

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

CONSUMER ISSUE

www.alamopc.org
December 2006
\$4.00

Great games for the holidays are here
page 37

Should your system be RAIDed?
page 43

Are you "Compuliterate"?
page 47

General Meeting:
page 9





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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:

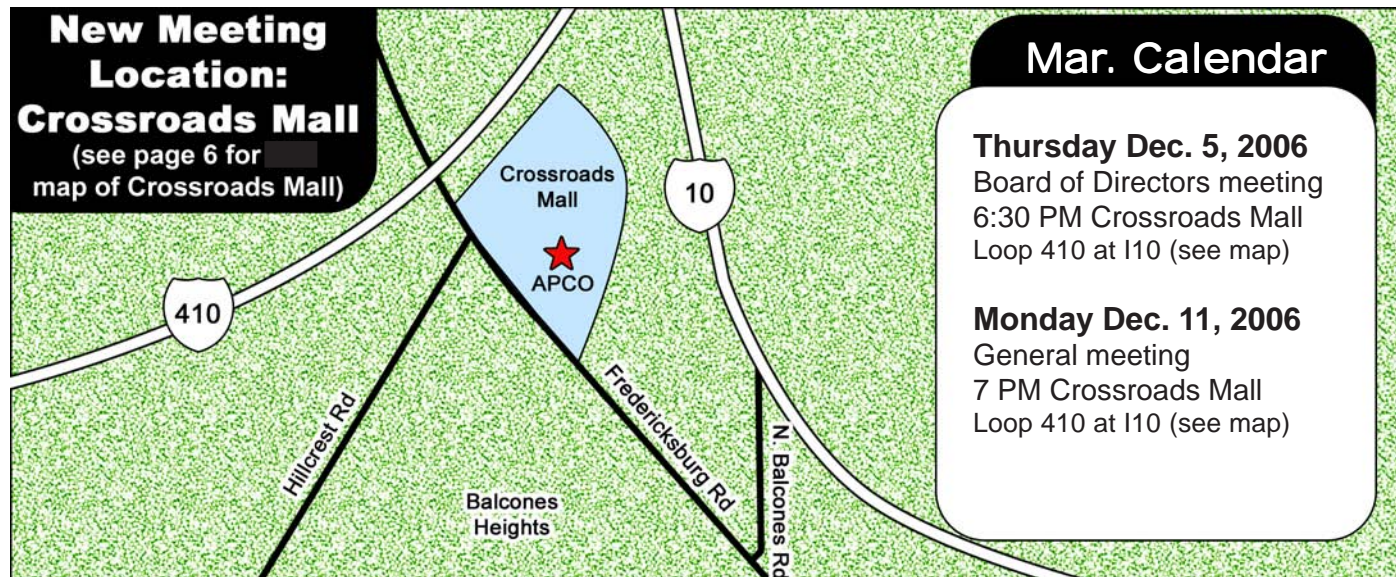
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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

Thursday Dec. 5, 2006
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Dec. 11, 2006
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

Featured this month

New Buy

Happy "Gadgetholidays"

Great games for the holidays are here

How to buy software

Software with new computers

Should your system be RAIDed?

What is U3 and why do I want to know?

Earth Probe

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Windows Vista

Windows Vista on the cusp

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Internet Explorer 7

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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.

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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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Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
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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

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

product reviews

Computer Crimes

Microsoft Office 2007 (beta)

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Board of Directors

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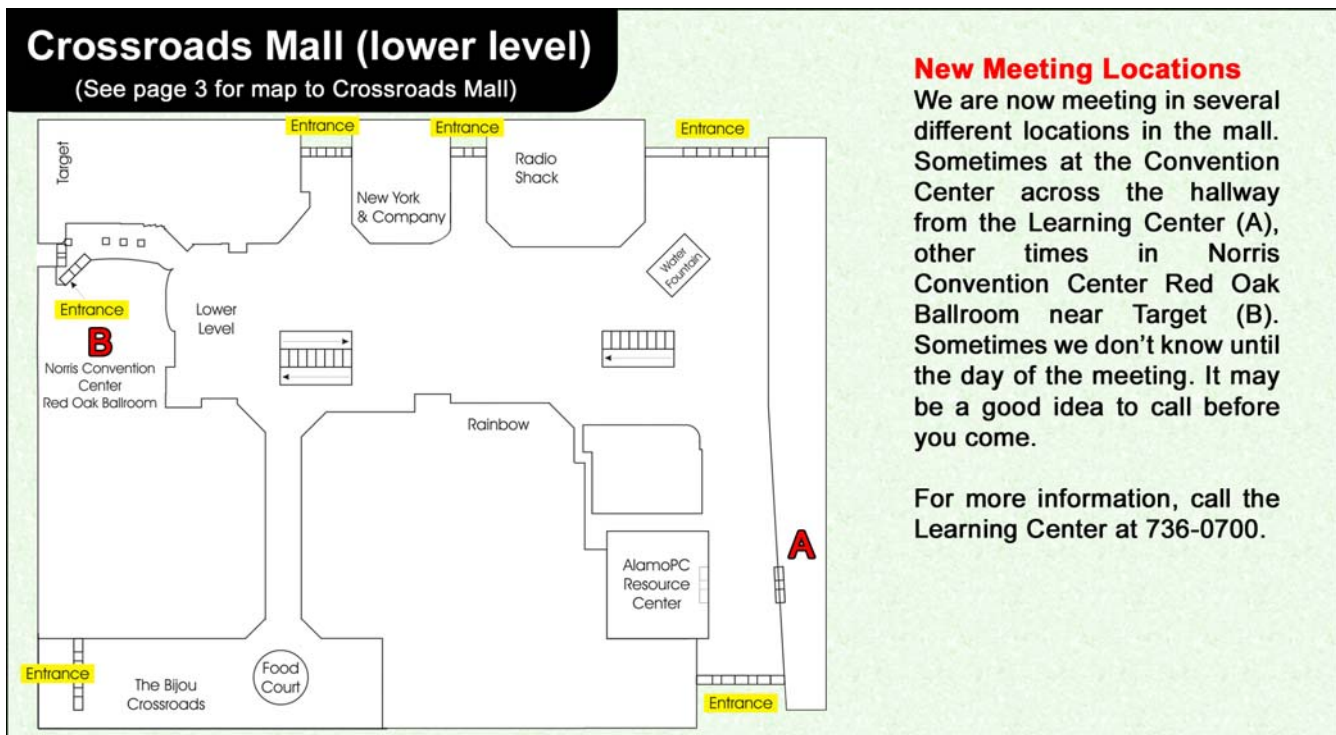
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

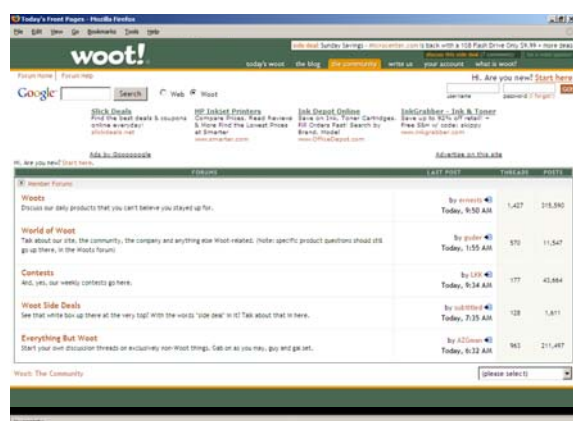
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



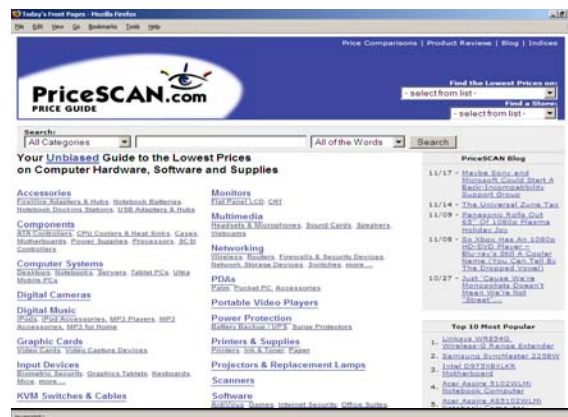
PC Alamode Links List



Woot

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

Woot.com is an online store and community that focuses on selling cool stuff cheap. Every day is a new item and it's usually marked way below retail. Great for buying new computer stuff!



PriceSCAN

<<http://pricescan.com/>>

This is a great tool for comparison shopping. PriceSCAN has a ton of categories and lets you sort by all kinds of criteria, such as price, popularity and manufacturer.



For the end of the year issue, get ready for some hot shopping. Even if the weather is cool. This year, learn how to deal with that software that comes bundled with new computers, a great video game buyer's guide and don't forget to buy gadgets.

You can take a silly quiz on page 47. It just might bring that much needed chuckle!

There has been so much hype about Windows Vista, I bet you've had enough. Too BAD! Here are several more articles from our affiliate user groups.

But, seriously. Vista does have some cool tools, but don't take my word for it. Several members have gone through the effort to let us know what rules and what bytes.

Don't forget to take a look at the most recent class offerings. Joe Davis is cooking up some amazing video and photo classes.

This month, I've volunteer of the month. Wow! Thanks so much for the recognition, but there are so many other people who deserve the honor as well. Let's keep those volunteer hours coming!

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

"December" - 7th, Ho! Ho! Ho!, EOY, AMD

The month of December usually stirs at least two thoughts. The first accompanies all the end-of-the-year reminders in stores that "The Holidays are rapidly approaching and I have so much left to do!" (Hope you have done a little shopping all year and are almost finished. If not, there should be some really good deals, since the discounts started last month, and should only get better. With economic indicators not giving a clear signal as to where things may be going, and inventory tax looming, nobody wants to have holiday inventory left on their shelves at the end of the year.) But, the major thoughts for the month are: December 7th - Pearl Harbor ("A day that will live in infamy!") - a time to remember there are those who would seek to control others and those of our military who serve/served to prevent that from happening, especially those who have seen war. (As we consider this, keep in mind that those who served in WWII, and survived, are almost, if not already, gone.); December 25th - A time for families to gather and enjoy the moment, exchange things, and give thanks, especially to those who have helped us, even in some small way, as life is sometimes short.; December 31st (Midnight) - The passing of the year (gone is the old, as we welcome the new year and make resolutions for things to be better); December 11th - Advanced Micro Device (AMD - Global supplier of integrated circuits for personal and networked computing, and also communications) has agreed to provide a representative for the Alamo PC General Meeting. Discussion and information should focus primarily on what we can expect in the Computer Chip arena in coming days, weeks, and years. (I am sure one or more attendees will take home an AMD supplied product.)

Note: Keep in mind other General meetings, and the presenters tentatively scheduled, or who are being contacted to determine their availability -- January: Beverly Bihn (member of Alamo PC) - Photoshop and some of the capabilities (Industry presenters will all be attending the Consumer Electronics Show [CES] at this time); February: Smart Computing - in my opinion, one of the best kept secrets around if you want to know more about computers. (Subscription price to the magazine allows access to several other online magazines, plus an extensive database); March: Trend Micro - Develops, markets and supports anti virus software and management solutions for corporate computer systems and personal computers; April: Gene Barlow - General Computer Information specialist (expert in Hard drives, backups, and computer vulnerabilities that may come from the Internet), friend to User Groups, and software vender; May: Dave Whittle - Technology and security expert (also a software vender), will probably address "Whittle's Picks." These are hidden gems from companies large and small, old and new on computer related technologies, helps and security.

I am sure with AMD talking about new Central Processing Unit (CPU) and computer technology in December, there will be increased interest and support for our General meeting. (Invite someone to come hear the latest industry & company information. About 2000 Postcard and 8000 E-Mails helped gather 274 people for the November meeting on VISTA. Not a very good return.) Hopefully we can reverse the trend of waning interest and the desire to say "I'll pass" on the benefits this organization can offer (one of which is the meeting presentations). Word-of-mouth advertising is a great tool. Please help us spread the word on things people may find useful about Alamo PC and computers in general. Current members, need to reconsider what this organization has done for each of you, and what it can do for others. Perhaps that will help motivate the renewal effort and improve the desire to provide some much needed support, at various places in the organization.

I will continue to ask each member to consider being just a little more actively involved with the Alamo PC Organization. Please remember "this organization is OUR's (yours and mine), and if WE want it to continue, WE must continue to be a supportive member, through renewals and participation at some level." If not, we will be allowing circumstances to decide for us.

Consider some of the following (and tell others to): free class benefit - enroll in one or more of the classes; the "Wish List" - (if a class you would like to have isn't on the list, make it known to the people at the Learning Center. They will put it on the "Wish List" of classes that people have requested); one membership for the family - entitles one family member to vote, but it entitles each family member, in the household, to enroll in free classes during, the time the membership is current.

With the holidays approaching, consider our popular Digital Camera & Photography class. (Google, entry www.popphoto.com to get a sub-list of additional items that may be of interest to you. Or pick from the free tips/courses on photography. Check the Hewlett Packard website <hp.com> also, for more related free courses on cameras and photography.) That should put you in a great position to get more info on editing and being creative with photos. Also, you will enjoy the January meeting presenter and her info. (She and her class are great!)

The retention of members has improved some, but new members are still not sufficient to offset non-renewing members. Each month has shown a net loss. (We can't continue this way for much longer.) Please, if you do not choose to renew, give us a comment or two as to "Why?" (Please send an E-Mail to Steven.Tech.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! As I have previously indicated, if membership continues to fall, the BOD will, at some point, have to make changes that will be to the detriment of the organization. As I have already said, "Remember, this is OUR organization." If you want to have your voice heard, attend a BOD meeting, General Meeting, write or call someone.

The future of OUR organization is essentially in the hands of its members. "Whether WE continue (or not) depends on the interest and involvement of each member. But, it primarily depends on membership renewals and/or financial support. Without those, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations and 'business decisions' will have to be made that will affect everyone."

I will continue to say "PLEASE, GIVE US SOME HELP!" Out fate may already have been decided by the position of many current and former members - "withdraw support because I don't have a printed magazine in my hands!" (If someone has a way to provide Alamo PC with about \$4,000 each month, or get free printing and cover mailing costs, we can again print and mail the magazine.)

Hope to see more members at the December General Meeting in the Norris Conference Center, across from our Learning Center. For those who missed the November meeting on VISTA, you missed an interesting and informative presentation, plus the opportunity to leave with software.

December Program

David Steward

AMD -- come to the meeting to find out more!

News Brief

New Skype Phone Doesn't Need PC

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2010681,00.asp>

Skype announced a new cordless phone on Thursday that sends and receives Skype calls just like a landline, but without the need for a computer. The new Philips VOIP841 plugs into a standard RJ-11 home phone jack, as well as into an RJ-45 broadband connection jack. It can send and receive Skype calls as well as calls from a regular home phone number, but you do have to have a broadband connection.

News Brief

The next energy source: Barnyard animals?

Microgy, which has discovered that manure and other waste products from cows, pigs and other livestock is a largely untapped source of energy. The company builds industrial-sized “digesters” that, through heat and microbes, reduce mountains of waste into gas or electricity that can be reused on the farm or sold on the open market. The plant will start shipping natural gas (methane) in the third quarter and, when fully operational, will churn out an estimated 1 billion cubic feet of biogas a year.

STUDY GROUPS

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

Volunteer of the Month

Joseph de Leon



THE DOCTOR . . . IS IN

EACH FRIDAY FROM 9:30 TO 12 NOON
DIAGNOSE YOUR SOFTWARE & HARDWARE PROBLEMS

TROUBLESHOOT MAJOR APPLICATIONS
TROUBLESHOOT HARDWARE, RUN TESTS

SOLVE O/S MYSTERIES
PROVIDE ASPIRIN AS NEEDED
MAJOR SURGERY ACCOMPLISHED BY OTHER FACILITIES

ALAMO PC RESOURCE CENTER

A cartoon illustration of a doctor in a white lab coat and stethoscope, holding a stethoscope to a computer monitor. The computer is on a desk with a keyboard and mouse. The doctor is looking at the monitor with a concerned expression.

ComputerFest is a collection of local and statewide dealers under one roof offering rock-bottom prices on all your computer needs. All of our dealers are independent wholesalers, so each conducts business separately. Most of the dealers will accept credit cards, but with cash you can usually get the best deals. And new products are almost always backed up with a warrantee, so you and your wallet can always feel comfortable with your purchases.

What you can find at the show:

New Complete Systems
New Hardware
Newest Software Titles
Printers, Monitors, Scanners
Ink-Jet Recharge Kits
Imaging Devices
Internet Services
Used Hardware
Multimedia Upgrades
Shareware
Diagnostic Equipment
Cables & Connectors
Bare Bone Systems
Computer Related Books
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

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

Show Dates and Times:

Dec. 9, 2006

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



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



News Brief

Cars with Depth Perception

Honda believes Canesta's chips could help drivers know how close they are to other parked cars, pedestrians, and get other similar, useful information. Automakers are also examining ultrasonics (sound waves) or stereoscopic technologies to give drivers better information about their surroundings.

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www.glasbergen.com



"Information security is a big deal at my office so sometimes we have to communicate in code. We have 37 different symbols for the word 'jerk'."

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.

*Here Is Some Fast Food Technology

Technology is fast catching up with vending machines according to this article I read in Information Week. Soft drink machines are everywhere you go, also vending machines for candy, coffee and many other types of products, even machines that dispense ice cream bars and ice cream sandwiches. A technique has now been developed for an ice cream vending machine that does not need to be refrigerated full time. To quote from the article, "we pump the base mix, aerate it, flavor it, flash freeze it, scrape it up off a freezing surface, form it into a scoop and into the consumer's cup in 45 seconds." Also, no refrigeration is required for warehousing. You can read the article at <<http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193004764>> and it also mentions their use of Linux for the machine.

*Have Your Medical Data With You!

Be medically prepared with all your medical records hanging around your neck (or in your possession) when you are away. Medistick makes a USB flash drive that is designed to hold up to five medical histories. It appears to be a self-extracting file that can also offer password protection. Medistick has medical emergency logo on the sides. Capacities are available from 128 MB to 4 gigs and costing \$57.00 for the 128 mb size. <<http://www.medistick.ch>> Information is collected and entered by you, or your doctor, if his staff will help in that regard, and the document automatically converts to a pdf file.

I doubt I would use the password protection because what if you are incoherent and can't give medics the password to open the file for your medical information? On the other hand, since some folks write their password on the side of their computer, you could do that with the Medistick. <G> I am cramped for space here so be sure to check their Web site to get the best description of the product. It sure sounds great to me, and so is the deal. All your records are carried with you including all your doctors' names and phones. If you see a new doctor, just give them your Medistick to get all your medical info. With my health, I will probably need the 4 gig model. Just a thought, but this might make a great Christmas gift for the person who already has everything, and for that person who has a serious medical history.

Medistick has offered the DealsGuy readers this deal: "1 128MB Medistick and software for 1 person for only \$49.00 with shipping included. (MSRP is normally \$57.00 plus \$3.50 shipping) This deal is good until Jan. 31, 2007. Readers should click on <<http://www.medistick.ch/en/contact/>> and mention the DealsGuy column in the 'comments' area. They will then get an online invoice from Medistick through PayPal for \$49.00 as payment by credit card in advance."

*Reminder About the Laptop Discount by Dave Whittle

Don't forget about Dave Whittle's discount offer on the Lenovo Thinkpad laptops that is still good. Simply call Lenovo's user group inside sales rep, Isaac Williams, directly for help in configuring your system, or to get answers to your questions. Call 1-877-338-4465, Option 1, Extension 6322.

*Below are some new products that I received announcements for. I have edited the announcements so check their URL for better info.

*How About A Backup With Security!

SoftOptima LLC announces the release of Backup Premium 2.5 backup software. The specially designed protocols SFTP and FTP SSL/TLS provide a high degree of security for data transferred via the Internet. Backup Premium offers the capability to backup user data using SFTP and FTP SSL/TLS and allows substantial safety of the backup process.

You can backup all important files from a Windows profile, Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express and ICQ; running certain programs before or after backup sessions; and the possibility to work with network drives under different accounts. It's easy to configure the backup process and adjust it to the particular needs of a single user, or a whole company. Backup Premium has an ergonomically correct user interface and a high-quality graphic solution that makes the work with the program simple and yet pleasant.

A fully functional Backup Premium 2.5 trial version is available for a 30-day evaluation period. Registration costs \$39 for a single user license. Users group members receive a special 25% discount at <<http://www.backup-premium.com/special-order.shtml>> until February 2007.

Continued on page 14

Product Page: <<http://www.backup-premium.com>>

Screenshots and graphics: <<http://www.backup-premium.com/screenshots.shtml>>

Download: <<http://www.backup-premium.com/backupppremium25.exe>>

*This Product Helps You Work With Your Pictures

Almalence Incorporated announces PhotoAcute Studio 2.0. PhotoAcute Studio processes sets of images taken in continuous mode. It utilizes super resolution algorithms to convert a sequence of photos into a single high-resolution and low-noise picture that could only be taken with a much better camera. PhotoAcute Studio operates with various camera and image types from mobile cameras to DSLR cameras supporting RAW format and 16-bit color.

Spatial resolution is limited by a camera's matrix and lens, but this limit can be exceeded by means of super resolution that can be done by either acquiring more graphic information (e.g. taking and merging several images of the same object) or by reconstructing the details lost due to the faultiness of the optical system. Noise is the most undesirable factor that degrades image quality. PhotoAcute Studio combines several photos of the same scene, separating the useful signal and the noise, thus providing strong noise reduction without losing the image details. By merging several images taken at different exposures, PhotoAcute Studio expands the dynamic range of the resultant image revealing the details usually clipped in the highlights and the shadows.

PhotoAcute Studio is a Windows based application. The Macintosh version will be released in 2007Q1. A detailed description of PhotoAcute Studio features, online help and an examples gallery are available at <<http://www.photoacute.com>>. You can download a free trial version. The price of the full version varies depending on supported camera types, ranging from \$19 for mobile phone cameras to \$119 for DSLR cameras with the support of RAW format and 16-bit color. Users group members get a 35% discount by going to the order page <http://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?items=13404-1&ss_coupon=DGY-8JQU> which contains the discount code in the URL. The discount will be applied on the second page of the ordering procedure. This discount is good until January 31, 2007.

PhotoAcute Studio 2.0 can be downloaded at: <<http://www.photoacute.com/studio/download.html>>

Product page URL: <<http://www.photoacute.com/studio>>

Direct download link: <http://www.photoacute.com/files/PhotoAcuteStudio_setup.exe>

*Got A Pocket PC? Now You Can Translate Languages!

LingvoSoft has released LingvoSoft Translator 2007 for Pocket PC featuring the ability to translate between English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. It provides full-text translation of business correspondence, e-mails, letters, documentation and even the words to your favorite song! If you choose the talking version, not only will you have the fastest translator available for Pocket PC but you'll also be able to use it to speak. With super fast and super smart search functions, a customizable interface and three different ways to enter text, it will even translate the contents of your device's clipboard automatically upon launching the dictionary application.

<<http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/?refid=16179>>

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

Users Group members get a 25% discount on any LingvoSoft software title at <<http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/>>. Simply enter your personal gift certificate code "MY8UZPF7M4" in the 'Add Gift' field of the shopping cart and click the "Add Gift" button. You should then see the discount deducted from your order's total in the shopping cart. This offer is good until December 31, 2006.

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

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



Cyber Criminals - Who and Why?

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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Why do some individuals have the need to engage in cyber crime? I refer specifically to those people who write code that damages networks and the computers connected to those networks.

According to a recent article in Internet News: "Tracking virus writers -- and more importantly, gathering evidence against them -- is a thorny problem for law enforcement agencies worldwide. While the number of arrests made and sentences handed down make 2004 the best year yet for catching cyber criminals, it won't have a noticeable effect on eliminating virus writers, according to the Finnish security firm F-Secure."

F-Secure states there were three "primary security-related trends in 2004: a massive increase in phishing attacks; the introduction of open-source botnets and for-profit virus writing."

Phishing is the term used for fraudulent emails that seek to obtain information from the recipient. This information is used for nefarious purposes including identity theft. An article on MSNBC.com states that consumers are susceptible to phishing. The anti-spam firm MailFrontier Inc. showed 1,000 consumers examples of so-called "phishing" e-mail as well as legitimate e-mail from companies such as eBay and PayPal. About 28 percent of the time, the consumers incorrectly identified the phishing messages as legitimate. Now that is a frightening statistic, as 28% is a high rate.

A botnet is generally a trojan that has penetrated security safeguards and is resident on a computer. When that computer connects to the Internet, the botnet will connect to an IRC channel. Then other infected computers connect to the channel and a botnet is formed. The person who created the botnet, often called a "botmaster" or "botherder," can then control the computers that are connected to the botnet. For example, the botnet could be used to launch a denial of service attack on an innocent Website or computer.

The major viruses in 2004 consisted of Bagle, MyDoom, Netsky, Sasser, Korgo and Sober. Three of these were designed for specific crimes according to F-Secure.

The intent of MyDoom and Bagle and its many variants was to create spam proxies. These viruses caused damages in the millions of dollars and created denial-of-service attacks on Microsoft.com and SCO.com.

According to F-Secure, at one point MyDoom.A was responsible for 10 percent of all e-mail traffic. Both viruses used the Mitglieder proxy trojan. Officials at F-Secure suspect the two viruses may have been written by one group of writers. Bagle.A downloaded the Trojan from a Web site, and it was installed through a backdoor in MyDoom.A-infected machines.

The Korgo virus was designed to grab credit card and banking information, according to F-Secure. Similar to the Sasser worm, the virus targeted Windows 2000 and XP machines, scanning random IP addresses for PCs with a vulnerable, unpatched Local Security Authority Subsystem Service (LSASS).

Internet News reports it is difficult to trace and apprehend the cyber criminals. "If there's an increase [in arrests and indictments], it's very, very slight," said Paul Bresson, a spokesperson for the FBI, about his agency's efforts to combat virus writers. "We tend to devote our resources depending on the volume and scope of what's out there, and if there's a lot out there, we devote more resources."

The international nature of the Internet means many criminals can leave a long, convoluted trail that crosses national boundaries with ease, even if law enforcement agencies cannot. Despite actions by the Federal Trade Commission to promote cross-border communications and aid, there are still blind spots where virus writers can flourish.

Mikko Hypponen of F-Secure says that whenever he speaks with law enforcement contacts about tracking spammers or virus writers and it leads to places like Romania or Belarussia or Lithuania, "you hear this sigh from the investigators, because they know it became that much harder to gain local cooperation."

"The bad guys know how to re-route their spam and their viruses and their hacking through six, seven, eight different countries and go through places like China and South Korea and some obscure island in the South Pacific just to make it hard for the authorities to track them," Hypponen says.

As an example, he points to a recent case where a Russian factory was hit with a virus by a hacker group operating out of Kuwait. The virus, after gaining access to the machines, started downloading more code from a Web site registered in a small island off the coast of Africa. The actual Web server, however, wasn't there; it was registered through Sweden to Jordan. From

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Jordan, the infected machines in Russia downloaded code that connected them with an IRC chat system operated in chat.cnn.com -- CNN's chat server in the U.S.

Hypponen said it was a relatively easy matter for his company to call CNN and the ISPs in charge of the Web server to blunt the effects of the outbreak, but it's something police would have had a tougher time accomplishing.

"If the Russian factory would have called the cops," he said, "how likely would it have been for the Russian police to first of all successfully track the virus around the globe and how likely is it that they would have been able to prosecute the Kuwaiti offenders?"

Sarah Gordon, a security expert at Symantec, has engaged in extensive investigation of the personalities of cyber criminals. "All those years of research and contact have revealed that many myths about virus writers are just that. The stereotype that virus writers are all young teenage boys with no social life, hiding in their basement is not accurate," she said. In contrast, she said, most virus creators are typical for their age, are on good terms with friends and family and are often contributors to their local community.

"Whatever the reason for writing a virus, all these groups share a common blindspot, says Ms. Gordon, which is that they have no conception that what they are doing can affect the wider world. "They do not connect the impact of what they do on the computer with the impact on another person," she says.

"But, once they realize that it can have an impact on other people, they age out of it and stop."

Her research has shown Ms. Gordon that there is a real difference between virus writers and hackers. While virus writers are usually socially adept, many hackers are not. "When you see a complex virus," she says, "it's come out of the hacking community." In her experience many malicious hackers have a borderline criminal view of the world and do not share mainstream ethical norms. Their judgment processes might be different," she says, "as well as their perception of risk and reward."

In my humble opinion, I find it difficult to excuse this sort of behavior, regardless of the reason.



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Tour the World with World Wind

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Lots of folks are familiar with Google Earth the free downloadable virtual globe program. Yet, I am finding that many have never heard of NASA'S World Wind. World Wind is developed at NASA Ames Research Center and is an open-source competitor to Google Earth. While it has been around for several years, it is a fascinating piece of software that can keep you glued to your monitor for hours on end.

Like Google Earth, this free program maps the earth by superimposing images obtained from satellite imagery and United States Geological Survey aerial photography over a 3D globe. Once the 60 megabyte program has been downloaded and installed, you are treated to a true-color image of the entire Earth from space upon opening the program. The globe can be manipulated with your mouse. Use the mouse wheel to zoom from satellite altitude down to any place on earth. Hold the left button and move the mouse to rotate the globe and the right button to tilt it.

The Landsat satellite imagery and Shuttle Radar Topography Mission data allows one to experience Earth terrain in 3D, just as if you were flying low over the landscape. Visit any place in the world.

But as they say on TV, "Wait! There's more!" World Wind also comes with virtual globes of the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mars and the Sloan Digital Sky Server, which allows you to explore outer space.

A variety of views are available. Below is a summary from the World Wind website:

Blue Marble

World Wind has a full copy of the Blue Marble, a spectacular true-color image of the entire Earth as seen on NASA's Earth Observatory: the Blue Marble.

Put together from data of a variety of satellites such as MODIS and Terra, the Blue Marble can be seen in all its glory at 1 km per pixel resolution.

Land Sat 7

Using World Wind, you can continue to zoom past Blue Marble and reveal the extremely detailed seamless mosaic of LandSat 7 data.

LandSat 7 is a collection of images from 1999-2003 at an impressive 15 m per pixel resolution. It includes other color bands such as the infrared spectrum. Users will be able browse these different sets as they become available. Any changes and updates are automatically inherited by World Wind.

LandSat 7's resolution makes it possible to see your own city, neighborhood, or landmarks in your vicinity. Seeing the whole globe like this puts the world in context with scientifically accurate data.



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The complete LandSat 7 data set is too large to fit on a single machine so World Wind only downloads what you see and stores a compressed copy on your computer for later viewing.

SRTM

Combining LandSat 7 imagery with Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) Data, World Wind can display a dramatic view of the Earth at eye level. Users will literally be able to fly across the world in any direction.

In addition, World Wind can exaggerate these views so a user can easily pick out the details.

NASA SVS

Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) has produced a set of visually intense animations that demonstrate a variety of subjects such as hurricane dynamics and seasonal changes across the globe.

World Wind can take these animations and play them directly on the world. Anyone can immediately grasp where the event is taking place as World Wind rotates automatically into view.

MODIS

Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer or MODIS produces a set of time relevant data that's updated every day. MODIS catalogs fires, floods, dust, smoke, storms and even volcanic activity.

World Wind produces an easily customized view of this information and marks them directly on the globe. When one of these color coded markers are clicked, it downloads the full image and displays them.

MODIS images can download publication quality material at a resolution of 250 m per pixel. A new fresh set of images can be downloaded every day.

World Wind also has a "tour mode" to automatically skim through any number of samples.

GLOBE

World Wind is capable of browsing through and displaying GLOBE data based on any time the user wants. For example, a user can download today's (or any previous day's) temperature across the world.

You can view rainfall, barometric pressure, cloud cover, or even the student GLOBE samples themselves. Each sample comes with a temperature scale

Country & (USA) State Borders

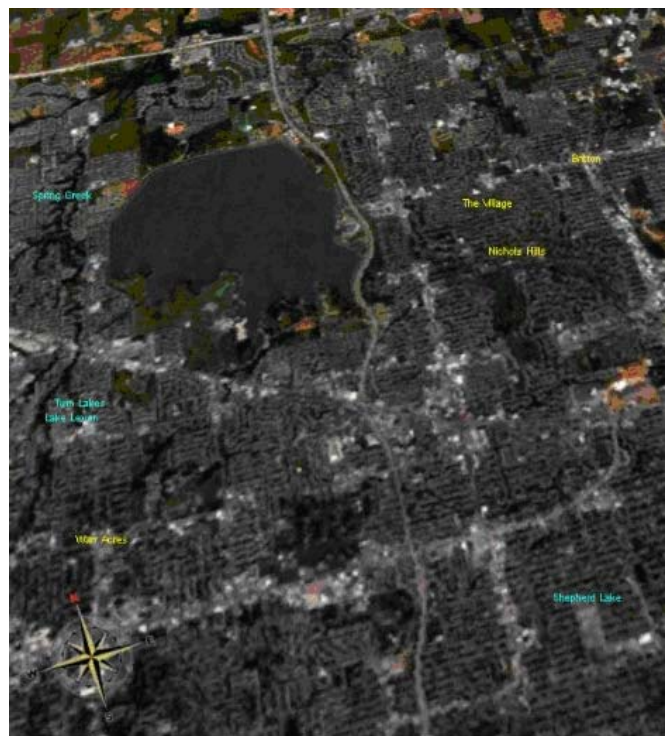
World Wind has a complete set of borders that traces every country and state. As you zoom into the world, the boundaries become more precise

You can observe where mountain ridges and rivers have formed the political boundaries of today.

Place names

World Wind has a full catalog of countries, capitals, counties, cities, towns, and even historical references. The names update dynamically, by increasing in number as the user zooms in. This prevents too many names from cluttering up the screen.

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It's likely that you'll find your own town no matter how big or small it is in World Wind.

Visual Tools

World Wind comes with a variety of visual guides that help the user's experience such as latitude and longitude lines, as well as extremely precise coordinate data.

These helpers can be toggled on or off any time and are viewable with any of World Wind's other features turned on.

Landmark Set

World Wind has the capability to display actual 3d models of landmarks on the earth. This helps to

see the world in context to places a user may have been to. Those landmarks that do not have 3D models for it yet have place markers similar to how MODIS displays places of interest.

World Wind is an incredible and highly addictive program that anyone with a high speed Internet connection should not be without. Give NASA'S World Wind a try and you won't be sorry you did!

Minimum system requirements:

System Requirements

Windows 2000, XP, or 2003

3D graphics card

Internet connection

Sorry, no support for Linux or Macintosh yet

Microsoft .NET 1.1

Microsoft DirectX 9.0c

With the minimum configuration, performance and functionality may be less than expected.

700 MHz or higher CPU

128 MB RAM

1 GB disk space (World Wind's cache size is 2 GB by default; you must reduce the size of your cache)

Recommended configuration

1.4 GHz or higher CPU

256 MB of RAM

DSL/cable connection or faster

3 GB of disk space

World Wind Home Page

<http://worldwind.arc.nasa.gov/index.html>

World Wind Wiki, "A knowledge base about NASA's World Wind that anyone can edit".

http://www.worldwindcentral.com/wiki/Main_Page

World Wind Forums

<http://forum.worldwindcentral.com/>

Video Card Compatibility List

http://www.worldwindcentral.com/wiki/Video_Card_Compatibility



Las Cruces, NM





E-mail, Part VI

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.

To send out newsletters via e-mail, you have several options. First, use free e-mail management software such as Major domo, Mailman and Dada Mail. E-mail management programs manage your mailing list and simplify the mailing. Others are available through SourceForge. You'll need to install the software yourself and have access to a server. The server can be your own or the one that hosts your Web site. If someone else is hosting your Web site, then check the terms of your service. They'll also need to know that you're a legitimate business and not a spammer. Some hosting companies charge you by the bytes of data that you use. Second, if uncomfortable handling things yourself, you can outsource the newsletter mailing. You can find both full-service and self-service outsourcing. With self-service, you prepare the newsletter yourself and use software installed on the company's server to mail the newsletter. Listcast, Ezine Director, and CoolerEmail are three outsourcing companies. The third option is to outsource the entire process. You create the content and hire a company to prepare the newsletter. Then the company will mail the newsletter to your entire mailing list. Before you start sending out newsletters, familiarize yourself with the CAN-SPAM Act. It sets out guidelines for bulk e-mailing. You could face steep fines and even jail time for violations. Your newsletters might look like spam to e-mail providers. You'll need to contact them so your e-mails actually reach the recipients. Three you will almost certainly have to deal with are AOL, MSN and Yahoo!. Even then, you can expect occasional problems getting your newsletter through Internet Service Providers.

Hoaxbusters

For some great hoax-debunking resources, visit CIAC Hoaxbusters <<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>>. This great collection of Internet hoax resources covers just about every e-mail hoax that ever crossed the Net. The CIAC (Computer Incident Advisory Capability) is part of the U.S. Department of Energy. The CIAC originally created the Hoaxbusters page for its own use, but over time, people all over the Internet grew to use it. When debunking a hoax, reply to both the person who sent the message to you and everyone who received it from your friend. Give a quick explanation that the hoax is, in fact, false, and that they shouldn't bother forwarding it to anyone else.

Photo Attachments

If you have a digital camera photos are easily downloaded directly into the computer from a digital camera. They can then be attached to an e-mail message. When pictures are downloaded from a camera, they should be saved at 72 dpi (dots per inch) for viewing on a monitor. For printed pictures, you should reduce size and save it at about 150 dpi. You can do that with nearly any photo-editing program, including many that come with cameras and scanners. If you already have printed pictures, you can scan them into your computer. Again, save them at 72 or 150 dpi, depending on how they will be viewed. Do not save pictures at a higher resolution than necessary. That makes the files large, so the recipients will have more trouble downloading them. Sending them with e-mail is simple. After addressing and writing your message, click the Attach button.

SPAM E-mail

If you receive e-mails that have no sender addresses, forward them to the Federal Trade Commission at <spam@uce.gov>. It uses these e-mails to pursue people who send deceptive e-mail. When you forward spam, include the header. This is information usually not seen when you open e-mail. It contains the IP (Internet Protocol) number of the computer where the spam originated. To weed out the empty sender e-mail using Outlook and/or AOL, first, you can set up an approved list. This way, only e-mail from known recipients will make it to your inbox. All other messages go in your spam folder. You'll need to check the spam folder periodically. To create an approved list using AOL, click Spam Control in the Mailbox window. Beside Sender Filter, click Edit, click Use a Custom Sender List, select "Allow only the senders and domains listed below." Now type the e-mail address in the box and click Add. You must repeat this for each sender. When you're done, click Save. Beneath "Blocked mail should be," select Delivered to Spam Folder and click Save twice. In Outlook, click Tools, Options, click Junk E-mail on the Preferences tab and select Safe Lists Only. Now open the Safe Senders tab and click Add. Type the address you would like to add to the safe list and click OK. Repeat for each sender and select "Also trust e-mail from my Contacts." Your Outlook contacts will be added to the safe list and click OK twice. Outlook may offer another way to block these messages. You can set up a rule to filter your mail by clicking Tools, Rules and Alerts. On the E-mail Rules tab, click New Rule, and then select "Start from a blank rule." In the top box, highlight "Check messages when they arrive," and click Next. In the top box, check both "where my name is in the To box" and "where my name is not in the To box," and click Next. In the top box, select "move it to the specified folder." In the bottom, click "specified," and select the Deleted Items folder and click OK, Next. In the top box, click "except with specific words in the sender's address." In the bottom, click "specific words." Type "@" (minus the quotes) and click Add, OK and Next. Enter a descriptive name for the rule. Make sure "Turn on this rule" is selected and click Finish. Make sure it's also selected in Rules and Alerts. Click Apply and then OK. The rule automatically moves all messages to the Deleted Items folder. But senders whose return address contains "@" are excluded from the rule. This procedure may not be 100% reliable, but it is better than having nothing to screen your unwanted messages.

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SPAM Identification:

To identify spam email messages, note whether the text you've received was actually written by the person who sent it. Did anyone sign their name to it? If not, be skeptical. Look for the telltale phrase, 'Forward this to everyone you know!' The more urgent the plea, the more suspect the message. Look for statements like 'This is NOT a hoax' or 'This is NOT an urban legend.' Watch for overly emphatic language, as well as frequent use of UPPERCASE LETTERS and multiple exclamation points!!!!!! If the text seems aimed more at persuading than informing the reader, be suspicious. Like propagandists, hoaxers are more interested in pushing people's emotional buttons than communicating accurate information. If the message purports to impart extremely important information that you've never heard of before or read elsewhere in legitimate venues, be very suspicious. Read carefully and think critically about what the message says, looking for logical inconsistencies, violations of common sense and blatantly false claims. Look for subtle or not-so-subtle jokes, indications that the author is pulling your leg. Check for references to outside sources of information. Hoaxes don't typically cite verifiable evidence, nor link to Websites with corroborating information. Check to see if the message has been debunked by Websites that debunk urban legends and Internet hoaxes. Research any factual claims in the text to see if there is published evidence to support them. If none are found, odds are you've been the recipient of an email hoax.

SPAM Prevention

Here is a tip to stop unwanted email message. It works with Outlook Express and probably will with other similar email programs with slight changes to the following steps. First, start keeping notes of keywords that are coming in most of your email messages, like: Viagra, Cialis, Vibrator, or approved/approval of your order,. You can start adding what you see coming in the subject line.

Now go to your email program, like Outlook Express and click on Tools, Message Rules, and Mail.

You will find an area that says "Add to Subject Line and Message Body" and "Move" to or "Delete" etc. Next type in all the words you are saving that will trigger a deletion, and click OK. Again, you may have a slightly different email program, but, if you study the parts in it, this tip should still work for you.

You can go back into this aforementioned sequence as you add new words. There are also steps to eliminate Spam in stand-alone email programs because these free Web providers offer tools to

help tame the spam. Yahoo! lets you block up to 500 senders. On the mailbox page, click Mail Options. Click Block Senders and enter the address you want to block and click Add Block. AIM lets you create an approved or a blocked list. Click Settings and then Spam Controls. Next click Control Who I Get Mail From. To limit senders to your contact list, click "Allow mail only from people I know." Or select "Allow mail only from senders on my Custom Sender List." To ban e-mail from particular addresses, choose "Block mail from all senders on my Custom Sender List." Click Custom Sender List to set up the list. Add the addresses, then click Add and Save. Now select whether blocked mail is sent to the spam folder or is deleted. Click Save. To block e-mail in Hotmail, click Options, Mail, Junk E-Mail Protection, and Block Senders. Type the address and click Add, OK. For an approved list, click Mail on the Options page, and then Junk E-Mail Protection, and Safe List. Type the e-mail address to add to your approved list and click Add. You can add up to 500 addresses. In Gmail, you must use a filter to block addresses. Click Settings and then Filter. Click "Create a new filter." In the From box, enter the address, click Next Step, select "Move it to the Trash" and click Create Filter.

Unwanted E-mail

To control junk e-mail in your Inbox, you need to pay close attention to your online habits. If doing any of the following, you have made your e-mail address public: 1. Post to a message board or newsgroup. These boards/newsgroups automatically display the name and address of the person who sent the message, which means anyone can see your e-mail address. 2. Chat. If you give your e-mail address to one person in chat, for all you know you're giving it to hundreds. 3. Join a mailing list. The mailing list manager may pass along your e-mail address to other list managers. 4. Create a member profile. A member profile also reveals your screen name, and hence your e-mail address, to anyone who may be searching the profiles. 5. Create a Web page. Web pages always have an e-mail link, and this will be available to everyone who stumbles across it, not just your friends. Avoiding unwanted e-mail entirely is extremely difficult, because your address has a tendency to wander around the Internet.

Remember that each email clients and ISP has its share of bugs and technical shortcomings. If you can't solve any of your email problems by yourself, then contact the email ISP for assistance in resolving error messages, lockups, crashes, and any other discrepancy.



Spingtronics

Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

No one, fifty years ago, could have foreseen or even imagined how the advent of evermore powerful computers would revolutionize science, technology, commerce, and communications. Vastly improved algorithms and architectural structures have been important, but the crucial factor has been the ability to cram ever smaller and more complex circuits on a semiconductor chip. That ability is now approaching a limit posed by atomic size and increasing influence of quantum effects. We may have to learn how to do more with what we already have if we want to further improve computers so that they'll be able to predict the weather or model the Big Bang, to mention just a few challenges.

From an electro-mechanical standpoint every digital computer, no matter how primitive or advanced, consists of on-off electrical switches connected in a circuit. In semiconductor-based systems the binary 0's and 1's are represented by electrons that carry a negative charge, and missing electrons, called "holes," with positive charge. That is simple and straightforward enough. But wait, there is more...

There can be no electricity without magnetism. They are like heads and tails, yin and yang, up and down. Electrons, the elemental carriers of electricity, also are elementary magnets. You can, very much simplified, think of them as spinning spheres of electricity, tiny electromagnets in other words. Depending on the direction of spin, the magnetism points up or down. Technology making use of the magnetic properties of electrons is often referred to as "spintronics." So far, computers ignore the magnetic state of the electrons, but what if we learned to use it for additional information storage?

About 50 years ago scientists learned how to manipulate and record the magnetic properties of electrons and certain atomic nuclei to examine the composition of substances, using a technique called nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). Eventually that technique was extended to examine the characteristics of human tissue. The name was changed to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to avoid the term "nuclear" with its negative connotations, although it has nothing to do with damaging radiation or nuclear energy in this case.

More recently, in the late 90's, scientists at IBM learned how to use spintronics to make very small, highly sensitive read-heads for use with computer hard drives. The sensors consist of a microscopic sliver of semiconductor sandwiched between two thin magnetic layers. The top layer is a permanent, "hard" magnet, but the bottom layer is a soft magnet that changes magnetic orientation easily as it passes over the magnetic regions on the disk. If both magnets in the head are oriented in the same direction, electrons align magnetically in the same direction and move easily through the semiconductor. If the magnetic layers point in opposite directions, the electron spin is reversed as it moves through the semiconductor, affecting its mobility and therefore the amount of current. Clever, isn't it? Practically all newer hard drives use that technology now.

If computers could be designed to use both the electrical charge and the magnetic state of electrons, each unit of information could have four different quaternary values (0,1,2,and 3) instead of the two binary values (0 and 1) currently used, resulting in greatly increased performance. But the semiconductors must be magnetic to recognize the magnetic 'up' or 'down' state of electrons. Magnetic semiconductors are few and far between, and so far none remain magnetic at room temperature.

If the material problems can be solved, we may be looking at future computers that are not only more powerful, but also easier to use. Because magnetic semiconductors retain their logic states without power, systems could be instant-on and use less power. Also, principal functions of a computer, such as logic operations, communication between circuits, and data storage, could be integrated in a single material, resulting in smaller and faster computers with high data-storage capacities and fast performance.

Making spintronic computers possible depends on chemists formulating magnetic semiconductors able to support the technology. Much progress is being made, but it will take a while longer. Not surprisingly, this article was based on an article in Chemical and Engineering News, Aug. 28, 2006.

Cookies With Gas?

Would you believe Internet via the gas meter? A San Diego-area start-up company, Nethercomm, claims to have developed technology to send broadband and TV services through the underground natural gas pipes. A converter box attached to your gas meter receives the signals and sends them to your computer or TV set. The headline of the article in USA Today (9/11/06) says it all: "Gas-line broadband a pipe dream?" (Thanks, Duane Morrow).

Motorola Sells Phones and Accessories in Vending Machines

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/technology/chi-0609210048sep21,1,939120>.

Motorola has begun selling phones and accessories through “Instantmoto” vending machines at well-traf?cked locations such as airports and department stores. Under the plan, the machines will stock nearly 12 phones and 18 accessories.



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Best Hardware of 2006

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

While building a system in anticipation of the release of Windows Vista, I stumbled across an article in Computer Shopper that named their choices for the Best Hardware of 2006. Whether I totally agree with them or not, I'll let you know what they chose:

In the area of Best Processor, they went with the Intel Core 2 Extreme X6800. This is currently the highest end processor and at the time of this writing will set you back about \$1000.00. It's the only Core 2 Duo processor whose multiplier comes unlocked, which means it can be overclocked easily. This is a dream come true for hardcore gamers or anyone who want to push the processor to its max.

If you don't have the \$1000.00 to spend on a processor, there are other options. Intel also produces the Core 2 Duo E6700 (\$500.00) and the Core 2 Duo E6600 (\$315.00). Without overclocking, these two processors perform similarly to the Extreme part and are more reasonably priced. AMD has the FX-62 (\$780.00), which is the main competition to Intel's Extreme processor. They also have the Athlon 64 X2 5000+ (\$520.00) and the Athlon 64 X2 4800+ (\$290.00). In most benchmarks that I've seen, the Intel Core 2 Duo line of processors has taken the lead from AMD. The FX-62 fell behind all of the Intel parts listed. In my opinion, the Core 2 Duo E6600 is probably the best value. If you're an AMD loyalist, the Athlon 64 X2 4800+ is probably your best buy.

The choice for Best Motherboard goes to the Asus P5N32-SLI Deluxe (\$220.00). Since they've chosen an Intel processor, it makes sense that they also use a motherboard that supports that processor. The choice of SLI also hints to what they will choose for the video card. SLI is nVidia's method of using two identical GPUs to increase the performance of your system by splitting the work between the two video cards. Therefore, your system will need an nVidia GeForce video card to take full advantage of this motherboard's features.

For the AMD enthusiast, the equivalent motherboard would be the Asus M2M32 SLI Deluxe (\$200.00).

Computer Shopper broke the category for video cards into the Best Mainstream Graphics Card and the Best Gaming Graphics Card. The Mainstream award goes to the nVidia GeForce 7600GT (\$160.00) and the Gaming award goes to the nVidia GeForce 7900GTX (\$460.00).

While I agree with their choices, you'll get the most affordable power from the nVidia GeForce 7600GT OC (\$145.00). This is simply the 7600GT GPU overclocked by the manufacturer of the video card. It outperforms the straight 7600GT and matches the performance of a single 7900GTX when you use two 7600GT OC cards in SLI (\$290.00).

In the category of Best DVD+/- Drive, the Plextor PX-750UF (\$145.00) is king. This is an external drive with both FireWire and USB connections.

While I agree that you can't go wrong with Plextor, I still think that most of us want an internal drive for our systems. In my experience, I've gotten similar performance and reliability from both Plextor and Sony DVD+/- drives. I don't have any specific recommendations in this category. I generally go to Fry's Electronics and see what they have as the latest drives on the shelves. Then, I price compare those drives with the online stores (like Newegg.com). Of course, if you aren't concerned about maximum performance, there are plenty of budget drives on the shelf as well.

For Best Soundcard, Computer Shopper chose the Creative Soundblaster X-Fi Elite Pro (\$290.00).

To tell the truth, Creative has owned the soundcard market for years. The X-Fi card is their current flagship and is clearly the way to go if you need the highest performance in sound. However, for you budget conscious builders out there—you can save almost \$300.00 by sticking with on-board sound. While you may not get the best audio, you won't suffer any significant performance drops either.

I was surprised when I didn't see a Best Memory section in their article. So, I get to make my own decisions on this category. I highly recommend Corsair XMS memory at whatever speed your processor and motherboard require. You'll also have to decide how much memory to purchase. With this in mind, prices will vary. You shouldn't go below the 1GB mark if you plan to run Windows Vista, and I'd recommend going ahead and taking your system to 2GB (which is generally purchased as a kit with two 1GB modules to run on dual-channel motherboards).

Of course, you can always turn to the Kingston Value RAM that's available at any retailer. However, expect varying speed and stability from these modules. If you are going to push your system to the max, don't skimp on your memory modules.

The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac The Mac Pro

Shane uses OS X. E-mail him at <mac@vpwn.com>.

Apple has replaced the G5 PowerPC professional desktops with the Mac Pro (<http://www.apple.com/macpro/>). This step completes the company's move to the Intel processors in all of their systems. The current price for the standard Mac Pro configuration is \$2,499.00.

From the Apple site, you'll see that the Mac Pro will sport Intel's Dual-Core 64-bit Xeon 5100 series processors, running at speeds of up to 3GHz with 4MB of shared L2 cache. The motherboards can accept up to 16GB of RAM.

The Mac Pro can hold up to four 500GB Serial ATA hard drives (or 2TB) of internal storage. Its dual optical drive bays allow simultaneous reading or writing to CDs and DVDs. Every Mac Pro will feature three full-length PCI Express expansion slots and one double-wide PCI Express graphics slot. The machines also include two USB 2.0, one FireWire 400, and one FireWire 800 ports on the front, as well as additional FireWire 800, FireWire 400, and three USB 2.0 ports on the back.

The Mac Pro comes standard with the NVIDIA GeForce 7300GT video card with 256MB of video memory. This provides support for dual-displays and Apple's 30-inch Cinema HD Display. The ATI Radeon X1900 XT and the NVIDIA Quadro FX 4500, both with 512MB of video memory, are available as options for creating a higher end workstation. With the expansion slots on the motherboard, up to four PCI Express graphics cards can drive up to eight displays at once for advanced visualization and large display walls.

The standard Mac Pro configuration is shipping today, featuring two 2.66 GHz Dual-Core Intel Xeon processors 1GB of 667MHz memory, 250GB storage, Nvidia GeForce 7300GT graphics with 256MB VRAM and a 16x SuperDrive optical drive, as well as an Apple Mighty Mouse and keyboard, priced at \$2,499.

The company notes that there are 4.9 million possible build-to-order options, including configurations with two 2.0 GHz or 3.0 GHz Dual-Core Intel Xeon processors; up to 16GB of 667 MHz DDR2 fully-buffered ECC memory; up to four 500GB Serial ATA hard drives running at 7200 RPM; up to two 16x SuperDrives with double-layer support; ATI Radeon X1900 XT and NVIDIA Quadro FX 4500 graphics cards, both with 512MB of GDDR3 SDRAM; AirPort Extreme module, Bluetooth 2.0+EDR module; Apple USB Modem; Apple Wireless Keyboard and Apple wireless Mighty Mouse; Mac OS X Server Tiger; Apple Xsan; and Apple Fibre Channel PCI Express Card.

Comparison between the G5 and the Mac Pro

The Mac Pro looks much the same as the previous line, with the same aluminum skin. However, while Apple left the external design alone, it addressed the G5's shortcomings with the new systems. The Power Mac G5's internal design was dictated to cooling the G5 processors. As a result, much space was taken up, offering space for only two drives. Using cooler Intel Xeon processors, Apple reclaimed space from the cooling system and gained room for internal storage.

As stated above, the Mac Pro can hold four Serial ATA drives. This compares to the G5's maximum of two. In the Mac Pro, drives are easy to install: slide out an empty drive housing, attach a SATA drive with four included screws, and slide the drive back



Continued on page 26

in. The drives attach directly to the Mac Pro's motherboard, so you don't have to fight with cables. The housings are designed so the drives slide smoothly back in place.

There's room for two full-size optical drives versus one in the G5.

With the G5, Apple moved the USB, FireWire, and headphone ports to the front of the case. But now, there's even more access. There are now two USB 2.0 ports on the front, and one each of FireWire 400 and 800. There are three additional USB 2.0 ports on the back, giving the Mac Pro a total of five USB 2.0 and four FireWire ports.

Of course, the biggest change is the use of two dual-core Intel Xeon 5100 series processors. Since these are dual-core, each Mac Pro has essentially four processor cores. While the PowerMac G5 offered a single quad-core configuration (two dual-core 2.5GHz G5 chips for \$3,299), the Mac Pro line offers three, featuring Xeon processors running at 2.0GHz, 2.66GHz, and 3.0GHz. To speed processing, each Xeon chip also has 4MB of Level 2 cache.

The Xeon processors use less power and produce less heat than the G5 chips. The Mac Pro has four fans (down from nine fans plus a liquid cooling system in the G5), and they run much quieter than the fans on the G5.


And the presence of Intel-based processors in the Mac Pro means that it can also boot into Windows. As of this writing, Apple's Boot Camp software is still in BETA and is missing several native device drivers to fully utilize the Mac Pro. However, you can expect these drivers to be included with the release of OS X 10.5 (Leopard).

RAM in the Mac Pro is known as Fully Buffered DIMMs (or FB-DIMMs), a format supported by Intel for high memory performance. Each FB-DIMM has its own memory controller onboard, which generates extra heat. To dissipate that heat, each FB-DIMM in a Mac Pro comes with its own heat sink, making FB-DIMMs look unique. FB-DIMMs must be installed in pairs, and for the highest memory performance gains, a Mac Pro should have at least two pairs of FB-DIMMs installed. But this performance comes at a cost. FB-DIMMs are new. Few companies currently offer these modules. So, for the time being, these modules will be significantly more expensive.

Installing RAM in the Mac Pro is much easier than on the Power Mac G5. The Mac Pro has two RAM carrier cards, each with four slots. To install RAM, you just slide the card out, place it on a table and insert your new FB-DIMMs, then slide the carrier back into its slot on the Mac Pro motherboard.

The Mac Pro, like the Power Mac G5, uses PCI Express slots. Apple has improved their design. First, the bottom PCI slot is double-wide. With many high-performance video cards today requiring their own fans, these cards often encroach on the expansion slots next to them. The double-wide slot solves this problem. Also, these slots can be individually configured for different maximum speeds. When you buy a card, a software assistant helps configure your PCI slots, channeling speed to the right cards.





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Copy rights and copy wrongs

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!

Whether it's Gutenberg's printing press, the copy machine or the VCR, every technological innovation has played havoc with intellectual property rights. The Internet is no different. In cyberspace, you have access to millions of words, sounds and images. Who owns them? How can you use them? Who cares?

The issue that will probably concern you most is copyright. Under the Copyright Act of 1976, items of expression, including literary, dramatic and musical works, graphical works, audiovisual works and sound recordings, are eligible for copyright protection as soon as they are fixed in tangible form. Everything on the Internet is in tangible form; this includes e-mail messages and postings to Usenet newsgroups as well as the more obvious examples of web pages and software programs. As soon as you save a computer-generated document to a disk, it is in tangible form.

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In general, you should treat everything on the Internet as if it were copyrighted. E-mail and Usenet news postings are technically copyrighted by the persons writing the messages, not the persons receiving them. The catch phrase "you own your own words" explains this concisely. Do not assume that because something is on the Internet it is in the public domain. Much of the information on the Internet is in flagrant violation of international copyright law. For example, there are sites that post song lyrics and recipes taken from published cookbooks: these are often in violation.

Owners of registered trademark can aggressive in protecting their identities. To be "foxed" is Internet slang being for being slapped with a lawsuit for violating trademark law. According to the Dummies Daily, the term originated when Twentieth-Century Fox sent letters threatening legal action to fan club sites that were carrying images from their TV programs.

To find more information about copyright, search the World Wide Web for Intellectual Property Rights. This is a hot topic, and there is a considerable amount of information available. A good guide for the layperson can be found at www.benedict.com.

Links and the Law

Many people ask me if they need permission to link to another site. You don't. The case law so far has indicated that the nature of the Internet is to link to sites and files, and that by putting a site on the Internet you are giving implicit permission to others to link to you.

You DO need permission to use a logo from another site or to give the impression that you are somehow affiliated with that site. But just to link - no.

The law of the Internet is constantly changing. If you want to keep up with the latest court decisions, one good site is phillipsnizer.com/internetlib.htm>.

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On the trail of dust

The Graphics Guy

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>.

One of the biggest enemies of effective scanning and photo graphic retouching is dust. Dust on the scanner, dust on the original, dust in the digital camera all conspire to leave those ubiquitous little white dots and squiggles all over your scanned image. You can easily spend hours working on a photo-composite or retouch project and feel that it is perfect, but when you output the image to a high-resolution printer you are bedeviled by those little spots. We will never be able to completely get rid of dust. High-end graphics shops have tried, using clean rooms, ionizing the air, employing anti-static brushes and compressed air with varying amounts of success, but most of us cannot afford such extreme measures. This month, we talk about simple things we can do to alleviate this graphic arts menace.

The first and simplest thing is to try and keep your workstation clean. Computer stores sell those little cans of compressed air (usually for blowing out your keyboard), they are great for blowing some dust off your scanner surface and the originals you will be scanning. On flatbed scans, dust will appear white; but on transparency scans from a film scanner, dust will be black. Swiffer-type cloths also work well for wiping down your computer equipment. It will be a constant struggle since we all know how much dust computers attract, but keeping a clean area for your scanning will save you time in the long run. On a flatbed scanner, be sure to clean the glass using a streak-free cleaner, but be careful not to get the spray inside the scanner.

There are two types of flatbed scanners with regard to dust: open and closed. Most older flatbed scanners are of the open variety. They had vents in the body to cool the interior of the scanner. Unfortunately this also allowed dust to get inside the scanner, onto the underside of the glass, the light source or the CCD element. Occasionally with older scanners it may be necessary to disassemble the scanner (carefully) and dust out the interior. Dust on the CCD manifests itself as a fine line running down the length



Figure 1

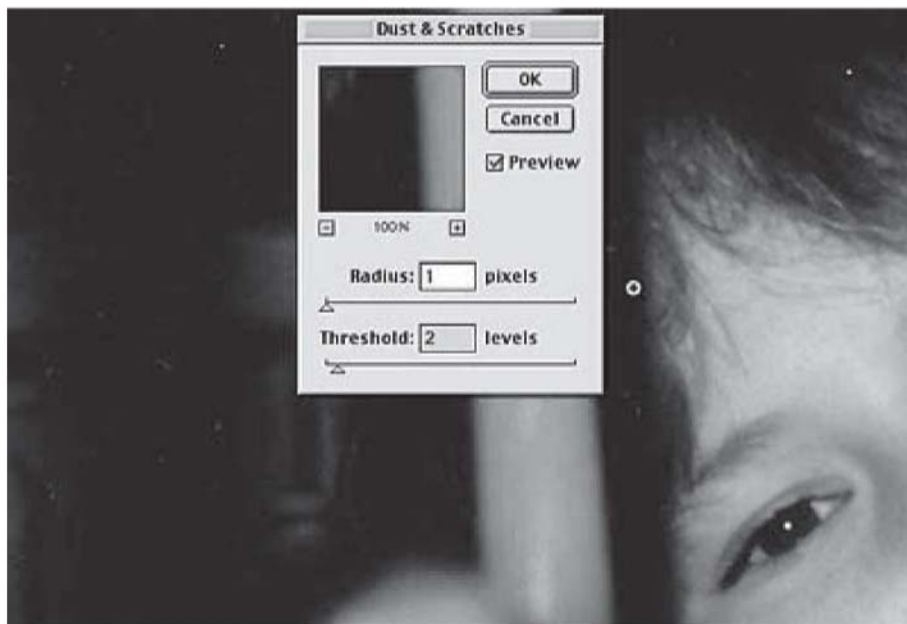


Figure 2

Continued on page 29

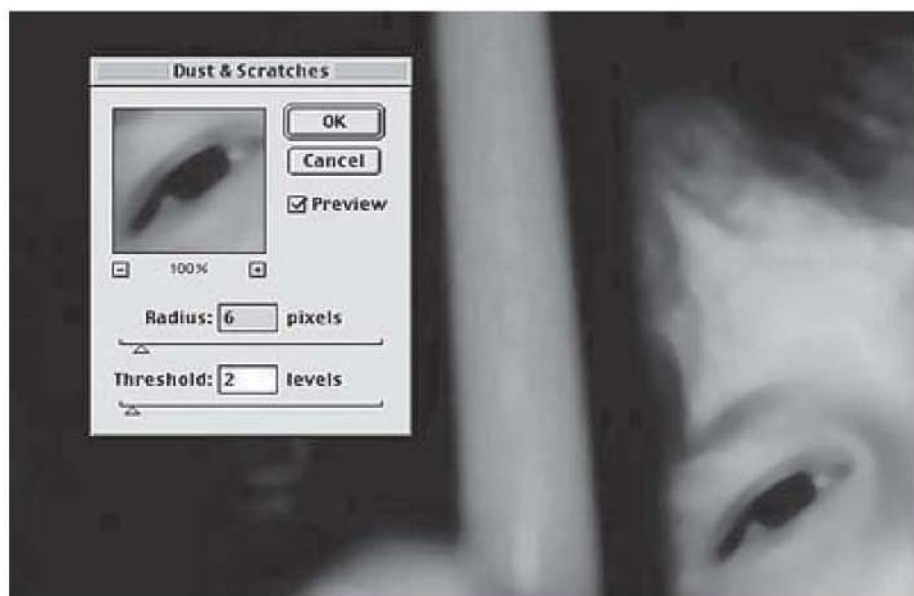


Figure 3

of the scan. Newer, closed scanners run cooler so they do not need to be ventilated in the same way. This is a good thing to look for when purchasing a scanner.

Upon making a scan, no matter how fastidious you are, there will be some dust spots on the image (fig 1). After sharpening the image (in Photoshop select Sharpen: Unsharp Mask from the Filter menu), you will see more dust spots. It is important to view the image at 100% (in Photoshop se-

lect View: Actual Pixels or double click the Zoom tool). This will allow you to see all the spots that need to be removed.

There are two basic ways to remove spots, the Dust & Scratches filter or the Clone or Rubberstamp tool. The Dust & Scratches filter (select Noise: Dust & Scratches from the Filter menu) does an effective job of removing spots at the expense of image sharpness (fig 2).

A high radius amount will eliminate larger dust spots, but will also smooth out the actual detail of the photo and can make somewhat of a watercolor look (fig 3). The Cloning tool is much slower but more precise. It is important to choose a source point similar enough to make the spotted area blend well.

Since viewing the image at 100% often makes it much larger than the size of your monitor, start cloning at the top-left corner of the image and work in a tiling manner. Use the page down key or the scroll bar to move down one screen and retouch out any spots. Once you hit the bottom move the scroll bar right and work on the next column going up until you have covered the entire image.

A combination of the two tools is often the best; you can use the filter at a low radius for the small stuff and then go in manually with the cloning tool to take out the bigger chunks. It is also possible to mask off simple background areas where a high radius Dust & Scratches filter would not be noticeable and then do the subject with the Clone tool. Used in combination, these tools can save you a lot of time.

You cannot stop dust from getting into your images, but you can create your own digital version of perfection. It is important to carefully look over every scan before you print it. No image should go out all spotty.

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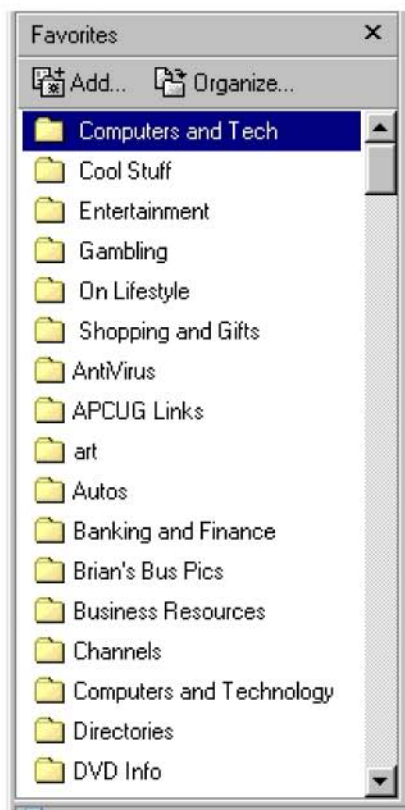


Internet Explorer - Connections

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>

Last month we finished up the Search button and its drop-down menus. Next on the bar is Favorites. When you click on it, a sidebar appears on the left of your active window as below. When you click on the Add



icon, the item will be added to a specific location, usually a folder. In my case, many of my favorites were simply added to the general list rather than to a folder. The general list is not visible at left because the list is designed to place the folders at the beginning. This of course is pretty sloppy housekeeping, resulting in a long list of individual, unrelated items. This is where the folders come in.

If I am in the



of which is seen at the left. You'll notice that a New Folder button has been added. To create a new folder, click on the button which will open the window seen below. In this case I have given the folder this name partly because it will appear alphabetically in the list. (The other reason is that I



have just had my gall bladder removed in this fashion.)

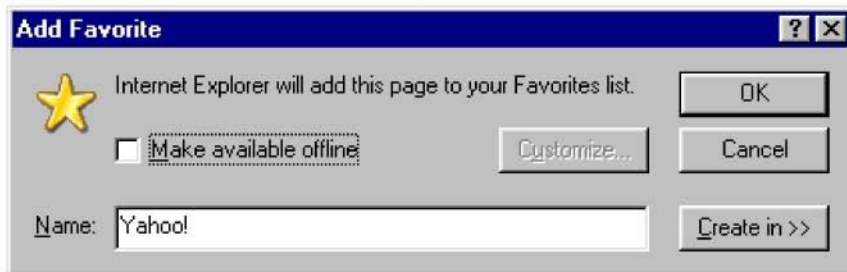
Clicking OK adds the new folder to the list of favorites as seen at right. You should observe that the new folder was placed in the list in the correct alphabetical order. This is



a little confusing,

since the first time you look for it, it will be at the bottom of the General list.

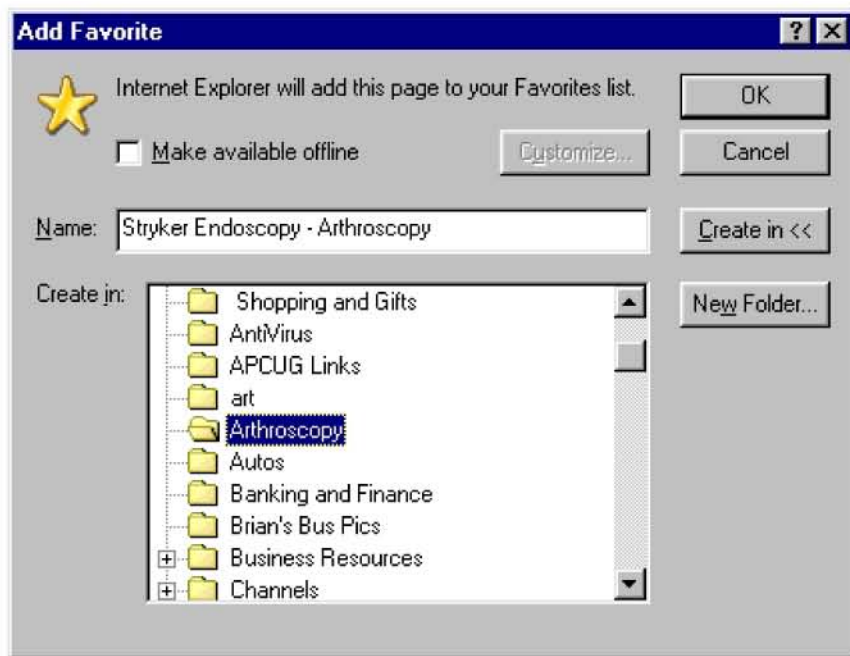
Having found a site of interest, I decide to add it to my list of favorites. With the site open in Internet Explorer, I click on the Add icon. The window at



process of researching some special area, it only makes sense to save any favorites I come across in a folder devoted to that area of interest. If a folder doesn't already exist, the first thing you want to do is create one. When you click on the add icon, the window above opens. In order to place the item in a specific location, you click the Create in button on the lower right. This will open another window, the right portion

the top of the column on the next page opens. You should note that the Name has already been entered. At this point I scroll the list to the Arthroscopy folder and select (highlight) it. Now I click the Create in button and then OK. This item has been added to my Favorites list in the Arthroscopy folder.

Now comes the interesting part, for which I have no explanation. If I close the page of interest and move on

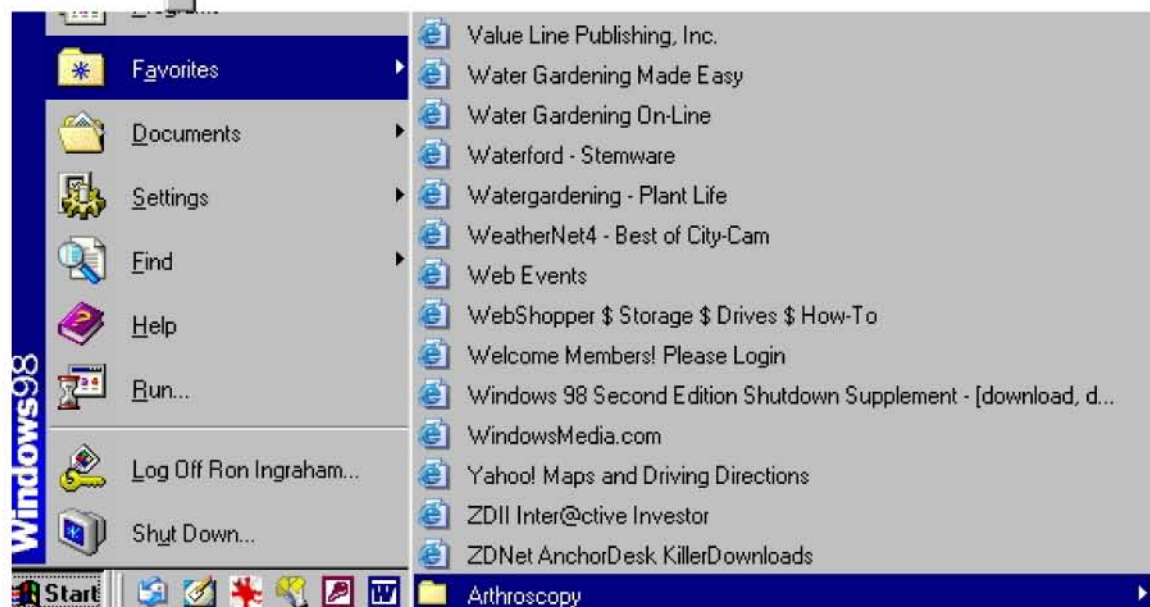


to another site, and then decide that I want to return to the Stryker site, the Arthroscopy folder does not appear alphabetically with the rest of the folders when I click on Favorites. Experience tells me to look at the extreme bottom of the list. Sure enough, that's where it

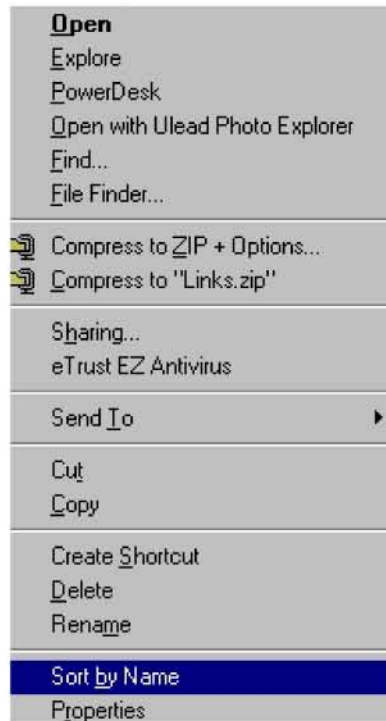


appears. Now the question is, how do I get it to appear with the rest of the folders? You may left click it and drag it to the desired location. The trick here is to wait until a horizontal

line appears just below the desired location, in this case, Art. Then release the mouse button. If you don't get the line, the folder will become a subfolder in whatever location you dropped it.



There are two easier ways around the problem. If your new folder is at the bottom of the list, the quickest way to put it in the proper location is to go **Start, Favorites** and when the list appears, right click in an empty area. (See the window at the bottom of the page). This will produce the menu seen below. If you click on Sort by name, the new folder or any other files out of alphabetical order will be



sorted correctly.

An even quicker way achieve this is to use the Favorites drop-down menu from the menu line. The list of favorites will appear immediately and from there the process is the same. Right click the open area and select Sort by Name.

Next month we'll look at using the Media icon. □

E-Mail: Be Less Annoying

Steve Bass, PC World; Author, PC Annoyances.

Everyone -- including Bill Gates -- can use e-mail more efficiently. And learn how not to do really dumb things.

I've come to the conclusion that everyone needs to take a test before being able to use e-mail. No, I'm serious. You have to take an e-mail test. If you pass, you get an e-mail license. Proudly hang it on the wall. Screw up--send lots of messages with blank subject lines, say--and your license is pulled. You go on probation and attend mandatory remedial e-mail training.

Why am I being so hardnosed? I have a laundry list of ways people drive me wild with e-mail. I wrote about a few in "Get Relief From Annoying E-Mail," my July, 2006 "Hassle-Free PC" column:

http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,125767,tk,nl_sbxhow,00.asp

But I ran out of room in the print column, so here are some more tips, including how to stop being obnoxious with your e-mail.

To Whom Am I Speaking?

Sometimes I have absolutely no idea who's sending me an e-mail, and this is a problem. I mean, I'll say something to another guy that I wouldn't dream of uttering to a lady my mother's age. [Sorry, Mom.]

* Don't share. If you and your live-in (spouse, significant other, whatever) use the same e-mail address, stop it. Extra e-mail addresses are free and consolidating e-mails into one mailbox is confusing the dickens out of me because I never know who I'm writing to.

* Use a sig line. Make life easier for me: Add a signature line with your name and e-mail address using the hot-linked mailto:steve_bass@pcworld.com format. It's easier to reply just to you if your e-mail was sent to many people; it's also great for when I forward your e-mail--the new recipient doesn't have to cut and paste your address.

* Use your real name. Don't get me wrong, I love your beerbelly49832@yourisp.com. The problem is, I haven't a clue who you are. Be a champ and add your real name in the signature line. And a favor? Don't use initials.

Do I Need to Read This Right Now?

Look, I'm a very busy man (or so I tell my wife and editor), and I get tons of e-mail every day. I need to do e-mail triage--you know, scanning the inbox for the hottest messages and reading them first. But honestly, I can't do this with most e-mail I get. So here's what I recommend:

* The subject is... Tell me, clearly and briefly, what your message is about in the subject line. I delete all messages with vague subjects--Hi, Hello, or worse, an empty subject line (oh, do I hate that!). And make sure you don't trigger my spam filter by using all capital letters, exclamation points, and words you typically see in junk e-mail, like "free," "spam," "mortgage," or "Viagra."

"I have a laundry list of ways people drive me wild with e-mail."

* Exec summary. Give me a one- or a two-sentence overview at the start of your e-mail. "I have a complicated issue," you might start out, "involving a Dell, memory cards, and SP2. If you have time to help, I've provided details below."

* Save time. Use [NM] or [EOM] (they stand for "no message" or "end of message") in the subject line as a shorthand way of responding with a simple "thank you" or an acknowledgement. This helps reduce the number of e-mails I need to open; many of the people at PC World use the trick and it's increased everyone's productivity.

And Your Point Is?

Once I actually open an e-mail, I need to get the point quickly so I can reply to the sender if necessary, then move on to the next one. But lots of the missives I get are, how to say it?, a mess.

* Use paragraphs. Obvious, right? Nope. I get e-mails with one long paragraph the length of the Gettysburg Address. Break it up into three or four smaller ones. By the way, my limit is three or four paragraphs; after that I start dozing. [Editor's note: I noticed.] And send a test message to a buddy to make sure your e-mail program isn't removing paragraph returns.

* By the numbers. If you have more than one question or point, number them. It makes replying a whole lot easier if I can refer to the numbers.

* Subject shorthand. When you reply or forward an e-mail, it's helpful if you stick one or two descriptive words in front of the original subject so the recipient has an idea of what's in store. For instance, I use tags such as "Update," "Confirmation," or "Really Dumb."

Miscellaneous Gripes

Think I'm done kvetching? Nope, no such luck.

* Attachment don'ts. Don't attach anything executable--period. If on the off chance I've asked you to send a program, stick it into a zipped file.

* Keep it private. Don't reply to a mailing list with "great idea" or "I agree." Reply privately instead. Select a small part of the original message for context's sake.

* Stay plain, Jane. Avoid fancy formatting, gaudy colors, and flowery backgrounds. Two reasons: first, what's cool on your monitor looks like hell on mine; and second, that extra coding increases the download time for folks with slower connections.

* Dear [InsertName]. Private note to PR flacks: If you can't use mail merge properly, don't.

[Editors: You can use this next section as a separate article. If so, use this as a title: Be Less Annoying, Take 2: Mail Lists. If you'd prefer making it a long column, use Be Less Annoying on Mail Lists. Be sure to modify the first graf to read: I really struck a nerve with readers of my newsletter when I talking about annoying e-mails. My inbox was flooded with a bucket of e-mail (most of it not very annoying). So I figured I'd follow up with advice on good mail list etiquette. But before I do, here are some e-mail gaffes that drive readers crazy.]

Be Less Annoying, Take 2: Mail Lists

Last week's newsletter really struck a nerve. My inbox was flooded with a bucket of e-mail (most of it not very annoying). So this week I figured I'd follow up with advice on good mail list etiquette. But before I do, here are some e-mail gaffes that drive readers crazy.

"Stop sending chain e-mails to me--no matter what the cause (little Timmy needs your old Christmas cards to live, canola oil is poison, tell someone you love them, whatever...). While I find them annoying in general, they are even worse when they

".. here are some ways on how to stop being obnoxious with your e-mail."

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are the only time you contact me. I'd rather be dropped from your little list. Think for a minute: Do I ever send you such drivel, or respond to it?" --Chuck

"Always use the subject line. I automatically delete any e-mail without a subject line." --Linda

"Check spellings. Don't mix subjects in one e-mail." --Arvind

"Phone home. For conversations that require significant two-way dialog and do not require documenting, use a phone or IM. Do not send an e-mail asking me to lunch in 30 minutes." --Jack

"Stop using those fancy script fonts! They are near impossible to read. And please, no more purple, orange, green font colors. Its an e-mail, not a work of art!" --Mark

Now, on to some mail list etiquette. If you're new to mail lists, or even if you're not, you can learn how to make your messages easier to read, more useful, and definitely less annoying to others.

When Replying to Messages

1. Don't hit Reply All for every message. Avoid responses the entire list won't find useful. For instance, don't reply to the entire list with "thanks," "good idea," or "I'll try it!" Instead, reply directly to the person who just helped you.

Unfortunately, on many lists it's easy to inadvertently reply to everyone instead of an individual. Take a sec and check the return address before hitting Send. The sender's e-mail address is usually near the top of the message.

Another tip: Insert OFFLIST at the start of your subject line when replying to an individual. That way the recipient will know you're not replying to the entire list.

2. Remove the extra stuff. When replying, it takes seconds to snip extraneous junk and leave only essential portions of the previous message. There's rarely a need to repeat the entire thread, and doing so often discourages people from reading your message.

No matter what you do, get rid of the stuff that's automatically inserted at the bottom of every message--the "how to unsubscribe" junk--that clutters up every message.

3. Keep the subject line short. If you're viewing messages in digest form, the subject is something lengthy, like, "[Computing] Digest 07-13-06, 16 messages." When you reply to a message, it's essential (mandatory, really) that you change the subject to the message topic. Then remove everything from the digest message except the topic and your response.

4. Restrain yourself. It's not necessary to weigh in on every topic, especially on very busy lists. Consider limiting yourself to one or two messages a day.

When Starting a New Thread

1. Brevity is the soul of wit. Just as with e-mail, consider tackling just one topic or issue per message, and keep your messages short. Long messages (more than, say, three or four paragraphs) are difficult to read; long paragraphs are equally difficult to plow through.

2. Use an informative signature line. Keep your signature line short, say, two or three lines. Usually your name is adequate, though some lists (such as one I'm on about camper vans) want a city and state. The point is to avoid sticking in anything nonessential.

3. Stay on topic. If it's a computing list, send messages about computing; ditto for a cooking list, or any other special-interest group. Most importantly, avoid political messages and jokes.


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News Brief

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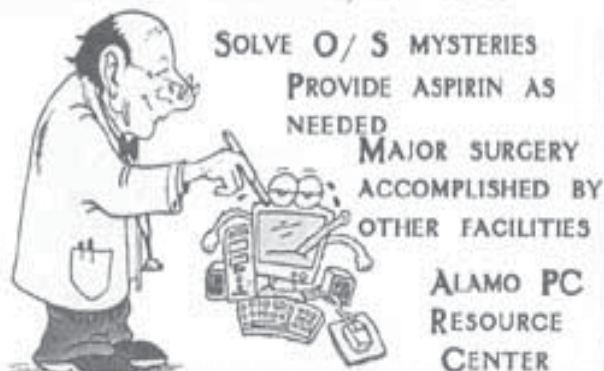
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New Computer



Happy "Gadgetholidays!"

By **Berry F. Phillips**, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor - bfpdata@1access.net, <http://www.ccokc.org>

Have many of us become "gadgetholics?" Do we rush in mass like drunken lemmings annually, especially during the holidays, to rush over the cliff of technology only to fall even deeper in debt as we race to upgrade to own the newest and the coolest gadget? The Associated Press reported that a poll says Americans are showing early signs of addiction to their gadgets.

Fifty percent say they could not get along without computer and mobile telephones, and 40 percent say the same for broadband use. The Associated Press article also quotes a psychologist who is an authority on INTERNET addictions so there must be truth to this new addiction. Those addicted broadband users are fortunate since "they can get help online."

Is gadget addiction generic? You might be a neophiliac if you are constantly upgrading with the latest technical gizmo. Media Life magazine reports neophiliacs are people addicted to the new. A study conducted by Yamagata University School of Medicine in Japan reports some people may be genetically predisposed to wanting the newest things. Their study suggests the cause may be a mitochondrial enzyme called monoamine oxidase. However, a University of York sociology professor disputes the findings of the study pointing out, "people were far more suspicious of change in the past – so the urge to constantly move on is sociological, not a genetic one."

Do you suppose gadgetmania may be gender related? Reality checks suggest

Males, far more than females, are gadget addicted to various degrees. This finding has been a boost to wives who often receive the blame for compulsive overspending while shopping. Jean Chatzky, author of "Make Money Not Excuses" gives this advice to spouses of gadgetholics: "They get excited in anticipation of their next purchase. They get a little higher when they are making it. And they feel a huge let down when it is over."

Compulsive shoppers also put their own families at risk by racking up bills they can not pay. If you think he is simply over-shopping, he needs your help. Offer to be his shopping buddy, which may contain his urge to splurge. And help him find new ways to avoid falling into that new-tech trap by getting off the email and mailing lists that are tempting him or by finding a new hobby to occupy his time." (I am sure glad that I am a single male so nothing will interfere with my gadget shopping during the holidays!)

Why I even understand that Mrs. Claus is having problems with Santa this year. Some say that Santa has global navigation installed in his high tech sleigh and no longer relies totally on Rudolph, the lead red-nosed reindeer, for navigation. The elves in Santa's workshop have been upgraded and some even replaced by robotics as more high tech gifts are being manufactured than ever before for children of all ages. Mrs. Claus is also concerned about Santa's belly that you recall "shakes like a bowl full of jelly" for fear he will get stuck in a chimney, and his deliveries could not be made on time, disappointing millions globally. Don't worry Santa has been working out daily in his high-tech gym loaded with all kinds of the newest and coolest gadgets. Santa who is male, of course, apparently seems to think that today's addictions are tomorrow's necessities.

New buy

Great Games for the Holidays Are Here: Changes in Industry & Technology Overcome

By Timothy Everingham, a member of TUGNET, California
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We are now in the time when most of the computer & console games get released, right before the holiday season. This year it even gets more complicated because of Windows Vista coming out in January and we are in the early stages of a transition to the next generation of game consoles. What makes it even worse is the collapse of the computer game industry's major trade show, E3. Game developers have had to revamp their marketing strategies for the future, yet at the same time prepare for this holiday season. This should add to consumer confusion on what to buy and when and hopefully this article will reduce that confusion.

“increases questions”

Microsoft's new operating system, Windows Vista, increases questions for those uses of 3D oriented applications, especially games. A great part of this is DirectX 10, which is a major rewrite of DirectX and has much higher capability than current and past versions. DirectX 10 will only be available for Windows Vista and can only be used if you have a video card that supports it. (Those cards that do not have DirectX 10 support will be running DirectX 9.0L under Windows Vista). DirectX 10 cards based on Nvidia chips will start to come out in November and those based on ATI chips will start to come out in February. There will be few games with additional enhancements if you are running Vista with a DirectX 10 card when Vista launches, such as Microsoft Flight Simulator X and Crysis. It will probably be at least until mid-2007 when significant numbers of DirectX 10 enhanced or DirectX 10 only titles will arrive. So for giving gifts to 3D gamers who are going to be first adopters of Windows Vista you might want to consider giving gift certificates.

Microsoft's next generation console, the Xbox 360, has been out for about a year. It has been well accepted by the market-place and has a good number of quality game titles. Sony's Playstation 3 is more powerful and will be able to play high definition Blue-Ray disk movies, but it has been delayed by technical problems until November 17 and even then will have limited supply in the US. With the decision to allow Blue Ray Disk movies to the higher level 1080p High Definition TV instead of the former 720p only should help sales. It will also have some very good games available at launch. There will be 2 versions, the standard costing \$499 and the deluxe costing \$599. Nintendo's Wii next generation console will launch on November 19. It is not as powerful as its two rivals, especially in the graphics area (Maximum Video Resolution: Wii-480p, Xbox 360-720P, PS3-1080p). However it has a very unique gyroscopic controller that is shaped like a TV remote control, which could make some very innovative gameplay (actions are evoked by your physical movement of the entire controller). The Wii's retail price will be \$249. The safe bet for buying a console now is the Xbox 360, but I would advise waiting on your decisions until the initial opinions on the PS3 and Wii consoles come out. (These will probably be found online on the video game review websites before the end of November). Remember when buying a console it is like buying a computer. First you determine what games/applications you want to run, and then you see which console has the games/applications you want to run now or in the future.

“for the holiday season”

Here are some of my game picks for the holiday season:

If you are looking a simulation, Microsoft Flight Simulator X (Windows XP or Vista) is a great visual experience. It is greatly improved from the last version, 2004, with great scenery and other graphics plus good missions. Be aware that to get good frame rates on this you will need a mid to high performance PC by current standards. This is the first game that can take advantage of Windows Vista only features, including DirectX 10 capabilities if you have a Direct X 10 graphics card. Comes in both standard and deluxe versions.

Continued on page 38

“spyware”

If you are looking for a first person shooter, Call of Duty 3 (Activision; PS3, PS2, Xbox 360, Xbox, Wii) is third installment of the extremely successful World War 2 team-based first-person shooter series. This time it centers on the campaign from Normandy to Paris. Additionally the number of concurrent online/network players has been raised to

24. Battlefield 2142 (Electronic Arts, PC) is Battlefield 2 set in the future in the middle of a new ice age. Since Battlefield 2 is such a great multiplayer combat title, this is a good thing. Like the previous members of the Battlefield series, it is usually played team vs. team online or at a LAN Party. Be aware that this game has in-game advertisements and spyware is installed when you install the game that analyses data on your PC to determine which adds to display in the game. So if you don't like such things on your computer you may want to pass on this game.

If you have dreamed of firefights using automatic weapons in the glamorous Las Vegas Casinos this is for you. Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas (Ubisoft; PC, PS3, PSP, Xbox 360) is another in the successful Rainbow Six series about the adventures of a US antiterrorist commando team. This time a large group of terrorists are attacking the Las Vegas Casinos and plan to burn them to the ground and your object is to stop them. Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent (Ubisoft; PC, Xbox 360, Xbox, PS2, Gamecube) is another in the great Splinter Cell series where you work as a spy/mercenary for the National Security Agency. However, this time you act as a double agent within a terrorist cell, so things get more complicated. This also has a multiplayer mode. This series is great for those who like to sneak up on the bad guys, take them out and steal or blow up their stuff.

“adventure”

As for adventure games, The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion (2K games; PC, Xbox 360) has extremely beautiful and high-level graphics. It is considered an outstanding title and one with which all other adventure games are compared, but you need a high performance PC to play it. Gothic 3 (JoWood, PC) is a single player adventure game in a land where humans have been enslaved by orcs. There is an evil mode where you side with the orcs, but most of the gameplay you are on the human's side. The game is much more open ended than most games, so if you get lost in non-structured game play this title is not for you. For those who enjoyed the fantasy role playing game Neverwinter Nights, there is Never Winter Nights 2 (Atari, PC). Half-Life 2 (Electronic Arts) has moved to an episodic model, and so now has Sam & Max (Lucas Arts). Sam & Max Episode 1: Culture shock is the first of seven episodes to come out on a monthly basis with an estimated 4-6 hours of game play each. Each episode will cost \$8.85, but you can subscribe to the entire set for \$34.95. This is an off the wall humor-ridden adventure game with a dog and rabbit team of freelance police as its heroes.

“sport games”

As for sport games, try Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07 (Electronic Arts; PC, PS3, PS, Xbox, Xbox 360, Wii). It is extremely similar to the previous two versions, but is still a great game. For those who love golf games this is probably your best bet. Need For Speed Carbon (Electronic Arts; PC, PS3, PS2, PSP, Xbox 360, Xbox, Wii, Gamecube, Gameboy, DS), is the next in the successful Need For Speed street racing series. Its graphics are excellent and smooth, and there is a lot of game play and various options/paths to explore in the way you play the game.

In the good, but not expensive category look at GTR 2 (10tacle Studios, PC). This is a

GT car racing game that has gotten good reviews and has a lot to offer and you can find it for less than \$20. It was released on Sept 26; it is a new game too. For sports games, Electronic Arts has most of the best ones. You should look there first.

If you are into building rather than destroying I would recommend Sid Meir's Railroads (2K Games, PC). In this empire -uilding game you have 15 historical and fictional scenarios to chose from. Up to four players can even compete online or over a network. The detailed graphic animation of the environment/world is impressive, but because of this it is recommended that you have a significantly better computer than listed in the minimum requirements.

Continued on page 39



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New buy**“Total War”**

If you are looking for a real-time strategy game, look at Company of Heroes (THQ, PC). The detail in both the game play and the graphics makes this World War II game set in France in 1944 superior to other similar titles. You play either as the allies or the axis and control small units on a battlefield to accomplish objectives. You can play against another player or players online. Because of the graphics, low-end PCs are insufficient for this game. Also you need to look at Medieval 2: Total War (Sega, PC), the fourth in

the Total War historical combat real-time strategy series. The graphics and animation is so good that the game's engine is used to create animated visualizations of large-scale actual battles for documentaries shown on the History and Discovery channels. The graphics have been updated, making the even more real than in any of the previous versions and what you even saw in the TV documentary visualizations. The game takes place in Medieval Europe and you command one of the historical factions/countries that vie for power. Look at Warhammer: Mark of Chaos (Namco Bandai, PC) too; a real-time strategy game with fantasy creatures and units, part of the excellent Warhammer series.

“something usual”

If you want something usual you may want to look at Bully (Rockstar Games, PS2). This is a boarding school simulator where you work your way up in this kid-dom. Last year's best unusual was Destroy All Humans, a spoof on the 1950's alien invasion movies. Now Destroy All Humans 2: Make War Not Love (THQ; PS2, Xbox) has arrived and is set in the 1960's. It is not quite as good as the original; but with the original being so good, especially in the rolling on the floor laughing department, it still makes for a very good game. There are new consoles and a lot of new games for this holiday season, too much to cover here. For additional information go to www.gamespot.com (part of CNET), www.ign.com, www.gamepro.com, www.gamespy.com, www.gamezone.com.

May your games be happy and bright (we don't have to worry much about screen burn-in anymore).

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How to Buy Software Cheapest Isn't Always the Least Expensive

By Larry Lentz, Microsoft Dynamics CRM MVP

The cheapest (legal) way to buy software is to purchase it with a new computer. This is called OEM, Original Equipment Manufacturer. This provides a substantial discount on the software compared to other methods such as buying it off the shelf. The most common software purchased OEM is the computer's operating system, say Microsoft Windows XP, and applications like Microsoft Office. However, there are some 'gotchas' involved with OEM. First, OEM must be purchased with a new computer or appropriate hardware. In the case of Windows XP, there will be a license called the Certificate of Authenticity attached to the side of the box somewhere. You can't legally purchase OEM without hardware though you may find it for sale that way. The next gotcha is that you can't move it from one machine to another. If your computer fails and needs to be replaced, so does the software! Another gotcha is that support for your OEM software is from your reseller, not the manufacturer. So if you buy Microsoft Office OEM from Best Buy, you'd best call Best Buy if you have any questions. Microsoft won't talk with you, at least not without a credit card number.

Another way to purchase software is off the shelf in a shrink wrapped box. This is called Full Packaged Product, FPP. This is a bit more flexible than OEM as you can move it from box to box. Of course it can only be on one box at a time. Oh, and you know that little slip of paper inside the box, the one that says something like End User License Agreement. Keep it! That is your only proof of ownership. The actual software doesn't count. If you lose that license, you lose your right to use the software. Ask the folks in New Orleans after Katrina about that. Microsoft sent in a bunch of folks to help out after Katrina but if businesses only had OEM or lost their FPP licenses in the flooding, they were out of luck. Also, if you are lucky enough to get audited by the software police (BSA), they will demand to see those little slips of paper. Boxes and CDs don't count.

The best way to purchase software, at least Microsoft software, is through the many Open Licensing programs. These can be confusing though. Microsoft has a bunch of attorneys with nothing better to do than figure out ways to make this complicated. But, there are advantages. First, the license is actually maintained on-line by Microsoft. Should you have some sort of disaster, like a flood or a visit from the BSA, your proof of ownership is safe and sound on Microsoft's servers. To replace your software you would only need to, perhaps, purchase a new CD set, \$27 or so, and look up the license keys on-line. But wait! There's more. Some products offer home use rights. Say you purchase Microsoft Office under the appropriate licensing program. It will allow you to install it not only on your computer at work, but also on a computer at home! Two for the price of one. You also can call up Microsoft for support and they'll actually talk to you. And you are likely eligible for training and other bennies. Plus you may get upgrade rights. If you bought Windows XP or Microsoft Office under the appropriate license, you would be eligible to upgrade to the soon to be released Windows Vista or Office 2007. But wait! There's still more. In some licensing programs you don't have to pay for it all at once. You can spread your software payments over three years. That can be a real cash flow saver!

There are many ways to buy software. Deciding which is best for you is not a cut and dried situation. Discuss it with your software/hardware vendor or computer consultant to determine which method is best for you. Sometimes the cheapest isn't the least expensive in the long run.

Larry Lentz is a Microsoft Dynamics CRM MVP, an MCSE + Internet, an MCSE on Windows 2000, a Microsoft Certified Database Administrator, an MCSA: Messaging on Windows Server 2003 and Exchange 2003. He is Past President of Alamo PC. He is the owner of Lentz Computer Services, www.LentzComputer.net, which he founded in 1989. LCS is the first Microsoft partner in San Antonio to earn the Microsoft Small Business Specialist designation and is a Microsoft Certified Partner. Larry has over 24 years as a computer professional and specializes in Microsoft Small Business Server and CRM. He chairs the Alamo PC CRM Study Group (MCSE Advanced SIG) affectionately called 'The Geeks' and the Alamo PC Small Business Server Special Interest Group (SBS SIG). Larry is available for presentations on technology for small business and can be reached via e-mail at Larry@LentzComputer.net

New buy

Software with New Computers

by **Hilton Kaufman**, member of the Chicago Computer Society, Illinois
www.ccs.org, hmkaufman@earthlink.net

When a typical consumer buys a computer, some software or programs normally comes with it. Just what is included will vary with price and brand, but usually includes an operating system as a minimum. It is possible to get a custom built machine without any software if this is actually wanted.

I recently bought an HP Media Computer, that I consider an overkill machine, for home use. A lot of software comes with it. There are several separate programs for working with audio-visual files and DVDs, two money management programs, several games, two internet browsers, two office suites plus an extra word processor, a security program, and probably a few other small programs.

In the vast majority of computers delivered today, the operating system that is included is some version of Windows XP. This includes a number of possibly useful programs in a folder or directory called Accessories. For many people, this will be all that is needed to get good use out of a computer.

The manufacturer of the machine very likely included some additional programs. Maybe this brings you up to your required level of software. If you do need more, the included programs may provide deals or better prices on the others that you need.

Check out what you have before rushing out to buy more.

Microsoft Windows Media Player should be adequate for playing most music and video files and comes with the operating system. The major competing program, RealPlayer, also seems to have come with the operating system. (I believe there is some sort of legal requirement that it be included.) In addition to playing music, you can also do things like listen to the hourly online BBC news headlines.

I personally do not use either of the money management programs, Microsoft Money and Quicken. I may be a bit paranoid but I do not put personal financial data on a computer that is regularly connected to the Internet. Spyware gets on computers too easily, even with good defenses.

I find several of the games to be fun to play, as well as good to kill time when I don't want to do anything serious. The virtual pinball machine comes complete with arcade noises and has the same motif as the last real one that I had a chance to play some years ago. Free Cell is a thinker's card game with most deals possible to win. There is also a straight solitaire game that is quite popular among long-time computer users.

Both Internet Explorer and Netscape are included. My Internet service provider seems to prefer to work with Internet Explorer. The default setting that came with my machine was Netscape. Other browsers can be downloaded if wanted.

There is a minimal level word processor, called WordPad, that comes with Windows operating systems. For many computer users, it is perfectly adequate. It will do letters and small plain text documents, such as an article for publication in a computer club newsletter, quite well. There is a choice of font styles and colors. A common starting document, such as a letterhead, can be saved and renamed when used for another document.



Microsoft Works and Office are collections of related software or suites of programs for office purposes, with Office being the one for professional users and large offices. Both have word processors that are more powerful than WordPad. Most home and small business users have no reason to use anything more powerful than Works.

Without getting into a lot of details, I can say that Microsoft Office is a very powerful and versatile office suite. There are increasingly expensive versions available with programs of interest to limited numbers of users. I received a 60-day free demo of the bottom of the line version of Office with my computer. If I upgrade during the trial period, I need only to pay the upgrade price for even the most expensive version.

Some sort of security program came with the program that would be good for a limited time unless I paid a subscription fee. Windows XP also has an adequate firewall for most users. I removed the security program since I am subscribing to an excellent one through my Internet service provider.

While the included programs you get can vary greatly with the brand and price of the machine, those that come with Windows XP remain constant. You can have a machine built to order with hardly anything in it or fully loaded. The default word processing suite from Dell seems to be a Corel WordPerfect one, but you can order a Microsoft suite for a slightly higher price. An off-the-shelf Media Center machine will routinely come with a lot of stuff.

While each machine is different, you should learn what you already have before adding more programs. You may already have something that will do what you want or will enable you to get a discount on what you want to add. †

Hilton Kaufman serves as the technical support person in the procedures writing unit of the Illinois Department of Employment Security. As such, he uses the software provided to him to create forms, convert documents into PDFs, advise members of his unit as to how to use the available software, and similar tasks.

For his home computer, he can go all out and get a powerful machine that allows him to do things like playing games and surf the web without getting in trouble. He has prepared a number of articles aimed at novice users on the basics of standard computer programs.

News Brief

Free Music Downloads

SpiralFrog, a new music download service, said it will make Vivendi's Universal Music Group's catalog available for free legal downloading in the United States and Canada. SpiralFrog's business model is based on sharing income from advertising with content partners like Universal.

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,2009739,00.asp>

New buy

Should Your System Be RAIDed?

by **Vinny La Bash**, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida
- <http://www.spcug.org>, vlabash@Comcast.net

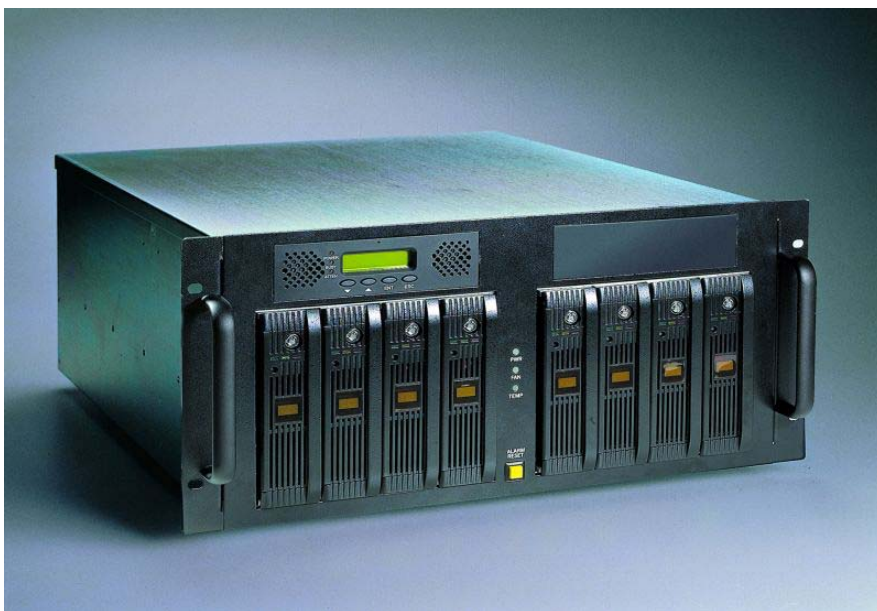
You may have heard fellow computer enthusiasts brag about their new fast RAID system as if it were a high performance sports car. If you wondered what they were talking about, you are not alone. Just what does RAID stand for? The source of the RAID acronym can be credited to three University of California Berkeley professors named Patterson, Gibson, and Katz. In 1987 they published a paper named "A Case for Redundant Arrays of Inexpensive Disks (RAID)". The fundamental concept of RAID was to combine multiple small disks into an arrangement yielding greater performance than a Single Large Expensive Drive (SLED). If you can see the potential to combine the acronyms to make bad jokes, again you are not alone.

The main objection to RAID was that two or more disk drives are inherently less reliable than a single disk drive. The professors overcame the objection by showing that disk arrays can be made more reliable by storing data redundantly in various ways across multiple disk drives.

The paper defined five types of RAID arrangements, each offering different trade-offs in features and performance. Over time, more RAID configurations were added to the mix. The corporate world gradually adopted RAID, but it never took the PC world by storm because until relatively recently, disk drives were not "inexpensive".

At the core of RAID is a process called "striping". With several hard drives connected to a controller card installed in a motherboard slot, you can juice up read and write speeds by breaking the data into blocks (stripes) and storing these blocks across multiple disk drives. This allows data to be either recorded or accessed in multiple blocks simultaneously across multiple drives in parallel. Without going into technical detail, the parallel operation provides the increase in performance. Of the many RAID configurations developed since 1987 only two are likely to be incorporated into a PC, and one of those isn't really RAID at all because it has no redundancy. The other is true RAID, but does not use striping.

We'll start out with RAID 1, also known as Disk Mirroring. The title gives it away. In a two disk array you mirror the contents of one disk onto the other. With 100% redundancy, there is no need to do any kind of data restoration if one of the disks should fail for any reason. A few simple instructions allow you to use the mirrored disk until you can install a replacement for the failed drive. Reactivate your array, and you're back in business with no down time. The trade-off is that a second disk doesn't give you any additional disk space, nor does it appreciably affect performance one way or the other. If reliability and preservation of data



are all important to you, then a RAID 1 array can make good sense. RAID 1 is relatively cheap, easy to use, and costs about the same as most conventional backup solutions. Turn to RAID 1 when data integrity is more important than performance. To set up a RAID for your internal drives, you will need support on your motherboard or add-in card. Finally, you must still keep current drive backups to protect against user errors, viruses, and other problems that affect both drives.

Hard core gamers and other performance obsessed nut cases are almost always referring to RAID 0 when they brag about their PC speed demons. Most of them either don't know or care that RAID 0 is not true RAID as it has no redundancy. Data is spread out among all the drives in the array, which means that if any one of your drives fail, all your data is lost. This is not important if you use your system solely for game playing, but how many of us do that? If you have important data stored on your system, RAID 0 can be a dangerous implementation that may ultimately trash every byte of information on your system.

A better way than RAID 0 is to install a hard drive with a disk cache of at least 8 Megabytes of RAM. Because computers can access data from RAM much faster than directly from a disk, caching can significantly increase performance though it won't match RAID 0. Many cache systems also attempt to predict what data will be requested next so they can place that data in the cache ahead of time. This will never stop performance crazy freaks from using RAID 0. They all backup their systems regularly, don't they?

RAID 0 is for those enamored of performance where loss of data is of little concern. As an alternative, you can approach RAID 0 performance by installing drives with at least 8 megabytes of disk cache.

While it does not obviate the need for backup, a RAID 1 array can provide additional protection for those whose main consideration is preservation of data.

There are many different types of RAID configurations which we have not discussed. We have confined our dialog to RAID 0 and 1 because they are the most common arrangements on home computers. Most technical details have been left out for simplification.

For a complete description of RAID, including animated diagrams of how data is actually stored, go to http://www.acnc.com/04_01_00.html

News Brief

Windows Vista RC1 Now Downloadable By Anyone

First, it went to a select group of technical beta testers. Then to those who had tested Beta 2. As of September 14, however, Windows Vista Release Candidate (RC) 1 is now available to anyone interested in testing the product.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/preview.msp>

U3 Drives

New buy

What is U3 and why do I want to know?

By Diane George, Webmaster, PC Community, California
<http://www.pcc.org>, digeorge@sbcglobal.net

I recently got interested in U3 drives, partly as a result of some software I saw at the Southwest PC User Group conference in San Diego in July. What is U3 and why do I want to know? It's not the successor to the rock band U2. U3 is an open-standard platform that allows you to take applications and store and launch them on a flash drive. Several flash drives are offered with U3 with pre-loaded U3 applications on them. Verbatim, Memorex, Atriva and SanDisk all offer U3 smart drives. Go to <http://www.u3.com/smartdrives/default.aspx> for a list of U3 drives and more information.

The drives come with software preloaded, such as an application that will allow you to take Office documents created on your desktop computer, and work on them on another computer (also with Office installed), without a trace of the files being left on the second computer. This means that you can take your work with you without a laptop, use a computer elsewhere, like in an Internet cafe, without having to copy the files to the new computer, including your e-mail.

Other applications that come preloaded include antivirus software for the flash drive, password storage and management, SKYPE, Zinio Reader for digital magazines, ACDSee for photo management, and Migo (more about that later). In addition, there are other free and commercial applications available at the U3 Central site that are accessed from the drive, including games.

How does this work? The flash drive has a small partition that pretends to be a CD-ROM so that your computer will autorun a launch pad that makes the rest of the drive storage accessible—did I mention that it is password protected and can be encrypted? When you start up, a launchpad for the drive is opened. You can password protect the flash drive itself so the first thing you see is a login screen. The launch pad is part of the U3 system and is the same on different brands of drive. The launchpad gives you access to the applications on the drive and is required to remove the drive—you must use the launchpad to eject the disk or you risk damaging the drive.

When you plug in the drive, your system recognizes it as a USB drive and you can see it in My Computer, as a very small 3.78 MB CD-ROM drive, that will autoplay. It also appears as a 2 GB removable drive that you can copy files on like any other flash drive. In general the device works, but I have a couple of quibbles. I have had difficulty with installation on one of my two computers and I have not yet been able to determine what the problem is. The first time I put the drive in, it caused my computer to slow to a crawl and it never did recognize the drive. Only when I had the drive inserted at startup did it allow me to use it. I have tried it on two other systems and it worked fine.

One of the software applications allows you to save selected files, Outlook email, contacts, tasks and calendar information, and creates a desktop that represents the desktop on a particular computer. You can create two of these desktops. When you take the device to another computer and launch the software, you have the choice of using either desktop. A tab is added to the top of your screen and when you click on it, you see thumbnails. (See Figure 3.) Each picture is the desktop of the other computers. When you click on one of the names or images, your desktop changes—the My Documents folder contains only the items that you brought from the other computer and your e-mail client will show the contents of your inbox and the other shortcuts are different.

I haven't figured out yet why some are the icons from the desktop of the computer I am on and some are from the computer on the flash drive. I need more time with the applications and will write a follow-up. In the meantime, these drives present some interesting possibilities and should be fun to explore.



Earth Probe

New buy

by **Berry F. Phillips**, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor
bfpdata@1access.net, <http://www.ccokc.org>

The sound of rolling thunder and the fingers of lightening lit up the blood red sky which formed a strange tapestry for the dark, ominous, and towering black mountain in the foreground. Saucer like craft with flashing lights were flying into the summit of the black mountain and disappearing.

At the summit of the mountain was a large cave and inside a top secret landing strip. The various humanoid passengers departing from the saucer crafts were being greeted by metallic security robots with scanners checking their credentials, and then escorting them to teleporters that whisked them down into an auditorium deep inside the black mountain.

"It is time to call our meeting to order. Welcome members of the Inter Galactical Federation to the revealing of the findings of our Earth Probe that has completed its mission. You may recall that we elected not to contact the Earthlings previously because they had not evolved into a higher level of consciousness necessary for membership into the Federation. They continued to remain on the lower war level. While they were making considerable technological advances, their consciousness was not advancing at the same rate. Many of us speculated their civilization would be destroyed by nuclear war. Here is information being projected on our info screens overhead on the Earth Probe findings."

There is no life left on Earth! There was no evidence of a nuclear war! There was evidence of obsolete computers and monitors all over earth! Our data bank suggests that as Earth computer sales continued to grow so did the obsolesce level of computers creating mountains and valleys all over the planet of obsolete computers and monitors.

E-Toxins and E-Waste were escalating to alarming proportions. Several organizations warned of the pending disaster. "Printed Circuit Boards contain heavy metals such as Antimony, Silver, Chromium, Zinc, Lead, Tin and Copper. According to some estimates there is hardly any other product for the sum of the environmental impacts of raw material, extraction, industrial, refining and production, use and disposal is so extensive as for printed circuit boards." CARE conference.

"in short, the product developers of electronic products are introducing chemicals on a scale which is totally incompatible with the scant knowledge of their environmental or biological characteristics." Mans Loonroth, Swedish Secretary of State.

Projections indicate that by 2006 well over 315 million computers will be obsolete in the United States alone. The following E-Toxins were released on Earth: "Cadmium compounds are classified as toxic with possible risk of irreversible effects on human health. Cadmium shows a danger of cumulative effects in the environment due to its acute and chronic toxicity. Mercury when inorganic spreads out in water, it is transformed into bottom sediments and accumulates in living organisms and concentrates through the food chain particularly via fish and can cause chronic damage to the brain. Plastics used in electronic manufacturing is polyvinyl chloride (PVC) which creates more environmental and health hazards than most other type of plastic. While some computer companies are reducing or phasing out PVC, there is still a huge volume of PVC in computer junk. Brominated Flame Retardants are a class of chemicals commonly used in electronic products as a means for reducing flammability in computers. There have been various studies that suggest this class of chemicals may have toxic effects on humans." Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition.

"Thank you for your attendance. I hope you will take the lessons we have learned here tonight to your respective civilizations within the Inter Galactical Federation. Let us have a moment of silence upon departure for the destruction of the human race on Earth, victims of E-Toxins and E-Waste."

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Are you "Compuliterate"?

by **Berry F. Phillips**, member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor
 bfpdata@1access.net, <http://www.ccokc.org>

"Compuliteracy" Test (unknown author)

1. Who invented the computer?
 - a) Mr. Chips
 - b) E.T.
 - c) Marquis de Sade.
2. What are microchips?
 - a) What a herd of micros leave on the prairie
 - b) What you eat with a microdip
 - c) The reason you had to take all those computer literacy courses.
3. What is a floppy disk?
 - a) A painful lower-back condition
 - b) An album that didn't sell
 - c) A great Frisbee
4. What is the first thing you associate with computers?
 - a) Bill Cosby commercials
 - b) Eyestrain & headaches
 - c) Annoying beeps
5. What is FORTRAN?
 - a) Between 3 tran and 5 tran
 - b) How to get computers excited before interface
 - c) Ridiculous
6. What is Pascal?
 - a) A leafy vegetable
 - b) A foot fungus
 - c) A city in southern France
7. When you need consulting help in deciding what to do with your computer, which organization do you think of?
 - a) IBM
 - b) FBI
 - c) PLO?
8. What is the most important computer peripheral?
 - a) Bill Gates
 - b) Someone to operate the computer for you
 - c) Aspirin.

Some years ago, I was staring at a demo game computer with that blank stare of a computer illiterate in a large computer store. I felt a tug on my sleeve and there was a small lad who asked me rather impatiently, "Why don't you do something?" I confessed with great difficulty being an adult that I did not know what to do. This mini computer user said, "I will show you because I have this game at home." He began killing monsters right and left as I slunk out of the store in humiliation. I vowed from that day forward I would become computer literate because no eight year old was going to be more computer literate than I was!

Continued on page 48

I suspect you have some hands on computer experience since you are reading my column. Computer literacy is today a necessity when entering the job market. I remember when Time Magazine awarded the computer, their coveted Man of the Year which dramatically illustrated the incredible impact the personal computer has had on our contemporary society. Computer literacy does not mean you need to know everything about a computer but you should master the basics and understand how a computer works. I remember thinking that just because a person used a computer in a business that they must be computer literate. I discovered that many computer users only knew how to do limited applications necessary for them to do their specific work. Further, I noticed that many computer users due to lack of computer literacy were very limited in their use of their computers. Limited computer literacy usually translates into limited use of the computer never experiencing the full potential of the computer and maximizing their return on their computer investment.



What alternatives are available to accelerate one's level of computer literacy? Basic computer courses are offered by most continuing education programs. They are usually reasonably priced and conveniently scheduled. They can be found in your local school district, or community college on evenings and weekends. There are career retraining programs that often offer computer courses through your local Labor Department Office. There are also online courses and tutorials available and the public libraries have computers available to their patrons with Internet access.

I have found that computer clubs are an excellent choice for developing computer literacy since they are economical, and less theoretical and are more focused on how to operate the computer using various applications. Computer users helping other computer users move to the next level of computer literacy is an incredible learning and motivating experience. All of those who obtain computer literacy were once computer illiterates. As they were helped to reach computer literacy, they enjoy helping others as they were helped. You are never alone in your journey to reach computer literacy in a computer club; there is always another member to ask a question or to get hands on help. Many computer clubs have computer labs as does the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, www.ccokc.org (405-843-4300) which is also affiliated with the national Senior Net Users Group and the Association of PC Users Groups. If you are not in the Oklahoma City area, please contact the Association of PC Users Groups, www.apcug.org (800-558-6867) to check on an affiliated computer club in your area .

The sole objective of computer clubs is to help each other to reach computer literacy. We often hear from our members who have achieved computer literacy how when they started they wondered how they would ever use a computer and now how they will ever get along without a computer! The transition from computer illiteracy to literacy is truly amazing. Our mission is to help each other reach computer literacy with a variety of proven classes that will get you up too speed as soon as possible. The Computer Club of Oklahoma City believes the only unintelligent question is the unasked question! Obtaining computer literacy is not a luxury but an absolute necessity in our rapidly evolving technological society.

I hope that I remain "compuliterate" because those eight year olds are getting more and more "compuliterate" especially the older I get!

Windows Vista on the Cusp

A Perspective on Vista



By Jan Fagerholm, Assistant Editor, PC Community, Hayward, California
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I have a confession to make. Though I am a confirmed Linux geek, I have been running Windows Vista. While I tell myself that I am preparing myself for what my clients will be running soon, a lot of the time I spend in Vista is because I like learning new stuff. I've been through the progression of Betas and have arrived at RC2, two weeks before the Microsoft freezes the code and sends it to the DVD burners.

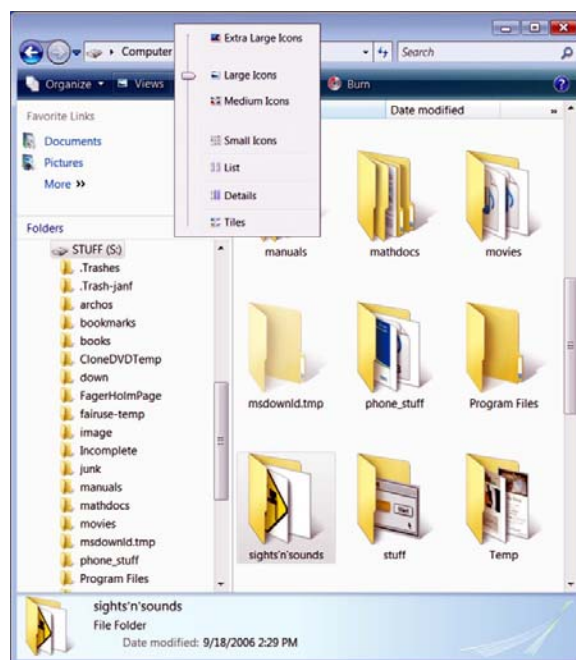
This is not a "review" of Vista as such - computer publications have been running articles on Vista for months - but rather a collection of likes and dislikes that I have gathered while using it for the last year. Don't expect objectivity here - I'm simply going to point to improvements that have stood out or "improvements" that have bit me. These are some of the things you might want to know before plunking down your hard earned plastic for Vista.

On the whole, Vista will swallow the mainstream applications that you are running now. There are exceptions, but these are usually utilities and anti-malware programs that work (as the phrase goes) close to the metal. Corel Graphics Suite X3, WordPerfect X3 and Adobe Creative Suite 2 all run well on Vista (as does the ever reliable OpenOffice). Roxio Easy Media Creator 9 and Nero Burning ROM 7 fail with installer errors. Present versions of Norton SystemWorks and Executive Software Diskeeper refuse to install. McAfee ViruScan installed, but made Vista unbootable, even in Safe Mode. I had to completely reinstall Vista from scratch.

Here's some of the stuff I've learned to love and hate in Vista, up close, personal and arbitrary. Nits and Picks:

Picks:

- * System Services and system monitors have been folded into Task Manager. Services are included along with processes, finally putting the running system stuff in one place. Expanded monitoring features give graphical information on these items similar to other operating systems, including who's using which process.
- * Removal of some sophomoric terminology, i.e. "My Documents" is replaced with, simply, "Documents", "My Computer" is replaced with "Computer", etc.
- * The Address line in most windows displays the path, the way Macintosh OSX has done for years. Similarly, progress bars show up as a transparent overlay in the Address line like OSX. The path display is interactive, allowing you to go to any point in the path directly as an alternative to "Browse," again like OSX.



* The Aero theme. It's pretty, and handles transparency intelligently. By effectively fading the window title bar and frame, it makes the windows contents the focus of what you see. This is one of those small things that have a large psychological effect on concentration. But see Nits.

* Thumbnail previews of programs in the Task Bar when you move the cursor over them. This is particularly useful if you have several instances of a single program running. You can quickly see which one has the content you want.

* Mixed feelings about the changes to Security Center. While various security features are better integrated into Security Center (such as Internet Options) and they have more granularity, User Account Control is pure pain. Vista security (like Windows XP security) is both superficial and intrusive compared to Macintosh OSX or Linux.

Nits:

* They rearranged almost everything. Too little is logical consolidation and too much of it seems serendipitous. After the Start menu (which is also changed) almost everything has been relocated and re-nested. This new organization is supposed to make things easier for the new user, but I don't see how going through more dialogs to get the same thing done is supposed to make things "easier." If you are an experienced user, you can throw away most of what you know about where things are.

* The Aero theme. While esthetically pleasing, it turns itself off when you run certain applications. It doesn't always come back when you exit the application.

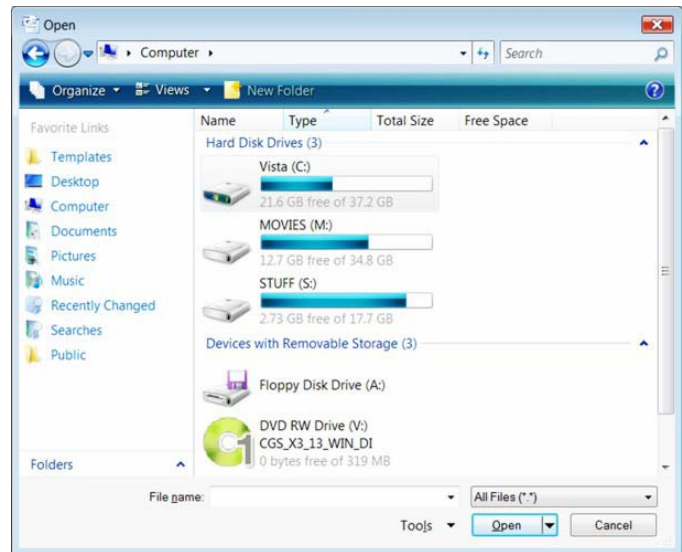
* The "Flip 3D" window switcher. It's pretty, but it works just the same as Alt-Tab. You must cycle through every window to get to the one you want. This is in contrast to the XGL/Compiz window switcher in Linux, which beats Flip 3D hands down for usability. Macintosh OSX's Finder is also much more direct. Worse, when Aero breaks, so does Flip 3D.

* Most of the interface windows have replaced menus with simplified toolbars. They are not customizable. Many of the functions I use regularly are invisible. You can get the menus back if you fish around. (Hint - go to Control Panel/Folder Options/View tab and check "Always Show Menus").

* By default, Vista enables User Account Control in the Security Center. Even if you are the only user on the computer (and thus administrator by default), User Account Control will pop up a dialog every time you (or any software you run) tries to access system areas. This results in several warning dialogs getting in your face while performing many normal actions. Worse, it blocked activation of several programs I installed, stopping the program from running or crippling it into non-activation mode. (Here's your Top Tip of the Day - you can stop this behavior by going to Control Panel/User Accounts, selecting your user account, then clicking the "Turn User Account Control on or off" link (and clicking the "Continue" button on the warning dialog this feature pops up), un-checking the "User Account Control (UAC). . ." item, then clicking "OK." A reboot is required. This will make Vista work like old-fashioned Windows XP.

* We are in for a sea change of hardware and software upgrades that we haven't seen since Windows XP came out. Count on upgrading most, if not all, of your anti-virus / anti-malware software, a lot of your PCI cards, and a lot of your peripherals, especially scanners. Many hardware and software manufacturers are using the impending release of Vista to drop support of a lot of their older products.

Vista is almost upon us. While not a compelling upgrade from Windows XP, it is inevitable, because it will be on the next computer you buy. It has some useful and some annoying updates. The revamped interface is clearly aimed at the new user, but it makes the experienced Windows user suffer because it requires relearning of things you already know. Vista security is somewhat improved compared to Windows XP, but the fundamental problem remains that security is tacked on to the surface of the operating system, compared to OSX or Linux where security is architecturally built in. If you are considering upgrading to Vista for security reasons, save your money; spend less and get equivalent protection from security software for the proven and reliable Windows XP you are using now.



Operating System

Should you upgrade your present computer to Vista? That depends on your hardware and your definition of value. If your computer is more than three years old, you will not enjoy many of the glitzy new features that Vista offers. It wants a lot of CPU and graphical horsepower to run the cool visual stuff. On older hardware, you will get what Microsoft calls an "XP-like experience". Read: you will need to increase your installed RAM and upgrade your video card. While Vista will install in 512 MB of RAM, Microsoft recommends 1 GB minimum for "the best experience." You will want to invest in an upgraded video card to get the best out of Vista, though. Video RAM is important; Vista capable video cards with 128 MB of video RAM and moderate performance are available for around \$50, and well worth the cost if you are moving to Vista. You will definitely want this if you are moving to Vista to freshen your desktop experience. You need it to get all the new toys working.

I am not as enthusiastic about Vista as many reviewers are. I have had the benefit of experiencing most of Vista's "new" features, debugged and often better implemented on OSX and Linux. Microsoft rightly imitated these; many of them are useful and compelling. But they are not new.

If you are a casual computer user, you will wind up with Vista on your computer sooner or later just because it will come on a new PC that you will eventually buy. If you are a computer enthusiast, you will have to decide whether it is worth both the cost of hardware upgrades and the purchase price of Vista to move into the latest and greatest that Microsoft can offer. For the short term, this will not be a painless experience; you will have to make many adjustments to the way you work and suffer several incompatibilities in both hardware and software to get into Vista. If you are a casual computer user and not certain if overcoming these problems is worth the effort, I'll offer my standard advice for new Microsoft operating systems: wait until SP1 before you take the plunge. For the adventurous, I say, "Follow me, and dodge the slings and arrows! The pain is slight, and I can endure it!" The challenge of making it work is part of the fun. And on the other end, you may find that you can eventually get some work done on the computer . . .



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Getting Ready for Windows Vista

By **Gene Barlow**, gene@ugr.com, User Group Relations, <http://www.ugr.com>

The next few months promise to be an exciting time for PC users as Microsoft rolls out their new Windows Vista operating system. While some business systems may be released late this year, most of the action will take place shortly after the beginning of the new year. Now is the time to start planning how you are going to take advantage of this new technology.

This is the first new version of Windows in over five years and is a major change in how PC users will interact with their computers. Lots of new functions have been added to Vista to make it the most exciting new Windows since Windows 95 was first introduced. You will want to be a part of this major step forward in technology.

Some of the new features added to Windows Vista include:

- A complete redesign of the graphical user interface that you see and interact with. Windows Vista has a fresh new look and is a lot easier to use.
- Finding things on your Vista computer is going to be much easier. Files can be stored in one location, but retrieved in many different ways.
- New multimedia tools will now be part of Vista. This will help you to better work with your images, music, and videos files.
- Communications between computer systems has also been greatly enhanced. Connecting with other computers can now be done quickly and easily.
- System security has also been enhanced. Vista will provide you with more security features than older Windows systems did.

These are just a few of the hundreds of new features you will find in Vista. To read about more of them download the Windows Vista Product Guide found on the Microsoft's web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/preview/>.

Interested and excited about Windows Vista? You should be. This is a very important change in how we use our computers. So, what do you need to do to get your computer ready for Windows Vista?

Microsoft suggests two ways to move to Windows Vista. They are as follows:

- Do a Clean Install of Vista on top of your old WinXP operating system. This replaces your WinXP system with a new Windows Vista system. You will have to save all of your data files and settings from your old system before installing Vista and then put them back on your hard drive after Vista is installed. You will also need to reinstall all of your application programs from their original CDs. This is a lot of work, but it should give you a cleaner Vista system. Unfortunately, in the process you will destroy your old WinXP system. I consider this approach too risky for my use.
- Do an in-place upgrade of your old WinXP operating system with Windows Vista. This will install Windows Vista on top of your old operating system, but will keep all of your application programs and data files from your old system in the Windows Vista replacement. This is an easier way to go, but if things don't work, you have just destroyed your old working WinXP system in the process. Again, too risky for my liking.

So, how can you get to Windows Vista and still have the protection of your working WinXP system while you are getting use to Windows Vista? The secret is that you setup your computer's hard drive to run multiple operating systems. That will give you the ability to run both your current WinXP operating system and the new Windows Vista operating system on the same computer. This is easy to do with the right software tools.

First, you need to set up a logical Data partition on your main hard drive to hold all of the data files. Then you can access those data files from either of the two operating systems you are using. To do this, you need a partitioning utility like Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0 . More about this excellent utility later.

Once you have moved all of your data files from your WinXP partition to this new Data partition you will be ready to install Vista. You can do this in the following ways:

- **Multiple Operating Systems with a Clean Install of Windows Vista.** Using the top rated partitioning utility, Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0, you set up a second primary partition on your main computer. Then you install a Clean version of Windows Vista in this second primary partition on your main hard drive. When you are done, you can switch back and forth between your WinXP operating system and your new Windows Vista operating system using the OS Selector utility that comes with Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0. This lets you keep your working WinXP system while you are building your new Windows Vista system. You will need to install any application programs in the Windows Vista partition that you want to run under Vista. This will give you the cleanest installation of Vista possible.

- **Multiple Operating Systems with an Upgrade Install of Windows Vista.** Also using the partitioning utility, Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0, you set up an empty space on your main computer where your Vista primary partition will reside. Then you copy your WinXP operating system partition into this empty space on your hard drive. This gives you two primary partitions, each with WinXP installed in it and running. Next, you do a Windows Vista upgrade install into the partition with the copy of WinXP. This will replace WinXP in that one partition with Windows Vista, but still keep your application programs and settings. You can switch back and forth between the two operating systems using the OS Selector utility that comes with Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0. This is the easiest way to get to Windows Vista from WinXP.

By using multiple operating systems on your computer to run both WinXP and Windows Vista, you do not risk having to burn your WinXP bridges before you are comfortable with Windows Vista. This gives you the time to test out your application programs and get everything working on your new Windows Vista system before you commit to using it exclusively. Once you are satisfied that Windows Vista works perfectly for you, then you can discard the old WinXP system and only use Windows Vista. It may be several months before you finally get rid of WinXP. You do not need to get rid of it the day you first install Windows Vista like the two Microsoft options suggest.

To help you move to Window Vista, we are putting several things in place. First, you will need a copy of the excellent partitioning utility, Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0. This product normally sells for \$50, but we offer it to user group members and their friends for a discounted price of \$29 in our Fall Special bundle. You will also get a copy of our tutorial, Getting Ready for Windows Vista in the Fall Special bundle. Both of these for only \$29 is an outstanding bargain and one that you won't want to miss. Order yours today from our web site at www.usergroupstore.com. Look for the Fall Special and use the order code of UGFAL06 to complete your order.

To help you understand and use Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0 to get ready for Windows Vista, we have just completed a new tutorial titled, Getting Ready for Windows Vista. You can view it on our web site at www.ugr.com/tutorials.html. This will help you to better understand the steps needed to set up multiple operating systems on your computer. Those ordering our Fall Special on a CD will receive the tutorial CD with their order. Finally, we are working on a detailed step-by-step technical paper titled, Using Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0 to Install Windows Vista. This paper should be available around the end of October on our web site. We want your move to Windows Vista to be successful, so we are offering you all of these tutorials and papers to help you get there as planned.

News Brief

Canon to recall copiers that can catch fire

Japan's Canon will recall more than 140,000 personal copiers made in Japan between 1987 and 1997 due to a faulty connection involving the power cord.

<http://driveragent.com/pcworld.php?PHPSESSID=9241043d076111e037e92e9e1fbab1e8>

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STUDY GROUPS

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Internet Explorer 7

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS, www.compukiss.com, sandy@compukiss.com

If you are using Windows XP, in the next few weeks when the Microsoft automatic Windows update appears on your computer, you will be asked if you want to upgrade your browser to the newly released Internet Explorer 7. It's great that Microsoft is giving us a choice rather than installing the new browser automatically. However, questions like these are always difficult for the average user.

Yet with this question, you don't have to hesitate to answer "yes" because the new Internet Explorer (version 7) is a great improvement over previous versions. I have been using it as part of beta testing for the last six months with no issues. I love its many new features.

While the toolbar has been simplified and some buttons have moved to new locations, you will find that the move to the new version is pretty intuitive. So you can continue to browse the Internet with minimal additional effort.

In fact, any effort you need to exert to learn how to use this new browser is more than worthwhile because it has some extremely useful features that make Internet surfing easier and more fun.

First and foremost is the fact that Microsoft has added tabbed browsing. While other browsers like Firefox and Opera have had these for years, this is a new addition for Internet Explorer. Tabbed browsing allows you to open a new webpage in a tab rather than a new window. So you can have several web pages open at once and you can switch from one to another easily. You will see all of the tabs across the top of the browser with the webpage name or part of it on the tab.

With tabbed browsing you can have your favorite newspaper (www.thepilot.com) open right next to the weather, your favorite financial website, and your favorite computer help website (www.compukiss.com). Click on the small icon to the left of the tabs and you can see each open web page as a thumbnail. Click on the arrow next to the icon and you get a text list of the open web pages. You can close any open web page by clicking on the red x on its tab.

The ability to view and to print web pages has also been improved in Internet Explorer 7. In Internet Explorer 6 you are able to change the size of the text, but often that change made the whole web page look askew because the size of the graphics is not increased. Not so with IE7. Just look in the lower right hand corner of the IE screen for the magnifying glass. You can click on the magnifying glass to make the entire web page, including the graphics, larger. This lets you adjust the size while keeping everything in proportion.....a boon to aging eyes and those with vision problems.

Printing functionality in IE 7 has also been greatly improved. Remember how when you tried to print a webpage the right side was cut off or you wasted paper as a second page would print out with only a line or two on it. Well, IE 7 has solved those problems with a feature that automatically shrinks the webpage content to fit the printed page. This does not necessarily work with web pages that have been poorly formatted, but it does work well for most web pages. Also there are many other printing options including adjustable margins, customizable page layouts, and removable headers and footers.

IE7 also has a search box that can be customized to use your favorite search engine. So you can perform a Google, MSN, Ask, or Yahoo! search without having to navigate to the search engine's home page first.

Just to the left side of the magnifying glass on the bottom bar of the screen, Microsoft has also added a security bar. This lets you change your security settings without sifting through menus. Also included is an icon that you can use to check whether the website you are visiting is a bogus site known for phishing. Microsoft has also added other security enhancements and it is worth upgrading just to get a more secure browser.

The only time you may not want to upgrade is if you are using a specialized Web software program. This caution will apply most to corporations and Web developers who need to make sure that the customized or specialized software they are using will work with this new version.

For the rest of you, take the jump. Internet Explorer 7 is stable. It is chock full of new features. And it's FREE.

News Brief

FREE Driver Update for PC Magazine Members

Are your computer's drivers up to date? Stop wondering and get a free computer scan for instant driver updates. Instant Access to 94,081 Device Driver Updates:

http://articles.techrepublic.com.com/2100-10878_11-6114592.html?tag=nl.e019

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Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Love Bytes, by Sally Chapman

Paperback,
Worldwide, 1994,
\$4.99, 253 pages

In their second outing, Julie and Vic have opened their own computer fraud investigation firm and their first client is a bawdy, cat-loving bail bondswoman who wants them to track down a missing client, a Virtual Reality guru who disappeared after embezzling a million from his corporation.

Cute series with an interesting high-tech plot, some clever writing but irritating protagonists. I really, really dislike Julie and Vic. Good virtual reality

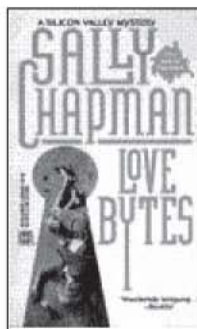


scenes at a time when it was a fairly new technology -- the crimes were rehearsed using VR -- and a few details about computer-assisted embezzling. Chapman is a University of Texas graduate who worked for IBM for nine years.

Cyberkiss, by Sally Chapman

Hardback, St. Martin's,
1996, 259 pages

A programmer from a biotech startup hires computer fraud investigators Julie and Vic to find out who is stalking him on an erotic Internet newsgroup. Their client is killed early on -- all that's left is a handful of ashes in his company's incinerator -- and when a secretary is murdered,

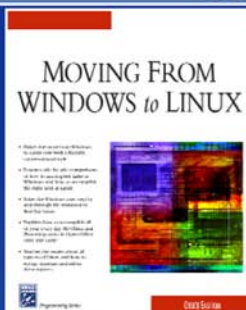


they partner with the police to find the killer.

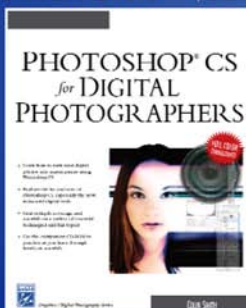
The techno-highlights are a virtual reality wedding, with all the guests plugged into the ceremony on a computer-generated Saturn and a precious scene where Julie, sprawled on the floor in her purple chiffon bridesmaid dress, fixes the VR server while a dozen engineers look on in male chauvinist humiliation. They also track down newsgroup postings through an anonymous remailer. Nice computer-based mystery with a good twist at the end.

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

COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



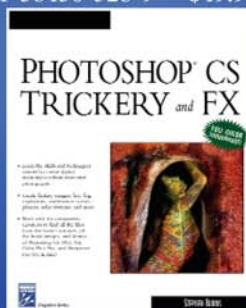
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



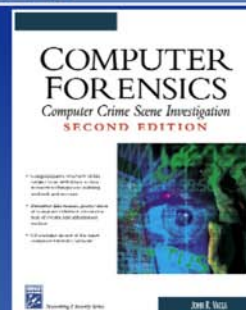
1-58450-321-1 \$39.95



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First Impressions – Office 2007 (Beta)

by Ann Moore, Member of the Topeka (Kansas) PC Users Club

<http://www.topekapcusersclub.org>, com_muter1@cox.net

[The deadline for submission of my monthly article is looming and I am still struggling to complete it. As the time draws nearer, our editor will bombard me with e-mails. I have a legitimate excuse but will he believe me when I tell him that I am tangled up in a Ribbon. Yes, the Microsoft Word 2007 Ribbon.


I had decided to compose this month's article using Microsoft Word 2007 Beta. When I opened the program I was stunned. 😨 What I was viewing did not in any way resemble the Microsoft Word that I had used for many years. Where to begin? My first thought was to seek Help. I pressed the blue button located IN THE RIGHT UPPER SCREEN AND IN MY TASK BAR APPEARED "Microsoft Help". It produced a drop down menu giving me four choices: ~~Move, Size, Minimize, Maximize or Close.~~ Where is that pesky paper clip when you need it?

I decided to start at the top left and work my way to my right. I clicked on the Office icon to open a new document. I went to Page Layout and I clicked on Margins. I selected the first which gave me a half inch around the page.

1. The font was set at Garamond 12 which was what I preferred. I clicked on something that gave me a request for borders which I did not want or need. NOW I have hit something that is causing this. (Placeholder1) Now what have I done to get this? 😨 I didn't want to number my paragraphs!

~~How did I get this Strike Through?~~ All I want to do is get out of this dilemma.

I checked the Home box and find my font has been changed to Calibri (body) 12. I enter the font box to confirm the Garamond 12 setting. I would like to enter some SmartArt

right about here  Where did all those arrows come from? I am at the end of my patience and have accomplished nothing.

... д€Ж £\$# Oh, Oh, no, I really didn't say that!!!! I clicked on the F1 again –received the same four choices in color. I am **exhausted**. Microsoft, what have you done to me? 😨

Why do I have these dots between every word? Will this torture never end?


okay, now I will continue, but wait a minute. What happened to my font? It was set at ~~garamond 12. Go back, stupid. Tuesday, August 08, 2006. Now what? I went back TO change the font. I think I hit the Increase Font size. I want to return to normal, whatever that is.~~

SOMETHING HAPPENED CHANGED MY FONT, AGAIN. Under Home, there is a category marked Fonts. I clicked on it and was told that this command was temporarily disabled and I should click on F1 which brings up the Help menu giving the same four choices. I feel like I am in a Catch 22. I guess I should sign off for now.

 X
Ann Moore

DECEMBER 2006

ALLAMOPC ORGANIZATION

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 *PRR* Small Business Server 2003 8 - 10 A.M. Computer Diagnostic: Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Workshop *PRR* Photoshop 1.00 - 4:30 PM Download the PCAlamode Magazine, burn to a CD, & using the PDF Reader, 7 - 9 PM. <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	2 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 PM.
3	4 Genealogy 7 - 9 PM.	5 BOD 6:30 PM. Class 1 of 4 Microsoft Word 7 - 9 PM.	6	7 Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (a/r) HGSI 6:30 - 8:30 PM. .Net Web Development 7 - 9 PM.	8 Computer Diagnostic: Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	9 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Commodore 1 - 4 PM.
10	11 General Meeting @ Ocasarocda Convention Center 7 - 9 PM. Presenter: AMD - newest chips <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	12 Class 2 of 4 Microsoft Word 7 - 9 PM.	13 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Home Page Jumpstart 8:30 - 7 PM. Class 1 of 2 *PRR** PowerPoint 7 - 9 PM. <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	14 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	15 Computer Diagnostic: Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	16 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 PM.
17	18 CorelDR ^{AW} X3 6 - 8 PM. (Rescheduled from Dec. 25) <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	19 Class 3 of 4 Microsoft Word 7 - 9 PM.	20 Class 4 of 4 Microsoft Word 7 - 9 PM.	21 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	22 Computer Diagnostic: Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	23 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 PM.
24	25  Resource Center is closed. Please, check with class leaders for rescheduling of classes	26 <small>Mail closes at 9 PM</small>	27 (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 PM. Class 2 of 2 *PRR** PowerPoint 7 - 9 PM.	28 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (Dot) NetNuke Portal 7 - 9 PM. (Cancelled)	29 Computer Diagnostic: Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon	30
31						



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 Dynamics CRM (Customer Relationship Manager) version 3.0 (www.Microsoft.com/CRM). The group will prepare for the three CRM certification exams. The study group is lead by Microsoft MVPs (Most Valuable Professional) in CRM, Larry Lentz. There are only 15 MVPs for CRM in the world. More information on the Microsoft MVP program can be found at www.Microsoft.com/MVP. The group has recently completed its study for the CRM 3.0 Applications exam and are now starting study for the CRM 3.0 Customization exam. The group 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 Small Business Server Special Interest Group, APCO SBS SIG, held its November meeting, Friday November 3rd, at the Alamo PC Learning Center in San Antonio, Texas. Naturally we started off with our traditional Taco Talk with tacos supplied by Albert Obar. Our main attraction was Peter Gallagher, Microsoft Small Business Server Support from the Las Colinas (DFW) regional office. Peter explained many things including how to configure e-mail enabled Public Folders to save attachments to SharePoint document libraries. Apparently one has to do it a bit differently in SBS than in a non-SBS SharePoint server. He also explained how to set up a Site-to-Site VPN using ISA on SBS. Apparently that also needs a little extra TLC in SBS due to the ISA being on the Domain Controller. All in all, Peter spent about 2 hours imparting his vast knowledge on the group. Afterwards the group adjourned to Mamacitas Mexican restaurant for lunch where we continued to pelt poor Peter with questions. Peter has promised to come down again, hopefully in February. 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: ★ - ★★★★★

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: ★

CLASSES

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 Alamo 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 Email will NOT be covered in this course.

Instructors: Andy Roca, Donna Dudley

When: Six sessions, Wednesdays; 10 am to noon

Jan 10, 17, 24, 31, Feb 7, 14

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; Jan 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb 6, 13 or choose

Instructor: Don Robinson

When: 6 sessions, Saturdays 1-3 pm
Dates to be determined

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
stephentechnr@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@absolutepowercomputing.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

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

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

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. Topics of discussion may include understanding your camera manual, camera optics, composition, tips, choosing the right camera, lighting, how to take night shots, silhouettes, portraits, action shots, and close ups.

Instructor: Joe Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 3 weeks - choose one set:

Set 1) Tuesdays, January 16, 23, 30 9 am to 11 am (some sessions may be longer)

Set 2) Tuesdays, July 10, 17, 24 9 am to 11 am (some sessions may be longer)

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing Classes \$

A series of Photo Editing Classes ranging from basic to advanced skills. The Microsoft Digital Imaging 2006 software is not required for these classes but it would be helpful to have on your home computer. Students will need recordable CD's or Flash / Thumb drives to be able to save their class work.

Intro to Digital Photo Editing \$

Remedial computer work as it relates to the use of Image 2006. Any computer skills that will be essential for success in Image 2006. We will learn how to place files into the work area. How to control the work area. We will learn the use of the essential photo editing tools such as; color balance, sharpening focus, removing red eye, crop, straighten photo, etc.

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

Instructor: Joe Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 4 weeks - choose one set:

Set 1) Tuesdays February 6, 13, 20, 27 9 am to 11 am

Set 2) Tuesdays August 7, 14, 21, 28 9 am to 11 am

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing \$

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.

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

Instructor: Joe Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 4 weeks - choose one set:

Set 1) Tuesdays March 6, 13, 20, 27 9 am to 11 am

Set 2) Tuesdays September 4, 11, 18, 25 9 am to 11 am

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Advanced Digital Photo Editing \$

This class is for the student who is very serious about digital editing. It involves the manipulation of photos whether they are new or old. We learn to use the tools to do everything from making greeting cards to photo refinishing.

Prerequisites: Students must have completed either the Introduction to Digital Photo Editing Class or the Digital Photo Editing Class or completed one of Joe Davis' prior Digital Photo Editing classes

Instructor: Joe Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 8 weeks - choose one set:

Set 1) Tuesdays April 3, 10, 17, 24 May 1, 8, 15, 22 9 am to 11 am

Set 2) Tuesdays October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 November 6, 13, 20 9 am to 11 am

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

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 CD with the images for the entire class is provided. Photoshop Classes are offered as three separate classes, teaching the basic tools, palettes and procedures. Instruction class "A" using Photoshop 7. includes adaptations for Photoshop CS and CS2. Instruction class "B" with different lessons and text, using Photoshop 7 includes adaptations for Photoshop CS and CS2 Photoshop Basic Instruction for Photoshop CS and CS2 (focuses on CS and CS2 but those using Photoshop 7 can take this class).

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 computer 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: Instruction class "A" using Photoshop 7 includes adaptations for Photoshop CS and CS2 will meet 8 weeks on Thursdays, 12:30 to 4:30 pm Jan 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb 1, 8, 15, 22 Year 2007.

When: Photoshop Basic Instruction for CS and CS2 will meet 8 weeks on Fridays, 12:30 to 4:30 pm Jan 5, 12, 19, 26, Feb 2, 9, 16, 23 Year 2007.

Fees: \$90 for New Students, \$50 for Previous Students who have attended a Photoshop 7, Instruction Class A or B class, or CS2 class.

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: September on Fridays (Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29) from 1 to 5 pm Working on "fancy" procedures beyond the basics.

When: October on Fridays (Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27) from 1 to 5 pm Working on more "fancy" procedures beyond the basics.

Fees: Tuition fee: \$25 per month

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.

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

When: to be determined

Where: Learning Center

Instructor: Instructor needed

Pre-registration: Yes, Call Learning Center at 210-736-0080

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

Home Page Jumpstart

A general introduction to developing your own Internet web page. It is *not* a course on HTML. Includes a 20+ page manual and a training disk. Not hands-on.

Contact: Susan Ives

<suives@texas.net> 210-694-4582

When: 2nd Wednesday, 5:30-7pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

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

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.

To register e-mail Mike at
<webmaster@alamopc.org>

Technical Rating: ★★

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
Dates to be determined

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

Microsoft's PowerPoint presentation program is the defacto standard for making presentations to a large audience. This class will show students how to create a PowerPoint presentation, how to add graphics and photos, business graphs, and sound clips. We will also learn how to use special transitions and animations in presenting your slide show to an audience.

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

Contact: Learning Center 736-0700

When: Two sessions, 2nd and 3rd Wednesday 7-9 pm of Odd numbered months

Instructor: Wade Forrester

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Movie Maker

A fun class learning to use the Movie Maker program included with Windows XP, to create slide shows with voice, music, text, and special effects. It is a very simple program, yet will do fades, wipes, special effects, sound, and moving text, etc.

Contact: Joe Davis

When: Class meets once a week for 4 weeks - choose one set:

Set 1) Tuesdays June 5, 12, 19, 26 9 am to 11 a.m.

Set 2) Tuesdays November 27, Dec 4, 11, 18 9 am to 11 a.m.

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Word Class

Students will become familiar with and understand Word's basic functionality, menus, toolbars, icons and shortcut keys. Students will learn how to create, view, format, save and print a Word document. Also work with templates, multiple documents, insert files, objects and pictures and email documents.

Contact: Linda Bianchi at
education@alamopc.org

When: 4 sessions - Choose one set:

Set 1) Tue. Dec. 5, 12, 19 and Wed. Dec. 20th 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Set 2) Tue. Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Instructor: Tod Bruning
liveoakhomenetworks@gmail.com

Where: Learning Center

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

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. |

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

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

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

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

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

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★

Help Numbers

Can you help a new member with a new computer? Are you proficient in software not listed? Can you help with a title currently showing only one volunteer? Call 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 Alamode 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 8 issues ago. Reward: free classified ad.



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

Alamo PC logo

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

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

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

Monthly Meetings

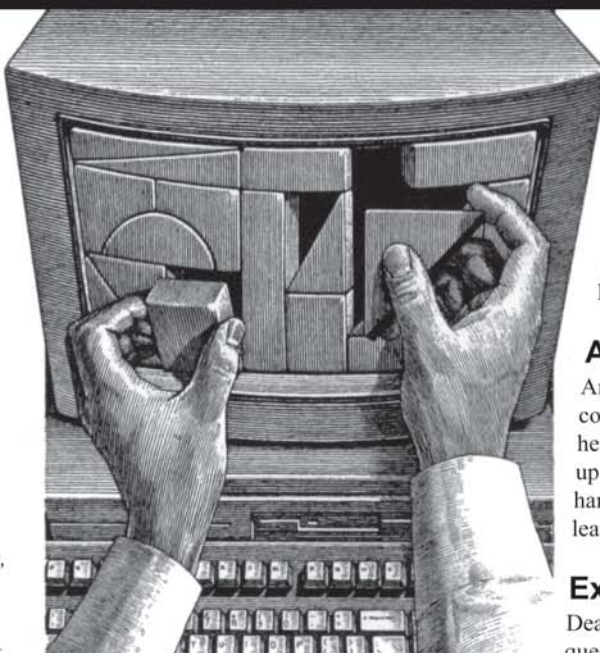
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

Award-Winning Magazine

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

Special Interest Groups and Classes

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



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

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

Alamo PC SeniorComp

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

Expert Help

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

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

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

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



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

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

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

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

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

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

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

