.7 million of the protected CDs, "Consumers don't have any kind of assurance that other companies aren't going to do the same kind of thing," said Mark Russinovich, a software developer who first discovered the rootkit.

The Entertainment industry has made a big deal over the last several years about the illegal copying and distribution of commercial CDs and DVDs. Recent surveys show that nearly 30% of people in the U.S. have acquired music by burning a CD from a friend. The Entertainment industry responded by developing technology that limits users' ability to make copies of their CDs and DVDs.

From the user standpoint, the demand to make backup and portable copies of purchased media is legitimate. Users also have a legitimate concern when it comes to protecting their personal computers from the installation of software that performs unauthorized actions on their systems. We call that spyware!

Potential laws for regulating spyware have had difficulty differentiating between legitimate and malicious software. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, said the Sony case only proves the need for anti-spyware legislation. "When we started working on spyware, we were not assuming that a major corporation would put spyware onto their customers' computers," Lofgren told CNET News.com. "This would fall in the category of behavior that was criminal under my bill...If they knew it was a felony, they probably would have been deterred."

Russinovich believes Sony has become a good example of what not to do. "I think other companies will look at this and say, 'We shouldn't try to hide things from the consumer, even in the interest of protecting content,'" he said. "I think they'll say, 'We need to be transparent about what we're doing, otherwise it's going to come back and bite us.'"

Several in the industry came together to provide software protection which certifies associated downloads to only do what they say they'll do. To obtain a "Trusted Download Program certification," any software must disclose what user settings are changed on a computer, what kind of user behavior is monitored or tracked, and must contain consent for the download.

Xbox 360 Controller for Windows

Most PC games can be played with the keyboard and mouse, but that's a pain. There are lots of games that would benefit from the use of a really good game pad. The problem has been that there's no standard for PC game controllers. Game developers don't know what to program for: what control sticks are available, how many buttons are there, etc. As a result, even if you buy a game pad for your PC, you'll probably have to remap the controls in most of the games you buy. Sometimes this doesn't even work!

Microsoft wants to change all that. The new Xbox 360's wired controller plugs right into a USB port and works with any Windows XP PC. It can even be purchased with a driver disk for Windows XP installation and configuration.



The Xbox 360 controller looks a lot like the "Controller S" for the original Xbox. There are two analog thumb sticks that can be "clicked down" as buttons and the digital 8-way D-pad is in about the same location, too. The Start and Back buttons have been moved from beneath the left thumb stick to the center. The four color-coded A-B-X-Y are in the same location. There's also a big silver button in the middle. The white and black buttons have been moved up top, where they have become shoulder "bumper" buttons. Accompanying the bumper buttons are left and right analog triggers. Extending from the top is a gray 9-foot cord with the same breakaway feature found on Xbox controllers, giving the cord a stiff tug will snap apart the breakaway plug before it yanks your computer off the desk. The bottom of the pad has a plug on it for the Xbox Live headset, which can be used as the microphone in Windows.

Even though some stores have been found selling a special packaged version of the wired Xbox 360 controller with the driver disk for \$5 more than the \$39.99 retail for the regular Xbox 360 wired controller, you don't need the driver disk. You can purchase the normal Xbox 360 controller and download the drivers from Windows / Microsoft Update.

PC game makers are already supporting the Microsoft standard, since they are tired of all the different PC game pad layouts and conventions. Big publishers like Electronic Arts and Ubisoft have already pledged their upcoming titles to conform. Others are sure to follow.

The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac You Can't Download Lyrics Either?

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

Have you ever wondered what exactly the lead vocalist is saying as you listen to your favorite song? Have you ever gone on-line to download a printable copy of those lyrics and wished you could save it electronically alongside the rest of your digital media? Apple provided a pretty cool tool with the latest version of iTunes that helps you do just that. It's a tab labeled Lyrics on the Info window. Once you've got your song lyrics, iTunes can even sync them with your iPod.

How do you populate the Lyrics field?

There are several programs out there to allow you to do this. However, the one that caught my eye was a program available at <http://www.pearworks.com> called pearLyrics. It reached v0.6 before being pulled from the web.

What was it and why is it no longer available?

Walter Ritter developed pearLyrics, an application and Dashboard widget. This widget searched the Internet for the lyrics to any song you played in iTunes. It displayed those lyrics on the Dashboard and copied them into the song's iTunes Lyrics field. In December of 2005, Ritter received a letter from Warner Chappell Music telling him to cease-and-desist.

Why did they go after Ritter?

There are several lyric sites out there, but Ritter reported on his site that he'd only heard of one other developer receiving a similar cease-and-desist letter.

During a MacWorld interview, Fred von Lohmann, senior staff attorney at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, was asked the question above. He replied that he felt the letter may be "a dry run for a much broader campaign." They might be building precedent to go after any web sites that publish lyrics.

While many lyrics sites are run by fans, others are mega-sites that generate revenue through advertising on their sites. According to the MacWorld article, the Music Publishers' Association has said it wants to crack down on such mega-sites. In fact, MPA President Lauren Keiser told the BBC that he wants to do more than just shut down those sites. He wants them to fear spending time in jail.

In its letter to Ritter, Warner Chappell specifically cited the Grokster case, where the Supreme Court allowed the entertainment industry to sue providers of peer-to-peer software for the copyright infringements. This means that if you build a tool that someone else uses to commit a crime, you're liable.

What about Fair Use rights?

Fred von Lohmann "put his money where his mouth is" by drafting an open response letter to Warner Chappell Music, warning that the company's actions could violate U.S. copyright law. You can view the letter at <http://www.eff.org/deepinks/archives/004246.php>. In response, Warner Chappell Music issued a statement of their own, which Ritter posted on his website. They claim being "committed to working together to provide consumers a convenient, legal way to find accurate song lyrics."

But as I finish typing this article, pearLyrics is still unavailable for download.

Annoyance

Fix iPhoto's "Y2k" Picture Date Problem

From Mac Annoyances by John Rizzo

The Annoyance: I have some old family photographs that I've scanned and imported into iPhoto 4. Whenever I try to set the date of a single photo to the early 20th century, such as 1926, iPhoto adds a hundred years (as in 2026). I thought all this Y2K stuff had been solved long ago.

The Fix: While not really a Y2K bug, it is a bit of annoying stupidity on iPhoto's part—you would think that iPhoto should know that no one would want to give a photo a date that is more than 20 years ahead of the date shown in System Preferences. Fortunately, this one is easy to fix.

Just tell Mac OS X to use four-digit years instead of two-digit years:

1. Open System Preferences.
2. Go to the International pane.
3. Click the Formats tab.
4. In the Dates section, click the Customize button.
5. Click the checkbox labeled Show Century.

iPhoto now accepts any date you throw at it. There is one side effect to this fix: Mac OS X now displays four-digit years (as in 7/4/2004) in other applications as well, such as Excel spreadsheets.

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Tables

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!

If you've spent just five minutes looking at the World Wide Web you've seen tables in action. Tables are intended to organize data - like a spreadsheet organizes data - but are most commonly used to specify the layout of a Web page. The basic of tables are deceptively easy, but, as you will see, a lot can go wrong, or at least not the way you expected. I'm going to spend the next few months deconstructing tables. This month, we'll address the lines.

From a design standpoint, I find lines useful if I am presenting tightly packed tabular data: a phone list, for example. Lines help keep connected information together. Generally, however, lines look fussy and if you are using tables for layout they are better omitted.

The tag pair for a table is `<TABLE> </TABLE>`. This in and of itself doesn't do anything except alert the Web browser to render everything between the tags in a tabular format.

Next come `<TR></TR>`. This indicates a table ROW.

Finally, there will be `<TD></TD>`. This is table DATA. Anything placed within this tag is what will show up on the screen.

Figure 1 shows a typical use for a table. Here is a slightly stripped down coding for this table:

```
<TABLE border="4">
<TR>
<TD>ESCHER EYE (1946)</TD>
<TD></TD>
</TR>
<TR>
<TD></font></TD>
<TD>In this piece, Maurits Cornelis Escher(Dutch, 1898-
1972) has drawn his own eye, which was greatly magnified
by a convex shaving mirror. In the center of his pupil is,
Escher teases, the one who watches us all.</TD>
</TR>
</TABLE>
```

Let's deconstruct it.

I've added one parameter to the table tag - border - and specified that it be 4 pixels wide. This is the big black border around the outside of the table, properly called the external frame. The interior lines (technically called vertical and horizontal rules) are the default: they show up automatically if I specify a border size.

Most of the tables that are used for layout do not use a border tag at all: the table acts as an invisible grid. If I were to omit the border parameter all together - `<TABLE>` - or to specify that the border should be zero - `<TABLE border="0">` - all of the lines will be removed. If I were to specify `<TABLE border="NONE">` the exterior frame will be eliminated but all of the interior rules will remain.

Here are some parameters that will help you determine where the lines appear:

FRAME: This attribute specifies which sides of the frame surrounding a table will be visible. The format is `<TABLE frame="vsides">`; figure 2 shows the results of using the `TABLE frame="vsides">` variable. The possible values are:

void: No sides. This is the default value.
 above: The top side only.
 below: The bottom side only.
 hside: The top and bottom sides only.
 vside: The right and left sides only.
 lhs: The left-hand side only.
 rhs: The right-hand side only.
 box: All four sides.
 border: All four sides.

RULE: This attribute specifies which rules will appear between cells within a table. The format is `<TABLE rules="rows">`; figure 3 shows the results of using the `TABLE frame="rows">` variable. The possible values are:

none: No rules. This is the default value.
 groups: Rules will appear between row groups.
 rows: Rules will appear between rows only.
 cols: Rules will appear between columns only.
 all: Rules will appear between all rows and columns.

Groups: Rules will appear between row groups (we'll discuss groups at a later time!)

You'll notice that the exterior frame around figure 1, the Escher Eye, is flat and black while the exterior frame around figure 2 has a 3D, shaded look. I find the 3D effect old-fashioned and unappealing, but this is, alas, the default.

Here's a work-around:

```
<table border="5" bordercolor="#000000"
bordercolorlight="#000000" bordercolordark="#000000">
```

If you deconstruct how the external frame is made, it is actually three shades of gray; a base color, a lighter color and a darker color. The coding above makes all of the shades the same color: black. This eliminates the 3D effect.

I hear your brain cells clicking. If you can make the border all black, could you make it red or blue? Of course you can! Just exchange the RGB code for black (000000) with the code for

Continued on page 27.

the color of your choice. Red would be FF0000. Chartreuse would be 7FFF00. Get a complete list of the color codes.

You can use these same variables within the <TR> and the <TD> tags, which will change the colors of the vertical and horizontal rules.

Look back at figure 1 and review the code for this table. You'll notice in the first table row specified in the first <TD> that COLSPAN="2". This table has two columns and two rows. By specifying that the first data element, <TD>, in the first row, <TR>, spans two columns, I eliminate the horizontal rule that would normally appear in that top row. Figure 4 gives you an idea what it would look like without this refinement. Combining table rows (it works with columns too!) has additional advantages: I could center the "Escher Eye" text over both columns, for example.

Here's your assignment for this month. Copy the code below into Notepad:

```
<table border="5">
<TR>
<TD><font size="+3">ONE</font></TD>
<TD><font size="+3">TWO</font></TD>
</TR>
<TR>
<TD><font size="+3">THREE</font></TD>
<TD><font size="+3">FOUR</font></TD>
</TR>
</TABLE>
```

I made the font sizes bigger so that you would have a table big enough to see the results. Next, play around with EVERY parameter. Eliminate interior rules. Change the colors. Expand the size. After a half hour you'll know more about lines that half of the world's Webmasters. Tables are key to attractive Web design.



Talking Turk-ey

Collected by Pim Borman,

SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., IN; <m>

Best and Worst

If you've ever earned some pocket money stuffing envelopes, the advent of e-mail may have put you out of business. But the Internet giveth what it taketh away.

Much of the unanticipated success of the Internet is due to the contributions made by selfless volunteers. Businesses then realized the importance of the Internet to advertise themselves, and Wile E. Coyote would now be able to order his Road Runner catchers from www.acme.com (there actually is such a Web site). Nevertheless, volunteers expect to derive some form of satisfaction from their efforts, and the equivalent of envelope stuffing for free does not draw many aficionados.

The Internet would not be more than a large flea market were it not for the powerful search engines capable of retrieving information almost instantly. The retrieval algorithms depend on vast indexes maintained by constantly culling millions of Web sites world wide. Only computer-readable text is indexable. Yet, there are many other types of valuable information on the Web that are not computer-readable, such as hand-written documents and graphical images. It is almost impossible for a computer to distinguish a picture of Picabo Street in her ski outfit from Mother Teresa in her nun's habit. A human can distinguish them at a glance. Hand-written documents must be retyped, as many genealogy indexers know. Thus there is a great need for indexing graphics and hand-written information that requires human input. There are many other instances where human input is required, such as rating the validity of computer-generated keywords describing search targets, or retrieving numbers from scanned documents, such as transfer deeds.

Amazon, with its interest in computer searching with its A9.com search engine, has established a program that enlists human help for such tasks. The program is called Mechanical Turk, after a mechanical chess-playing automaton in 1769 that defeated

nearly every opponent it faced. It featured a life-sized wooden mannequin, adorned with a fur-trimmed robe and a turban, seated behind a cabinet. It confounded such brilliant challengers as Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon Bonaparte. What they did not know was the secret behind the Mechanical Turk: a human chess master cleverly concealed inside.

Amazon has set up a Web site (<http://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome>) as a link between programmers looking for "artificial, artificial intelligence," and paid volunteers providing human inputs to perform the requested tasks, referred to as HITS. These are typically of a simple, repetitive nature and pay a minimal amount, a penny or so, for each input. For instance, I saw a HIT listed to look up deed records on a Web site and find the transfer taxes. The volunteers that complete such tasks are rated on their proficiency and accuracy and build up a reputation that qualifies them for somewhat more challenging and higher-paying HITS.

It is an interesting concept that may catch on as it is further refined. (Mentioned in Bill Machrone's column in PC Magazine, February 17, 2006).

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Adobe Photoshop CS2

Paul Vaughn, Alamo PC

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

Adobe Photoshop CS2 is the ninth version of Adobe's principle application. Photoshop derives the appellation 'CS2' from its inclusion in Adobe's Creative Suite, which includes Illustrator (for vector illustration) and InDesign (for page layout) in the Standard Edition and adds GoLive (web page authoring) and Acrobat 7 Professional (PDF creation) in the Premium Edition. Photoshop is also available as a standalone application and this review focuses on it primarily.

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

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

Bridge works as a file browser, letting you see thumbnails of images, illustrations or page layouts (Fig. 1); even letting you save related files together as a file group. But that's not all it does. Like the Photoshop CS File Browser, you can run batch operations — automated multi-step repetitive tasks — like creating multipage PDFs or web photo galleries images selected in Bridge. You can also run some such operations on Illustrator or InDesign files. But with Bridge you can now run batch operation while continuing to work in Photoshop, previously you would have had to take a coffee break waiting for batch completion. This is a great feature for processing loads of Camera Raw images while still getting some work done. You can display images, including multi-page PDF documents, in a full-screen slide show as well as editing a file's metadata such as copyright notice, title or location.

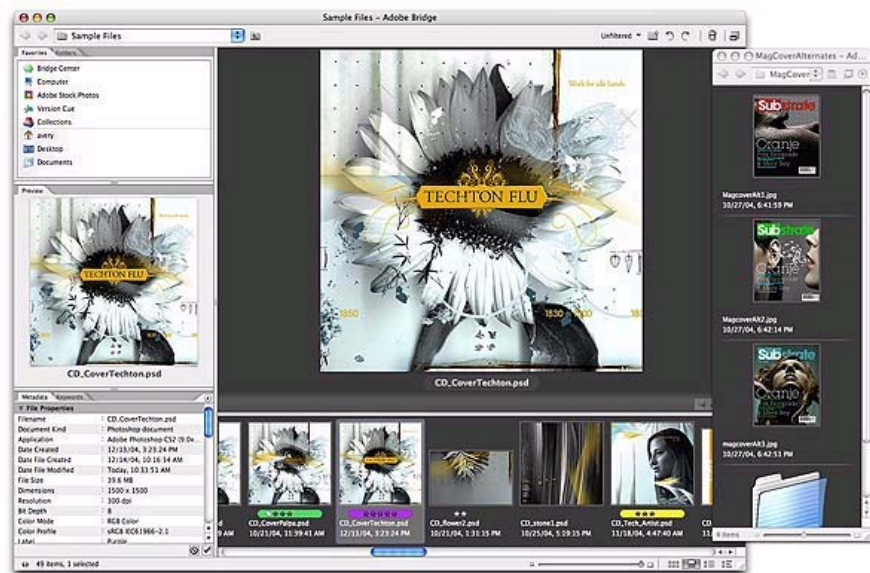


Figure 1



Figure 2

But Bridge is more than a pumped-up File Browser; it's more of a resource center. From Bridge you can browse and purchase stock photography from a variety of providers working under the umbrella of Adobe Stock Photos. Type in a few keywords to see scores of images related to the subject. A single button gets you price information or lets you search for similar images. Bridge also includes a RSS (Really Simple Syndication) reader. You can add any RSS feed that you wish, but Adobe has already set up several that will give you Photoshop tips, notices of program updates and add-ons and announcements of upcoming Photoshop-related events. Need more? Bridge gives you a steady supply of tips and tricks for Adobe programs and you can edit the color setting affecting all of the Creative Suite applications. Obviously, Bridge is a major addition to the Photoshop toolbox, but since it is a separate application, you do not have to use it at all.

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

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

Another spectacular feature in the new Vanishing Point tool, with it you can define planes in your image and then clone objects in perspective (Fig. 3). You can also place a Smart Object onto a plane, great for Photoshopping a logo onto the side of a building.

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

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

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

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

The Smart Sharpen filter (Fig. 5) gives you new options for sharpening an image. It will remove common types of blurring from



Figure 3



Figure 4

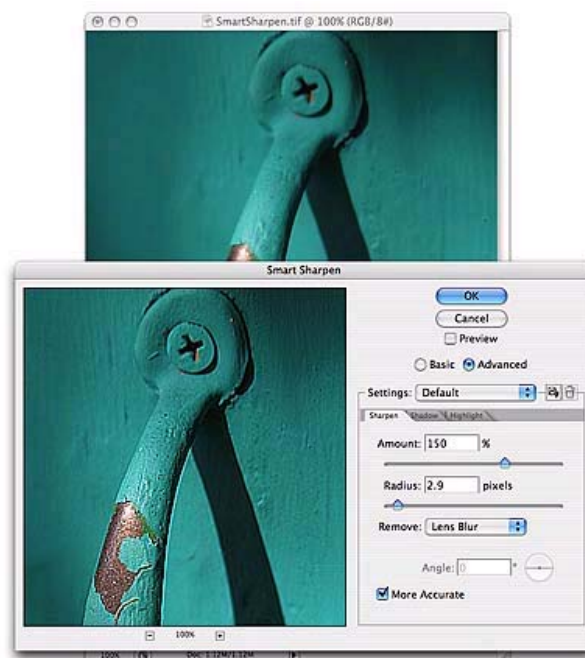


Figure 5

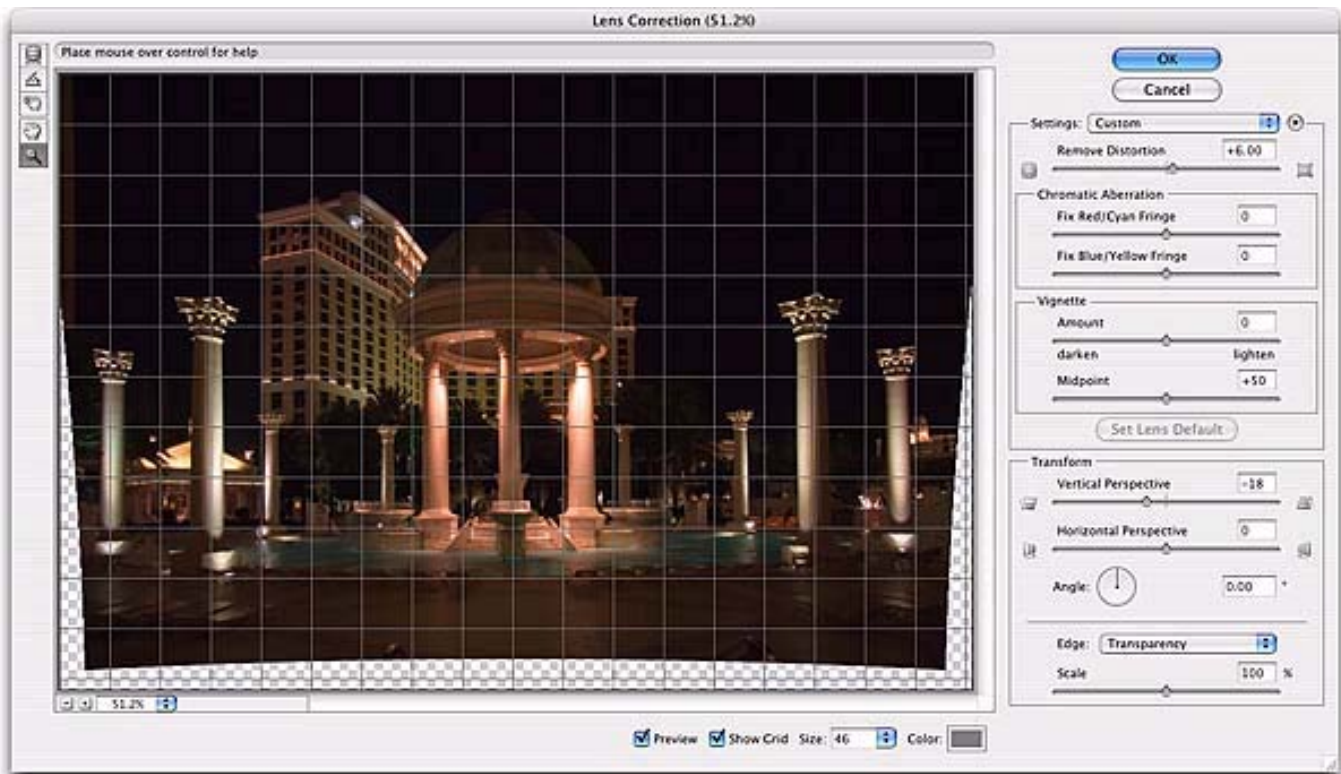


Figure 6

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

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

There are so many new things in Photoshop CS2 that it is hard to list them all. How about: Support for more than 2GB of RAM on 64-bit systems, a new Animation palette for creating animated GIF files directly in Photoshop, video previews of broadcast graphics, WYSIWYG previews in the

Font menu, expanded printing options, enhanced PDF support, menu customization. The list is pretty long; I suspect that every Photoshop user will find something of interest.

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

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



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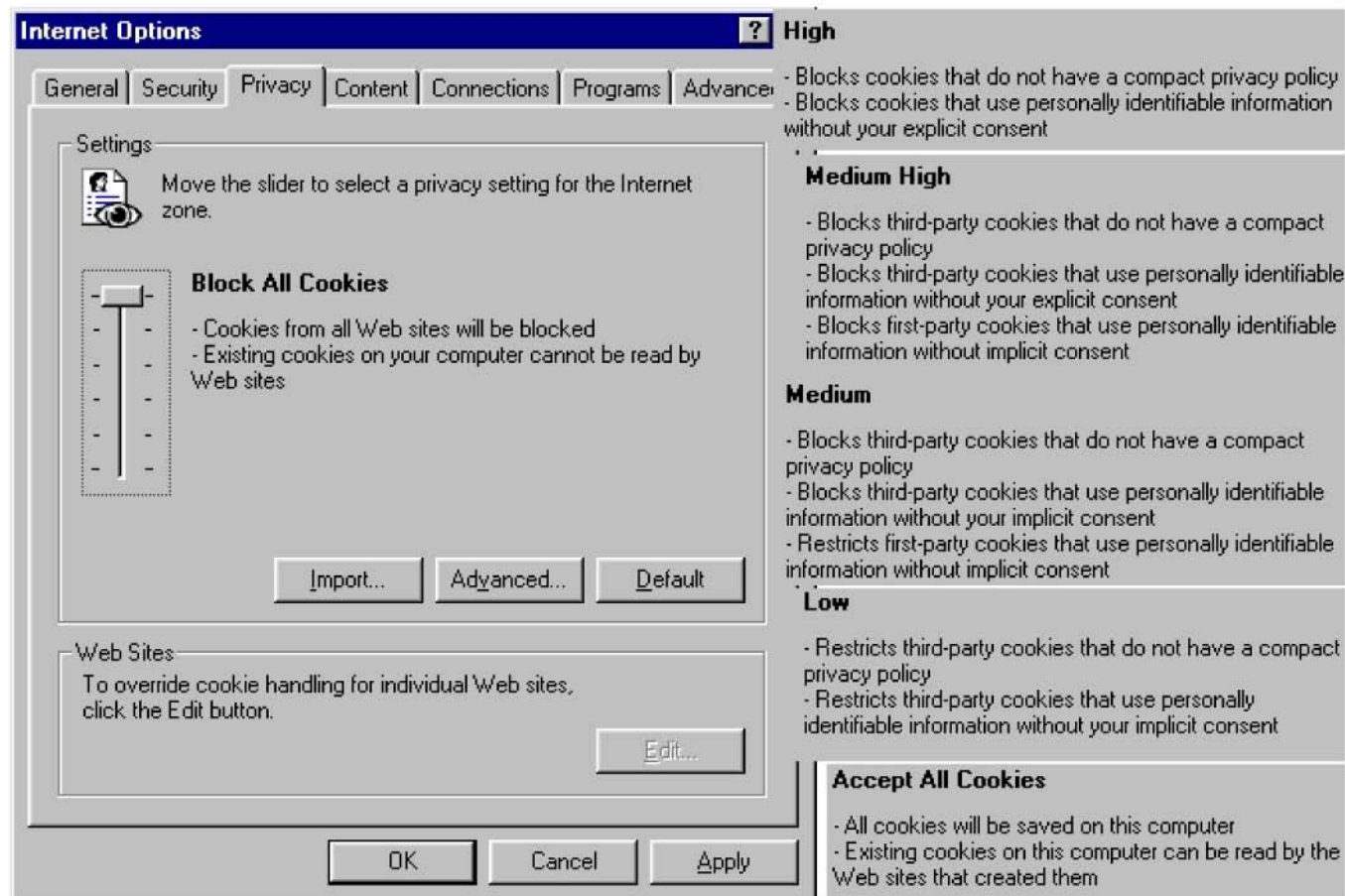
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Internet Explorer - Internet Security Options

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>



As I said last month the Privacy Tab will most likely be one of the most useful options for you. The maximum setting is the most severe, blocking reception of all cookies, as well as preventing existing cookies from being read.

Many people have no full conception of the function of cookies. Basically, when you access a web site from which you have previously accepted a cookie, that site will know of your interests and tailor the site to the content of the cookie. Some sites will use cookies to set you up to receive ads from other sites, but most are fairly benign. Still others, such as those for online banking or stock brokers, are absolutely necessary for you to avoid having to reenter your login information, etc. You need to seek a balance between these various types of cookies.

All of the available privacy levels may be seen in the column above right. **High** is the first setting below the

Block All Cookies setting displayed in the window. I believe each of the level descriptions is self-explanatory. You must decide which will be the proper level for your needs. **Medium** is the default setting, but I have chosen to set mine at **Low**.

Cookies can also store personally identifiable information. Personally identifiable information is information that can be used to identify or contact you, such as your name, e-mail address, home or work address, or telephone number. However, a Web site only has access to the personally identifiable information that you provide. For example, a Web site cannot determine your e-mail name unless you provide it. Also, a Web site cannot gain access to other information on your computer.

Once a cookie is saved on your computer, only the Web site that created the cookie can read it.

Continued on page 32.

Persistent cookies

A persistent cookie is one stored as a file on your computer, and it remains there when you close Internet Explorer. The cookie can be read by the Web site that created it when you visit that site again.

Temporary cookies

A temporary or session cookie is stored only for your current browsing session, and is deleted from your computer when you close Internet Explorer.

First-Party vs. Third-Party cookies

A first-party cookie either originates on or is sent to the Web site you are currently viewing. These cookies are commonly used to store information, such as your preferences when visiting that site.

A third-party cookie either originates on or is sent to a Web site different from the one you are currently viewing. Third-party Web sites usually provide some content on the Web site you are viewing. For example, many sites use advertising from third-party Web sites and those third-party Web sites may use cookies. A common use for this type of cookie is to track your Web page use for advertising or other marketing purposes. Third-party cookies can either be persistent or temporary.

Unsatisfactory cookies

Unsatisfactory cookies are cookies that might allow access to personally identifiable information that could be used for a secondary purpose without your consent.

Your choices in working with cookies

Internet Explorer allows the use of cookies; however, you can change your privacy settings to specify that Internet Explorer prompt you before placing a cookie on your computer (this enables you to allow or block the cookie); or you can prevent Internet Explorer from accepting any cookies.

You can use the Internet Explorer privacy settings to specify how you want Internet Explorer to handle cookies from individual Web sites or all Web sites. You can also customize your privacy settings by importing a file containing custom privacy settings, or by specifying custom privacy settings for all Web sites or individual Web sites.

Privacy settings only apply to Web sites in the Internet zone

All information on this page was extracted verbatim from the IE Help files, which I believe in this case explain the terms better than I could.

Understanding privacy policies

A Web site's privacy policy tells you what kind of information the Web site collects, to whom it gives that information, and how it uses the information. Personally identifiable information is information that can be used to identify or contact you, such as your name, e-mail address, home or work address, or telephone number. However, a Web site only has access to the personally identifiable information that you provide, or to the choices you make while visiting a Web site. For example, a Web site cannot determine your e-mail name unless you provide it. A Web site cannot gain access to other information on your computer. If a Web site collects personally identifiable information, it may store the information in a cookie, a small file that it saves on your computer.

Many Web sites provide privacy statements as written documents that you can view on the Internet. Web sites also might provide a Platform for Privacy Preferences (P3P) privacy policy. If a Web site has a P3P privacy policy, Internet Explorer can display it. Internet Explorer also might be able to compare your privacy settings to a representation of the P3P privacy policy, and determine whether or not to allow the Web site to save cookies on your computer.

Understanding privacy reports

The Privacy Report in Internet Explorer enables you to: view the P3P privacy policy for a Web site, find out if a Web site might contain information provided by a third-party Web site (a Web site other than the one you are viewing), or find out if Internet Explorer restricted any cookies from the Web site you are viewing.

To view the Privacy Report

In Internet Explorer, on the **View** menu, click **Privacy Report**.

To complete the discussion of the Privacy Tab, we need to look at the radio buttons below the slider. The **Import** button allows you to import a file containing custom privacy settings, click **Import**. To import a file, it must be located on your computer. You can download files containing custom privacy settings from privacy organizations and other Web sites on the Internet.

The **Advanced** button gives you the option to set various levels for first and third party cookies which override the basic settings determined by the slider. These options may be seen in the window displayed on page 19. Essentially they are Accept, Block, or Prompt for each type.

Continued on page 33.

large corporations could afford. Once you are on the Internet, most of the information, a lot of the knowledge, and quite a few of the applications are free! You may have seen the TV ad showing a one man garage shop company that looks like a large company because of what the computer can do. This is a true story, not an advertiser's pipe dream. Information is power and the Internet makes information available on about any subject. Aside from the "chump change" what does all this power cost? The willingness to spend the time to learn how to use it!

I am no longer envious of people who live near a large library. I use the Internet to answer many of the questions which I think about but forget before I get to a dictionary, encyclopedia, or other paper research material. Now I can get an almost instantaneous answer and can ask to be notified by e-mail when a certain topic comes up in the news. For example I used this recently after I read a murder mystery based on a deadly chemical named sodium azide. I had never heard of it before. I searched the Internet using Google and found many articles about it and its deadly properties. This chemical is readily available and widely used. I was concerned enough to use a feature of Google to send me an e-mail when sodium azide is in a news story.

Wouldn't you be willing to invest some of your time to be able to really use this type of power? What about really learning some of the abilities of the software that is probably sitting on your computer? Have you ever really looked at the features of WordPad in Windows XP? Have you ever clicked on help in WordPad? Did you know that the "Help Menu" in WordPad contains a "Help on how to use Help" section? Are you taking digital photos? Are you in sales? Do you have a disability? Of course you can find use for some of the more advanced features of your software. The problem is you won't ever know what these may be, unless you expend some effort to learn what is possible.

Once you decide that learning more about the potential of your computer is a benefit to you, it makes it a lot easier to find the time and energy to accomplish this.

Understanding goes a long way toward the feeling of being in control. When you feel in control of your computing experience, the irrational feelings of rage

will probably go away or at least be minimized. This doesn't mean that you will no longer get mad or upset with your computer, far from it, just that you will be more likely do it for a real cause.

How do you acquire the information and skills you need to feel in control of your computer? One good way is to go to a computer user's group. Unfortunately, if you are the person this article is about you are probably not getting this newsletter. My suggestion is that those of you who are getting this newsletter give a copy of this article to your friends that have computer rage. □

News Brief

Porn gets its own domain

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) that oversees Internet addresses has approved a new online neighborhood specifically for pornographic Web sites: the .xxx domain. Proponents say this will help parents screen out the porn sites for their children, but other groups argue that it's not a reliable safeguard until its mandatory.

The Internet? I Can't Live Without it!

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World Magazine, frequently writes for Forbes ASAP, and is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He often writes with his tongue in his cheek. Write to him at <stevebass@earthlink.net>.

The computer was turned off (really!) and I was sipping coffee and reading the Sunday funnies. There's Cathy searching for airline tickets on the Internet. In one panel, a friend describes spending an hour juggling flight schedules on screen, trying to find the best time and low price. Another friend tells about finally giving up after experiencing the World Wide Wait at every airline site she visits.

Cathy also pokes around the Web and after four hours online, finally finds the perfect, discounted ticket.

When she finally gets on the flight, the passenger next to her explained how his discount ticket cost him \$20 less than Cathy's.

The punch line? He apparently doesn't own a computer and got his ticket by making a ten-minute phone call.

Of course the guy missed the point. I mean, why in the world would anyone want to do something by phone when you could use modern technology?

Okay, I'll admit that I've done it. I'll invest 20 minutes using a dozen search engines trying to find a phone number for a restaurant. Oh, sure, I know—it's in the Pasadena Yellow Pages. And the book's sitting on the bookshelf just across the room. But that's the point, right? It's not within reach—and I'm already logged on. <smile>

Seriously, used judiciously, the Internet's a tremendous tool. In the last few weeks, I've been able to use the Web to: Get an obscure part for a camera lens, find replacement vinyl straps for a lawn chair, buy discounted wallpaper (50 percent less than the local shop), learn more about Home Theater devices than I could at a local store, find an out-of-print book, and hire a fencing contractor. Here are some other examples:

Improve on This

The fencing guy came by way of ImproveNet, a web site that hooks me up with a contractor. You plug in the details of the job and they find a contractor in your area who is qualified to handle the job. The site reports whether the contractor has a general liability insurance certificate on file with ImproveNet, has a license in good standing, a clear financial history, and a clear legal history. Each item is updated quarterly.

So far, I've had good luck twice: first with a concrete job and again with the fencing contractor. Check it at www.improvenet.com

Beam it to me, Scottie

Last year I had a satellite dish installed on the roof and subscribed to DirecTV. It's terrific—the picture's digitally and stunningly crisp, the signal's never failed (hello? Charter Communication? How's your cable doing?), and the available programming is excessive. We're getting all the basic channels, a few premium channels, as well as the Independent Film Channel—all for a little less than cable service. (www.directv.com)

With all that high-tech beaming into the house, I don't want to sit in front of the TV and stare at DirecTV's on-screen scroll to keep track of what's playing. Instead, I use TV Grid, a nifty Internet service that jumps through hurdles for me. (www.tvgrid.com)

First, it offers what every other TV service has—a grid listing your favorite stations. So far, no big deal.

But when I move the cursor on top of the movie or show, a description appears in another frame. Click on the link and another Java-based window pops up letting me quickly jump to one or two movie review sites (<http://www.mrqe.com/> or <http://www.imdb.com/>). Then the film's title is inserted into the search engine saving me keystrokes. Very cool.

It gets better: I want to watch a specific movie, say, the Producers, I can create a Perpetual Reminder. TV Grid searches every morning, e-mailing me if they find a match.

Inside DVD

Do you have a DVD player? Then sign up for a free DVD of Infinity, a 1996 movie starring (and directed by) Matthew Broderick. It's an account of the personal life of Manhattan Project scientist Richard Feynman. First read some reviews here...

<<http://us.imdb.com/TUrls?COM+0116635>>

I discovered the free DVD—from Inside DVD: The DVD Entertainment Magazine—on the Web. www.insidedvd.com/

Log onto Inside DVD's Web site, register, and they'll send you a DVD. Free. No hooks and no obligations. And nope, I haven't received any e-mail or junk mail—and I've been signed up for six months. That's because the DVD's advertiser sponsored.

Nonetheless, it's loaded with movie trailers, music, previews, and other stuff (and, because it's DVD, you can blithely ignore anything you're not interested in viewing).

Shopping for a DVD—or Anything Else?

If you haven't tried comparison shopping on the Internet, you're missing a ton of fun. Even if you don't buy anything on the Web, these resources take the hassle of comparing products and features.

The very best site at feature comparisons is www.compare.net. I started by searching for a DVD player. Once the models came on screen, I could click a few DVD models and in a few seconds, I had

Continued on page 35.

a grid on screen showing each product feature compared to the others. You can also drill deeper and have the site get you pricing.

There are loads of sites that'll check for low prices, but the two most comprehensive I found: Excite's Product Finder (www.jango.com/xsh/index.dcg?) and Bottom Dollar (www.bottomdollar.com/).

But it doesn't stop there.

As I began shopping for an A/V receiver, two PIBMUG members told me about the Audio Review site (www.audioreview.com). I searched the site, found the A/V unit I was interested in, and found—ready?—75 independent reviews.

People rate themselves as audiophile dweebs, casual users, or audio enthusiasts, and then post a review. The value is tremendous; I soon learned that the model I chose was both underpowered and had problems with high-range frequencies. It was a bad choice for me. I figured the reviewers were on the same wavelength as I so I sent e-mail to a number of them, asking for recommendations.

The replies were equally valuable. I read the reviews of another receiver and it helped with the buying decision. Better than relying on a Circuit City salesperson? You bet!

In the meantime, I've got to go online. A new Cathy's just been posted. <www.uepress.com/ups/comics/ca/index.html>

Computer Hysteria: The Sentence

by **Berry F. Phillips**

Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor <www.ccokc.org>

I was terrified as I faced the Judge of the Spammers' Court awaiting my sentence. The Judge began reviewing my case. "You have been charged with sadistically deleting spam but reading 'ham'. Spam is described as unsolicited (usually commercial, usually unwanted) e-mail messages. 'Ham' is described as real e-mail messages. You are charged with a capital crime, spamocide in the first degree! Since your plea is not guilty, I will review your case."

The defendant's brief contains some material available from CAUCE, The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-mail which is an ad hoc, all volunteer organization, created by Netizens to advocate for a legislative solution to the problem of UCE (a/k/a "spam"). UCE is the leading complaint of Internet users. But junk e-mail is more than just annoying, it costs Internet users and Internet based businesses billions per year. Junk e-mail is 'postage due' marketing; it is like a telemarketer calling you collect. The economics of junk e-mail encourages massive abuse and because junk e-mailers can get into business very cheaply. The volume of junk e-mail is increasing every day."

Vint Cerf, Senior Vice President, MCI and acknowledged "Father of the Internet" is quoted by permission "Spamming is the scourge of electronic mail and newsgroups on the Internet." It can seriously interfere with the operation of public services, to say nothing of the effect it may have on any individual's e-mail mail system ... Spammers are in effect, taking resources away from users and service suppliers without compensation and without authorization."

In 2002, Paul Graham discussed in a paper, "a Plan for Spam" developing Bayesian spam filtering to distinguish between illegitimate spam e-mail from legitimate "ham" e-mail. Many modern mail programs such as Mozilla Thunderbird utilize Bayesian spam filtering. Server-side email filters such as spamassassin and ASSP, make use of Bayesian spam filtering techniques, and the functionality is sometimes embedded within the mail server software itself.

While there has been some excellent anti-spam software written, the increasing volume of spam clearly demonstrates the survival adaptability of the spammers. CAUCE indicates that very few legitimate marketers use spam. Spam takes a variety of forms, like chain letters, get rich quick schemes, quack health remedies, porno related products, pyramid marketing, pirated software (WareZ), and many more too numerous to mention which can loosely just be called various scams. There are various techniques

to get your e-mail address to be placed on a spam list. One that is very common is the offer of free software. In my opinion, deletion is the "ounce of prevention that provides a pound of cure." However, we are losing the war on spam; you may want to join CAUCE's efforts to get legislation to stamp out spammers. If you want to join other Netizens to support the efforts of CAUCE, visit the website for more information at www.cauce.org.

The Judge at the Spammers' Court banged his gavel and pronounced my sentence. You have been found guilty of spamocide in the first degree! I remand you into custody of the processors at the Spammers' Cannery. I shouted at the Judge in the same spirit of Patrick Henry, "If I must be canned, then can me ham NOT spam!"

Thank goodness it was only a dream; I awoke looking at my e-mail client when I had obviously dozed off while deleting spam. However, this article must now end because I have a strange craving for a "ham" sandwich!

Berry Phillips is a member of the CCOKC and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor.

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Email Management

By Sharon Housley, who manages marketing for NotePage, Inc. <http://www.notepage.net> a company specializing in alphanumeric paging, SMS and wireless messaging software solutions.

If you utilize a computer at home or work it is likely that you use email. Email is an electronic message that is sent from one computer to another following a specific protocol (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol or SMTP). As email's popularity has grown so too have the inherent problems with email.

In order to send email you must have the exact spelling of the email address. If there are any typographical errors in the recipient's email address then an unintended recipient could receive the email message. When creating an email address avoid characters that cause confusion, like the number 1 (one) and the letter l (el), computer fonts often cause those two characters to have similar appearances. Try to create an email address that cannot easily be misspelled.

As email has become a popular communication medium the email address should not be too long or complicated, but easily said in a phone message. Choose an email address that is easy for others to remember, as a pen is not always handy.

Unfortunately spam, unsolicited email has become common place, though many countries are taking action to make spamming illegal, these measures will unlikely have any short term effect on your email inbox. Many email clients that are used to read and respond to email messages, include basic filtering options that will sort your email messages into folders, based on rules that you define. Email messages can typically be stored and filtered by sender, subject and contents. There are also a number of 3rd party tools available for limiting the amount of spam received. Spam filters typically use different filtering technologies. When evaluating whether a spam solution fits your needs consider sorting filtered email into a specific mailbox for review prior to deletion. This will prevent any important messages from being unintentionally deleted.

As with almost anything, the best defense is a good offense. It is best not to post your email address in public forums, where spammers can harvest it. If you have a website consider typing out the email address: 'name at domain.com', without using the "@" symbol, as this will prevent the address from being abused by email harvesting bots. Another alternative is to provide a contact form rather than an email address.



Resources

Email Clients - <<http://www.messaging-software.net/e-mail-client-software.htm>>

Spam Filters - <<http://www.email-software.org/spam-filter-software.htm>>

E-MAIL... OVERUSED, ABUSED & INVALUABLE

By G.A. "Andy" Marken, <Andy@markencom.com>
President, Marken Communications Inc.

"I predict that by 2010, 100 percent of network traffic will be packetized. None of it will be voice because we will be too mad at each other from sending flame e-mails." Vint Cerf, executive vice president of MCI and one of the founders of the Internet.

It's true.

Emotions don't travel well in the written form.

A smile, a wink of the eye, a smirk, a furled brow...is fine for face-to-face communications but they are completely missing when you use the killer application of the Internet...e-mail.

Despite the hype and global business promises of the World Wide Web, the most used, most useful and most misused Internet tool is e-mail.

E-mail is faster than conventional postal delivery and as dependable. Shortly after you hit the Send button your "target audience" usually receives the information.

Postmaster General Martin Runyon recently predicted that the giant quasi-government enterprise lost about \$1.4 billion in 1998, more than \$2.5 billion in 2000 and nearly \$4.5 billion in 2004, due in no small part to the increasing use of Internet e-mail. According to the USPS nearly 60 percent of business and personal correspondence already bypasses the postal service over the Internet.

E-mail has taken off so rapidly in business that when an e-mail server, network or Internet provider's connection goes down people wonder how they can get in touch with someone. They also wonder how long before they can get to their incoming mail.

Or as one person commented recently, "If someone I need to get in touch with doesn't have an e-mail address I probably don't need to talk to him."

But like any valuable business tool people often don't understand how to use it properly or quickly find ways to abuse its use. In fact the Electronic Messaging Association estimates that over 184 million users sent over 35.8 trillion e-mail messages last year.

With the increasing use of push technology, the application of spam junkmail and the growing use of single keystroke e-mail mailing lists, each of us have to be concerned that we will dull the value of this important communications tool.

E-Mail Don'ts

Don't use e-mail emotionally. We've been criticized a few times when a tongue-in-cheek comment didn't quite come across in



an e-mail. Since e-mail lacks the immediate feedback and verbal nuances of the spoken word don't use it when you are joking or are angry. Rather than a flamemail response, talk to the person face to face or at least over the phone.

E-mail should be avoided in a supervisor-subordinate or customer/vendor "issues" discussions.

Verbal communications gives the benefit of immediate feedback. Both parties can understand how the message is being received either by the listener's facial expressions or the tone of their voice.

Avoid the automobile cocoon syndrome. Just as some people tend to become more aggressive with their driving because they are anonymous and remote behind the wheel, the same can happen with e-mail. Increasingly there are news items about "interesting" e-mail being received with remarks people would never say in person.

Don't spam. Spamming or sending an announcement in a shotgun manner is not only discourteous to people inside and outside your organization but it is an insult to them.

We use an active database of about 4,000 e-mail addresses. Some are used only once a month. On the other hand certain individuals addresses (key customers, regular suppliers, remote office workers) are used daily and weekly.

When we develop a conference or status report it may go to as few as three-four people. When it's an announcement for a client it may go to 200-300 people around the globe. But each time the specific person is individually selected to receive the message. I don't read spammed messages so why should I expect someone else to read mine just because I'm too lazy to individualize the mailing?

Besides, if recent legislative interest is any indication there may be stiff penalties levied for people who insist on "direct mailing" their announcements to the global Internet community.

Use the bulletproof Internet e-mail test. If you aren't willing to have the e-mail printed in tomorrow's paper or you wouldn't make the same comments in public...don't write them. That includes off-color jokes, sexist or racist language or anything that can be construed as contributing to a hostile environment.

E-mail messages are about as private as if they were posted in your favorite restaurant.

If you are sending company private information and want to protect your message from accidentally going to the wrong person or being intercepted by someone, you can encrypt your e-mail. Encryption makes the message unreadable until the recipient decrypts it. But use encryption sparingly. Unless you are only working on top-secret projects and programs there's no reason to over-secure everything you send across the Internet.

Think before you use the Send button. You've seen TV episodes where people accidentally sent a love letter meant for a particular person to their entire mailing list. There have been news reports of department heads sending staff salary data to everyone on the organization's distribution list. Product launch plans and company business plans have been accidentally sent to editors and reporters.

These are disasters.

But to a lesser degree each of us has sent an e-mail to someone only to discover "immediately" after it left that it didn't have the attachments you mentioned. Or the attachments were sent in a form that couldn't be read by the intended recipient. Your only recourse is to apologize and resend the message/attachments.

Speaking of attachments, the general rule should be that unless the recipient knows what you are sending don't send it.

People we interviewed for this article hate it when they open a "general delivery" e-mail and the attachment automatically copies to their hard drive. It's a waste of time to leave one storage area to open another, open the file and then determine the information that was sent is a waste of time and should be simply trashed.

Worse yet most are gun-shy about receiving "strange" attachments. The reason? It's an easy way to transmit viruses that can destroy a few files or an entire hard drive of information.

Safe computing practice says that whenever you receive an attachment with an .EXE, .BAT or .COM extension you should run anti-virus software against it before you open the file. It's great in theory and it works...unfortunately few of us practice safe computing.

Since there are so many different e-mail and word or presentation packages around it is also difficult to make certain the recipient has the same software (and version) you do so they can open and view the attachment. You're better off simply pasting

e-mail



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Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue Service

the message into the body of your e-mail correspondence as ASCII text. It won't look as pretty but both parties can be assured the message is received.

Practice good netiquette and don't send spoof e-mails. Spoofed messages are those that are sent with false header information that disguises the sender. If you're not proud enough of your work or your company perhaps you should find a new career or a new company.

E-Mail Do's

Use e-mail whenever possible. From a management perspective it's significantly less expensive than sending the average business letter. And as we noted before it is faster...almost instantaneous.

In addition to personalizing who is receiving your announcement, be descriptive in the subject area of your e-mail. Putting something bland or non-descriptive in the subject area makes it very easy for the person to quickly hit the delete button or file it for "later review." Instead, make the subject informative, inviting and sometimes even intriguing.

Many people today receive 100 and more e-mail announcements. They don't have the time or desire -- and we would suspect the inclination -- to wade through every e-mail to find the one or two bits of information they need. Think of their e-mail screen as a billboard and you have less than five seconds to capture their attention.

If you're sending an e-mail format it properly and even though it is somewhat of a relaxed way to communicate write using good English. There's no excuse for poor writing.

Regardless of which e-mail program you use or whether it's for internal, external or combination usage you should thoroughly train your staff in the ins and outs, dos and don'ts, capabilities and faults and the company's general guidelines, policies and procedures before everyone is e-mail enabled. For security and HR purposes, some firms have established a program of monitoring and reviewing e-mail. If your firm has such a policy make certain everyone clearly understands the policy, the reasons for the policy and the ramifications of inappropriate e-mail conduct.

The Web may get all the glory but it's e-mail that gets results when it's used properly. The Internet and e-mail are excellent tools for responding to and working with all of your organization's stakeholders including customers, dealers, employees, investors, security analysts, suppliers and special interest groups.

Or as someone recently said, "The Internet should really be viewed as communications on steroids. It's the ultimate one-on-one communications tool."

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e-mail

News Brief

SP3 for Win XP

Microsoft has confirmed that there will be a 3rd service pack for Windows XP. They declined to release further details, but said that Windows XP SP 3 will be available after Windows Vista ships, scheduled for the end of 2006. Microsoft released the most recent Windows XP service pack, SP2, in August 2004. The service pack was one of the most significant updates to the Windows OS that Microsoft ever produced, and it included features to make Windows more secure.

Absence Makes the E-Mail Grow Fonder

e-mail

**By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist,
AARP Computer & Technology Website, <www.aarp.org>**

“Absence makes the heart grow fonder” is never truer for me than when I’m on the road, away from my wife, four cats, and e-mail. My wife and cats forgive my travels but it’s a challenge e-mailing remotely. Fortunately, technology provides many ways to access e-mail. You’re on your own, however, explaining to people you’re visiting why you need a break from vacation, sightseeing, or family, to check for in-box nuggets.

Aside from pressure to stay in touch (some people are addicted to e-mail), it’s worth thinking about e-mail before traveling, especially for an extended period. Many ISPs (Internet service providers) limit the e-mail they’ll store for you. If you exceed this amount your e-mail may “bounce”—that is, be returned to senders. That frustrates people writing to you and causes problems with lists to which you’re subscribed.

You can suspend list subscriptions to reduce e-mail volume, but that’s a nuisance and won’t help if someone sends you huge notes with vacation pictures.

If you have dial access you can’t do much other than ask correspondents not to send large notes. Always-on cable or DSL users can leave e-mail software enabled, downloading mail as it arrives. But things can still go wrong—power may fail—leaving e-mail stranded at the ISP.

This article describes using remote computers for e-mail; it doesn’t cover traveling with a laptop (which may require reconfiguration for sending e-mail) or using your cell phone or wireless PDA (which should be straightforward).

Facilities for reading e-mail will require your normal e-mail password; if your PC logs in automatically, you may not remember it! It’s a nasty surprise—realizing when you’re far away—that you’ve forgotten your password.

The easiest way to read e-mail when away from home is through your ISP’s facility. If you normally read e-mail via a Web interface, your life is simple indeed: find an online computer, enter the ISP’s e-mail Web address (URL), and you’ll have your familiar interface. This also works for Yahoo!, Google’s Gmail, and other national e-mail services.

Even if you usually read e-mail using a PC program such as Outlook Express, Eudora, or Thunderbird (which all use an Internet protocol; called “POP3”), your ISP may provide Web access to e-mail, so ask. If it’s available, practice using it before leaving so you can learn the process and have ISP tech support handy instead of a long-distance call away. Again, take your ISP information with you so you can log on, get help, etc.

Some ISPs provide an e-mail interface called Telnet. This text-only (not graphical) interface was developed in the Internet’s early days. It’s fast, efficient, and accessible from most PCs, but isn’t intuitive and best suits technically oriented folks. If you’ll use this on the road, practice beforehand is essential.

A very simple tool for accessing many ISP’s e-mail is Mail2Web [www.mail2web.com]. Enter your e-mail address and password; the Web site fetches and displays your e-mail. Notes you send will appear to be from your normal e-mail address. Yahoo! provides a similar facility for reading POP3 e-mail.



AOL members can visit AOL’s Web site [www.aol.com], click the Mail link, and access e-mail.

If you use an always-on Windows XP PC, you can—with technical setup beforehand and assuming no ISP-imposed blockage—use its built-in Remote Desktop feature to operate your home PC remotely as if you were sitting in front of it.

Two final issues: First, keep security in mind when using strange computers. Don’t allow passwords to be saved; when finished, clear the browser cache and close applications you’ve used. Second, be careful setting an “away” message for everyone who e-mails you. Some less-than-clever notification systems annoy people and interfere with mailing lists.

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STUDY GROUPS

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

Netiquette Equals Friendly Online Neighborhoods

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP
Computer & Technology Website, www.aarp.org

Etiquette -- proper behavior in various situations -- has concerned humans through the ages. Google [www.google.com] turns up references to early telephone manners, proper Medieval-era knightly behavior, and how shells and sharp stones became today's knives and forks (and, of course, which hand to hold them in).

Though the Internet became generally accessible about ten years ago, academics and researchers had used it for decades before that. Just as civilization accommodated sudden widespread automobile and telephone usage, developing common practices (stop for red lights, answer telephones with "Hello"), new online technologies created the need for corresponding innovations in manners.

Called Netiquette ('Net + etiquette), the new discipline really just requires using old manners in a new setting. But since going online is like traveling to another country, a guidebook is useful.

The first and simplest chapter is simply "Follow the golden rule" <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethic_of_Reciprocity>: Treat people online with the same courtesy you expect. Without normal conversational cues such as body language, facial expression, and tone of voice, it's easy to misunderstand someone's meaning. You may remember Emily Litella on classic Saturday Night Live television, mishearing the need to reduce TV violence as "eliminating violins". Even stranger miscommunication occurs online, so give others the benefit of the doubt.

Out-of-control ranting is sometimes called "flaming". Before responding angrily, consider how you'd react to receiving the note you're about to send. Remember that once sent, e-mail and other online communications take on a life of their own, being forever retrievable with your name attached. And asking "Did you mean..." can avoid having to give Emily Litella's trademark "Never mind" if your interpretation was off target. Replying calmly often gets a conversation back on track without anyone suffering a "flame war", an unproductive exchange of angry notes.

E-mail is likely the most commonly addressed Netiquette area. Searching Google for email + netiquette provides an encyclopedia of advice, some general, some for personal use, and much for business settings. Common tips are DON'T USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS (it's hard to read and is considered "shouting"); be brief; use meaningful subject lines; quote just enough from what you're answering to provide useful context; don't forward to everyone you know jokes, rumors, hoaxes, chain letters, charity appeals, and such, even if an arriving note tells you to do so; don't send "Me too" notes to discussion lists; don't send attachments without getting the recipient's permission; send plain text e-mail unless all your addressees prefer HTML-format; etc.

Accept and cheerfully answer questions asked by people newly online -- remember that we all started with basics. Interesting e-mail tips are available at places like Writers Write <www.writerswrite.com/journal/dec99/pirillo1.htm>, <www.emailreplies.com/>, and Yale University Library <www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette/>.

Not all tips are "Don't"!

If you receive multiple replies to a question you ask online, it's advisable -- this will make people love you -- to summarize answers for everyone else who saw the question. Be careful with humor: what's obvious and sidesplitting to you may baffle or annoy someone else. When appropriate, and sparingly, use "smileys" -- symbols like ;-)-- to show that you're not serious. And if you receive what seems to be an unlikely rumor, do the sender a favor by checking it out at a site like snopes.com<www.snopes.com> and reporting what you find.

The Netiquette Home Page [www.albion.com/netiquette/] is an entertaining and informative reference. It notes that Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and informal cyberspace "rules of the road". The site lists and explains rules with friendly illustrations. It's interesting that not only do the rules all agree with that Golden Rule mentioned earlier, they're often different ways of giving the same advice. For example, using the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life is an easy way to make yourself look good online.

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What Is Spyware?

by **Anton Chuvakin**, Security Strategist with a major information security company
Published online at O'Reilly® Windows DevCenter <www.windowsdevcenter.com>

Spyware

Spyware is a strand of malicious software (or malware), annoying, and capable of robbing computer users all over the world.

In This Article:
How Spyware Works
Protecting Yourself
The Future

Spyware is such a broad term that even the definition of this computer scourge is fuzzy. So, what is spyware? The best definition out there is given by Wikipedia: "Spyware is a broad category of malicious software intended to intercept or take partial control of a computer's operation without the user's informed consent."

Thus, spyware has come to mean not only the "software that spies on you," but also the software that performs other kinds of abuses and annoyances, outside the traditional virus-and-worm world. For example, displaying unwanted ads is a primary purpose of "adware," which is often categorized as a type of spyware. In fact, some people even extend the definition to cover browser cookies, relatively innocuous pieces of text used by websites for user tracking.

One angle missed by the above definition is that while some folks are known to launch viruses and worms, two well-known types of computer nasties, "just for fun," spyware is usually written for somebody's direct monetary benefit, often in the form of good old cash. This aspect is one of the keys to the dramatic rise of spyware.

Spyware emerged in recent years to "entertain" computer users. This emergence coincided with a sea change in the world of mainstream computer attackers that shifted their focus from having fun at somebody else's expense to making money at somebody else's expense. Spyware, along with spam, phishing ("social engineering" attacks via email intent on stealing credentials), and pharming (DNS attacks aimed at attracting users to malicious websites), is one of the most noticeable computer threats of the day. We did say "noticeable," although spyware is often engineered to be hard to find, hard to notice, hard to pay attention to (that is, hidden in a lengthy license) and, obviously, hard to remove. Spyware evolved in the same time frame as e-commerce and online banking. As business use of the internet was growing up, so was business abuse.

The world of spyware is extremely broad and the mechanisms of its operation range from a mundane social engineering ruse (e.g. three pages of license "blah-blah-blah" followed by "and we will also steal your cookies and browser history for 'marketing purposes'") to a "zero-day" (that is, previously unpublished) exploit launched against the victim's Internet Explorer by malicious or compromised websites.

Loss

Types of spyware Scenario

Direct financial loss

Keylogger
Somebody steals your online banking passwords and transfers the money to his account abroad

Slow system performance

All
A machine running dozens or more types of spyware will slow down to a crawl

Display unwanted content

Browser objects, other
A website can install a malicious toolbar that will show popup ads and objectionable web content

Loss of privacy

Browser plug-ins
All web personal history collected and potentially exposed

Table 1. Types of loss caused by spyware

Here are some of the commonly identified types of spyware:

Browser objects (IE hacks, ActiveX controls, malicious toolbars, and so on)

Bots and rootkits (allow others to control your system remotely)

Keyloggers (record your keystrokes looking for sensitive data)

Bundled parasite software (miscellaneous nuisance)

Adware (run on the system or in the browser to display advertisements)

Let's look at some common spyware specimens. As reported by commercial anti-spyware company Sunbelt Software, these spyware programs were common in September 2005: Claria.DashBar, AvenueMedia.DyFuCA, IST.SlotchBar, ABetterInternet, and IST.ISTbar, to name a few. Most of the above are "adware" specimens (they display ads that can potentially generate revenue for the software creator) and do not spy on the victim, but others (such as IST.ISTbar, a malicious browser toolbar) actually collect web usage information and may install other, more harmful spyware on the user's system.

How Spyware Spreads

There are many mechanisms for spreading spyware, employed by their creators. Let's look at a few common ways spyware can infect:

When installed by other spyware (unlike viruses and worms, spyware rarely treads alone; some machines analyzed by the anti-spyware vendors were found to have hundreds of spyware specimens)

When installed by malicious websites through flaws in Internet Explorer (so called "drive-by downloads")

When bundled with "free" or sponsored applications (unfortunately, with permission of the application creators)

Later we'll cover some of the things all computer users should do to lower the risk of "catching spyware."

Spyware's Impact on Your PC

Overall, what can spyware do on your system? For that, we will refer you to Microsoft's Ten Immutable Laws of Security. While it might be ironic that such laws are formulated by the makers of the most common spyware platform -- Windows -- they do provide vital insight into security. For example, Law 1 proclaims: "If a bad guy can persuade you to run his program on your computer, it's not your computer anymore." Thus, the above question becomes "what can spyware do on their system?" The answer to this one is really easy: everything that its creator wants. Common changes due to spyware include registry changes, browser configuration and settings modification, new program installation, as well as using your system for whatever else is needed. In other words, spyware, when installed and running, can do everything you can do on your system (and sometimes more).

Table 1 on page 42 shows the direct damage you might suffer from spyware.

Protecting Yourself

Now that the evils of spyware are understood, let's use the well-known security mantra "prevention/detection/response" to focus on what you can do to:

- Prevent spyware from happening to you
- Detect that it might be sneaking by the defenses
- After it happens anyway, respond by cleaning your systems

First, will an antivirus solution will take care of all spyware problems? The answer is a resounding "no." Many anti-spyware products (both freeware and commercial) have features to block (prevention), scan for (detection), and remove the offending program (response), but PC Magazine's recent anti-spyware and antivirus software review, which compares stand-alone anti-spy defenses, indicates that antivirus solutions still do not do a good job of fending off hordes of spies.

Fortunately though, there are several simple things every computer user can do to lower the risk of spyware infection:

Keep your Windows systems up-to-date by using Microsoft Update, which will update both your Windows and MS Office software. Installing Windows XP SP2 (Service Pack) is also important.

Restrict some of the Internet Explorer settings (refer to Google for tips) or use Firefox, which significantly decreases the

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chance of spyware infestation. Here are some of the important settings to tweak: block popups using Windows XP SP2 popup blocker or another solution, limit or block ActiveX controls, and limit file downloads via the IE settings panel.

Use antivirus and anti-spyware tools, and frequently update them using each tool's own automated update mechanism. The best free programs to use are Spybot Search and Destroy, Ad-Aware, and Windows AntiSpyware (to be renamed Windows Defender later this year). Most antivirus vendors, such as Symantec, McAfee, and Trendmicro are launching their own anti-spyware solutions. However, stand-alone anti-spyware companies such as Webroot and Sunbelt Software still outperform them. Also, make sure that you not only run the anti-spyware software, but also use it to perform spyware scans on a periodic basis, just like you do with an antivirus software.

Use a personal firewall with outbound protection; it might notify you when the spyware that sneaked in tries to "extrude" the stolen information to its "mothership." It is important to note that at the time of this writing, Windows' built-in firewall didn't offer this protection, so other free (such as ZoneAlarm from Check Point) or paid (such as Norton or McAfee) software solutions should be used.

Use only software obtained from trusted sources. For those needing a more specific suggestion, downloading from a random site from the Internet or receiving it from a "friend" you just met online does not count.

If you think your system is acting suspiciously, you need to determine if spyware is the factor to blame. Since there are so many parts of the system that can be modified by spyware, the best way for users to detect spyware is to run any of the free anti-spyware tools mentioned above. For better results, run multiple tools, since recent tool surveys indicate that no commercial or free tool will detect all spyware specimens. Some of the tools will also attempt to clean spyware traces, which brings us to the next item: response to spyware infections.

As far as responding to a spyware infection, the only guaranteed 100 percent effective measure a user can take is to rebuild a system. Only this will guarantee removal of all traces of malicious software from a system. On a typical Windows system there are numerous places where a piece of malicious code might reside. In a more real-world situation, where it is not possible or desirable to rebuild the entire system, try looking for spyware removal tools, sometime published by anti-spyware and antivirus vendors. All of the above anti-spyware solutions provide this functionality and will clean the spyware traces with varying degrees of efficiency (often depending on the type of malicious program). Same applies to the antivirus tools with anti-spyware defenses. However, note that the latter category is more likely to leave the risk alone and just warn the user about its presence.

Microsoft, which is now an anti-spyware vendor due to a recent acquisition, often publishes stand-alone removal tools for various malware. Microsoft's Malicious Software Removal Tool, which is updated monthly, can be downloaded to your system via Automatic Updates or the above link. It can be run online from the above link (via an ActiveX control).

Removing complicated spyware manually, such as a driver-based keylogger, will often render the system inoperable and should only be undertaken by those intimately familiar with their system internals. On the other hand, instructions for removing simpler specimens, such as adware, are often published online and can be followed by anybody who maintains their own PC.

The Future

To conclude, we will try to peek into our crystal ball, a necessary tool for an enlightened security professional. What's next for spyware? Will spyware bother us for years to come? It sure looks likely; there is no reason why the spyware creators will stop since -- guess what -- it pays the bills and there is no clear way to make such practices "prohibitively expensive" for their creators.

Security tips

Keeping Passwords Secure

As the web has evolved, so have the methods of collecting personal information. A large number of websites require visitors to register to gain access or participate. While the need for registration is understandable, tracking user names and passwords can be burdensome. Consider using software to store your passwords, in a safe accessible manner.

Most websites have privacy policies, but the value of privacy statements are only as honorable as the people behind the websites. Here are suggestions for keeping passwords and your information secure:

- 1.) change your password frequently
- 2.) never share your password with anyone
- 3.) try to choose a password so it doesn't need to be written down, but not so obvious others would easily guess the password
- 4.) be sure your password is at least 6 characters
- 5.) don't use a password containing all the same characters
- 6.) don't send your password via email or provide it over the phone
- 7.) don't use pet, family or friend names
- 8.) don't use your telephone number, zip code or address
- 9.) use a different password for each account
- 10.) don't use user name
- 11.) deactivate accounts for terminated employees
- 12.) don't allow shared accounts
- 13.) password contains upper, lowercase letters, non-letter characters and numbers

Resources

Password Software - <<http://www.password-software.com>>

Passwords are not foolproof. Do not rely on a password alone to protect sensitive information. Monitor accounts closely to ensure that security is not breached.

Adware

Should I be Afraid?

By Sharon Housley,



Developers offering downloads are paying the price for the malformed truths that have been put forth regarding downloads. While not a political campaign the smears are ever present in the adware arena.

Years ago developers saw they could monetize freeware that was becoming expensive to host. Developers began working with Ad Networks such as the former Aureate and Conducent, who imbedded advertisements in the software. The software in many cases phoned home retrieving ads. In other cases adverts were imbedded directly into the download only being removed when the software was registered. Many well known software companies, including Netscape distributed ad supported versions, which allowed users to use the software for free. Developers were compensated either by install or the number of ads served. Advertisers welcomed new revenue streams to reach potential customers.

Adware or advertising-supported software is any software application in which advertisements are displayed while the program is running. These applications include additional code that displays the ads in pop-up windows or through a bar that appears on a computer screen. Adware helps recover program development costs, and helps to hold down the price of making the application for the user, often making it free of charge. As a result of the AdWare revenue programmers were motivated to write maintain, and upgrade valuable ad-enabled software. Adware was a great consumer trade off, so were did it all go wrong?

Unbeknownst to the developers a handful of ad serving companies were logging and profiling the surfing habits of those who had downloaded the ad-enabled software. After downloading free software, the new adware companies delivered pop-up and pop-under ads based on the consumers surfing interests. Adware has been criticized for including code that tracks a user's surfing habits, email address and personal information, which are passed to third parties, without the user's authorization or knowledge. This was the downfall of the ad serving technology and ad-enabled software.

In many cases consumers rightfully believe they have been and are being spied on, which prompted an outcry from privacy advocates. Adware is not a virus and may not be detected by anti-virus scanning programs. It does not spread the

same way as most viruses spread. Many users do not know they are downloading a free program along with adware onto their computer. The lack of disclosure tarnished reputations of many well known, but misfortunate developers and software companies. The collapse of a number of venture backed ad-serving companies including Aureate and Conducent.

Fast forward to today. Few applications are now ad enabled. Those that are generally follow strict disclosure guidelines. Some developers opt to insert static (not changing) ads for other applications in their product line, into free versions, but these ads do not change and there is no record of what ads are clicked. Freeware can therefore be used free of charge and there is no evaluation time period as with shareware. Freeware is also often a basic or stripped down version of the shareware version.

Developers make money off ads or those who want to upgrade from the free version. There are also developers who provide freeware out of principle, occasionally asking for a donation. The majority of freeware that employs the use of imbedded advertisements are provided in the true spirit of adware without the intent to track users, but just to be safe consumers should read the fine print.

Sharon Housley manages marketing for NotePage, Inc. <<http://www.notepage.net>> a company specializing in alphanumeric paging, SMS and wireless messaging software solutions.

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The Plain Truth about Casual Software

security

Piracy

by Matt Slot, Ambrosia Software



It's a rare day when a shareware programmer gets firm statistics on the extent of software piracy, but just recently, I got that chance. You see, the company I work for--Ambrosia Software--writes and publishes shareware--software that encourages users to make lots of copies and share them with friends. It works like this: we write a game or utility and make it available for download and on low-cost CD, so you can install it and try it out for a while--kick the tires and drive it around the block a few times, so to speak. If you like it, you can buy the product; if not, just delete it or pass the CD on to someone else. <<http://www.ambrosiasw.com>>

We make money, and stay in business, by selling software that competes with commercial products for quality and entertainment value, while remaining priced so that it doesn't stretch the pizza-and-beer budget of the average college student. There's no bait-and-switch going on: you get a fair chance to try out the product and decide if your \$25 could be better spent elsewhere. We think our software is competitive--\$25 will cover a burger run and movie ticket for about three hours entertainment, but a good game can entertain you for days or weeks--and we won't make you watch Jar Jar Binks.

A few years back, Ambrosia's software was distributed on the honor system. You could download the software and use it forever, scot-free except for the friendly reminders that you had the software for 1,500 days and still hadn't beaten level 6. This was obviously a big leap of faith on our part, but it built up an almost cult following among Mac users. What we lost in sales, we made up in good will. As a business model, the honor system wasn't ideal, but it certainly was idealistic, and it helped put Ambrosia's founder, Andrew Welch, through college and kept Ambrosia's employees supplied with pizza and beer. (I think there's a law of conservation at work there.)

This was all fine and good--except that eventually Andrew graduated and everyone else got sick of pizza and beer. Ambrosia grew from an interesting sideline into a full time place of employment. The company became an entity with its own purpose, its own office space, and its own gravitational pull. It also developed an insatiable appetite for cash, because as any MBA will tell you, the lifeblood of business is green.

This period of growth and rampant consumption was constrained only by the limited diet afforded by the generosity and honesty of others. Basically, money was tight. One way we encouraged users to pay for the game *Escape Velocity* was to introduce the character of Captain Hector, who would remind (and eventually harass) players who were still unregistered after an extended period of play. When we compared sales of *Escape Velocity* to those of our previous products, it became apparent that either pizza and beer had become a lot more expensive or that some people needed an extra nudge--such as from Captain Hector--to do the right thing and pay up.

Locking the Front Door

Shortly after I joined the Ambrosia team, Andrew forwarded me an article that illustrated the benefits of crippling software. In short, the author of a shareware program found that people were five times more likely to register and unlock a crippled version of his software than they were to register software that came fully functional from the outset. It was the final straw in our camel-breaking, decision-making process. We would still make shareware, but we would no longer stand there waiting for handouts on the street--we'd charge admission. <<http://hackvan.com/pub/stig/articles/why-do-people-register-shareware.html>>

Let me tell you, we heard about it. Many who had praised us for our idealism were now calling us sellouts. It didn't matter that little changed for our paying customers--they still got their codes quickly, and had unlimited access to the game--it was the principle of the thing. Okay, it was a little inconvenient if you'd lost your code or wanted to install it on your new Power Mac 7500, but we could resolve that quickly in response to a phone call or an email.

I mean, we like being cool and fair, but even a cult following can get tiresome (cultists don't shower, they track in mud, and they leave you to pick up the check). Besides, the mantra kept repeating in our heads: five times as many registrations, five times, five times. I don't think it ever was quite that good for us, but we definitely saw an increase in sales that helped Ambrosia weather some tough times. (No, we never actually ran out of pizza, but there were times when we had to mop up spilled beer with borrowed rolls of toilet paper.) It was a hard decision, but it was a business decision, and it turned out to be the right one.

Time passed. Our staff continued to grow and evolve, and my wife and I begat our son Luke. Nothing brings home how untenable your professional and financial situation is like having a family. When it was just my wife and I, we could fool ourselves into thinking that we were just coed roommates living on a college budget--but no more. Pizza and beer had given way to diapers and life insurance.

Diapers and Life Insurance

So I'm working for this shareware company, and I want to make sure that my job is secure. You have to understand that even a 10 percent variance in Ambrosia's registrations means that someone may need to start checking the employment classifieds. At the same time, it's becoming more evident that people aren't just not paying for our software--they're actually going out of their way to share license codes with others over the Internet. Some ingenious folks have even reverse-engineered our software and figured out how to generate their own license codes.

We don't live with our heads in the sand. We knew what was happening. The Internet was the great facilitator of homework assignments and world peace, but it had also become a way for people to get registration codes for any software they wanted. We felt action was required, but we remembered the trauma of our last change in policy when we required people to register the software instead of just asking nicely.

So over the course of numerous lunches (many of which didn't include pizza or beer, but did involve some yummy sandwiches from Arby's), we discussed various ways for improving the whole registration system from our standpoint without making the pro-

cess onerous for our loyal customers. Simplicity was the keyword. The final piece of the technical puzzle fell into place one weekend as I drove through Canada, when I recalled a bit of algebra that would make our license code algorithm quite secure without violating any treaties or munitions bans.

When I finally contacted Andrew, I said to him one word: polynomials.

The blank look on his face continued for a long time as I explained how we could factor the serial numbers, secure our products, and even distribute codes that would expire and stop working when exposed to prolonged sunlight. With his grudging consent, we sketched out and implemented the first pass at the "new Ambrosia registration system."

The fundamental change we made was to build the current date into the license code itself. That timestamp is then used at just one point in the process: it forces the user to activate the product within 30 days, or the code expires and won't activate anything. Now, and this is important, the timestamp has

Continued on page 48.



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absolutely no effect on the operation of the software after the code has been entered. Once personalized for the user's computer, it remains fully functional forever (unless someone wipes the system clean).

Snapz Pro X

The first product to use the new registration system was the latest version of our flagship utility, Snapz Pro X, which started shipping in June of 2001. Over the course of the summer, the system silently and steadfastly worked as intended. Most people didn't care that the license codes were now 12 digits instead of 8, and registrations continued apace. It wasn't until September that we received any negative feedback. <http://www.snapzpro.com>

You see, in September Apple upgraded Mac OS X to version 10.1, and many people were paranoid enough to reformat and perform a clean install. That meant the data file containing the software registration was lost, forcing most people to reenter their license codes. It also meant that anyone whose serial number was generated before August needed to contact us by phone or email to get an updated code. Of course, these people had paid already, so we renewed their codes quickly and free of charge.

It's been our experience that people are often too busy or forgetful to store their license codes in a safe place, so it's inevitable that every major system release is followed by a barrage of requests for missing codes. To handle the tremendous load of people who had misplaced their codes (as well as those who saved them only to find they had expired), we created an email address - `<lostcodes@ambrosiasw.com>` - dedicated to generating new codes. When Joe User entered the expired code, he was prompted to send us an email (it required only a click), and someone would respond to the request as soon as possible. Yet we were constrained by the laws of time, space, and the New York State Department of Labor, so our staff was available to answer requests only during regular business hours.

After several customer complaints, we decided to remedy this problem by automating the process of renewing an expired code. When an expired code is entered for Snapz Pro X, the user is encouraged to request a new license code from our automated server--right then and there! Renewing the code takes only two extra clicks, maybe an extra 30 seconds overall, but it puts the power back in the hands of the user. He can decide when to update his system, install software, and renew his license code at his leisure. Even at midnight just before a four-day weekend.

So you are probably curious about the benefits of expiring codes--why would anyone want this hassle? Let's look at the three categories. For paying customers with an Internet connection, the extra work is minimal: an email sent to Ambrosia that's answered within one business day. For those organized enough to save their original codes, there isn't even a

wait: they get the code on the spot. The only inconvenience comes to those people trying to enter a pirated code.

Which brings us back to the question, "How many people are using pirated codes?" The plain fact is that most people are honest unless given a chance to be dishonest. If they stumble across a working license code for software, or do a quick Internet search, then they can quickly enter the code and cover their self-loathing with the adrenaline rush of blasting aliens and squishing fish. Only the most hard-core computer user will try to reverse-engineer the software and crack the copy protection--and I'll be honest, there's isn't much we could do to stop them. Crackers enjoy the challenge itself--the tougher the better--so if they want it badly enough, they'll find a way.

Historically it's been difficult to measure software piracy, but our experience is that the vast majority of users lack the time or inclination to modify software to bypass license checks. Here's the rub: these users might actually buy the software if it weren't so easy to find pirated codes. Thus, expiring codes are a good way to defeat (or at least hamper) this kind of casual piracy--the serial numbers stored in databases and posted to the Internet are viable only for a short while before they must be renewed.

Ironically, it's these casual pirates who are helping me measure the impact of piracy on our sales.

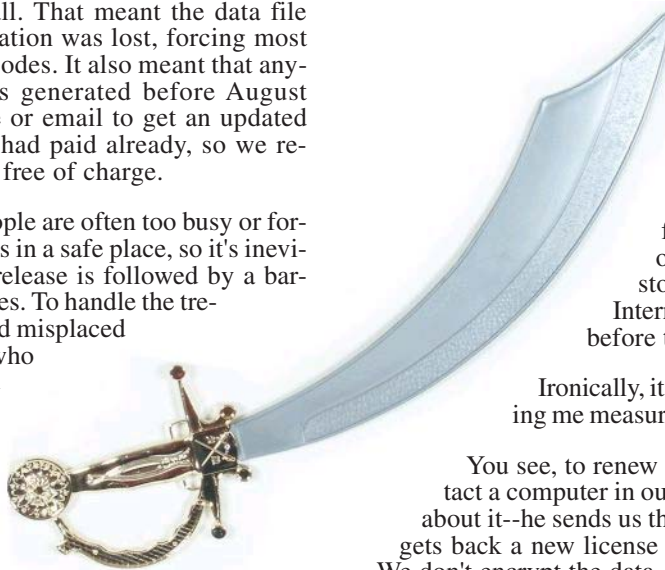
You see, to renew a stolen code, Joe User must contact a computer in our office. There's nothing nefarious about it--he sends us the user name and expired code and gets back a new license code or a suitable error message. We don't encrypt the data, we don't grab any personal information, and we don't even open a connection without explicit permission. But when Joe User clicks that bright shiny Renew button, our server records the product, user name, and the Internet address he came from.

For the first two days after we posted the latest update to Snapz Pro X, our server was busy. Of the 194 different hosts that tried to renew a license code, 107 of them sent in pirated codes (click the URL below to view a screenshot of an actual server log file; the entries highlighted in red are attempts to authenticate pirated license codes). Incredibly, more than 50 percent of the people installing the update entered one or both of the pirated codes we've known about for months.

Some of these people even tried several different variants on the names when the server refused them access ("maybe I misspelled it"), and one guy got so frustrated he pounded the Renew button over and over every four seconds ("WHY_click_IS_click_THIS_click_NOT_click_WORKING???") until our server blacklisted him for flooding. http://www.tidbits.com/resources/620/pirate_log_red.gif

You don't have to remind us that the sample isn't statistically valid. Nevertheless we think it's a reasonable approximation of

Continued on page 49.





security

reality--if not a little conservative. It certainly reinforces our perception that casual piracy is both significant and widespread.

Hopes for the Future

Maybe I didn't look these people in the eye, but they know I'm watching them. They indicated a real interest in our software when they thought they could use it for free, and this gives me hope that some may yet decide that registering is easier and more satisfying than stealing our hard work. If not, then either they were forced to stop using the software or they'll likely encounter me again, somewhere down the road. Next time, I'll bring Captain Hector.

I also hope this article explains to our customers (and other computer users out there) the impact that piracy has on small software firms like ours. I hope they can appreciate our decisions regarding the registration system and agree that the extra 30 seconds and two clicks are a minor inconvenience. If every-

one pays for the products they like and use, companies like Ambrosia can stay in business and continue making cool products for everyone to enjoy.

Finally, I hope that these changes give me a little more job security, so I can continue doing what I love with some of the coolest folks I've ever met. Because I plan on working here as long as I possibly can, making great software and saving enough money so my kids can eventually go to college, where they can enjoy their share of beer and pizza.

Reprinted with permission of the author. Matt Slot has worked for Ambrosia for nearly five years, but life isn't just fun and games for the Bitwise Operator. When he's not calculating polynomials and fighting off pirates, Matt enjoys reading a good book (Terry Pratchett), watching a little television (24), and playing with his two kids (Luke and Kaleigh). You can reach Matt at <fprefect@ambrosiasw.com> or visit the Ambrosia Software site at <www.AmbrosiaSW.com>. This article originally appeared in TidBits, a Mac newsletter. <(www.tidbits.com/tb-issues)>

Security tips

Tips for Keeping Your Children Safe Online

Parents are constantly struggling with ways to keep their children safe online. The Internet has a global reach and at this point no bounds, or limitations. Outside of installing filtering software children should be educated in order to protect themselves to this virtual monster. We've put together a collection of ten tips that should be observed while surfing online. At the very least these tips will prompt family discussions regarding safety.

- 1.) When on the internet personal information should be kept private. Just because someone asks doesn't mean you need to tell them. When someone asks for personal information, consider how they might use that information and whether it is necessary for them to have it.
- 2.) If you are conversing with someone online, don't assume that they are being honest with you. Just because they say they're 16 doesn't mean they are.
- 3.) Do not release your password to anyone, even if they say they are from your online provider.
- 4.) Overall it is best not to respond to unsolicited e-mail (SPAM), if there is something flagrant or inappropriate in the e-mail, consider reporting the sender to their Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- 5.) Do not give out or post identifying information, including address or telephone numbers.
- 6.) You may want to create a nickname for a screen name in chat rooms.
- 7.) Keep in mind when posting in chat rooms or newsgroups, that there may be lurkers (people who read but do not post). Your information can be read and seen by all.
- 8.) Keep an open dialogue with children surfing the Internet, remember if they come to you with a problem, your first reaction should not be to take away the Internet. Applaud child's confidence in confiding in you and work together to find a solution.
- 9.) Overall it is not a good idea to post or exchange pictures over the Internet
- 10.) Try to keep in mind the Internet is global and is *not* governed by any entity. This means that there are no limitations or checks on the information posted and accessible to Internet users.

Additional Resources:

The following resources will assist in staying safe online.

Collection of Internet Access and Filtering Software - <<http://www.monitoring-software.net/access-monitoring.htm>>

Contract for Safe Surfing - <<http://www.911paging.com/internetsafety/internetcontract.htm>>

Submitted by Sharon Housley

Organizing the Favorites Menu

browsers

by Glenn Richards <grich32(at)yahoo.com>, Emeritus Member of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Leesburg, FL <www.lscs.us>

When you collect shortcuts to web sites like I do, the Favorites menu gets difficult to manage without some organizing. It is easy to add sub-folders to the Favorites main folder, either via the Internet Explorer menu item Favorites, or using Windows Explorer.

The figure shows a main Favorites subfolder I named "Software." Under that folder I have a subfolder named "A to C," etc. down to "U to Z." The right-most column shows some of the contents of the UtoZ subfolder.

I split the alphabetic range of the subfolders so that the height of the contents of any folder does not exceed the vertical space on the Desktop. The figure has squeezed the display horizontally to make more room for these words.

My Software folder is for web sites where I have found worthwhile programs for download. One of its subfolders is "Tudogs," a web site that has shortcuts to hundreds of free programs. I have acquired many of them for the group's CDs.


The method of creating the subfolders using Windows Explorer that I use is to have WE in a two-pane mode with the Favorites folder highlighted in the left pane. Right-click in the right pane, New, Folder, and give the folder a name of you're choosing. This method can be cascaded as far as you want to go.

The above method of organization can also be used to consolidate items in your Start, Programs menu. Use WE to open your Programs folder at C:\Documents and Settings\<your own menu>\Start Menu\Programs, create subfolders for categories of menu items, and move appropriate shortcuts to this new subfolder. This can reduce the height of the Programs menu so it will fit on the screen.

My Favorites folder has 1968 files (web addresses) in 136 subfolders occupying 403KB, with no web address more than two clicks away.

dvnation.com

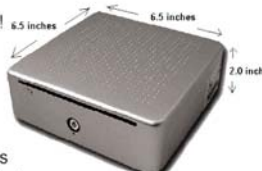
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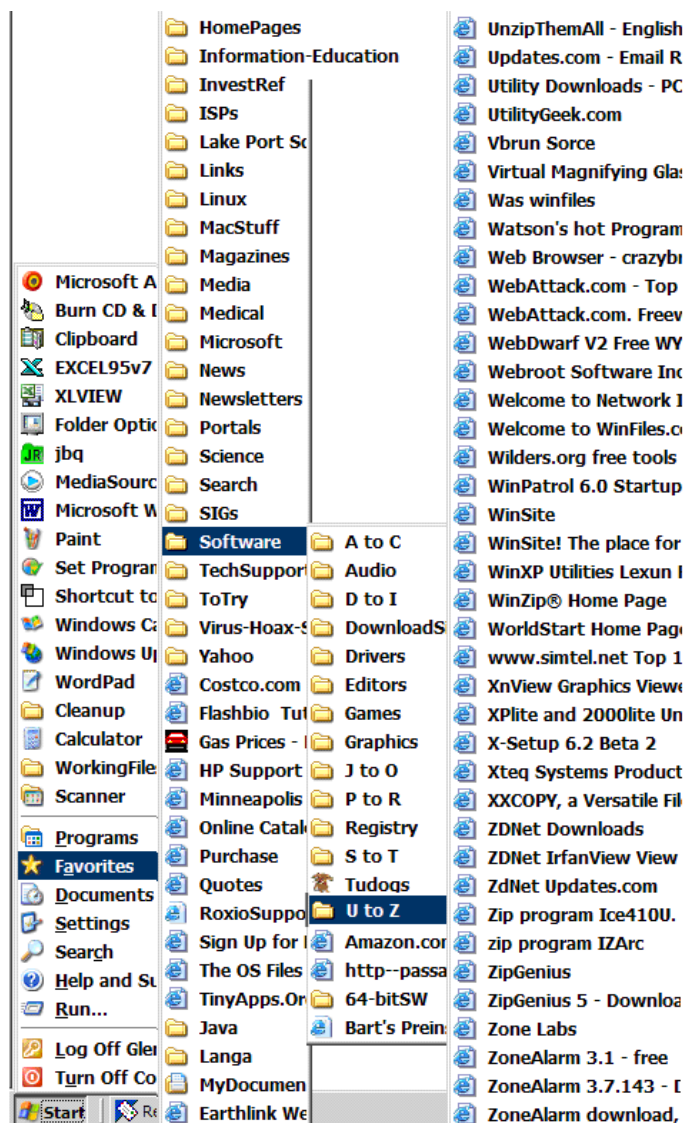
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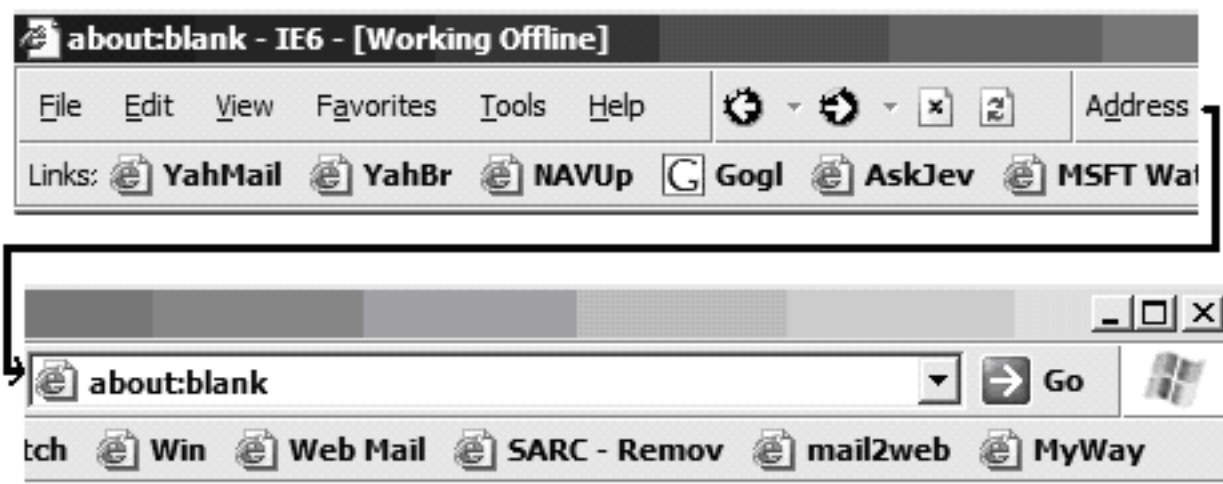
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Getting the Most Viewing Space in the Internet Explorer Window

browsers

by **Glenn Richards** <grich32(at)yahoo.com>, Emeritus Member of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Leesburg, FL <www.lscs.us>



The IE window toolbars can take up a lot of space that could be better used to see web page content. This can be especially critical with small monitors and/or with low resolution settings. But even with my 21" monitor at 1280 by 1024 pixels I like to maximize the viewing area. The graphic above shows my setup (split into two rows to show the detail).

Below the Title bar are the Menu, Standard Buttons, and Address Bars in one row. Below these is the Links Bar that has the full width of the window for its choices. Note that for the Standard Buttons Bar I have reduced the choices to just Back, Forward, Stop, and Refresh. These are the only tools I use frequently. The functions of some other tools can be found under View, Explorer Bar. Make the selection via menu item View, Toolbars, Customize. Also in the Customize Toolbar window are the options to select "Small icons" and to have "No text labels" - my choices.

Some users may not realize that toolbars can be moved to the row occupied by the Menu Bar, but IE version 6 allows this. To make the move go to View, Toolbars, and uncheck "Lock the Toolbars." This enables vertical bars at the left end of toolbars. These are "Handles" that can be dragged with the mouse cursor. Once a satisfactory arrangement is found, go back and check "Lock the Toolbars." This insures against accidental rearrangement of the toolbars.

The Links toolbar, a special function of the Favorites menu because Windows and IE make its content available on the toolbar, contains internet shortcuts that I access frequently. Actually, in my system it has more choices than I really need because I have the space for them. And I shorten the references to the web sites they point to to make space for as many as possible. For instance YahMail points to the web page for Yahoo Mail, <<http://mail.yahoo.com/>>. And NAVUp points to the web site for updating Norton Antivirus references,

<<http://www.sarc.com/avcenter/download/pages/US-N95.html>>. The same shortcuts can be found under menu item Favorites, Links.

Another space saver is shortening the IE program name in the Title bar. Typically it is "Microsoft Internet Explorer." Other info in this bar is the web site or other info. I changed the program name to IE6 to make more space. This involved editing the Registry at HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main to have an entry in the Name column of "Window Title" with a Value data of your choice (like IE6).

One last note is that I set the default Home page to Blank to prevent IE from trying to go to a Web site when the window is opened. Remember to tap the F11 key for more space.

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Indexing the Web: Spiders, Web Crawlers & Bots



By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Sarasota PC Monitor
Sarasota FL PC Users Group <www.spcug.org>

Have you ever wondered how search engines such as Google manage to get the answers to your queries so rapidly? How could they search the web that fast, I mean usually less than one second to find the words you ask for? Well --- They don't. Actually the searching goes on constantly, 24/7. And, the mechanism they use is just a modification of what you use for browsing the web.

Although you may have heard about spiders, web crawlers and web bots, they don't actually traverse the web any more than does your web browser (Internet Explorer or Firefox or whatever browser you use). Instead they download web pages that are then scanned and the significant words added to an index.

To simplify the terminology, I will refer to all the web searching programs as "spiders". (It takes less space and is easier to type.) These spiders are programs designed to find web addresses (URL's) and to download the pages. Some also do the indexing of the words on the page. However, Google uses a separate indexing program and stores the downloaded pages for future reference. Now if a single spider were being used to locate and download pages, the task would really be impossible. Sergey Brin and Lawrence Page, the originators of Google, published a paper while they were graduate students at Stanford that utilized three spiders. Each spider kept about 300 connections open simultaneously. With four spiders they could download about 600 pages per second. This paper referred to the prototype that became the commercial Google enterprise. Even with the prototype system they were able to download and index 24 million pages in a week. Their current methodology is proprietary and so is not public, but it is probably a significant improvement over their prototype system.

We can use the original Google system as a model of what could be used by search engines to prepare the index and database of web pages that you access when you send a query. The first step is to send a list of URLs to the spider to download. This is done by a server that maintains a list of URLs. The spider will download pages and also follow any hyperlinks to other pages. Addresses of pages that were linked to the original search list are also sent back to the server to be checked to see if they were already on the list. If not, they are added to the URL lists. Not every spider uses a URL server. The spider will continue crawling the web until it reaches a dead end or a page with no further links.

As I mentioned earlier, a spider isn't just working with one page, but has hundreds of connections open to different pages. Given that there are billions of pages on the Web, even with thousands of spiders collecting information, only a small fraction of the entire web is scanned. Some web sites, such as those with news or rapidly changing information are visited hourly. Every spider has a re-visitation policy that determines how frequently a page will be revisited and checked for changes.



There is another general policy that is usually programmed into these spiders. That is called the "politeness" policy. This is used to prevent the overloading of web sites. After all, there is a finite limit to bandwidth and it would be possible to overwhelm a web site with visits from multiple spiders in a short period of time. This policy provides for an interval of time to elapse between accesses by a spider. This time interval seems to vary from 20 seconds to 3-4 minutes. This would be the case where multiple pages need to be downloaded from a single server. Revisiting indexed and stored web sites occurs at less frequent intervals.

However, even this politeness policy is sometimes inadequate. Frequent visits by spiders may result in complaints being sent back to the owner of the spider. So it is also possible to enter code on a web page which asks the spider to not access or download a page or pages. This can be done by the addition of meta tags in the page header or by a robots.txt file placed in the root directory for the web site. This is especially appropriate for game pages. These pages use a dynamic format that changes when pages are viewed or links are followed. When a spider downloads these pages the game program may respond as if a very high-speed player were logged on. This can create problems for the program and may result in crashing the game server. So we now have the robot exclusion protocol being used by owners of web pages that do not want their pages included in the search engine indexing.

In the original Google system the web pages were sent to another program referred to as the indexer. This program sorts through every word on the page and stores them in a database. The exceptions are the simple words such as a, an, the. However, simply entering the words into a database is not sufficient. They have to be identified to the particular page from which they came, the location on that page and a relative ranking in importance. The frequency with which they appear on the page as well as the position on the page may be used in determining the weight or relative rank. Words in the title or near the top of the page may be ranked as more important. So the storage of the words include the URL, and a calculated weight in an encoded format.

The word database is then indexed to speed the retrieval of the information. This is usually done by the building of a Hash Table. Hashing evens out the alphabetical sections so that it takes no longer to find a "z" than it does a more popular letter like "m". It also separates the index from the actual entry for the word. This improves the efficiency of the storage of this information. The indexing and the Hash Table also speed the overall retrieval of the information. The complete web page is also stored in

a separate location. Once the indexing process is completed, the information is available for your query.

Given the size of the web and the continuing changes to web pages, the spider's search is never ending. It may also be one where we will never have every page indexed. One other aspect of the size of the web and the time required for the crawling process is that broken links will always occur. If a page is not re-visited frequently, it may still be in the index and the database long after it has been removed from its server. Another situation may be where the URL has changed and the new location has not yet been crawled. So, the process is not perfect by any means.

The other aspect of searching the web is the design of the query you want to submit to a search engine. As I'm sure you know, you can simply list a few keywords in the search engine and hope you will get a useful result. Many times you will also get results that have no relationship to the information you are seeking. In some of these cases, you need to try the advanced search or learn to use Boolean operators. Those most frequently used are:

AND – all the terms joined by “AND” must appear in the pages or documents.

OR – at least one of the terms joined by “OR” must appear in the pages or documents.

NOT – the term or terms following “NOT” must appear.

Quotation marks – Words between quotation marks must appear as a phrase.

Followed By – one of the terms must be followed by the other.

Near – one of the terms must be within a specified number of words of the other.

Generally, search engines can use these Boolean operators to provide results more closely aligned to the topic you are trying to locate.

Like everything else related to computers, web indexing and searching are not static technologies. The search engine companies are researching “natural language” queries such as those handled by “Ask Jeeves”. Currently, these queries can accommodate only relatively simple phrases. However, there is heavy competition to develop an engine that can work with much more complex queries. Another area that is being pursued is “concept-based” searching. This would use a form of statistical analysis to determine if the page fit your query. And, as you may have read, Google has plans to put the content of the world's libraries on the web.

Just imagine what it would be like if we didn't have these search engines to help us find information on the web. So good searching and I hope you find what you are looking for.

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>.



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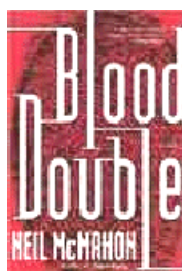
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Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Blood Double by Neil McMahon, hardback, Harper Collins, 2002, \$22.95, 240 pages

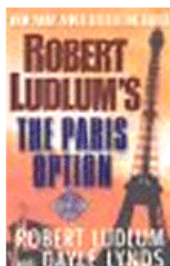


An unconscious John Smith is brought into physician Carroll Monk's emergency room suffering from a drug overdose. Monks recognizes him as a billionaire computer wunderkind who is set to announce an IPO of software that can untangle genetic codes at the speed of light. When the patient disappears and his ER is burgled, Monks is drawn into a shadowy world of genetic manipulation, corporate cover-ups and murder.

Garbage in, garbage out. The software used data from Finns and Korean prostitutes as its baseline, and people fear, with good cause, that it could be used

to create designer babies and deny insurance coverage to vulnerable populations. The ethics of using flawed technology to make life and death decisions is a compelling ethical dilemma. Genetic testing seems to be the next new thing in thrillerdom (recall last month's review of Knockout Mouse) so look for more like this in the future.

The Paris Option by Robert Ludlum, Gayle Lynds, paperback, St Martin's, 2002, \$15.95, 425 pages



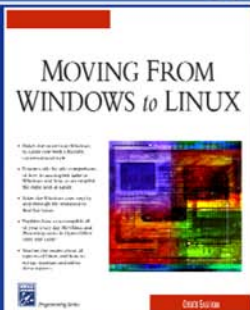
Terrorists blow up the Pasteur Institute in Paris. Covert One, a secret U.S. Intelligence Agency, fears that Emile Chambourd, a scientist there, was close to developing a workable DNA computer. Chambourd is presumed dead and his prototype is missing. Their worst

fears are confirmed when secure military communications go haywire - only a molecular computer, capable of evolving, is capable of conducting the rapid computations needed to crack the codes. Covert One agents are dispatched to Europe to recover the prototype and save the world.

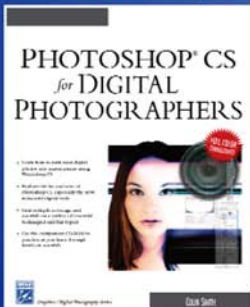
This is the kind of book my husband calls a 'shoot-em-up'. Lots of action, little character development. I was disappointed that there wasn't more technical explanation of the DNA computer - if I hadn't read other novels (for example, Prey and Society of the Mind) I would have been totally lost. Not Ludlum at his best

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

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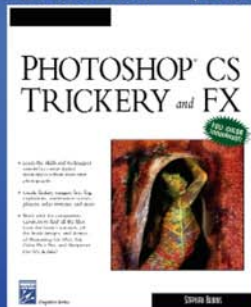
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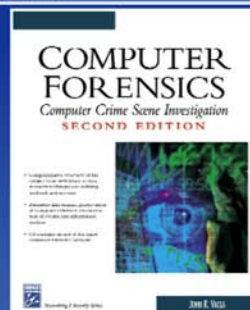
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Book Review

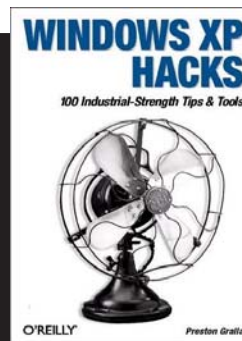
Windows XP Hacks - Tips and Tools for Optimizing Your OS

By Preston Gralla

Published by O'Reilly

\$29.95 US

Reviewed by Steve Devine, Alamo PC



This edition has been completely revised and updated to take full account of the new features in Service Pack 2 (SP2). This collection of hacks covers the XP operating system from start to finish. It includes timesaving hacks for computer and network security, using digital media, web browsing, and more. This book is an excellent all 'round handbook suitable for both the relatively novice, but also contains a few whammies of interest to more experienced "power users".

This book is a compilation of a hundred and twenty "hacks", or "little things you can do" to make your Windows XP computer easier to use, safer from viruses and other malicious software, ,

Windows XP Hacks is written in a cookbook style - all practice with no (ok: a minimum) of theory to get you going fast. It is a listing of 100 hacks that are well grouped by chapters into sensible categories:

Chapter 1: Startup and Shutdown

Ducks look so serene and peaceful as they glide, seemingly effortlessly, across the surface of a pond, but underneath the surface there is a flurry of furious activity as those webbed feet down there supply the propulsion. Likewise, when you push your computer's On button, many many things are happening behind the scenes. As your machine rises from its hardware slumber and prepares to serve you. This chapter contains 7 hacks on how to take some control of that activity, such as how to speed up the startup and shutdown processes so your machine automatically has "on" the programs and processes you usually use, how to customize the "splash" screen that you see before your desktop "materializes", how to create different user profiles on your system so that the different folks who use the machine don't see each others' software clutter or accidentally wreck each others' stuff, as well as a basic lesson in how to hack the Windows Registry and customize many functions of the startup and shutdown processes. If it is inside of hack number one, then it is something anyone can do, so anyone who is sent into a panic/tizzy over the phrase "registry hacking" can relax. Or at least try to..

Chapter 2: The User Interface

This chapter includes 13 hacks on the computers visual appearance from how to create your own cursors and icons, to various small changes to the look and feel of XP. On a non-superficial level there are a few hacks here about how to remove un-removable programs, icons, and system objects.

Hack number 16 is a "beaut": it's called "How to make your PC work like a Mac," and it's a nine page hack (waaay longer than most) involving improvements to the look, feel, and epeience of tyour computer, it allows one to take advantage of the many widgets or useful, small programs available for the Mac. Since they are written in JavaScript, they'll work with only minor tweaking on your Win XP machine, too. Oddly (quite oddly indeed) the last hack in this chapter concerns how to temporarily try out Linux on your PC without interfering at all with the Windows XP. That's something I would not have expected out of a Windows XP book, and I think it is an interesting thing to try for someone with some curiosity about the choices that are out there, but maybe a bit too much of a sideline for the average computer

Hack (hak) n., A clever solution to an interesting problem.

O'Reilly's Hacks Series reclaims the term "hacking" for the good guys--innovators who explore and experiment, unearth short-cuts, create useful tools, and come up with fun things to try on their own.

user. It is 100% free and won't hurt your machine, but it may drive you nuts. Your call, in other words.

Chapter 3: Windows Explorer

These 11 hacks help one to take charge of and optimize the Windows Explorer we've al been using since I-don't-know-when. Some tricks include: hiding files by encrypting them, giving yourself more apparent hard drive space by compressing files, and searching through your own files by using the indexing service and its rather primitive, but easy to use query language. If you are a new computer user this last hack is overkill, but if you have been writing, saving, or collecting odds and ends on your machine for a couple or more years, this hack just might save your sanity.

Chapter 4: The Web

These hacks include how to kill annoying pop up advertisements, stop spyware, change around some superficial aspects of Internet Explorer, how to get some very fast and useful tricks from the Firefox browser (a free download) including how to build a custom search engine to search your favorite sites for the most important stuff, and even kill banner ads. A heck of a chapter for us heavy web users. The hack on how to use Google search on your own PC's desktop seems out of place for a chapter on web hacks, but what the heck, right? I don't want to get a reputation for being stuck in the mud or anything, let 'er rip. And if you think Googling your own computer is the living end, the last hack concerns using MSN (Microsoft Networking0 Desktop Search to beat Google at its own game. MSN Desktop Search out does the Big "G" by hooking in directly to Windows XP, Microsoft Office, and the various Outlook programs, and zeroes in on e-mail and other files that are just waiting on your hard rive for you to

Continued on page 56.

find and react to them somehow. At least they are on my machine. I know they are.

Chapter 5: Networking

Windows XP is the first of the Windows that was designed to network from the get-go, and this chapter lays it out for you. From fancy tricks regarding internet use, to hacks to help your home network run right, this chapter “does” the networking issue right. There is even a hack involving how to set up a VoIP (meaning “Voice over Internet Protocol”) service on your machine and make phone calls, even long distance ones, for cheap cheap cheap. VoIP services have been ruled legal and ok to use as of over a year ago, and the phone companies have moved into Internet Access providing, so “No Fear”, as they say.

Chapter 6: Email

E-mail has the distinction of simultaneously greatly boosting human office work productivity along with wasting god-awful huge amounts of time. I think future generations will look back on this era and call e-mail a draw, basically. These hacks allow one to repel “spam”, get better email programs, pick up your web based email using a desktop email client, as well as a more dubious hack: opening blocked file attachments in the Outlook family of programs. Could be very convenient, could be the doorway into Virus Hell. Beware, and all will be ok. You don’t have to use every hack, I hope you realize.

Chapter 7: Wireless

This chapter forces me to reveal my Inner Fuddy-Duddy. I have never owned a computer that is capable of Wireless, “Wi-Fi” action, and don’t plan to very soon. I wouldn’t uninstall Wi-Fi hardware from a free computer that was given to me, but I’m frankly not comfortable with lugging around a laptop machine that, in my paranoid opinion, can be hacked by remote control no matter where I go. This chapter covers the basics of wireless stuff I have never ever used before like discovery of wireless access points nearby, how to protect your own wireless stuff from being “discovered” by curious little hackers who are holding a very different book in their own hands, and how to encrypt, or encode your wireless traffic so even if somebody does discover you in spite of our best efforts, all they see is useless gibberish.

Chapter 8: Security

Security. Such a beautiful word. Nice in principle, but does it even exist in the practical, day-to-day reality we must inhabit? I’m dead either way I answer, so I’ll just say that there are many different kinds of threat against computers today, usually from people who either want to look at and perhaps copy any valuable information you may have on your machine (credit card numbers are just the beginning) or maybe they want to take some kind control over your machine for some (usually illegal) purpose.

BUT! This chapter includes hack after hack on how to test your PCs for weak spots, how to safely use the Internet and also any local network you may be attached to, as well as how to hide and encode your files and folders so you can get at them easily, but no one else can, and how to use firewalls properly. This last is an interesting thing to try and educate folks about. Untrained use of firewall software is less than no good, it will make you less secure than you were before you started. The chapter finishes up with a description of how to set up your own VPN, or Virtual Private Network, as

well as how to close down various open “ports” on your machine that may allow undesirable traffic through, and how to shut off protocols which, if you don’t need, prepare, and properly use them, can be open invitations right into the heart of your machine for all land sundry.

Chapter 9: The Registry

Feared by the Many, Mastered by the Few. The Windows XP Registry contains the underlying organization of the entire operating system. Metaphorically speaking, it is like the Table of Contents of a book, but so much more, in that changes to it can change the contents and the actions of that book (the computer). Most mentions of the Windows XP Registry in polite conversation include such phrases as: “It’s so complicated” and “Be careful, you can wreck your whole computer if you mess it up”. These fears, while partially true, are not the whole picture, of course. If you stay organized, break things down step by step, and maybe in the beginning of your registry hacking career, keep a written log of what you’re doing so you don’t get lost, then you will find the XP Registry is a magic doorway to a multitude.

This chapter is supposedly only five hacks long, and it teaches basic Registry structure, how your PC uses the Registry to go about its business, how to back up and safely edit the Registry, and how to get programs from some internet sites with good reputations that can help you edit the Registry like a real pro.

When I say that this chapter is “supposedly” only five hacks long, I mean that most of the hack entries are comprised of multiple tricks. If broken down one trick at a time, it’s more like fifteen or twenty hacks long.

Continued on page 57.

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**10%
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Bruce Cramer
Microsoft Certified
Professional



The Windows Registry is a big subject, but like many challenging subjects, it's easily manageable if you stay organized and take things one step at a time.

Chapter 10: Applications

Applications, applications. We used to call 'em programs, now we "have to" call 'em applications. This eleven hack chapter deals with how to optimize the behavior of programs under Windows XP. From how to uninstall balky software that doesn't want to leave your hard drive, to shortcuts to quickly launch programs and customize them to your needs. Some of your older programs that might normally refuse to run under Win XP can be coaxed to do so with the hacks contained here. Two hacks concern opening, using, and creating Word and Excel files without purchasing Microsoft Office. Quite handy. One trick involves preventing people from gaining unauthorized access to your information by disabling the Hidden Fields feature in Word. Hard drive defragging is covered as well, and there are four or five pages dedicated to how to use the Windows Virtual Desktop to keep yourself organized while doing many things at once on your machine. The hack on Back-Up philosophy is incisive and well done. Two hacks address Windows Messenger, and the safe use of messaging.

Chapter 11: Graphics and Multimedia

Windows XP is the first Microsoft operating system to attempt deep integration of multimedia, graphics, and audio playing abilities. It does pretty well overall, but these nine hacks help you take things a step further in the way of ease and usefulness. Hack 99 concerns how to create your own icons and convert graphics from one format to another. Many hacks concern music, from problem free burning of music CDs, how to import lyrics into iTunes and iPod, how to convert your music from Apple's iTunes format to make it easy to legally store, transfer and use your purchased music, and how to save streaming media onto your computer.

This chapter also contains an unusual hack: how to rip, play, and otherwise use Ogg Vorbis files for your music. Very easy, and quite a quality jump over MP3s. Since it has free and open terms of use, you may use it freely, subject only to any copyrights on the music itself. The one Ogg Vorbis hack takes up seven pages and change, clearly a subject of great importance to the authors. The hack concerning the TweakMP PowerToy utility winds up giving the Windows Media Player a great deal of basic and useful functions that are, alas, new to WinMP such as playlist editing, volume leveling for burning CDs that have all the songs at the same loudness, and how to prevent WinMP from triggering a cookie overload on your hard drive as it thoughtfully informs various and numerous media companies on the net of your CD and DVD tastes.

The Windows Movie Maker is software built in to Windows XP and allows making and editing videos and home movies, adding titles, transition wipes, and various special effects. A six-page hack covering everything from how to get the video onto your computer in the first place, to how to burn your own DVDs. Multimedia operations are lots of just plain fun, and this chapter is key to making it a whole lot easier.

Chapter 12: System Performance

System Performance. Sounds kinda ... general, if you know what I mean, but here in this chapter are seven whole hacks devoted to boosting it. Let's try coming to an understanding from the bottom up, so to speak. The first hack involves familiarizing you with the Performance Console, which is software included with your Windows XP that helps you see how well

your XP is performing, how to log this performance, how to read and evaluate the log info, and how to tune your system to best make use of XP, especially on "older" model machines. There is an assortment of registry modifications, and some task manager adjustments, but the jewel hack of this chapter is the one on how to deal with the rough spots engendered by Service Pack 2. Gotta have the SP2, but if you're not careful, you might have all sorts of problems like applications suddenly shutting down and auto updates failing. Hack 114, Fixing SP2 Upgrade woes is a beaut.

Chapter 13: Hardware

This final chapter involves a small number of hacks involving hardware "tricks", such as how to quickly network two PCs together, find hidden hardware with your Device Manager, and improve screen resolution. Not very much, but after a whole book full of hacks we've just covered, in hopefully not too agonizing detail, I hope you won't be too disappointed.

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**

Student Practice Lab

Polish those new skills - 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

MAY 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	2 Class 1 of 12 **PRR** Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. BOD 6:30 P.M. Excel Basics 7 - 9 P.M.	3	4 Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 - 11 A.M. Class *PRR* Brush Up Photoshop 1 - 3 P.M. (a/r) HGSI 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Net Web Development 7 - 9 P.M.	5 *PRR* Small Business Server 2003 8 - 10 A.M. Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 8 *PRR* Photoshop 7 1 - 5 P.M. PC Alamode Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	6 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
7	8 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	9 Class 2 of 12 **PRR** Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Excel Basics 7 - 9 P.M.	10 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Home Page Jumpstart 5:30 - 7 P.M. <i>Canceled class will start again in the fall</i>	11 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 - 11 A.M. Class *PRR* Brush Up Photoshop 1 - 3 P.M.	12 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 8 *PRR* Photoshop 7 1 - 5 P.M.	13 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Commodore 1 - 4 P.M.
14 <i>Mother's Day.</i>	15	16 Class 3 of 12 **PRR** Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Excel Basics 7 - 9 P.M.	17	18 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 4 of 6 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 - 11 A.M. Class *PRR* Brush Up Photoshop 1 - 3 P.M.	19 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 7 of 8 *PRR* Photoshop 7 1 - 5 P.M.	20 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
21	22 CorelDRAW 12 6 - 8 P.M.	23 Class 4 of 12 **PRR** Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Excel Basics 7 - 9 P.M.	24 Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M. (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	25 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 6 *PRR* Digital Camera & Photography 9 - 11 A.M. Class *PRR* Brush Up Photoshop 1 - 3 P.M. (Dot).NetNuke Portal 7 - 9 P.M.	26 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 8 of 8 *PRR* Photoshop 7 1 - 5 P.M.	27 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M.
28	29 Memorial Day (Let's remember those who fought for our freedoms.)	30 Class 5 of 12 **PRR** Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Excel Basics 7 - 9 P.M.	31 Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M.			

ALAMOPC ORGANIZATION



The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

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: ★

STUDY GROUPS

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (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. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas
When: Thursday mornings, except Holidays, 9 am to Noon.

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★

C/C ++ Study Group

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

Contact:
Bruce McAlexander
<mcalexb@satx.rr.com> 210-680-0231
Murry Adams
<mnadams@texas.net> 210-696-0047
Carl Deneke
<cdeneke@Texas.net> 210-496-6397

When: First and Third Saturday, 2:30 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★★ - ★★★

Commodore Users of SA

Contact: Diana Jones
830-303-1220

When: Second Saturday, 1-4 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★★★

Genealogy Study Group

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

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

When: First Monday, 7-9 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

HGSI Study Group

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

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

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

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

Pre-registration: Call Maynard

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

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.

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

DotNET 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 ★★★

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: ★

MCSE Advanced Study Group

The MCSE Advanced SIG, affectionately known as 'The Geeks', is currently studying Microsoft's new ISA Server 2004 in anticipation of it's being included in the soon to be released Service Pack 1 for Small Business Server 2003. The SIG meets every Saturday morning from 8:30 until noon. Space is limited and the subject matter is very advanced. Therefore membership is restricted. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

Contact: Larry Lentz, MCSE on NT & W2K, MCDBA, MCSA:Messaging <Larry@LentzComputer.Net>

When: Every Saturday, 8:30-noon

Where: Contact Larry

Pre-registration: Yes - contact Larry

Technical Rating ★★★★★

Small Business Server Study Group

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

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

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

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 ★ - ★★

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.

CLASSES

Alamo PC offers Free and Fee-Based classes. Classes showing a \$ next to the title indicate that either a Registration Fee or a Tuition Fee will be required.

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (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. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

When: Thursday mornings, except Holidays, 9 am to Noon.

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★

The next three free or low-cost classes provide instruction on the basics of using a computer, the Windows Operating System, and how to use Adobe Acrobat to obtain your PC Alamode online magazine. The successful completion of the Windows XP class (or classes) would then enable those students to take the other classes offered by Alamo PC.

Introduction To Windows - \$

The Introduction To Windows class is designed for people who do not have a computer yet or have just obtained one and don't know how to "turn it on". Students will learn about the parts of the computer, acquire keyboard and mouse skills used in many software programs, and some word processing. Instruction proceeds at a slower pace than most computer courses and time is allotted for "hands on" practice. Taking the next course, Windows XP, 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 Windows XP Instructor is teaching. Internet and e-mail will NOT be covered in this course.

Instructors: Andy Roca, Donna Dudley

When: Six sessions, Wednesdays; 10 am to noon, choose one set:

Set 1) May 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28

Set 2) August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Sep 6

Set 3) Oct 4, 11, 18, 25, Nov 1, 8

Fees: Registration fee is \$10.00

This class will use the Easy Windows XP book, purchase of the book will be helpful and is strongly recommended but is not required. The book may be purchased from Alamo PC for \$20

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

Where: Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

Windows XP - \$

Our Windows XP course reviews the fundamentals of using a computer, and provides instruction on using the Microsoft Windows XP operating system. 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.

Prerequisites: Students should have completed the Introduction To Windows course or have the equivalent knowledge. Choice of two class sessions:

Instructor: Audrey Henkin

When: 6 sessions, Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 pm; Choose one set:

Set 1) May 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13

Set 2) August 15, 22, 29, Sep 5, 12, 19

Set 3) October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov 7

OR

Instructor: Don Robinson

When: 6 sessions, Saturdays 1-3 pm; Choose one set:

Set 1) May 27, June 3, 10, 17, 24, July 1

Set 2) August 5, 12, 19, 26, Sep 2, 9

Set 3) Oct 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov 4, 11

Fees: Registration fee is \$10.00

This class will use the Easy Windows XP book, purchase of the book will be helpful and is strongly recommended but is not required. The book may be purchased from Alamo PC for \$20

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

Adobe Acrobat - PDF Class

How to download, install, and use Adobe Acrobat Reader. How to view the PC Alamo magazine online or download it to your computer or a CD. Students who want to download the magazine to a CD in class should bring a blank CD-RW (a read / writeable or recordable CD)

Instructor: Steve Tech
stephentechnjr@yahoo.com

When: first Fri. of the month, 7 pm to 9 pm

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

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

<<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/apcoretro/join>>

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolute-powercomputing.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

<stephentechnjr@yahoo.com>
210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★★

Introduction To Photo Editing

An interesting and informative class teaching the basics of photo editing. We will primarily use Photoshop Elements software although we will also use Corel Photo-Paint and ArcSoft PhotoStudio from time to time. Students will also learn how to put together a short "movie" using Microsoft Movie Maker

Prerequisites: Students must have completed the Introduction To Windows course or have the equivalent knowledge, and have a graphics software program on their home computer.

Instructor: Clarke Bird

When: Meets for 8 sessions, once a month, on the Second Sat. of each month, 8 - 10 am

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★★★

Digital Camera & Photography Class

Digital Cameras have become an integral part of our computerized lifestyle. They come in all shapes and sizes; some are simple, some not. Yet many of us look at this wonderful tool and think, "Now what is that doohicky for?" Sometimes learning to use our digital cameras can be a confusing and frustrating experience and the manual may even make it worse. Then when you do figure out how to use the camera, the photo never seems to come out quite right. Learn how to use your digital camera, plus all the tips and tricks to get better pictures when you take them. This class will include field trips to interesting local spots to learn photography techniques.

Instructor: Joe M. Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 6 weeks on Thursdays 9-11 am (some sessions may be longer)

Choice of two class sessions:

Thurs., April 27, May 4, 11, 18, 25, June 1st

OR

Thurs., June 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13

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

Where: Computer Learning Center Plus Field Trips

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing Class

The companion class to the Digital Camera and Photography Class. Students will learn the basics of digital photo editing using Microsoft Digital Imaging 2006 and if time permits, extra tips and tricks about matting and framing plus interesting uses for your photos. The photo editing basics used in this class can be applied to almost any photo editing program. The Microsoft Digital Imaging 2006 software is not required for the class but it would be helpful to have on your home computer.

Prerequisites: Students should have completed the Windows XP course or have the equivalent knowledge.

Instructor: Joe M. Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 12 weeks on Tues., 9-11 am May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13, 20, 27, skip July 4, cont. July 11, 18, 25

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Photoshop Classes for use with Photoshop 7, CS, CS2 - \$

These courses will teach you how to modify and combine images to create realistic composite images. You will learn to use several tools for selecting parts of images, and will move, duplicate, and resize images. You will also learn to use layers, and to apply layer effects and filters to create special effects. Additionally, you will use painting tools and blending modes to create blending effects, and will perform adjustments to enhance images. A text is supplied to new students, and a CD with the images for the entire class is provided. Photoshop Classes are offered as two separate classes, teaching the basic tools, palettes and procedures. Instruction class "A" using Photoshop 7. includes adaptations for Photoshop CS and CS2

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. |

Instruction class "B" with different lessons and text, using Photoshop 7 includes adaptations for Photoshop CS and CS2

Prerequisites: 1) Students need to have completed the Windows XP course or have the equivalent knowledge to be able to function properly and progress in these graphics programs. This is Not a course for beginning students.

2) Students need the Software for Photoshop 7 or Photoshop CS or Photoshop CS2 on their home computers to join these graphics instruction classes.

Instructor: Beverly Bihn assisted by Jane Montgomery

When: Photoshop Basic Instruction for CS and CS2 will meet 9 weeks on Fridays, 1-5 pm June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, July 7, 14, 21, 28

Fees: Tuition fee: \$90 for New Students; Tuition fee \$40 for Previous Students to re-take the Instruction A or B class, you may be asked to purchase a book.

Previous enrollment in the Photoshop Elements 2 class does not count as a previous student.

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

Where: Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★★-★★★

Photoshop Workshop for use with Photoshop 7, CS, CS2 - \$

Written creative lessons are given to participants and demonstrations of the lessons are given during class for students to follow. Extra exercises at the end of the lessons encourage students to do similar tasks on their own without demonstrations. They can bring a blank recordable CD or a jump drive, to copy the images for the lessons to take home for more practice.

Prerequisites: 1) Students need to have completed the Photoshop Instruction Class A or Photoshop Instruction Class B, or have the equivalent knowledge with the permission of the Instructor.

2) Students need the Software for Photoshop 7 or Photoshop CS or Photoshop CS2 on their home computers to join these graphics instruction classes.

Instructor: Beverly Bihn assisted by Jane Montgomery

When: Dates and times to be announced

Fees: Tuition fee: \$20

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

Where: Learning Center

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: Date and time. To be announced. Call the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center at (210)

736-0080, or (210) 736-0700 to place your name on a Waiting List for the class. You will be notified when the next class is available.

Where: Learning Center, Room 1

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating: ★

Excel 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 **no class July, Aug.**

Class will resume Sept.

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: ★★★

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

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (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. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

When: Thursday mornings, except Holidays, 9 am to Noon.

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Pre-registration: No

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: ★★

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.

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.

Prerequisites: Students must have completed the Windows XP course or have the equivalent knowledge.

When: 6 weeks, Wednesdays, 1 to 3 pm
Choose one set:

Set 1) May 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28

Set 2) August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Sep 6

Set 3) Oct 4, 11, 18, 25, Nov 1, 8

Instructor: Don Robinson

Fees: Registration fee is \$10.00

Where: Learning Center

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

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: ★

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: Linda Bianchi at

education@alamopc.org

When: To be announced

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

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

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

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

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

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (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. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

When: Thursday mornings, except Holidays, 9 am to Noon.

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No


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.



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

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

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 Linda Bianchi at 226-2460 or email her at <education@alamopc.org>.

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

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

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

Step One

1 Computers for Beginners

2 Windows 98

3 Windows XP

Microsoft Office

4 Word

5 Excel

6 PowerPoint

7 Publisher

8 WinFax Pro

Corel Office

9 WordPerfect

10 CorelDraw

11 Quattro Pro

12 Paint Shop Pro

Photoshop

13 Adobe Photoshop

Internet and E-mail

14 Internet Basics / ISP Connection

15 Web Page Development

16 Internet Explorer

17 MS Outlook Express

18 Opera

19 Mozilla

20 Dreamweaver

21 .Net

22 Flash

23 RoadRunner

Open Office

24 OpenOffice

Financial

25 Quick Books

26 Quicken

Auction Online

27 eBay

Genealogy

28 Family Origins for Windows

29 Genealogy

Communications / Management

30 Time&Chaos

31 Act

32 Goldmine

Data Base

33 Access

34 AlphaFour

35 dBase

36 Paradox

37 MySQL

Networking

38 Networking

Other

39 Hardware / Setting Up A New PC

40 Maintenance and Security

41 Home Help

Step Two

Expertise	Name	Phone	Availability	E-mail
(1, 5, 6, 3, 12, 23, 26, 38, 41)	John Bolton	658-3060	6pm-9pm M-F	
(1, 3, 14)	Joe Barth	696-5783	7pm-9pm Tu, Th, Sat	jbarth@swbell.net
(2, 3, 4, 16, 17, 23, 29, 38, 39, 40, 41)	Bruce Cramer	865-2933	9am-3pm M-F, Sat	service@pcpro4u.com
(3, 5)	Bill Eastridge	223-8743	10am-6pm M-F, Sat, Sun	
(4, 15, 17, 33)	Bill Hudson	490-6513	7pm-10 pm M-F, Sat, Sun	bhudson3@satx.rr.com
(4, 9, 14, 27)	William Hudson	824-6910	3pm-8pm M-F, Sat	rwsh@earthlink.net
(19, 24, 30, 37)	Chris Montgomery	490-2415	7pm-9pm M-F / noon-6pm Sat, Sun	
(3, 16, 17)	Ted Ressler			catechist@gmail.com
(1, 3, 14, 16, 17, 40)	Don Robinson	497-3737	9am-5pm M-F, Sat, Sun	dl7266@swbell.net
(10)	Stephen Tech, Jr	675-2880	5:30pm-9pm M - F	stephentechjr@yahoo.com
(9)	Cynthia Thompson	655-1058	7pm-9pm M-F / 10am-4pm Sat, Sun	cynthom@satx.rr.com
(4)	Christel Villarreal			christel.villarreal@gmail.com

If you are unable to find help in the list above, consider contacting the desk staff volunteers at the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center. 736-0700 or 736-0080. 10am - 4pm M-F, Sat. Remember these volunteers are all levels of expertise and some may not be able to answer your questions, but may be able to find someone who can.

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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 Old dusty computer found in my garage. No power source, no mother board, no RAM. It's basically a plastic box full of dust. \$2,000 or best offer. Call 555-5555

For Sale Invest in antique computer junk. Box of old 5.25" disks. Paid \$45, will take \$600, plus delilvery fee. Call 555-5555

Wanted Classified ads from members of Alamo PC. It costs nothing and it's a good way to sell or buy any computer-related thing.

Missing Alamo PC members from the classifieds section. Answers to the name of 'Apconian.' Last seen about 5 issues ago. Reward of free classified ad offered.



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.

Deleted

Drafts

Inbox

Journal

Notes