

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

OPERATING SYSTEM ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

March 2007

\$4.50

Moving to Vista - What not to do
page 36

How does Windows handle USB devices?
page 48

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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:

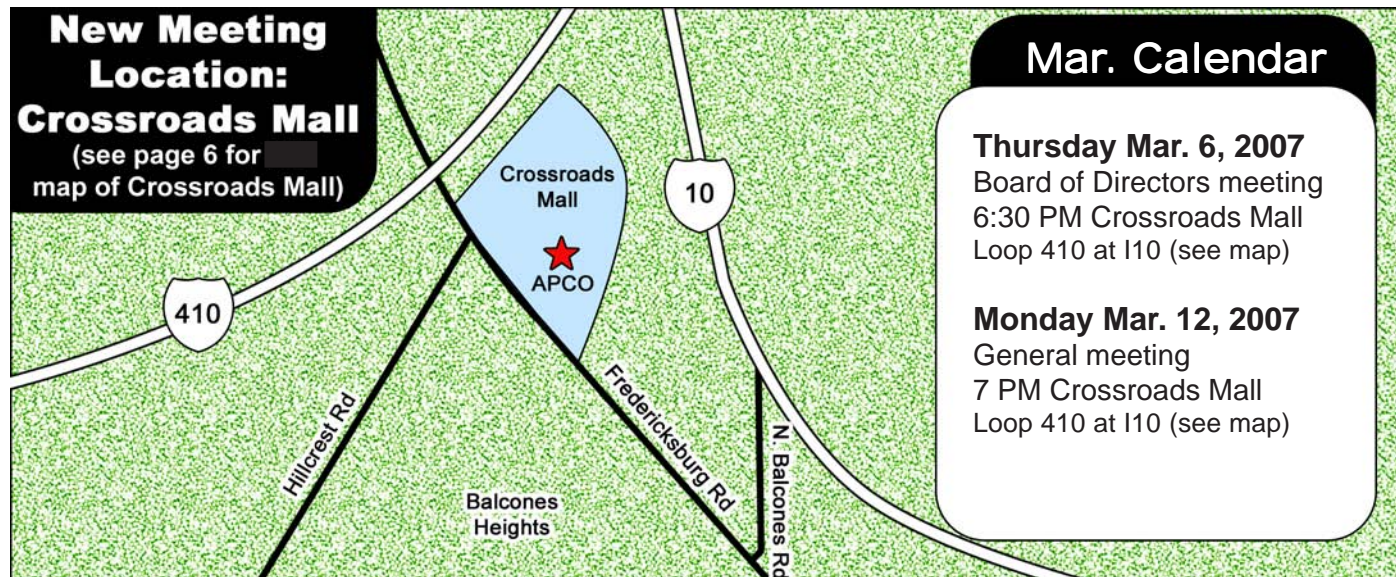
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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 Mar. 6, 2007
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Mar. 12, 2007
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Operating Systems

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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

Featured this month

Operating Systems

- Moving to Vista - what not to do
- What is an operating system?
- The Changing World - A review of Vista
- Vista Vexes
- How does Windows handle USB devices?
- XP Disk Maintenance Tools

How-to Guide

- The Big Red X

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 © 2007 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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Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode
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Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
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product reviews

- Computer Crimes 54
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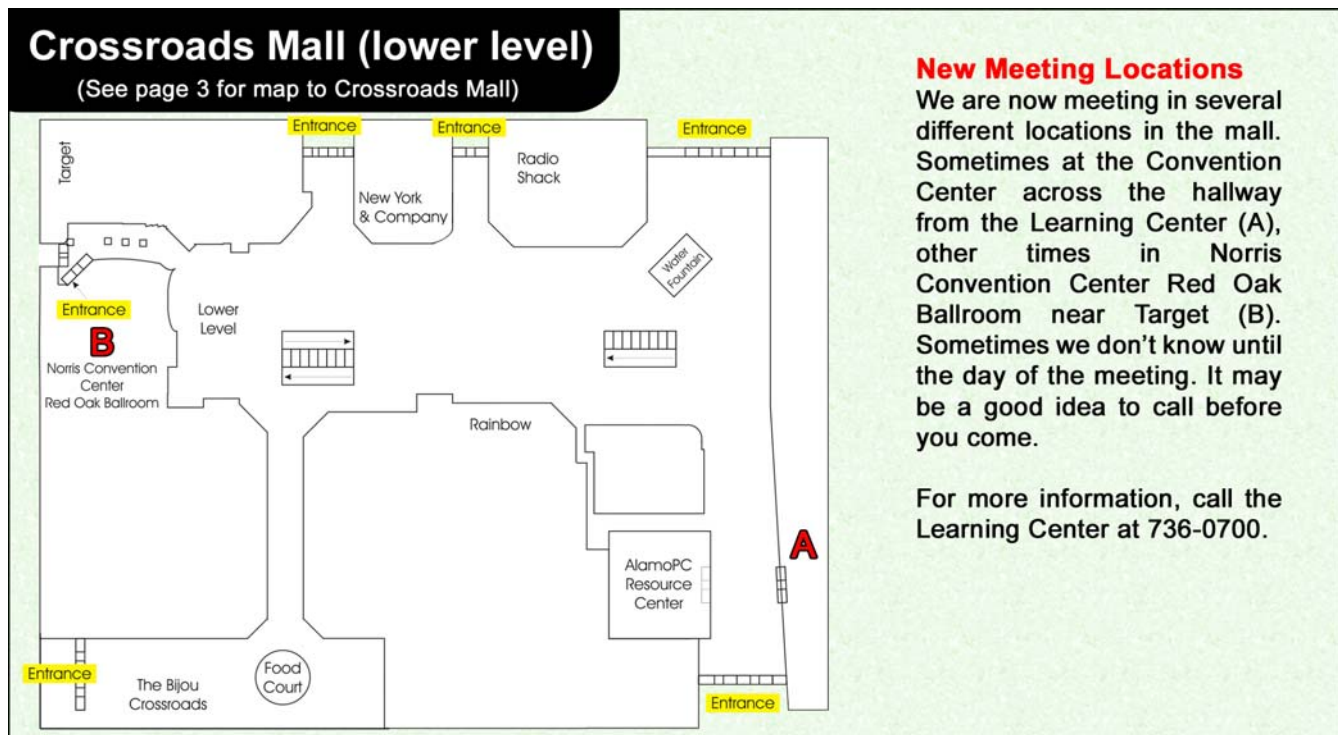
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



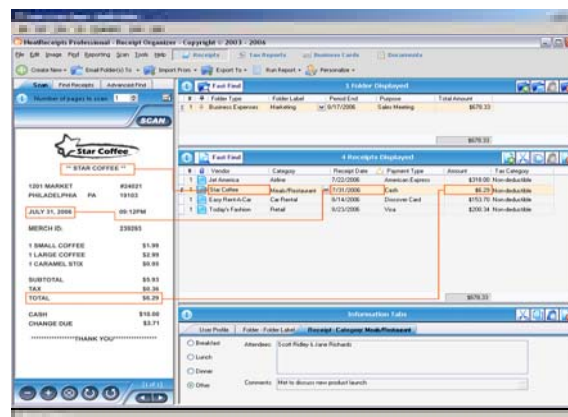
PC Alamode Links List



Ultimate Guitar Archive

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

The fastest growing guitar community on the net -- it's the only guitar website that has gear and cd reviews, music news, guest columns, guitar and bass lessons and tabs in one place!



Trend Micro

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

Trend Micro Incorporated is a global leader in network antivirus and Internet content security software and services.



I've gotten a few e-mails from those of you who like the new one column format. Another continued request is to go easy on the colors and graphics. Many of you still prefer a printed version of the magazine and have taken to publishing it on your home printers. Hope the single column format doesn't interfere with the printed versions!

Some of you have found the changing location of the general meeting a bit frustrating. Please be advised that sometimes the meeting is held across the hall from the resource center. Other times it's been held at the conference room near Target. Since we often don't know where the gathering will be held until the day of the meeting, please call the learning center in advance to learn where to get together.

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

Joseph has worked in the graphics industry for 9 years and teaches graphics and web classes at San Antonio College.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"March" - Winds, Daylight, Trend

The month of March usually stirs thought the "Winds of March" - in like a lamb, and out like a lion. But, I will address two other things. For computer users, the last one should be moved to the top of the interest list. More about it in a moment.

Almost everyone should think of Daylight Saving days, which has been extended about four weeks, beginning this year - Mar 11th thru Nov 4th. Some may like it, and some may not. The last one, that will hopefully be at the top of the interest list, happens shortly after the first one - March 12th. That's the date of the next Alamo PC general meeting and presentation.

The folks from Trend Micro will be here to talk about some of their products, and about recent developments and current risks from viruses, worms, trojans, spam, spyware, rootkits and other threats to PC computer and network systems. One of their products, PC-cillin, should be helpful in these areas. (They will probably offer some sort of discount to user group members, as I seem to recall that being the case the last time they were here.) As a note, Trend Micro, headquartered in Tokyo and founded in 1988, develops, markets and supports anti virus software and management solutions for corporate computer systems and personal computers. It sells its products in more than 30 countries.

Note: Keep in mind the other General meetings, and the presenters tentatively scheduled, or who are being contacted to determine their availability -- 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 was again pleased to see that about 70 people were present on February 12th, to see Smart Computing's Jen Cluasen give her presentation. She stressed that a subscription to Smart Computing includes access to smartcomputing.com, 3 other magazines, an extensive database, FREE tech support, and more. Although the magazine has a cover price of \$5.99, the regular hard copy issue is \$29 for 12 issues (\$2.42 ea) or the Web-Only version is \$17 for 12 issues (\$1.42 ea). (Information in the online version is usually different than the hard copy.) As the hard copy says on the front, "In Plain English," that is what you will find as you read the information provided, because it is presented as though a fairly new to intermediate user is reading the material - pretty much step-by-step. If there is a question, and you are a subscriber, remember the FREE tech support service. In my opinion, Smart Computing is one of the best kept secrets around, if you want to learn more about computers and how things work. If you want to subscribe and help the organization in the process (each 5 subscriptions gives us 1 free for promotional use) call the learning center (210-736-0700) for information.

Current members, need to reconsider what this organization has to offer, what it has done for you, and what it can do for others. You are our best source of free advertising. Perhaps by thinking about it, you will be prompted to renew your membership and provide some much needed support, at various levels in the organization.

I ask that each member consider being just a little more actively involved with the Alamo PC Organization - marketing, advertising & sponsors, software for evaluation, general meeting set up & tear down, trade shows, learning center volunteer, etc. Please remember for this organization to survive WE must continue to be a supportive members, through renewals and participation at some level.

Consider some of the following items available to members (and please talk to others about them): 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 so they can put it on the 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, "The Dr. Is In" - Friday AM hands-on help with computer problems, at the Learning Center; monthly presentations about current issues in the computer hardware and software; etc.

Don't forget about our popular Digital Camera & Photography classes (4 different levels, each repeated once during the year). Even though the holidays over, picture opportunities are available throughout the year. After taking one or more classes, the end of year holiday photos should be great.

Continued on page 9

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

We are still trying to improve member retention, as new members have not been sufficient to offset non-renewing members. Each month continues to show a net loss, although the number is getting smaller. If you do not choose to renew, send a comment or two as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, or to me (president@alamopc.org or privately wlklutzjr@juno.com). I appreciate all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

The future of OUR organization rests 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 look forward to seeing members and guests at the March General Meeting. It will be in a Norris facility (hopefully across from our Learning Center).

March Program

Bill Klutz

Trend Micro, headquartered in Tokyo and founded in 1988, develops, markets and supports anti virus software and management solutions for corporate computer systems and personal computers. It sells its products in more than 30 countries.

We are fortunate they will have a representative here for the March the General Meeting, to talk about some of their products, and about recent developments and current risks from viruses, worms, trojans, spam, spyware, rootkits and other threats to PC computer and network systems. One of their products, PC-Ceylon, should be helpful in these areas.

The March General Meeting will be in a Norris facility (hopefully across from our Learning Center, in Crossroads Mall).

Volunteers Wanted

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

STUDY GROUPS

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

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

Former Alamo PC member passes

Kuo Yen Ng

Kuo Yen Ng was born in San Antonio, Texas on October 12, 1929 and passed away there on February 13, 2007. He retired from USAA in July 1992 and transitioned to the life of a full time artist. The joys of his life were his wife Lili and his sons Richard and Christopher. Due to Lili's encouragement of his art, he always signed her name below his signature on his paintings. Lili passed away in 1984, after which he met the second woman in his life to adore him, Pat Safir. Pat, a fellow artist, became his constant companion and accompanied him on all of his painting trips. Kuo Yen was a member of the San Antonio Watercolor Gang along with well known watercolor artists Clay McGaughy, Ivan McDougal, Hal Sims, Finis Collins, and E. Gordon West. Of all the places that the Gang visited, Venice was his favorite. He enjoyed the artist's life and was grateful for his friendships with fellow artists, especially his very best friend, Cliff Cavin.

He attended the University of Texas at Austin, studying commercial art. Besides being a member of the San Antonio Watercolor Gang, he belonged to the San Antonio Watercolor Group and Texas Watercolor Society and won numerous awards for his work. He is survived by his sons Richard K. Ng and Christopher K. Ng and numerous friends and relatives. SERVICES Visitation were held on Friday, February 16, 2007 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Mission Park Funeral Chapels South. Funeral services were held at Mission Park Funeral Chapels South on Saturday, February 17, 2007 at 9 a.m. Interment followed at Mission Burial Park South.

Prepared by San Antonio Express-News

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

- ☞ Keyboarding/Typing
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- ☞ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour
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Bare Bone Systems
Computer Related Books
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

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

Show Dates:

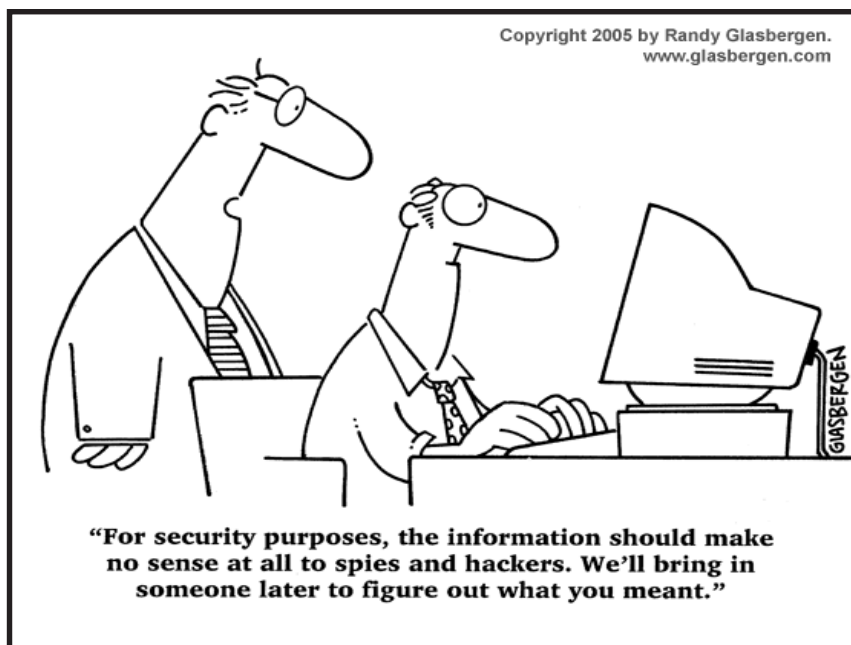
March 10, 2007
May 12, 2007
June 30, 2007
Sept. 29, 2007
Dec. 8, 2007

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



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





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.

A neighbor told me about his urologist who, he said, used the latest laser equipment, and had been written up in the newspaper as using very advanced procedures. I decided the best might not be too good for me, so since I am having urinary problems, I would try him. I went for my appointment and in came a Nurse Practitioner to examine me. (You all know how I feel about that.) While she asked her questions and did the preliminary work, I told her how I felt about the use of NPs substituting for doctors and that I felt I should always be actually diagnosed by the doctor. In so many words, she assured me she was just as capable as any doctor, and that she often offered suggestions that helped the doctors there. Maybe! However, she assured me I would definitely see the doctor, which turned out to be about 15 seconds when he stuck his head in the door and greeted me.

Needless to say, I didn't make another appointment no matter how good he was. My old urologist might not have the latest equipment, but he is the one who actually examines me. I feel he is capable so I'm going to stick with him. I have since seen him and he assured me he also has the same laser equipment. I am not comfortable being examined by a "substitute doctor" who has nowhere near the training an actual doctor goes through making important decisions concerning my health.

*Interesting Items

Here are two items I found interesting in Information Week. Read about invisible RFID ink for cattle that also won't contaminate anything: <<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=UKBMPSHVFDNIKQSNDLRCKH0CJUNN2JVN?articleID=196802844&queryText=K.C.+Jones>> Also a robot called "iRobot Create" that you can send to the kitchen if you are thirsty. I couldn't find it on the magazine's Web site so here is the product's URL: <<http://www.iRobot.com/>>. They have other robots that you have probably heard about, such as the Rhumba robot vacuum cleaner.

*Reminders

The reminder about a free version of Tax Act for doing your taxes is never very timely, but perhaps it's because of how early I must write this column and the fact that I'm not even doing my taxes yet. <<http://www.taxact.com>> You can even file your tax return electronically now with the free version.

If you don't feel comfortable doing your federal income tax on your own computer, and you make \$39,000 or less, you can call for an appointment with an IRS volunteer who will meet face-to-face with you to do it. Call 1-800-829-1040 to find the nearest IRS volunteer office.

Don't forget the free income tax help from the great folks at AARP. Call the AARP chapter near you to see where they offer this help, and the times they are available.

Two items below are announcements that included a user group discount. I have edited them, but they are mostly in the vendor's own words so check further on their Web sites for complete information. I have not tried any of the products myself although I was invited to do so. They both sound very useful.

*Manage Your Clipboard History. One Version Is FREE And A Nice Discount On The Other.

LW-WORKS Software has released Version 4.0 of Clipboard Recorder, an application that helps users manage their Windows clipboard history and provides easy ways for users to access their saved clipboard data. Once its running, Clipboard Recorder adds an icon to your system tray and monitors your system clipboard. As you copy any data from other applications to the system clipboard, Clipboard Recorder will capture it and store it to the listening clipboard record list in a compressed format.

Clipboard Recorder provides four ways to select the records; Popup Window, Floating Window, Menu Window and Main Window. Most of the time, you don't need to leave your working application to access your clipboard history! The selected clipboard records can be pasted to your working application directly just as if you have pressed "Ctrl + V". Clipboard Recorder also features transferring clipboard data between computers. Therefore, users can do "Ctrl + C" on one computer and "Ctrl + V" on another.

Continued on page 14

Clipboard Recorder is available in two versions, Professional and Standard (Freeware). The professional version with complete online help costs \$29.95 (user group members get a 30% discount using the coupon code "Special"). Clipboard Recorder 4.0 runs under Windows 98/ME, Windows 2000, or XP Home and Professional. Visit the LW-WORKS Software home page at <<http://www.lw-works.com>> to order Clipboard Recorder or to download a fully functional trial copy.

***Here Is Help To Sort Your MP3 Files**

This handy utility will sort a musical collection of any size, quickly reorganizing folders and renaming files on your hard drive. MP3 Sorter physically rearranges music on your hard drive while similar programs just create a list of files, but make no actual changes. After you use MP3 Sorter, all changes will be seen in Explorer as if you arranged files manually. Prior to actually rearranging files, MP3 Sorter allows users to see the structure of files and folders after renaming/rearranging takes place. MP3 Sorter renames files according to the artist's name and the title of the track and places them in folders like this; "Artists\Album + Year". The utility has an adjustable renaming system.

The utility has a preview window showing the newly arranged structure and comes with a Duplicate Checker that insures against accidental overwrites. You can see the transfer result to avoid any transfer mistake, and if you want to undo the transfer operation, it is possible to return the original file and folder structure with the help of the Roll Back Manager. Also, you can make MP3 Sorter delete source files, which will be done only if copying was successful. MP3 Sorter provides an advanced editor so you can change custom tokens whenever you like. After MP3 Sorter neatly reorganizes your MP3 collection, you will be able to find required music tracks on your hard drive with the speed of a radio DJ.

MP3 Sorter runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows and costs \$24.95 (USD) for a single-user license, but users group members get a 10% discount by using this URL: <<https://secure.shareit.com/shareit/cart.html?PRODUCT%5B300080839%5D=1&COUPON1=MP3ST891>>. Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on 'MP3 Sorter', as well as a free trial copy is available free of charge from <<http://www.prograce.com>>.

Product page link: <<http://prograce.com/index.php?page=mp3>>

Download link: <<http://prograce.com/download/MP3SorterInstall.exe>>

***The Bundle Is Back!**

Colleen Toumayan from Diskeeper Corporation tells me the "Bundle" is back. It consists of one Diskeeper Home Edition, and one Undelete 5 Home Edition for just \$49.95. Most of you already know the good qualities of Diskeeper products. Get it here: <<http://purchase.diskeeper.com/checkout/addtocart.aspx?Item=2140>> I'm glad Colleen stayed (she had considered leaving Diskeeper) with the company because she keeps me apprised of special offers and is a great resource.

***Free Software That is Interesting**

I saw this in Mug Monitor, newsletter for Macon Users Group, <<http://www.maconusersgroup.org>> and wondered if it would interest any of my readers. It is called Google Sketchup 6. It is a FREE 3D modeling software that helps you in remodeling or landscaping. It has to do with Google Earth. I can't fully explain it so check it out at <<http://sketchup.google.com/>>. It is a great deal because if you want their Pro version, it will cost you a cool \$495. I don't know what that one has that the free one does not, but you can read up on it.





Patent Wars Friend or Foe

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

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

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

There are three types of patents:

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

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

The patent infringement case involving the Blackberry device received a great deal of publicity recently. NTP is a company based in Arlington, Virginia, and was co-founded by Thomas Campana Jr., an engineer. In 1990, Campana created a system to send e-mails between computers and wireless devices. Campana died in 2004 and was survived by his wife, who owns a large stake in NTP. NTP alleged that Research in Motion, Ltd. (RIM), was infringing on the NTP patent with RIM's Blackberry device. NTP sued. The federal judge assigned to the case urged the parties to settle their differences outside of the courthouse. The parties agreed to settle. It is reported that RIM paid NTP \$612.5 million to fully settle any and all claims.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

News Brief



On-the-Go Printing

Users can print laser-quality reports, brochures, and documents from their office or on the road with the HP Deskjet 460wbt Mobile Printer. The printer features Bluetooth wireless technology and a rechargeable lithium-ion battery. Weighing 4.6 pounds, the printer prints up to 17 pages per minute in black and 16 ppm in color and can print borderless 4-by-6-inch or 8-by-5-inch photos. Users also can print without a computer from a PictBridge-enabled digital camera or supported CompactFlash, SD, or MultiMediaCard card. The HP Deskjet 460wbt Mobile Printer costs \$349.99.

Contact HP at (800) 752-0900 or www.hp.com.



The Uninterrupted Power Supply, UPS

Rob Rice, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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A few years ago a computer's need for safe and clean power became apparent to me in a rather expensive way. While in the process of writing an important paper one summer day I suddenly heard a loud "BOOM!" outside and below my open second story window. This was accompanied by the unmistakable sound of electricity running rampant. My computer's monitor started acting erratically with wild wavy lines and sickly looking colors. I reached for the power switch and killed the power to the computer. Next – I got the heck out of the building!

The power box on the side of my apartment building had exploded. A huge stream of white sparks was shooting from the box. The fire department was only a block away and arrived within minutes. The fact that this was a dangerous and unnerving situation was not lost upon the firepersons who were attacking this spectacle by creeping up on it with long fiberglass poles with their arms shielding their faces. The power company finally ended the show by killing power to the box.

Once the apartment complex finally repaired the power box (with duct tape, but that is another story) power was eventually restored. I held my breath as I turned on my computer. To my amazement it booted without a hitch and I had only lost the last two paragraphs of my paper. It seems that my 1150-joule rated surge suppressor had done its job. Even on-board testing suggested all was well.

However, several weeks later it became obvious that something was wrong. The computer began to reboot on its own. Spontaneous reboots evolved into spontaneous black screens. However, enough time had elapsed from the exploding power box to the erratic behavior that I did not immediately recognize it as the culprit. I replaced power supplies, video cards, hard drives, sound cards, CPU, CPU fans and even the BIOS chip. Nothing worked. While clearing the CMOS would usually restore it, it was obvious something was wrong with the motherboard – and it was only five months old. A careful examination with a magnifying glass at first revealed nothing. I had checked each capacitor to see if it showed any signs of leaking. But there were no bulging or exploded tops, no brown ooze leaking from the bottom or the top of the little cylinders. Finally I decided to take a last look this time in direct sunlight. Suddenly there it was, in the corner of the motherboard was a single capacitor that had at one time two wires going into it but now one of those wires was broken. The power box explosion had probably damaged it and the wire separated over a period of time. Trying to repair the damage did not work so I trashed the motherboard and the surge suppressor reasoning that it also was probably hiding damage as well.

While my experience may be rather extreme the importance of having good clean power cannot be understated. So-called "dirty power" is electricity that is experiencing fluctuating voltages and cycles. Surges, brownouts and spikes are examples of dirty power. It is believed that power quality will erode as power deregulation allows municipalities to buy power from hundreds and even thousands of miles away.

As a result computer monitors, printers, or any expensive electronics equipment should never be plugged straight into a wall socket. At the very least it should be plugged into a surge suppressor but preferably it should be plugged into an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS).

The UPS

The UPS is typically a rechargeable battery and some associated circuitry that you plug your computer and monitor into and in turn, plug it into the wall. The UPS keeps a constant charge so that in the event of a power failure the circuitry of the UPS switches from power supplied from the wall outlet to power supplied from the battery. This allows for enough time to save work and gracefully shut down the computer or allow it to remain running until power is restored (Never recommended).

The simplest type of UPS for home and office is the Standby Power System. This type, which switches to battery during a power loss is described above.

The Line-interactive UPS is very similar but it also has Automatic Voltage Regulation (AVR) and monitors power consistency. The AVR cleans up dirty power that is flowing through the utility lines by switching to battery power even when low voltages occur and not just blackouts. This keeps the power at an almost constant state and minimizing or eliminating damage.

A third type is the On-line UPS system. It provides the most protection by constantly supplying power from its own inverter. This avoids those few milliseconds of switching from AC power to battery power. This type is often much more expensive and is used in critical systems such as found in medicine or on critical network servers.

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Isn't a surge protector enough?

Most people will have a surge protector to protect their computer equipment from damage as a result of a power surge. These are rated by joules, the higher the number the more resistant it is to power surges, or so common thought goes. Somewhere around 800 joules or more is typically recommended today. However, a surge protector cannot protect against power under-voltages and may not survive erratic power cycles. These can damage equipment as well. Power sags, dropouts and transient voltages account for the majority of power problems and can either damage your equipment in a matter of minutes or slowly over a period of months.

Symptoms of a power problem

- The symptoms of a possible power problem include:
- Having to reboot a hung system while running a program known to be stable. Rebooting resolves the issue by resetting the memory that was possibly corrupted by a transient voltage spike.
- Read/Write errors during hard drive operation or while transferring files from another medium may be a sign of power problems.
- System lockups.
- Good memory modules suddenly going bad.
- Boards such as video card, modem, or even motherboard suddenly failing.
- Snow on the monitor can be line noise from hair dryers, lights, vacuums and microwaves.

Shopping for a UPS

In addition to the three types mentioned earlier, the UPS that is typically found in stores these days has Automatic Voltage Regulation. The box should say so and will typically have a rating measured in volt-amps (VA). The most popular UPS suppliers have guides on their Web site to help you select the proper size of UPS for your computer and monitor. For example, at Tripp-Lite's site (<http://www.tripplite.com>) we find that a desktop computer with a 17-inch monitor, Athlon XP processor, DSL modem, ink-jet printer, a writable CD-ROM and powered speakers will have an estimated draw of 315VA. In order to have an estimated 10 minutes of battery power to save your work and shut down in the event of a blackout, a product with a rating of 500VA would probably be about right. A 325VA UPS would be too small with the battery not being able to keep enough charge to supply power. Also one should note that typically printers are not put on the UPS, especially a laser printer, which draws too much power. At the time of this writing a 500VA UPS typically costs \$40 to \$70 and at times \$30 on sale.

Most of the more-advanced models come with software that will detect that the computer has reverted to battery power and will shut the system down gracefully. Batteries can also be replaced by the consumer and will have status lights and surge protection built in. Still, the UPS manufacturers are businesses and many have resorted to offering inexpensive UPS devices by sacrificing surge protection. You may find that 500VA UPS for a cheap price but check the surge protection rating on it. It may be only 325 joules, which is not much protection. You may have to go to the model's website to get the information as manufacturers with low joule ratings typically don't brag about it.

While we have been talking about using a UPS for computers you may wish to consider putting one on your television or expensive stereo equipment as well. A 350VA UPS (no software would be needed) can handle a 32-inch television, VCR and DVD player without much trouble. As expensive as these big screen televisions are it's not a bad idea to maximize protection. Not to mention that they weigh a ton and any trip to the shop for repairs would be an ordeal.

A simple formula can tell you the correct size of UPS: Multiply the number of amps your equipment uses (see the label or owners manual) by 120. If your equipment is rated in watts, multiply the number by 1.67. So if your monitor uses 3 amps and your computer uses 100 watts, you would need 360 (3 x 120) amps plus 167 (100 x 1.67) watts for a total of 567 (360 + 167) volt-amps.

Other items to consider when buying a UPS:

How many sockets are protected by battery and how many are protected by only surge suppression? A UPS needs to have enough battery powered sockets to accommodate your equipment.

How low will it go (in volts) to bring power up to acceptable levels during a brownout? Lower is better.

It needs a way to communicate to the computer. Is it via serial cable, or USB? USB seem to be the better choice these days. Certainly if you want to use it in the future as serial ports are being phased out.

Can you get replacement batteries for it? They won't last forever.

If a UPS is just too bulky or expensive, a line conditioner performs some of the same functions as a UPS but without battery backup.

Predications are that electrical power will continue to see a decrease in quality and that the potential for your PC or electronics to have an equipment failure will only increase. A UPS can be insurance against damage and data loss.



Win9x/Me/XP Computer tips & tricks

Microsoft Office Word, Part I

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.

Certain features available to Word 2007 documents, such as Quick Styles and themes, aren't available to files saved in older Word formats. To correct this situation, you must update the older Word documents.

Use the Open dialog box to locate an older Word document. Word 2007 is smart and displays older Word documents with special icons representing their versions. Choose the older word document and click Open. The Word document opens and is displayed on the screen. From the Office button, choose Convert. The Convert command appears only when you open an older Word document, one that can be converted into the Word 2007 document format. Now click OK and Save the document.

Bullets

If you need bulleted or numbered items, they're on the Formatting toolbar. Most of us have used them many times. Often you have struggled to put a paragraph under a bulleted or numbered item, without adding another bullet or number. When you hit Enter to move to the next line, depress Shift. There will be no bullet or number.

Calendar

You can use Microsoft Word to create a calendar. Open Word and from the File menu, select New. In the New Document task pane, under New from template, select General Templates. Click the Other Documents tab and double-click Calendar Wizard. Follow the steps in the wizard. For a great selection of calendar templates and wizards, visit the Microsoft Office Template Gallery.

Captions for Figures

To put a caption around a figure, create a table in the spot where you want the image and caption. Now make your table so that it has only two rows and select "No Border" as the line style. Next insert or paste the figure into the top cell and type the caption into the bottom cell. Resize the table (or resize and crop the image) so that everything fits nicely. Finally select the bottom cell and format your caption, e. g., centered, bold, italic, etc.

Captions for Tables

To add a caption to a table in a Word document, click the table to select it and then choose Insert, Caption. When the Caption dialog box opens, select the kind of caption you want to use and click OK.

Case Change

With Word 2000, you can change the capitalization of a word by either selecting it and choosing Format/Change Case or simply click inside the word you want to change and press Shift + F3. Each time you press Shift + F3, Word will move to a new case type.

Change Tracking

If you staff or circulate a Word document to be reviewed by other people and then want to see changes they made to it that are not evident at first glance, open the newer Word document, click Tools, Compare and Merge Documents. Browse to the original Word document. Click it once to highlight it. In the lower right corner, click the drop-down box and select "Merge Into Current Document." For Word 97/2000, click Tools, go to Track Changes, and click Compare Document. Find the original Word document and click it once so it is highlighted, and then click Open. Sometimes, the development of a document is so arduous that we lose sight of what we're trying to do. Looking back at previous versions can help. That's easy to do in Word. Click File, Versions, and select "Automatically save a version on close." Every time you close the document, that version will be saved. When you want to look at an old version, follow the same path. All of the versions will be listed in the box. The most recent will be on top. Highlight the version you want and click open. You can turn off this "versioning" feature by clearing the check mark from "Automatically save a version on close." You can delete individual versions by highlighting the ones you want to dump and click Delete.

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Changing the CASE in Word

Upper- and lowercase text effects aren't considered part of a font, character attribute, or format. Microsoft has a two-fingered command that lets you mix around the case of your text by pressing Shift+F3 to change the case of your text. The Shift+F3 command works on a block of selected text or on any single word the toothpick cursor is in (or next to). Press Shift+F3 once to change a lowercase word to an initial cap or all words to initial cap by pressing the key combination again to change the words to ALL CAPS. Press it again to change the text to lower case., and yet again to start the process all over again. You can also use the Format, Change Case menu command, which calls up the Change Case dialog box and lets you choose specific combinations of upper- and lowercase letters for your text.

Christmas Cards

There are a number of programs you can use to make Christmas cards using MS Word. There are templates on the Microsoft site that make cards. They load into Word with one click. To get started, go to Microsoft's template site at <http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/templategallery>. If you are looking for Christmas cards specifically, you'll find the selection sparse. You first print the outside, and then run it through the printer again for the inside. There are other specific cards for the holiday season. These include cards for Hanukkah, Ramadan and Kwanzaa. There's nothing for Festivus. Microsoft also includes generic season's greetings cards. They have a Christmasy look and should suffice for most occasions. The site includes both business and personal cards. Most are intended to be used with Avery card stock, which will give your creations a more professional look. In addition to cards, the site includes free labels, place settings and other holiday items. Most can be used with Word 97 or later. However, some require Word 2000 at least, and others Word 2002. If you want more selection, there are a number of card programs available. Some of the manufacturers are Broderbund, Sierra Home and Elibrium and their programs are generally inexpensive.

Close All Windows

To close all of your open windows at once, depress Shift and click File. Now click Save All twice and click Close All.

Color Palette

In Microsoft Word 97, you can choose from an almost endless palette of colors for drawing, but you have a choice of only 16 default colors for text. But Word 2000 supports the full palette of colors available via your video card for coloring text. Select some text and choose Format, Font from Word's menu. Use the drop-down Font Color list, or click the drop-down arrow to the right of the Font Color button on the Formatting toolbar, to choose a color. By default, you get a palette of 40 color swatches covering a broad spectrum. Now click the More Colors button at the bottom of the list to see an expanded palette and a control box you can use to mix the right shade.

Color Text

Add color to your Word document to make certain parts of your text easy to find. First, select the text as a block. Then click the down arrow by the capital A icon on your tool bar. A drop-down color palette should appear. Choose any color, and your text will take on that color.

Columns

One way to get a more professional look in some of your papers is to use columns like a newsletter. To make a two-column paper, choose Format/Columns. When the Columns dialog box opens, look under "Presets" and double click "Two." To create multiple columns in your Word document, choose Edit and Select All or press Ctrl+A. Click the Columns button on the Standard toolbar. When the Column menu appears, highlight the number of columns you want by dragging the mouse to the right. Word immediately converts your document into a multicolumn document.

Comments

In the old days, comments were scribbled illegibly in the margins of books and documents, but in Word 97/2000, comments are easy to read. To write a comment, follow select the word or sentence that you want to criticize or praise. Choose Insert, Comment. A window opens at the bottom of the screen with comments that have already been made and the initials of the people who made them. The comments are numbered. Type your comment next to the square brackets with your initials in them and click the Close button.

Copy and Paste

One of Word 2003's new features is the ability to store more than one cut or copied block of text in the Clipboard at a time. You can cut, cut, cut or copy, copy, copy, and then pick and choose which of those blocks you want to paste back into your document. To view the Clipboard, just choose View, Task Pane, click the downward-pointing triangle in the task pane, and choose Clipboard from the menu. You'll see a list of all the things you've cut or copied. To paste any collected text in the Clipboard, place the

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cursor's insertion point where you want to paste the text in your document, and click that chunk of text in the task pane. To paste something else, just move the insertion point again and click on another chunk of text.

Crop an Image

Cropping means changing an image's size without making the image smaller or larger. It's like using a pair of scissors to cut a chunk from a picture. To crop an image using Microsoft Word 2003, click the image once to select it and then click the Crop tool on the Picture toolbar. The crop tool looks like two intersecting right angles. You're now in cropping mode, which works much like resizing an image. Drag one of the image's handles inward to crop. After you're done cropping, click the Crop tool again to turn that mode off. If you don't like the cropping you've done, click the Reset Picture button to undo it.

Cross-References

Creating a cross-reference within a document to another section of your document is a simple matter of typing some fixed text and then inserting a reference to the item. To use this tip, place your cursor where you want the cross-reference to appear, and then type an introductory text. For example, you might write "For more information, see." Make sure your cursor ends up at the exact spot where you want the cross-reference inserted. Choose Insert, Cross-reference. The Cross-reference dialog box appears. Select the general reference category in the Reference type drop-down list. The Insert Reference To and For Which list changes depending on the reference type that you select. Select an option for the Insert References To drop-down list to specify the information from the reference category that should be inserted in the cross-reference. Note each reference category contains a Page Number option with which you can refer to the page where the reference item occurs. Specify the exact reference that you want from the For Which list. If you choose Bookmark as the reference type, the For Which Bookmark list then contains a list of all bookmarks in the document. Choose Insert. The Cross-reference dialog box remains open so that you can add more info to your reference. When you're finished, close the Cross-reference dialog box.

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Odds and Ends

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New, Best and Worst

Open Document Format

Long-term archiving of documents generated and stored in computer format presents formidable problems. Current storage media, such as magnetic tape, CDs and DVDs, have a limited, ill-defined lifespan. Programs currently used to read their contents sooner or later will become obsolete. And the most-used formats for storing office documents are mostly proprietary, mutually incompatible, and incompletely documented.

The international Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS) has developed an Open Document Format (ODF) based upon the XML-based file format originally created by OpenOffice.org. It was developed with inputs from a variety of organizations, with the notable exception of Microsoft, and a committee of the United Nations. It is publicly accessible, and can be implemented by anyone without restriction. The Open Document Format was recently adopted by the International Standards Organization as ISO/IEC 26300. Many foreign governments are adopting the new format, and it has also been adopted by the US National Archives

Microsoft, meanwhile, is developing its own proprietary, XML-based document format expected to be used in the forthcoming Office 12 suite. Most likely it won't be compatible with ODF.

The most recent version 2.0 of OpenOffice.org uses ODF as its native format, although documents can also be saved in formats that are compatible with the major proprietary Office Suites.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OpenDocument>)

Camera Fingerprints

Jessica Fridrich and coworkers at Binghamton University have developed a technique to extract a characteristic "fingerprint" pattern from pictures taken by a digital camera. It depends on the observation that each original digital picture is overlaid by a weak noise pattern characteristic for the camera used. It is due to background electrical noise in the pixel units of the light sensing element.

That pattern can be seen by taking a picture with a digital camera with the lens covered. The resulting image is not pure black, as with a film camera, but shows a mottling in many colors, due to electronic noise. The mottling also shows up when a digital picture is underexposed, maybe because the flash did not go off. The mottling pattern is uniquely different for all cameras. It is distinct from pixellation that results from insufficient resolution.

It requires a number of pictures taken by the same camera to extract the characteristic pattern. Being able to identify the camera used can be helpful in legal prosecutions of child pornography and such. Study of the background patterns can also give an indication of image tampering.

Astrophotographers habitually take pictures of faint objects in a dark sky with CCD chips similar to those found in digital cameras. In order to eliminate the mottling from their images they take a "dark frame," a picture taken under identical conditions with the lens covered. They then digitally "subtract" the dark frame from the image to remove the mottling. This can be done with Adobe Photoshop, but it doesn't work with inexpensive digital cameras that internally process and compress photos, usually in JPEG format. (<http://urel.binghamton.edu/PressReleases/2006/Jan-Feb%2006/Fridrich.html>)

Linspire Back On Top

The best things in life generally go unnoticed. If you notice your shoes, they probably don't fit right. If everyone notices your new glasses they may not be flattering.

If you own a PDA, do you know what operating system it uses? Never noticed it? How about the operating system of your computer? You've noticed that plenty of times, haven't you?

The ideal operating system works quietly in the background, doing what's expected of it. Microsoft Windows has come a long way over the years, to the point where weeks may go by without you noticing anything wrong. But oh boy! when it crashes.

Continued on page 23

Over the past 15 years Linux, "the other operating system," has in the hands of computer professionals grown into a powerful, reliable tool. It has been running many of the largest computer servers in the world, including Google. Early efforts to make it available as a desktop operating system didn't get very far because of the steep learning curve to overcome in mastering it.

To make Linux easier to use, a number of Linux distributions on CD-ROM have become available. They typically bundle the Linux Kernel with drivers for peripherals, sound and video cards, and network connections, and include a boot manager to allow side-by-side installation of Linux with MS Windows. In addition, the self-installing distributions typically include a windows interface, an Office Suite such as OpenOffice.org, an Internet browser and email program (Mozilla), a paint program (The Gimp), a variety of card and arcade games, and other useful or entertaining features.

The ideal distribution provides the best off-the-CD support for a wide variety of peripherals, useful programs, and easy access to a broad range of other programs available for the Linux operating system. Over the last several years I have reviewed most of the major distributions and concluded that Linspire (nee Lindows) and Xandros came the closest to the ideal.

Last year Linspire underwent a major upgrade to version 5.0, including support for the latest version of the Linux Kernel, itself a major upgrade. Unfortunately, I couldn't get the new Linspire to run well on my computers, so I reluctantly switched to Xandros on my desktop, and kept the old Lindows 4.5 on my laptop for everyday Internet access. Xandros does not have the same range of software available, including updated versions, as Linspire.

Recently Linspire issued its greatly improved version 5.1, and I am glad to report that in my opinion they are back on top again. It faultlessly recognizes all my systems, including the recent AMD 64-bit double-core CPU in my new computer. In fact, Linux was weaned on 64-bit processors and runs best in that environment. Linspire continues to offer its extensive program library (\$20/year) that lets you download programs over the Internet and install them, all with a single mouse click. It doesn't get easier!

Try it sometime. Use the free LIVE CD version of Linspire 5.1 to boot your computer. It allows you to experience Linux without permanently installing anything on your hard drive, and to determine your system's compatibility. After you turn the system off nothing is left behind. (www.linspire.com)

Maybe some day you'll be running Linux without even noticing it!

Noticeable

One amazing event during our special May meeting that went unnoticed: Jim Geiser, 75, SWIPCUG President and volunteer fireman, backing a humongous, \$400,000, gleaming red firetruck into its cramped stall in the fire station - in a single try! (<http://swipcug.apcug.org/Photos/photos06.htm>)

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Finding the best prices on the Internet

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

Have you ever used one of the search engines in an attempt to locate the best price for a particular item on the Internet? How do you know which site provides you with the best service? Computer Shopper recently reviewed 8 different sites to determine which site provided them with the best prices.

Froogle

This is a simple site provided by Google. The URL is <http://www.froogle.com>. With the power of Google behind the pricing search engine, one would expect it to return incredible results. However, Computer Shopper found this site wanting. They found that a search for a particular item often resulted in page after page of add-ons for the product, rather than pricing for the product itself. Another problem with this engine is that it doesn't provide any menus for selecting categories of items. You have to know exactly what you're looking for. You can't make a general selection of video cards, for example. This site also failed to provide any pricing information based on your location (including sales tax and zip code). Froogle did have some positive aspects. Its links include pricing from standard brick-and-mortar stores—not just online merchants. The engine will then provide driving directions (though Google Maps) to get you to the store.

MySimon

Computer Shopper found the interface for this engine to be too busy. There were several links with drop-down menus, buying guides, shopping advice, along with product picks and featured items (which Computer Shopper felt often had nothing to do with what you were actually searching for). Computer Shopper did like the ability to narrow product searches by category and price. This engine includes tax and shipping information. It also provides information on special promotions and rebate programs. This site is at <http://www.mysimon.com>.

NexTag

NexTag is located at <http://www.nextag.com>. Its engine not only provides pricing on products, but also on travel, mortgages, cars, and online degrees. It allows you to search for items by their attributes. The site also provides complete information on item availability, special promotions, and total cost with tax and shipping. The engine even provides reviews, and pricing history.

The only major gripe that Computer Shopper found with the site was its tendency to offer not-so-reputable sellers in its results. Many of the other sites actually remove these sellers from their search results so that you deal only with trusted sources for your purchasing needs.

PriceGrabber.com

Go to <http://www.pricegrabber.com> to utilize this site. Computer Shopper was impressed with the interface and the breadth of information available from this site. As one of the earliest shopping sites, PriceGrabber has access to over 11,000 vendors. The site holds a lot of product details such as reviews and technical specifications. Some items even include 360-degree product views. On top of possible rebates, PriceGrabber looks for available coupons as well. They also list merchant ratings and a merchant protection policy for registered users for up to \$500.00 in case of seller fraud or misrepresentation.

Shopping.com

This site not only provides results from the normal sellers, it also mines eBay content. Results include user reviews from Epinions (<http://www.epinions.com>) which also include seller ratings. It's found at <http://www.shopping.com>.

ShopWiki

From <http://www.shopwiki.com> provides a lot of user created content for the items you're looking for (such as reviews and buying guides). You can search using natural-language queries like "256MB RAM under \$200" or "10,000RPM SATA 80GB to 750GB". Computer Shopper found that the results of this site aren't always correct and aren't as accurate as the other engines. In fact, one price result provided by the search engine ended up as being \$100.00 more expensive when the seller was contacted.

Shopzilla

The site at <http://www.shopzilla.com> is filled with options. Computer Shopper found it to be nearly as busy as MySimon, but not as intimidating. Tabs provide access to the different search categories. Computer Shopper also found the search results to be impressive. Shopzilla produced more possible sellers than the other sites, along with customer reviews and seller ratings. Results also include pricing with tax, shipping, and product availability.

Smarter.com

From <http://www.smarter.com>, you'll find an interface with 20 categories to choose from along with featured products. Computer Shopper believed that Smarter.com provided descent results on pricing, but really liked the extra features provided. Due to partnerships with CouponMountain.com and MoreRebates.com, Smarter.com results include additional savings on the products you're looking for. One shortcoming Computer Shopper found was that these cost savings aren't including in the pricing results. At the same time, if you find the rebate or coupon in their engine, you can product pricing from a link on the coupon.

So, what was the overall determination? Computer Shopper searched for the best prices on three different items. They based their conclusions on the engine providing the best overall experience.

The winner: Shopzilla.

The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Dynamic DNS

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

In order to find a computer online, you need to know its IP address. However, there's no way that you can remember the IP addresses of all the sites that you need to access. Instead, everyone is probably most familiar with accessing computers by using a URL (such as <http://www.apple.com>). It's the Domain Name System (DNS) that allows you to do this by creating a table that matches URLs to their particular IP addresses. These tables are static, meaning that in order to work, the IP address that matches the URL doesn't change.

A problem arises when you want to access a computer that doesn't maintain a static IP address. Most Internet Service Providers (ISPs) don't provide their customers with static IP addresses. Therefore, if you want to access one of these systems over the Internet, you can't because their IP addresses often change.

This is where Dynamic DNS services come into play. Companies that provide Dynamic DNS services keep track of changing IP addresses and host the DNS table on their own servers. When anyone tries to access the URL of one of these systems, they're directed to the Dynamic DNS servers which then pass the request on to the dynamic IP address of the actual system. This provides Internet access to that system.

There are several companies that provide such services. A popular one is DynDNS because they provide this service for free if you follow their restrictions. You start by going to their website and creating an account. Logon to your account and go to Add Host Services. Select Add Dynamic DNS Host and you're ready to create your URL.

For the free service, you are allowed to select the first part of your URL (or the host name). You can use any name you want as long as someone else hasn't used that name with DynDNS. DynDNS requires you to use one of their domain names for the rest of the URL. The most common domain provided is dynDNS.org. Therefore, your URL is HostName.DynDNS.org.

From there, you provide your current IP address as provided by your ISP. Generally, DynDNS automatically picks this up from your machine and fills this field for you. However, there's still the problem of DynDNS keeping track of your changing IP address to update their DNS table. To do this, you download and install software on the machine that you wish to access from the Internet.

The program is called the DynDNS Updater. When your IP address changes, this program informs the servers at DynDNS what your new IP address is. By going to the Add User button on the interface and providing your DynDNS username and password, you'll be able to activate your DNS services. As long as the Auto-Setup option is selected, the software should fill in all of your required information. Select the Active check boxes next to your name and host name. From there, your DNS configuration is complete.

The next thing you need to setup is what services you want your computer to provide. There are several options, but the most common are enabling file sharing, remote access, file transfer protocol (FTP), and setting your system to provide Web hosting services.

There are some possible concerns with using Dynamic DNS services. First, some ISPs don't want you running these types of services on your standard Internet account, especially if you expect to have a high amount of traffic accessing your system. They may limit access to your account, or even ban you from their network. Be sure to check with your ISP to ensure you're following the rules of your contract with them. Second, you should be concerned with the security of allowing access to your computer from the Internet. If you're using a Firewall, you must open the ports associated with any of the services that you've enabled. But remember, every port that you open gives outsiders access to your system through these ports. The more ports you open, the wider the surface available for attacks. To limit the number of possible attacks against your system, open only the ports for the services that you require. On top of that, make sure that all of the user accounts on your system (especially the Administrator account) use the strongest passwords possible.

You've now performed all the steps required to utilize Dynamic DNS.

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CSS, Part 2

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!

This month we continue our exploration of Cascading Style Sheets by making a simple external style sheet, linking to it, and beginning to learn the syntax for creating rules.

Your external style sheet can be constructed in Notepad, just as you can write your HTML code in Notepad. You will save it with a file extension .css. So open up notepad and type or copy this:

/* style1.css – my first style sheet */

body { margin-left: 100px; margin-right: 40%; color: brown; background: "#CBC67E" }

H1 { font-family: Arial; font-size: 300%; color: FFFFFF; text-align: center; text-transform: uppercase }

Save the file as test1.css.

Now that we have a style sheet, let's use it. Create a separate, simple Web page that includes at least one paragraph of text, with at least one line tagged as H1.

Now, insert this line into your Web page's head tag, right before the title tag:

<link type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" href="test1.css">

Make sure that the style sheet and the html document are in the same directory. Look at your Web page to see what the style sheet does!

Let's deconstruct what we have here:

/* style1.css – my first style sheet */

This is a comment. The `/* ... */` serves a similar function to `<!-- --!>` in HTML. It doesn't show up on the screen or do anything except act as a reminder/documentation. Your notes might say something like "this is the style sheet with the pink background that I use on the 2nd level of the widget site." You can put in as many comments as you want, wherever you want them. It's a good practice to help keep things straight.

body {margin-left: 100px; margin-right: 40%; color: brown; background: "#CBC67E" font-size: 12pt}

Now we are starting to define some rules, but let's start by defining some of the language we will be using. In the above example the element body is called the selector. This is what the rules will be applied to. Margin-right, color, etc. are called properties. Brown, 100px, 40% are called values.

Note the format. We start and end with a curly paren. Then a space, a property, followed by a colon, a space, the value for the element, a semicolon and a space. Then repeat with the next rule. Got that?

These are the rules for body, and since body is the top level parent, most of the rules we set here will be inherited by everything on the page unless we override them by giving a child (such as <P>) different rules.

The first two rules set the right and left margins; we can also follow this same format for margin-bottom and margin-top. Margins can be set as pixels (margin-left in this example will indent the text 100 pixels in from the left) or as percentages (here, 40% in from the right.) This margin property is an important one. HTML does not let us set margins with this level of precision.

The next rule, color, is the color of the text, then background color for the entire screen. Note that colors can be expressed either as words or as RGB values. Also note the "" when the RGB value is used.

Finally, we set the value for the text size at 12pt. Unlike in HTML, there are many options for setting font size.

We can use a unit of measurement: px (pixel); pt (point); pc (pica (a pica is 12 points)); em (for practical purposes, the same at pt, although technically the em size is the width of the letter M in a font); ex (think of it as a half em; it is the height of the letter x); in (inches); mm (millimeters) and cm (centimeters).

Or, we can use an absolute size: xx-small; x-small; small; medium; large; x-large and xx-large. The format for this is `P { font-size: x-small }` We can use a relative size: larger or smaller. This will change it one level from the parent object.

Finally, we can use a percentage. We'll see how that works in the next example.

H1 { font-family: Arial, sans-serif; font-size: 300%; color: FFFFFF; text-align: center; text-transform: uppercase }

Now we are setting the rules for H1, headline level 1.

The first rule is for the font-family, which is the same as font face in HTML. As in HTML, the font has to be installed on the user's machine, so it's a good idea to offer a generic alternative, in this example, sans-serif, which will be employed if your first choice is unavailable. The other generics you can use are serif (like Times); monospaced (like Courier); cursive (like Zapf-Chancery) and fantasy (like Western or Impact).

The next rule is for the font size. It's set as 300%, which means three times as big as the parent font, which is 12pt (we set that in the body, remember? If we hadn't, it would be 3x the default size) or 36pt.

We've already covered color; I made H1 white. Next is text-align: the options are left, right, center or justify.

The last property is text-transform. Here I made it all uppercase; even if it was typed in lower case, it will appear on the screen in all caps. The other options are lowercase and capitalize, which will make the first letter of each word a capital letter. You can also specify text-transform: none, which will remove any transformations that were inherited from the parent.

I was curious about H1's relationship to H2, H3, etc. Are they considered children? If I set the values for H1, do they descend to H2, suitable smaller? The answer is no.

However, I can group a bunch of elements together if they share some values. Here's an example:

H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 { font-family: Arial, sans-serif; color: FFFFFFF; text-align: center; text-transform: uppercase}

H1 { font-size: 300% }

H2 { font size: 250% }

H3 { font size: 200%; text-transform: capitalize} etc.

The common properties – font-family, color, alignment, etc. – are specified as a group. Then, I listed each one individually to specify the differences. In H3, capitalize overrides uppercase in the rule above it. Values listed higher up are superceded by values further down on the list.

Your assignment this month is to play around with CSS – if you want more properties to fiddle with, there's a list at www.w3.org/TR/REC-CSS1.

Next month we will explore some more rules, learn how to use DIV, SPAN and classes, and begin to learn about some advanced layout rules.

News Brief

Digitally Enhanced Photos May Be "Too Good"

Kacie Powell, a photographer for Centre College in Danville, Ky., tried to get some digital photo shots printed at Wal-Mart, but employees said they looked "too professional." She ended up signing an affidavit that included pictures of college employees who were authorized to print her pictures. When a colleague whose portrait was included among the authorized photographers went to Wal-Mart with some candid shots from graduation, she got turned down too.. Photo Labs, fearful of being sued by professional photographers, are in a tough spot: should they anger their customers or risk a lawsuit? Don't be surprised if your digitally enhanced personal photos are turned down by WalMart and other fast-photo labs.



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Dreamweaver MX 2004

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>.

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

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

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

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

Continued on page 29



Figure 1



Figure 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Figure 3



Figure 4

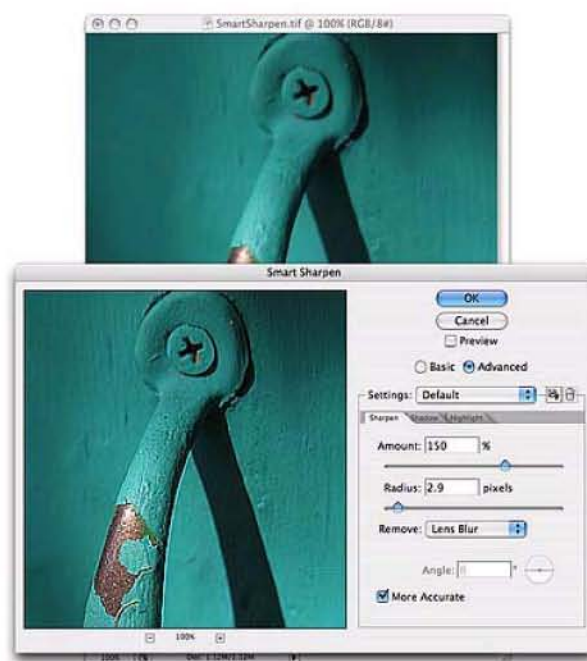


Figure 5

Continued on page 30

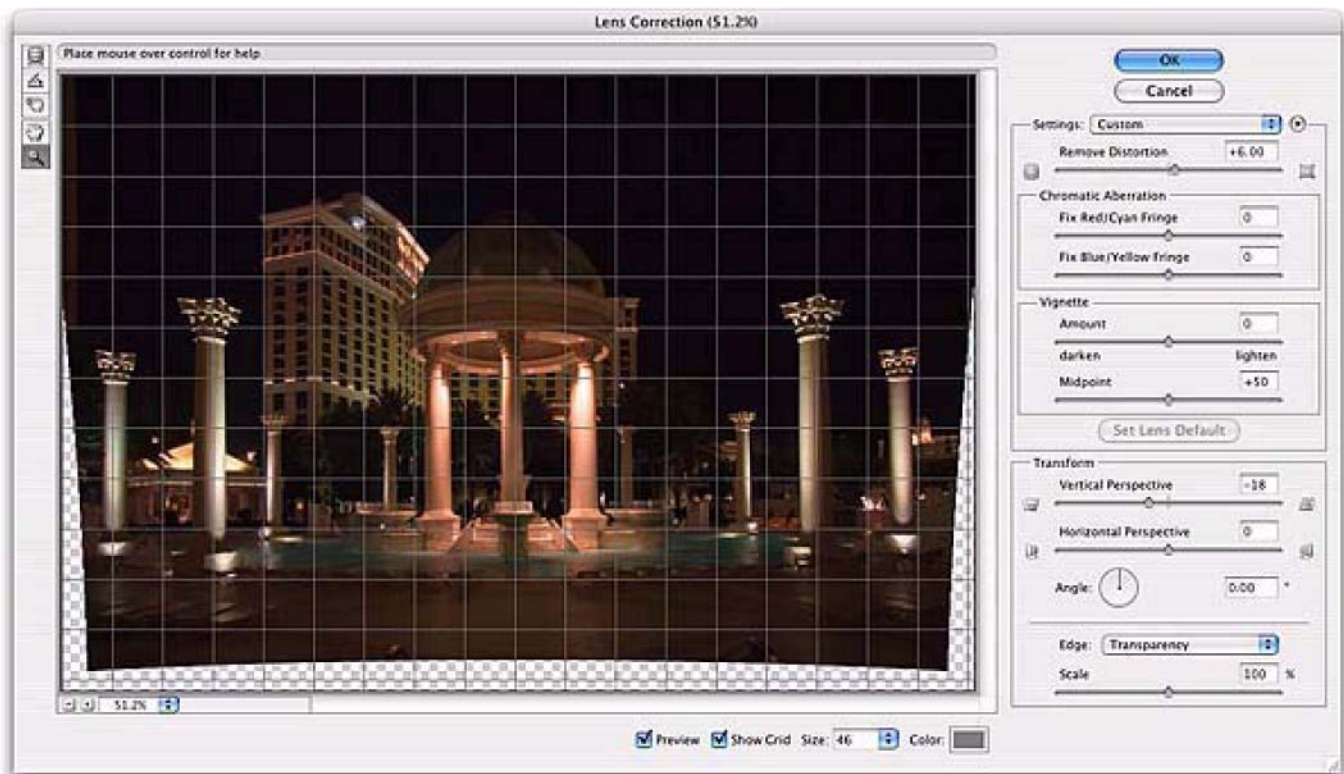


Figure 6

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

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

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

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


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

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

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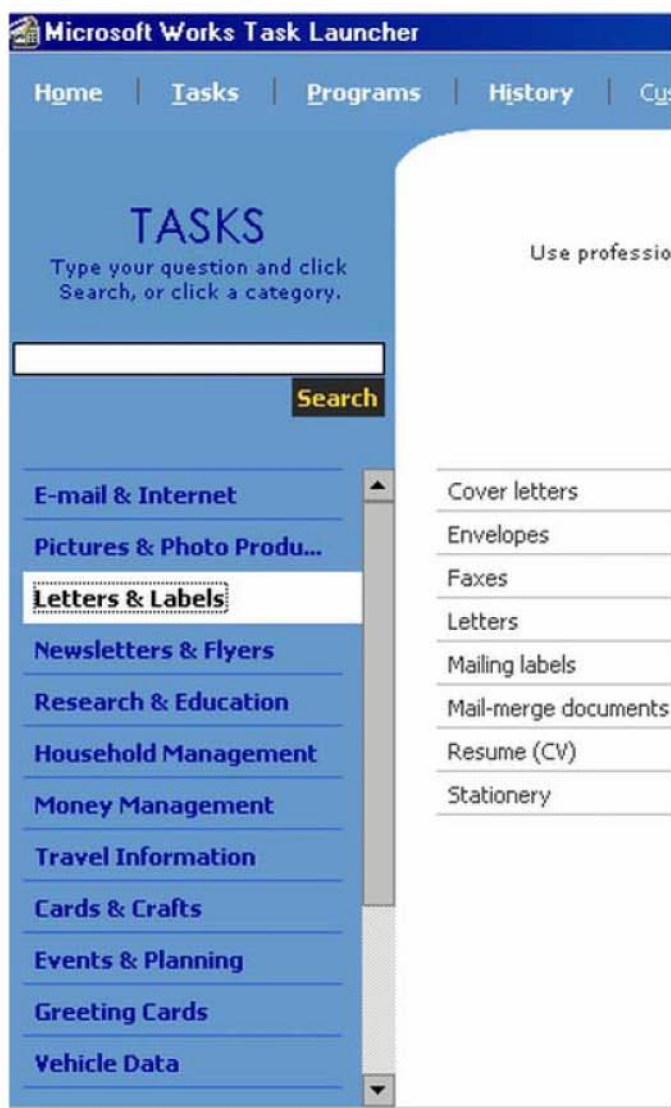


Microsoft Works - Word Processing Letters

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 looked at an overview of Works. From here on out I intend to concentrate on the most used functions. In most cases I believe that first among these will be the Word Processor. Depending on what type of document you wish to create, you may want to first select a layout. Works can make this very simple for you. Beginning with the Task Launcher



which appears when you activate Works, you can see the wide variety of tasks for which there are automated layouts. For this discussion I selected Letters and Labels from the list on the left side of the window. We

now have a choice of a variety of documents, etc. from which to choose. A logical selection for the most used of these would be Letters, which provides the key to



Letters

Create letters for all occasions. Choose from a variety of letter styles/templates. Create mass mailings to family and friends.

 [Start this task](#)

beginning the task. Clicking on “Start this task” opens the Letter Wizard, a portion of which is seen below.



Because of space limitations, I have reduced the size to fit the column. At this point I should stress that if you don't already do so, you should open these items, and any others that appear in this series, on your computer to see them more clearly.

Choose a Layout has been selected and in this case a Centered format. An explanation of this format appears in the black area above. It reads partly, “a stylish and visually appealing design that is especially effective for formal and special events.”

Flush Left “for serious correspondence ...useful for businesslike purposes.”

Modern. “Use this style when you want your letter to appear sophisticated and concise.”

Once the Layout is selected the Wizard guides you in the creation of the letterhead. You may use as much or as little of this as you wish.

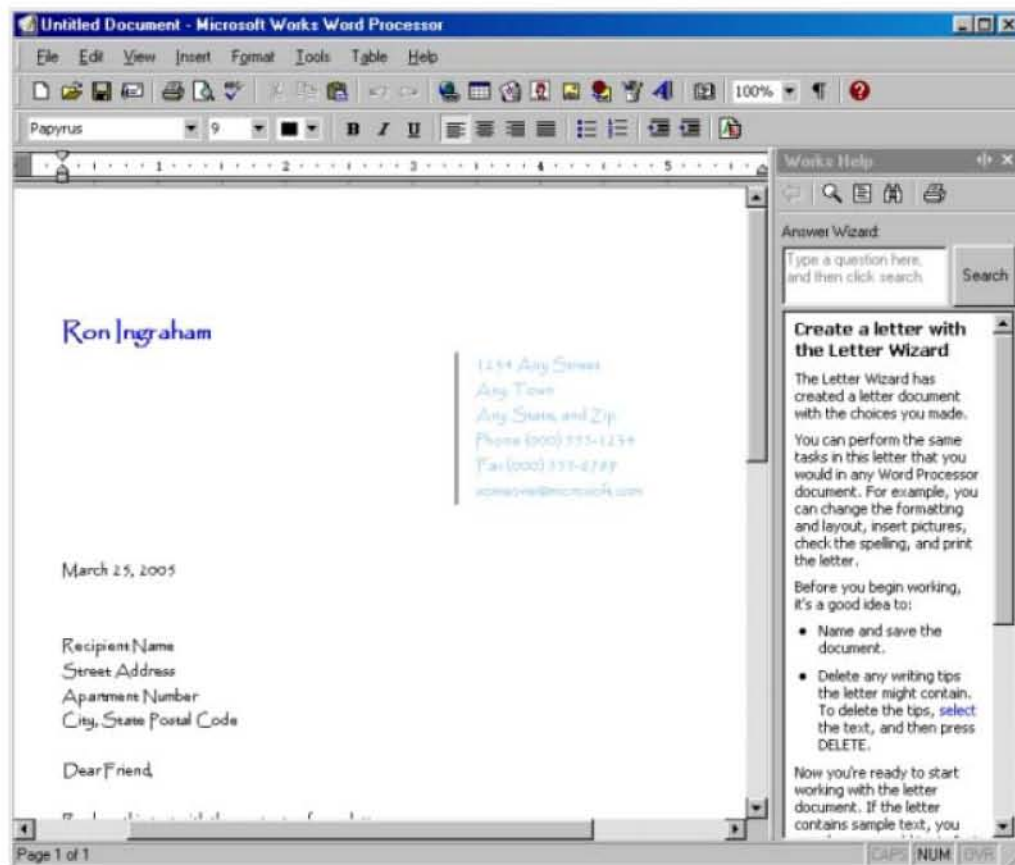
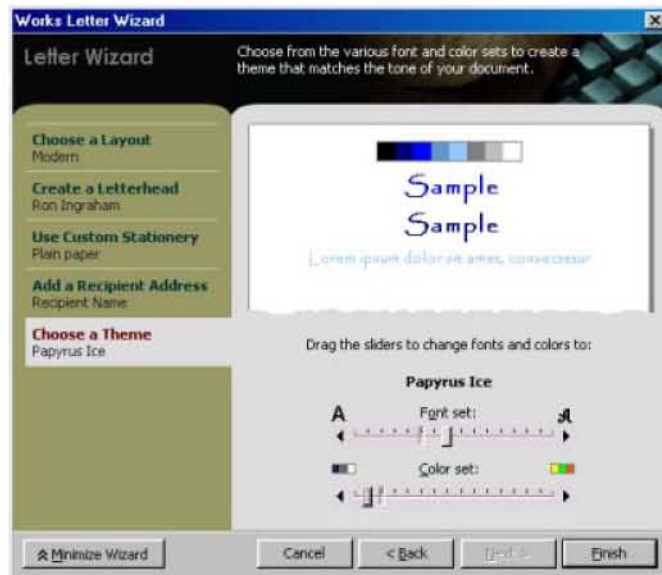
If you minimize the Wizard, your document is displayed, ready for you to add your greeting, message,

and signature.

The Wizard next allows you to select whether you want to use plain paper or Custom Stationery. The latter requires that you designate margin space for the special areas of the stationery.

If you wish to add an address for the recipient to the document, the next step in the Wizard provides for that.

The final feature allows you select a theme, choosing from various fonts and color sets. When you click



“Finish” the document window opens, along with the “Works Help” sidebar. This is your source of any and all information you need to accomplish the desired task. If you don’t see a link to a feature, you may enter a question in the “Search” box.

You can perform the same tasks in this letter that you would in any Word Processor document. For example, you can change the formatting and layout, insert pictures, check the spelling, and print the letter.

Before you begin working, it’s a good idea to:

- Name and save the document.
- Delete any writing tips the letter might contain.

To delete the tips, select (place the cursor next to the text you want, click and hold down the mouse button, move the cursor to highlight the text, and then release the mouse button) and then press DELETE.

Now you’re ready to start working with the letter document. If the letter contains sample text, you can change or add text. Just click the section that contains the text, and then start typing. You can also move and copy the text to rearrange it.

If you added names from the Address Book to do a mail merge (the process of merging information into a document from a data source, such as an address book, database, or other file to create customized documents), you can filter and sort the entries before you print.

Use the Works Word Processor to quickly write a letter, create a flyer, or produce a school report. Make any writing project look polished and professional.

If you’re new to the Word Processor, click the topic that describes what you want to do.

[Create a new document](#)
[Save a new document](#)
[Change the way text looks in a document](#)
[Correct spelling and grammar](#)
[Print a document](#)
[Use Word Processor shortcuts](#)
[Use Works Help](#)
[Quick Tour: Word](#)
 You’re on your own. Try it out to see all the neat things it will allow you to do. □

Dufferdom - Kingdom of the Ordinary User

Written by David D. Uffer, a member of the Chicago Computer Society, <http://www.ccs.org>, daviduffer@sbcglobal.net

Ever think about this, one of the consequences of Internet spam: missed genuine messages? Calling them “false phonies” may make them sound less serious but it is a real loss. Having a publicly known e-mail address would only add to the risk of garbage, obnoxious, or offensive messages, which is why I do not announce my address here—and no longer elsewhere—and why I wonder at the bravery of those who do. As it stands, I get a bunch of suspicious messages, a consequence of having previously been too open and trusting. I assume a lot of readers have the same experience.

Happily, most of the current garbage is obviously that. Crude spelling, offensive wording, or silly or too-cute sender names are a giveaway, a tip to delete and not open the e-mail, which would probably anchor some form of evil in my PC. That evil could just be a spam target sign that in effect announces DUMB GUY HERE or GULLIBLE TARGET or KICK ME or BUYS ANYTHING or BUYS SOFTWARE ON or BUYS GARDEN TOOLS or it could open a little secret program in your PC that transmits further activities to an eager collector of such information. There goes your assumed anonymity. Scary, huh?

So, ways to avoid such nasties include: 1) leading a Simon-pure life, 2) keeping your address as secret as possible, 3) having some anti-spam, anti-spy program that does some measure of safeguarding, and 4) opening only those from e-mailers you can trust. Since (1) & (2) are difficult to do, (3) is a lot of trouble, costs time and money, may be harmful, and may not work, (4) is the simplest “solution” for most of us. That brings us back to the starting question. What do we miss and what do we care are valid questions. Steve Bass, of PC World, says he also automatically filters out e-mail containing the word, “Free”. There’s a realist for you. There was a time when a popular target for complaint was the Postal Service. Then that became too common and they got better. Then we’d also had the Phone Company as a favorite repository of reluctance. Then they got so eager to help that they got beside themselves, splitting up into competing companies all claiming to be offering the best deals. In that situation, all but one must be lying, which one being unclear. But you do observe that the most extended claims gather the big market share and the revenue, which brings us to Microsoft.

A colleague of mine has a sigh and a quip, “Every morning when I get up I send Microsoft \$10 and beg them not to give me any trouble this day.” It may well be that this favored MS—not the medical condition but the requisite host—will be an occasional target for this column. It’s hard to choose among the many cases of places bearing target signs. No, I could not do what they do, nor so well, nor so profitably, nor so annoyingly. My annoyances include new versions of MS Word that do not easily recognize output from an older sibling. Or older versions that also need a format change in order to be useful now. That’s one, a big one. But I found a new annoyance more suited to my scale, a small one.

I needed a new mouse, a chance to get steadier, smoother cursor movement. Guess what. Microsoft had just the ticket. A new, red-boxed optical mouse. Buy it, try it. No more interruptions to clean off the ball inside. But guess what. The new scroll wheel klacked along like a marble over gravel. Take it back. Surprise; Microsoft also offers the red-boxed MS Comfort Optical Mouse 3000, with magnifier and Tilt Wheel, no less. For more money of course but you do get wonderfully smooth scrolling, a click-on & -off magnified region, and some limited side-to-side shifting for off-screen text. A new slim thumb button triggers the variable area magnifier on & off and the scrolling wheel can be tilted to get the off-screen text. Nice, but down the road there’s a surprise and a memory aid.

While using the enlarged on-screen area, you can fiddle with it some to adjust height and width of the magnified area. You find that using it also slows down any screen operation. Further, having the region move one way while the cursor moves another could make you something akin to airsick. You can probably make your peace with that and find it useful. Then, after some 15 or 20 periods of using and adapting to it, I found a new function for the magic thumb trigger. It makes the current screen vanish. Permanently. Then, if you push it again, that next screen also disappears. Permanently. I find it a new way to get back to the desktop screen in a hurry, if I don’t mind losing access to the intervening screens.

But what of the magic magnifier? Where is it hiding? Back on the desktop. That must be its new home. Maybe it goes there to rest. That is now where I must go to find it and call it forth. Then it becomes a creature pet, almost domesticated, and accompanies me for a while, ready to enlarge anything on the screen at my beck and call. Until it tires of the adventure and goes home, at some stage not predictable by me. Sort of a game it is.

But you may ask, where is the memory aid? A simple learning process it is. I learn by doing. Self-education. I learn and must remember that if I want the creature pet critter to accompany me I must summon it early or not at all. Failure to do so is penalized by progressive loss of screens and data. The learning is thus hastened and reinforced. So I get these gifts from Microsoft: surprises, memory aid reminders, and gently enforced self-education. Clever, resourceful, and wholesome, these MS folks in Redmond, WA. Or maybe I’m just one of their famous charities. But I did pay for the entry. And now Vista has arrived, with open doors and ticket booths beckoning.

Originally from Denver, Dave Uffer wended way to Chicago and the Big Iron by a not quite corporate route. He is a friend and long-time admirer of the Chicago Computer Society, a member of some standing. He knows that ordinary users are now the main body of the field and deserve some say. So he began Dufferdom as their realm.

Things, Thinglets and Thingassos

by **S. Jack Lewtschuk**, Monterey Bay Users' Group-PC Columnist
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KEEPING TRACK OF MULTIPLE PASSWORDS

Passwords are a part of our everyday life: we use them for e-mail, online banking, stock trading, shopping, blogging, etc. For good security, you should have a different password for each website you enter. But how can you remember so many passwords?

A password manager is a great way to consolidate all your passwords without compromising security. Generally, a password manager is a program that stores all of your passwords for you. All of your passwords are kept secure with—you guessed it—a password.

The key advantage to using a password manager is that you only have to remember one password. That's not too bad. Then you can retain unique passwords for each of your various accounts without taxing your memory.

There are several pay programs that work this way. Before buying one, try KeePass (<http://keepass.sourceforge.net/>), a simple, free password manager. It can help you organize your passwords and also enter them into log-in forms.

How does KeePass work? After you download and install it, there are several easy steps to setting it up. The first time you open it, you have to create the file that will store your passwords. Click the "New" button at the top left of the window which will

prompt you for a "Master Key." Make it one that you can easily remember, but which someone else can't easily guess (e.g., your birth date, your spouse/child's/pet's name), because it's the password you'll use from now on to unlock all your other passwords.

KeePass includes categories for online functions such as e-mail, home banking and others. To put a password into KeePass, select a category and then click the "Add Entry" button. You'll be able to enter a title for the password, which will help you easily identify where the password is used.

Let's take Hotmail as an example—an effective title for a Hotmail password could be simply "Hotmail." You could also enter the web address where the password is required. KeePass automatically fills the password box with a random password. Chances are that it's stronger than the password you already use for Hotmail, but to make it work, you have to log into your account and change it to match KeePass.

If you want to keep things simple, erase the pre-filled box and put in the password that you already use and click "OK". Do the same steps for all of your everyday passwords and take a load off your memory. You can drag and drop passwords directly from KeePass. Click the password you need from KeePass and move it to the blank form on a Web page. The password will appear in the blank.

KeePass keeps your entire password file encrypted. The only way to open or read it is with your master password, so don't lose it!

In addition to Windows, "switch-hitters" can download versions of KeePass for Macintosh, PocketPC, Palm and Linux. You can also take KeePass with you on a thumb drive by copying two files onto your thumb drive. One is the KeePass program (KeePass.exe), and the other is the file containing your passwords (the default is called Database.kdb).

BACKING UP OUTLOOK CONTACTS

Outlook stores all data in a single file called a ".PST file". This file contains your contacts, e-mail, calendar items and tasks. It's easy to back up your entire Outlook .PST file—just locate it and copy it as you would any other file. Backing up individual folders within Outlook is also easy, so you can export your entire "Contacts" list. Simply highlight "Contacts" in your Outlook folders list. Then click "File," and "Import and Export" to open the "Import and Export Wizard." Select "Export to a file" and click "Next," to choose from a list of options (I recommend Microsoft Excel as the best one to choose in order to export all your contacts into a nicely ordered spreadsheet). After making your selection, click "Next." You'll be given the option again to select the folder you want to export. Highlight it, click "Next," and specify the name and location where you would like to save your file (use the "Browse" button if needed), click "Next" and then click "Finish."

WORDS OF WISDOM

If builders built houses the way programmers build computer programs, the first woodpecker to come along would destroy civilization!

You can use the same procedure with other items in the Outlook folder list. This is handy if you only want to export certain parts of your Outlook data file. You can use the files with other programs such as a "Database." You can also use it to share information with other people. Say you want to share your contacts with friends or coworkers: just export them, and others can import your list into their Outlook program.

To import a file, click "File," and "Import and Export." Select "Import from another program or file," click "Next," and select the type of file from which you're importing. In this case, select "Microsoft Excel" and click "Next." Click "Browse" to locate the file you wish to import, and then select your import options. You may want to allow duplicates, or you may wish to replace duplicates with imported items. You can also specify that duplicates not be imported. Click "Next," select the destination folder, click "Next" again, and finally, click "Finish."

NOVICE CORNER

Starting Your Computer in "Safe Mode"

At some point in time you may need to start your computer in "safe mode." You should print these instructions before continuing as they will not be available after you shut your computer down in step two.

Click "Start," click "Shut Down," and then in the drop-down list click "Shut down." In the shut down window dialog box, click "Restart," and then click "OK." When you see the message "Please select the operating system to start" or "Windows" appears on the screen, press the "F8" key several times. Use your arrow keys to highlight the appropriate "safe mode" option, and then press "ENTER." If you have a dual-boot or multiple-boot system, choose the installation that you need to access using the arrow keys, and then press "ENTER."



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Operating Systems

Moving to Vista What Not to Do

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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Microsoft's long-anticipated new operating system, Windows Vista, is finally here. After months of testing I can say that it is a stable program and is more secure than any previous version of Windows. It also has a great new look and some wonderful new features. Just remember that there are always gotchas with a new operating system. Here are a few of the "don'ts" when moving to Vista.

Continued on page 37

First, five different flavors of Vista are available in the US: Home Basic, Home Premium, Ultimate, Business, and Enterprise. Don't bother with Home Basic. It doesn't have "Aero", the rich new visual interface. It doesn't have the advanced multi-media features for photos, movies, and television. It doesn't even have the cool new chess or mahjong games. All of this is missing, but Microsoft is still selling the Home Basic upgrade for \$99. The full version of Home Basic is \$199. If you buy a new computer with Vista, make sure that you get at least the Home Premium version. You can get a comparison of the different versions of Vista and what they offer at the Microsoft website.

Another don't....don't try to upgrade without a large hard drive and at least one gigabyte of memory. You can use the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor to determine if your computer is ready for Vista. Most older computers will come up lacking. So, you may not want to upgrade at all. Although Vista's better security is enticing, if you are happy with your Windows XP machine you may want to keep using it a bit longer because it may be not be economically beneficial to upgrade. The Vista product upgrade can cost several hundred dollars. That plus the cost of extra memory and/or other hardware upgrades may make it wiser to just purchase a new computer with Vista preinstalled.

Don't expect every software program to work with Windows Vista. Intuit, the makers of the popular Quickbooks program have notified their users that no older versions of Quickbooks will run on Vista. Only an upgrade to Quickbooks 2007 will let Quickbooks users run the program on a Vista computer.

Because of the major security changes in Vista, most antivirus programs will also need an update to be able to run on Windows Vista. If you purchase a new computer it may come with a trial subscription to Symantec or McAfee that will get you started but you will have to purchase a new version in the future or move to a free antivirus program. Again upgrading an old computer may be problematic because the old antivirus software will need to be removed before the new version is installed. Experience has taught me that it is often difficult to remove all the various pieces of an existing antivirus program. This is one experience you may want to avoid.

Some programs will also have trouble with Windows Vista new user controls which make it more difficult to make changes to your computer. This bolsters the operating system against hackers, but can confuse some existing programs. Simple changes or work arounds for these types of problems can easily be found on the Web. For instance, I couldn't run Adobe Photoshop CS2 upon installation on my Vista machine, but a few simple changes which I found documented on the Web, solved the problem quite easily.

Also any specially written or high-end software programs may not work with Vista. This will not affect the average user, but if you have any unusual or specialty programs you will want to check out compatibility.

Much of today's current hardware will work with Windows Vista. Of course, you may want to check the manufacturer's website to be sure before you make that assumption. You may need to update a hardware driver or two. If you have older hardware, some may not work with Vista. So check it out before you move to Vista.

Of all the hardware problems, you can expect the most problems with audio equipment. Windows Vista has a new audio stack which means that it handles the audio data structure differently than older versions of Windows. Also this audio change was made quite late in the Vista development process, so audio manufacturers may not have caught up yet. While this will probably not impact the average computer user, if you have any high-end audio equipment, make sure you check our compatibility before you migrate to Vista.

One last don't....don't worry about the 64-bit version of Vista. If you have a 64-bit processor on your new computer like the Intel Core2 Duo or AMD 64-bit processors you may be thinking about trying out the 64-bit version of Vista. Don't do it unless you want to be on the "bleeding" edge of technology. Most hardware does not currently have 64-bit drivers and the 64-bit version of Vista does not support the widely used 32-bit drivers. Also there is currently very little software that actually takes advantage of the 64-bit system. So leave the 64-bit version as something to dream about. It will be more secure and faster, but it is not yet ready for prime time.

However the 32-bit version of Vista is ready for immediate use. The best way to move to Vista is to buy a new computer with Vista preloaded. Just be sure you check out these gotchas before you put your money on the counter.

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.

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News Brief

Pandora – a Free Music Resource

The Internet is filled with free resources, but some are better than others. Here is one of the best free music resources on the Web.

Pandora is one of my favorite music websites. Just surf over to www.pandora.com and type in a song or an artist that you like. Pandora analyses your choice and creates a music station with similar-sounding music. It will then play comparable songs that it thinks you will like. You can add more music and/or artists to the station to refine your choices. You can also tell Pandora whether or not you like the song that is playing. It uses your likes and dislikes to refine the songs it chooses. You can create up to 100 different stations with different types of music.

Pandora was created by the Music Genome Project, a group of musicians and music-loving technologists who have broken music into hundreds of music attributes or “genes” such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, orchestration, arrangement, lyrics, and harmony. They then use high-tech methodology to analyze the musical qualities of each song and rendition.

The results are uncanny. I created several music stations with different genres that I like and in almost every case I was presented with similar music that I found very pleasing. You can experiment with different combinations. For instance, putting James Taylor and Willie Nelson together gave me an interesting, but likable mix of music.

Pandora is pretty smart. Typing in The Christmas Song and choosing Diana Krall as the artist gave me a whole station of mellow Christmas music which is just what I was looking for. Typing in The Nylons and Take 6 gave me a nice selection of acappella and harmonistic music.


Pandora also lets you bookmark songs or artists so you can remember what you liked. You can look up more information about artists and songs right on the site. Two clicks will lead you to iTunes or Amazon where you can purchase the music. You can also share your music by emailing your stations to friends.

Pandora is ad-supported so you will see ads for everything from gym shoes to cell service. I found the ads to be unobtrusive, but if you want to get rid of them, you can pay to eliminate them. For \$36, you get 12 months of unlimited use with services exactly the same as the free version, but without the ads.

Since the ads don't bother me, I'll continue to use the free version of Pandora. It's an entertaining website that provides much listening pleasure to keep me company when I am working on the computer.

If you are into music, you may also want to check out two other music resources. MusicIP Mixer and Goombah. Like Pandora, both of these sites provide intriguing music adventures.

by Sandy Berger, *CompuKISS*
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What is an Operating System?

A review of the Los Angeles Computer Society
January 2007 General Meeting Presented by
Stephanie Nordlinger, Vice President, LACS

by **Charlotte Semple**, President, Los Angeles Computer Society, CA
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Stephanie asked the group, “What is an operating system?” An operating system (OS) is the guts of what makes a computer work – the ground upon which programs are built. An OS is the software that underlies all other programs that you install into your computer. Your programs will not install and cannot be run without an OS.

Brief History of PC Operating Systems

Stephanie first came into the business during the late ‘70s and early ‘80s when people were using CP/M operating systems for their microcomputers. In 1981 IBM produced the first PC (Personal Computer) which was run by DOS (Disk Operating System). Several manufacturers including IBM and Microsoft offered several versions of DOS. MS (Microsoft) DOS continued through version 6.2. It did not have a graphical interface, and one had to be VERY careful to enter data on the command line correctly or nothing happened, or, worse yet, something that you did not want to have happen happened.

After a few years, MS produced Windows 3.0, the first OS with a graphical user interface (GUI). You could now click on things instead of having to type every command. It did not work very well. Some months later, MS produced Windows 3.1, which did work and was a commercial success. In 1995 MS produced Windows 95, followed by Windows 98, Windows NT and Windows 2000, Windows XP Home and Professional in 2001, and Windows Media Center in 2002.

Stephanie was not able to install Vista Releases Candidate 1 on the LACS Toshiba laptop that was purchased in July 2006 and supposed to be Vista Compatible. It still might be, possibly by the end of January, when Vista’s shipping version is released. At this point, neither Microsoft nor Toshiba has not written or released software to make the video capability of the LACS laptop work with the video of the RC-1 version of Vista. Microsoft did provide a large and wonderful book on Vista for Stephanie to use. Some parts of Vista are already available to people: Internet Explorer 7 and Microsoft Media Center. One does not have to buy Vista in order to have these two programs and some of the other features of Vista.

Vista has a peculiar graphical interface; it can do 3-dimensional images of different pages of open windows that one is working in; part of the first or open page of each window is presented on the screen, instead of a list of the windows at the bottom of the screen. However, the windows move a little too fast. Vista also has weird glassy shiny wavy see-through lines running through the pages, which can be quite annoying and takes up a lot of hardware to run. Many computers are not set up with sufficient hardware, particularly new video cards, to cope with this feature, or with Vista itself. Many do have enough RAM and speed, but not the video capability to run Vista.

Editions of Vista

The editions are designed for different types of customers:

Emerging Market - Is designed for those persons who do not have a state-of-the-art computer and who need something inexpensive. It is not available in the U.S. The American versions are:

Home Basic – has very few new features but presumably better security than XP Home.

Home Premium – is designed to be an equivalent to Windows XP as it is now with new Vista graphics and security features.

Ultimate – is designed for persons who have computers at home, which are used as home and business computers. They would have a Media Center, more graphics, and special information designed for home based businesses.

Business – is designed especially for small and medium-sized businesses.

Enterprise – is designed for very large corporations that need to do massive amounts of data base activities.

Not all versions have the features that Stephanie discussed this evening. There is some integration with Office 2007, which MS is releasing at the end of January 2007.

Installation

Microsoft offers and encourages you to use a pre-installation assessment program to see how Vista ready your computer is: "Vista Compatible" vs. Vista premium ready vs. not suitable for installation of Vista. The program, Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor, is on MS's website. It only runs with Windows XP, not Windows 98 or 2000. In the report including a Task List, it says what it thinks about your computer's capabilities and whether you need to do something before trying to install Vista. Stephanie installed and ran it on the LACS Laptop and her home office computer. It ran quickly and easily.

When Stephanie originally ran it, the program did not catch the fact that the LACS Laptop does not have a proper interface between its 128 MB of video RAM, which is supposed to be enough, marginally enough, and Vista, which requires at least 128 MB of video RAM. It reported that two files on the LACS Toshiba laptop were not compatible and that many others (mostly utilities) would need upgrading. This new Toshiba laptop is supposed to be Vista Compatible! It did NOT say that the VIDEO RAM was insufficient to install Vista – which, many hours and half a dozen attempts later, seemed to be the case. Toshiba may, or may not, be able to correct this.

Toshiba, like other manufacturers, is trying to get its various computers ready for Vista, and they are chasing a moving target – Vista is going through at least 5 versions, including the shipping version. Even when the shipping version comes out, you will need to go to the MS website to update Vista because MS needs lead time to do the shipping, and MS will not have it all together by the time they send Vista to be manufactured.

Advice: Buy a computer with Vista installed – don't try to upgrade a computer if you can avoid it.

You will still have to move your files though. Vista has a program within it to move your personal settings and files. It will NOT move programs. These will have to be re-installed from the original CDs, and then you will have to go to the individual vendor's websites for any service pack or upgrades they had since you first bought their product. Many will wait until the Vista SP-1 is released to be sure most of the bugs are gone.

The Most Important Improvements

1. Internet Explorer 7 (IE 7)

IE 7 has a different, more compact menu bar that can disappear to give you more "real estate" (screen display). It still has most of what was in IE 6: Pop-up protection, Spell Checker, etc. IE 7 is trying to be up-to-date with the new electronic "stuff, including RSS feeds. IE 7 will condense a too-wide web page so that it can be printed correctly, where IE6 often left off the edge of a web page. Occasionally, IE 7 will over-condense a web page and print it in very small type. If you use the print preview function, you can see how the condensed page will appear and adjust the font size if it seems too small, before printing.

IE 7 also can save a favorite group of tabs, so that if you wish to bring up several websites at the same time all you have to do is click on the one Favorite. For example, if you are doing investments and you want the Morningstar, Fidelity and Vanguard websites all available to you at a click, you don't have to go in and out typing in a URL each time. Instead, you can click the one Favorite and you will get the desired web pages with tabs to click as you need them.

2. Windows Media Center and Media Player

Media Center is included in XP Pro and XP Media Center (2002). Media Player v. 11 (for music) is available as a free download from Microsoft. Media Center is an excellent product for downloading and playing TV, videos, music, etc. Your computer running Vista can interface with most electronic devices. It has great graphical capabilities, allowing you to do absolutely beautiful graphics, work with photos, etc.

With Vista Home Premium or Ultimate (but not with the other versions without third party stuff), you can enjoy TV, music, photos, videos, home movies and on-line entertainment on your PC. With a TV Tuner and your PC, you can watch, pause, and record TV. With dual tuner support you can watch a pre-recorded program while recording another live program. With Media Center extenders, like the MS X-Box 360, you can extend the Media Center to other rooms in your home. You can also enjoy your Media Center "on the go" using Windows Mobile "Windows Plays For Sure" devices. Windows Media Center has limited digital imaging and editing of photographs – a third party program will do a better job.

3. Improved Explorer Menus and Dialog Boxes

Vista's graphics are designed for digital screens instead of CRTs (Cathode Ray Tubes), but they will work on both. Vista has a new Aero Technology, with Aero Glass, a 3-D technology whereby you can have several images on the screen, one placed over another, all transparent (see-through glass), and sometimes with the transparent wavy line patterns that I spoke of earlier. The quality of the graphics is much better because you have better equipment, but I would choose to run Vista without the Aero floating lines experience.

Operating System

4. Clear Type and New Sans Serif Web Fonts

Clear Type is type rendering that is optimized for flat LCD screens. While available in XP, it is turned on by default in Vista. There are six new sans serif fonts in Vista and Office 2007, with recommendations of which ones are appropriate for different kinds of activity. Using them is said to save 5% of your reading time, which is not insignificant, namely 24 minutes in an 8-hour day.

5. Gadgets

Screens are wider than they used to be and you don't really need to use the whole screen to work in. With Explorer, you can have a movable column on the far left or right of the screen. It is used for your gadgets such as a clock, a weather report, calculator, mini files or Post-Its, etc. These functions are quickly accessible without having to open a browser or full program.

6. Improved Security

How many security features you get depends upon which version of Vista you are using. All have automatic backup and restore, and automatic defragmentation. MS has redesigned ActiveX Files, limiting what they can do as a protection against malicious persons. They can't wreck your computer as much as they could previously wreck it.

Vista contains Windows Defender (a free download from MS that also runs on XP) that is designed to avoid malware (mostly spyware). Similar programs are available for little or no cost. You will probably still need a new version of third party anti-virus software or a subscription to Microsoft's Windows One Care (\$50.00 a year). Third party anti spyware vendors are aware of Vista and will produce Vista versions of their products.

The Vista Business version has some new tools that give you peace of mind that all the important data on your PC is protected automatically. The Windows Security Center puts all your essential security settings in one easy-to-find location to help protect your data. Although there is a lot of protection available against viruses and worms, threats continue to evolve as hackers become more sophisticated. Vista includes an anti-phishing filter for e-mail and websites (which load rather slowly if you use it).

Vista also has parental controls, which can control when a child is allowed to use the computer, what he or she may do and where he or she may visit. This previously required third party software.

7. Improved Linkage to Other Electronic Devices

You can sync your device with multiple computers and can use a MS Xbox 360 in the living room with the content on your computer elsewhere on your home network. Vista includes DVD creation software, so you may not need another CD or DVD creator program.

8. SuperFetch

SuperFetch searches for files anywhere on your computer. But to make full use of this, you have to index each file – i.e. provide key words, dates, authors, etc. You have to provide key words for your photos since photos do not index themselves. File indexing is already available via Copernic (free downloadable software).

9. Automated Pre-Tech Support Data Collection

This allows for shorter calls to in-house or external support. It keeps track of what you have done so that if you have to call tech support, you don't have to tell them all of the background data, including what program you've just installed that you have totally forgotten about which caused your system to crash. This program is designed to give faster tech support so neither you nor the tech support person has to lose a lot of precious time in trying to solve your problem.

Vista facilitates IT management by allowing a company's chief IT person to selectively turn off things that have changed and selectively turn them back on – to ease the learning curve for employees. Vista is also allegedly more reliable and fixable at a distance. Networks are apparently easier to set up also; this was very difficult in previous versions of Windows.

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10. New .XPS Document Format

“You can transform on-screen content into a document that can be easily viewed, printed, full text searched and securely protected and authenticated with the latest rights management and “digital signature technologies.” This is done using the new open XPS document format. Office 2007 users will have the option of “Save as XPS” file. There is also a Vista Compatibility wizard for XP files.

11. Other Features

Vista includes Windows Speech Recognition software, but Stephanie could not find any reports on this and does not know how it compares with available third party software.

Vista includes Ready Boost, which is a great feature. It allows a particular kind of thumb drive with special technology and a program to be recognized and used as extra RAM. If your computer (especially a laptop) needs more RAM, this is an excellent (and sometimes the only) way to add it.

Vista includes the calendar function of Outlook, including a personal task list and calendaring for groups.

12. Improved Games are included and supported.

Microsoft claims the Vista gaming experience is as good as when using dedicated gaming devices. Stephanie is not a gamer and couldn't install Vista, so she did not pursue this.

13. Software for Transferring

Vista includes software to transfer your settings and data from another computer to your new Vista computer. Vista does NOT transfer programs – only your settings. You will have to reinstall programs from their CDs and sometimes get new ones or updates. Utilities NEVER transfer between operating systems.

14. Microsoft Is a Service Business

Office Live lets you set up a small website via Microsoft. The program can be obtained from a special website, from free to \$40 per month. For more information, go to <http://www.officelive.com/freeoffer>.

Microsoft is also offering Windows Live One Care service, an anti-malware program.

News Brief

Take Windows XP to the Next Level with the Free Vista Transformation Pack

If you don't want to shell out the cash for a copy of Windows Vista, Windows Vista Transformation Pack (VTP) is an easy and free way to emulate Vista's look and feel. I've been playing around with it for a couple of hours now, and it makes for a nice change after looking at the same old XP icons and UI.

VTP bundles together many different applications that mimic Vista's UI in different ways to give you transparent windows, a new Start Menu, a Vista Sidebar, and a new Explorer. Overall, your computer should look revitalized after installing VTP. Everything has a bit of Web 2.0 glossy sheen.

Install a Vista wallpaper, and you're basically there. There might be some stability issues if you install VTP, so you'll want to be sure before you install it. The good part is that uninstallation is easy: just go to Add or Remove Programs. Some files are overwritten during the process so keep your setup CD handy if you want to undo all the changes.

If you decide to install VTP, you'll have a lot of control over the installation. Check off the things you want changed like boot screen, process manager, or sounds and leave what you want to stay the same unchecked.

*by Dave Gerber, Program Chair, Sarasota PCUG, Florida; member of the Daves Bytes radio team
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The Changing World A Review of Vista

Operating
System

by David Steward, APCUG Advisor, Region 8 and Program Chair, Alamo PC Organization, Texas, www.alamopc.org, dsteward@apcug.net

The title of this article explains a lot. With the release of Microsoft's newest iteration of Operating Systems, Vista, we are going to be making a lot of changes in how we perform day-to-day tasks on our computers. For once, I think they actually got it right. With a more intuitive interface, a lot less cluttered desktop, easier networking and a much more robust security system, Vista will indeed go a long way in making the lives of us who spend a great deal of time staring at a computer screen easier and more exciting.

Getting Started

The first thing that you will notice when opening the box is that Vista is shipped on a DVD instead of a CD, as all of the previous operating systems from Microsoft have been. There are a couple of reasons for this. The first is that Vista is packed with much more content than has been available in the past. Things like Windows Defender, Sidebar, Snipit (a screen capture utility and more), built-in Fax and Scan, and Windows Live Meeting all of which are designed to make life easier.

The second is that regardless of which version (see below) you purchase, all of the versions are included on the DVD. The version that loads depends on the installation key that you receive with the purchase. What does this mean to us, as consumers? It means that you can upgrade the OS version any time you want, and the media is already on the disc. All you need to do is the purchase the upgraded "key" and the system will do the rest.

As mentioned above, Vista is being offered in many different versions. Each version is, of course, designed around a specific type of user. At the time of this article's writing, the following versions are being offered:

Vista Home Basic – Basic package. Contains all the usual things that you would expect to be included in an operating system plus many new enhancements.

Vista Home Premium – Adds support for the Media Center PC, the Tablet PC, automated backups, Windows Aero and Glass, built in DVD authoring, and much more.

Vista Business – Version scaled for business use

Vista Ultimate – The whole enchilada. Contains everything including support for multiple processors.

For a detailed description of each version, and to help decide which is right for you, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/editions/default.msp>.

On a little side note here, I want to caution the readers to not think only in today's terms when deciding which version of Vista to choose. With the advent of the multiple core processors and initiatives to put more processors on the motherboard, each with multiple cores, you might want to consider the Ultimate edition, as it directly supports multiple processors, up to 128 gigs of memory (on 64 bit machines) and makes use of the higher buss speeds associated with multiple cores. Plus, as you will see later, it grows with your system.

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Entertainment

As I said previously, Vista is designed to make your life easier. Plus, a lot of the OS has been wound around the entertainment capabilities of today's PC. With built in DVD, CD and TV (with tuner card installed) support, any PC can be turned into the main entertainment center of your house.

Most of us have grown up using a PC for normal things like word processing, spreadsheets, digital photography, listening to music, email, and surfing the web. Basically, everything that we can do while sitting about 2 feet from the computer screen. Well, a new "buzz" word in the industry is the "10 foot" experience. It encompasses things that we can do away from the computer. This includes experiences like storing all of your DVD's and videos on your computer's hard disk, and viewing them from anywhere in your house. Being able to show slideshows of your photos on your TV in the den, listening to your music files in the bedroom including changing the playlists a you desire. Vista makes this possible. And, Vista's Media Center capabilities will couple with your Xbox360 and use it as a media extender.

If you want to see if your computer is Vista capable, visit the "Vista Upgrade Advisor" at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/upgradeadvisor/default.mspx>. The Upgrade Advisor will perform a very thorough search of your system's hardware and installed software and let you know what needs to be changed before upgrading to Vista.

The Meat

Let's get to the actual operation of the software. Before I installed Vista, I ran the included Upgrade Advisor, which informed me that I needed to remove the "Nero Burning Rom" software before I could install Vista. In addition, it cautioned me that although Vista would run on my system, I would not achieve the full performance of the graphics engine due to the installed drivers for my video card. Specifically, I would not be able to run the Aero or Glass enhancements. At the time, I did not consider that a good enough reason to rush out and purchase a new high end graphics card, so I went ahead and installed Vista, after removing Nero. I chose to upgrade my existing system, as I have a ton of programs installed, and did not want to have to re-install all of them. So, after entering a few basic pieces of information, including the "key", Vista took off and performed all of the upgrade functions without any further input from me. This is good as it took almost 2 hours to completely install and upgrade the system. At one point, I thought that it was stuck and that I would have to start over, but it wasn't. It just took that long to load the features and enhancements, and upgrade the existing programs.

This might be a good time to point out that I am performing this review on a 2 year old Sony Vaio Media Center PC, which has a Pentium 4 running at 3.4 Ghz, 1 GB of RAM, a 320 GB drive, and a 64 MB on board graphics card. I have partitioned the drive into 2 partitions, a 80 GB program partition, and a 240 GB data partition.

Finally, the upgrade finished and the system rebooted into Vista. The first thing that you see is a screen titled the "Welcome Center". From this screen, you setup all of the basic things like security, users and internet settings. This is all accomplished by wizards that lead you through the process step-by-step. You can also view some very informative videos that introduce you to the features of Vista. It also gives you the opportunity to register and go online with Windows Live, a place where you can setup your own personalized start page with Live Mail access, news, weather, RSS feeds, etc....however you want it to look.

After you finish setting up all the necessary features, it is time to explore and have fun. I am not going to write about every feature and function, as I would have to write an entire book to cover it all, but I am going to highlight a couple of things that I think will be of interest to us all.

First, Vista has a ton of informational type of screens that tell you a lot about your particular system and hardware. One of these is called "Performance and Information Tools" which is accessible from the "System and Maintenance" button on the Control Panel. This is where you can find out what your system experience rating is. This will let you know how Vista will perform under different conditions, and whether or not you can take advantage of some of the enhancements like Aero or Glass on your desktop. My particular system rating was 2.8. The reason for the mediocre rating was because of the graphics chip that was on the motherboard. Everything else had a rating of 4.2 or above. I really wanted to use the Aero on my desktop, so I rummaged around in my computer room, and found an nVidia 6600 graphics card. After installing it, I re-ran the performance rating test, and my system rating increased to 4.1, which allowed all of the included enhancements. It was well worth the time.

Another feature that is accessible from the Control Panel is the "Problem Reports and Solutions". This area keep track of every time a program stops running for any reason, or has a problem installing, and logs it into a database. From time to time, you should check this area and see if a fix for a particular problem has been released. Vista will automatically download the fix, apply it, and test it on your system. Why is this important? It means that you do not have to wait for a service pack to repair individual problems. There are many more features on the Control Panel that you will want to explore and play with, including the ability to change the partitioning of your drive, schedule tasks and view event logs. Believe me, Vista is an information geeks dream.

Another new addition is Windows Mail, which replaces Outlook Express. I used to prefer Outlook Express over Outlook because of it's ease of operation and Windows Mail has not changed my mind. Windows Mail operationally looks like Outlook Express with one major enhancement. It has an automatic spam and phishing filter integrated in the program, and it works. It is so nice to look at my messages and not have to wade through 200+ messages wanting to sell me stock or change my anatomy.

Getting back to the desktop, one of the features that I really wanted to see was the new Aero feature. Aero is the high performance desktop experience that has been introduced in Vista. Basically, it allows a much more robust and dynamic view of the desktop and the components running on it. For example the Glass feature turns the individual windows translucent so you can see what is going on in windows under it. The Flip 3D function allows you to quickly "flip" through all of the open windows until you find

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the one that you want. In addition, when a window is minimized, you can hover your mouse over the button on the taskbar, and see exactly what that window looks like. Plus, Aero gives everything a much smoother appearance making it easier on the eyes. It is hard to describe Aero in words, but trust me, you will like it.

Another new feature is Gadgets. Simply put, they are little gadgets or programs that you can place on your desktop to help you. Things like a clock, news feeds, stock tickers, RSS feeds, or even games. Now, this is what Active Desktop really means. <G> You can adjust the transparency of each of them so that they do not distract from the workspace.

Ultimate Extras

For those of you that take the plunge and opt for the full blown Ultimate version, there is a bonus. Microsoft has announced the Vista Ultimate Extras program. This entails new additions to the Ultimate package that will be added as time goes on. Things like new gaming experiences with Windows Hold'em Poker, added security with the bit-locker encryption system, and my favorite, Dreamscape, which turns your desktop background into a true "active" desktop by allowing motion video to be run on the desktop. It is truly an unbelievable sight. And, more will be added in the future, allowing your system to grow as time goes on.

For the gamers reading this, Vista is going to change the way that you play games on the PC. Microsoft has included DirectX 10 with the shipping versions of Vista. DirectX 10 is a much more robust API that allows a more realistic appearance in games. In addition, you can use your Xbox360 controller on your PC now, and it will take advantage of all of the controller features like vibrate and positive feedback.

Having said all of this, I do want to note that I did have some problems while running Vista. I have had a couple of programs that flat refuse to run in Vista, specifically shareware video editing and video conversion programs. I am presently working with the support engineers to rectify this. I also found that although Microsoft says that Vista will run well with 1 GB of memory, and it does, Vista really wants as much memory as it can get. I noted a significant improvement when I install another gig of memory. Same thing is true about the graphics adapter in the system. I recommend at least a 128 MB card, and preferably a 256 MB card if you want to run Aero and Dreamscape. This will ensure that there is no noticeable loss of system performance.

I know that this is supposed to be a review of Vista, and it has ended up sounding like an advertising blurb about the product, but I am very excited about the new Operating System. I truly believe that Microsoft has finally listened to the user community, and



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Vista Vexes

The Windows Vista Pains'n'Gains Page

by Jan Fagerholm, Assistant Editor, PC Community
Hayward, California, <http://www.pcc.org>, jan-f@pacbell.net

OK, so I've suffered through the betas and RC1 and RC2 (Release Candidate = not quite done yet), and now through two succeeding RTMs (Release To Manufacturing = the finished product) So what's the final version of Windows Vista finally like? Is it worth the pain of upgrade?

I'm not going to spend much time telling you how pretty the Aero interface is, or how cool the Flip3D task switcher is – the computer press has already given lots of space to these features. I intend to relate some experiences with hardware and software that I have encountered. I'll sometimes talk about the new features, as these are the reasons for upgrading to Vista, but I'll mainly be focusing on the stumbling blocks, as these are the reasons that you may want to wait until the problems that relate to you are resolved. If you went through the XP changeover five years ago, you are in for a similar experience with Vista.

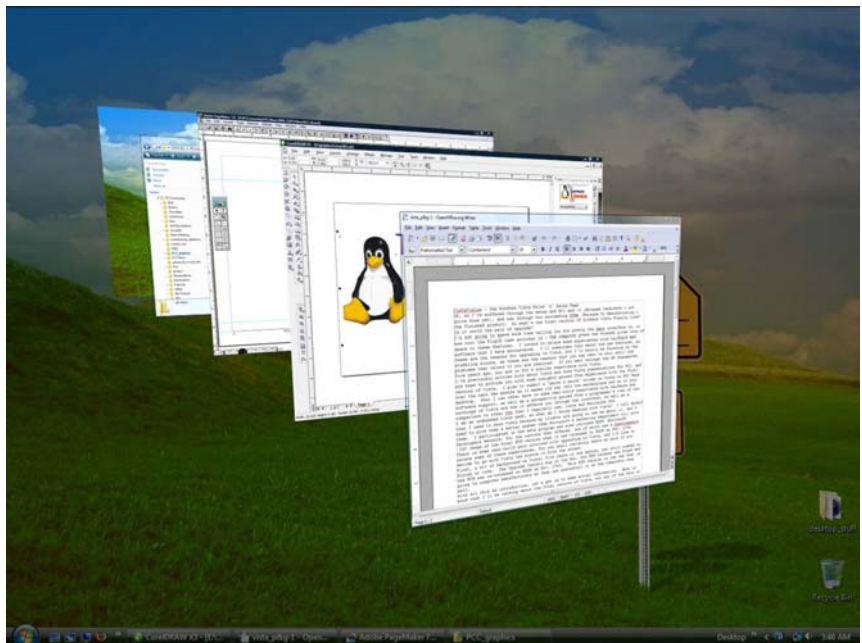
I've previously written bits about Vista and done Vista presentations for PCC, and now hope to provide you with some insights gained from experience with the final version of Vista. I plan to submit a "pains & gains" column on Vista to PCC News over the next few months as it makes its way into the marketplace and on to your desktop. What I can offer here is some real-world experience with hardware and software support, as well as a perspective gained from a programmer's view of the workings of Vista and how it affects you through the interface, as well as a comparison to other OSs that I regularly use, Linux and Macintosh OSX.

I am an unabashed Linux geek, so what am I doing messing with Vista? I tell myself that I need to know Vista because my Windows clients are going to ask me about it, and I need to give them a better answer than Microsoft's marketing department will give them. I participated in the beta program and even rejoined MSDN (Microsoft Developers Network) for the carrots they offered, one of which was a downloadable .ISO image of the final RTM version when it was released to MSDN on Nov. 17th. There is some real-world pain involved with upgrading to Vista, and I'd like to relate some of these experiences, for you shall certainly share my pain if you decide to go with Vista the minute it hits the street.

First, a bit of background on Vista: five years in the making, yet still rushed to finish on time. The Upgrade Install bug in the Nov. 8th RTM release, which destroyed existing XP installations, was fixed and the RTM was re-released on MSDN on Nov. 17th. This RTM version is the one that is going to computer manufacturers so they can preinstall it on the computers they sell.

After all this introduction, let's get on to some hard information. Bear in mind that I am talking about the final version of Vista, not the beta or RC versions.

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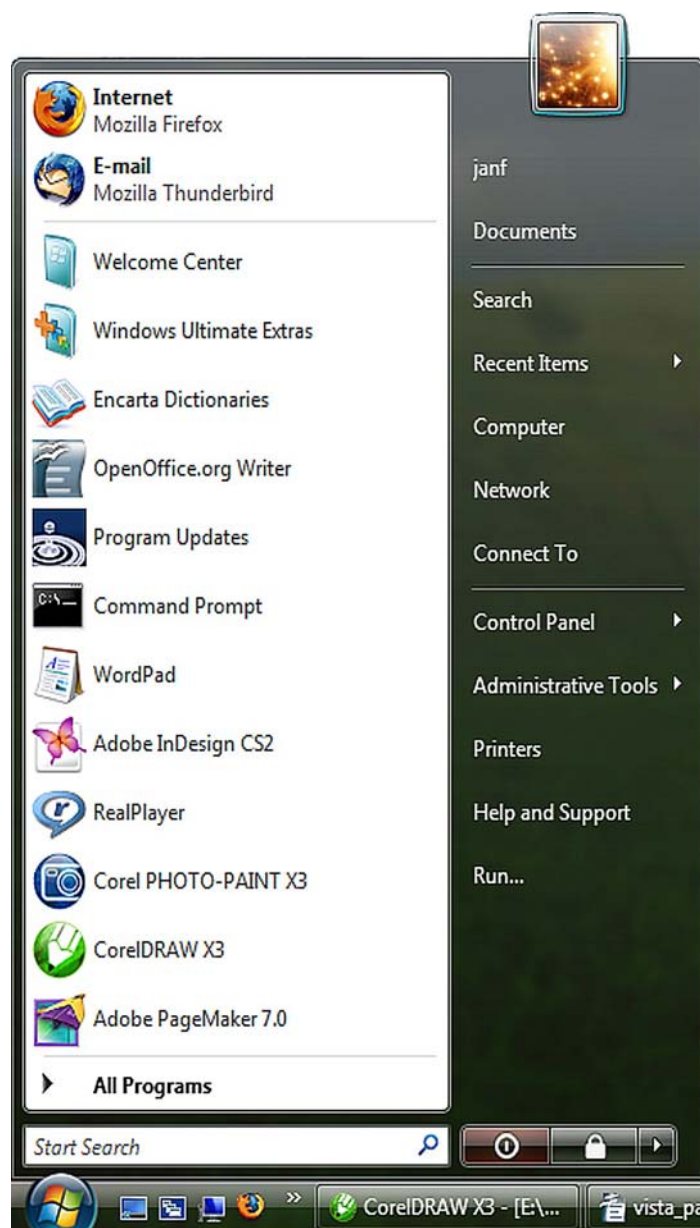
Though I mentioned this previously, it's worth mentioning again because it will affect everybody. Vista has a new security feature called "User Account Control" that is intended to protect the system from "unauthorized changes" that can affect the system or other user's settings, particularly from malware and spyware. It does this by popping a dialog in your face every time something tries to write to certain system or user folders. It also does this whenever you attempt to do a normal software installation even if you are logged in on an administrator account. It came up during installation of Microsoft, Adobe and Corel software. In the case of Adobe and Corel software, it also made the installation fail, even though I told it to allow the changes during installation. Installation of this software did not succeed until I turned off User Account Control. To turn off User Account Control, go to Start -> Control Panel -> User Accounts -> and click the link for "Turn User Account Control on or off". Once you have turned it off, Security Center will complain that it is off, and penalize you by reminding you it is off every time you log on to the system, but this is a small price to pay for normalizing the system.

Among the hardware that you can expect to lose with Vista is the ubiquitous Creative Sound Blaster Live! 5.1 series of sound cards. Vista has a two-channel audio driver for the card, but you lose 5.1 surround sound and the game port. Thus, I not only lose 6-channel capability of my \$100 5.1 Surround speaker system, I also lose the use of my \$120 Microsoft Force Feedback Pro joystick. Creative's Web site says they do not plan Vista support for the Live! 5.1 series of sound cards - I must upgrade to at least a \$150 X-Fi card to get back both of these capabilities. I am NOT pleased, as I have Live! 5.1 cards in two of my computers.

Judging from manufacturers' Web sites, many scanners are going to be abandoned under Vista as well. This is similar to what happened when XP came out. (i.e. The manufacturer chose not to write an XP driver for the scanner.) My HP ScanJet 6300C doesn't work in Vista, and HP's Web site is depressingly silent about scanner support in Vista. Of the twenty or so different scanners of different make that I have plugged into Vista, none of them over two years old would work.

Printer support, on the other hand, is quite good. Judging from the printer database, it looks like almost everything that works under XP will also work in Vista. The Vista drivers are as rudimentary as XP's though -- you will need to get the manufacturers' drivers for high resolution printing in many cases.

Early returns are in on Vista. Many of the developer forums that I belong to are abuzz with Vista experiences, from installation (or failure thereof) to device support (or failure thereof). I intend to relate more of these in upcoming articles.



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How Does Windows Handle USB Devices?

by **Dave Gerber**, Program Chair, Sarasota PCUG, Florida; member of the "Live on the Internet" Bits and Bytes radio show team
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One subject that often comes up is how Windows handles USB (Universal Serial Bus) devices and what you can do when USB devices don't work as you expect. First, let's talk about the two versions of USB that you'll probably encounter:

USB 1.1: these were the first widely-available devices and usually ran at a speed of 1.5 mb/sec. They were meant to replace old-fashioned serial and parallel (printer) connections that ran at only a fraction of the speed and could connect only one device at a time. While this speed was OK for slow devices like mice and keyboards, it wasn't useful for transferring large amounts of data, like from digital video cameras. For faster speeds, you needed SCSI or FireWire (IEEE 1394) connections. Since these were used mostly on the Mac, you often needed an add-in card for your computer to use them, which is one of the inconveniences that USB was supposed to alleviate.

USB 2.0: typically runs at the much higher speed of 480 mb/sec, which is faster than the original FireWire standard and much faster than SCSI. This is more appropriate for large data transfer, such as to external hard drives, and necessary to connect CD or DVD burners. However, some people still prefer FireWire for devices like video cameras, because FireWire is really a network that allows devices to be more interactive.

So how do you know which USB you have? If your computer was made sometime in the last few years, chances are its USB ports are version 2.0, which are backwards-compatible with 1.1 devices. One way you can tell which version your computer has is to look at the Device Manager in Windows XP:

- Press Windows Key + Break to open Device Manager (or click the Start button, then right-click My Computer and select Properties).
- Click the Hardware tab, then click Device Manager.
- At the bottom of the list, click the plus sign next to Universal Serial Bus controllers.

If your computer has is equipped with USB 1.1, you'll see a device or two called a Host Controller or Open Host Controller.

If your computer is equipped with USB 2.0, you'll see a device or two called an Enhanced Host Controller or USB 2.0 Controller.

Any USB device you buy will have the regular USB trident logo and any high-speed USB device will have the red, white and blue high-speed logo.

If you connect a high-speed USB device to a low-speed USB port on your computer, Windows will probably give you a message that the device can run faster if you connect it to a high-speed port. A USB 2.0 internal expansion card costs about \$20 and a USB 2.0 notebook adapter (fits in the PC Card slot) costs about \$40.

The most common problem people have is when they connect a USB flash drive (sometimes called a thumb drive) to a computer and the computer doesn't recognize it.

First, let me say that these are great devices. Connect one to your computer and it works like a removable hard drive.

When you connect a USB device to a computer running Windows XP, the computer will detect it immediately. When that device is a USB drive, you'll probably see a message on the taskbar that Windows detected a new device, followed by a dialog box that asks if you want to open the drive to see its contents, play a movie and other choices. Windows will also assign a drive letter to the device. But sometimes you won't get this dialog box, and when you open My Computer manually (Windows Key + E), you won't see the device listed. That means there's a drive letter conflict.

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Here's how you fix it:

- Select Start/Control Panel, then double-click Administrative Tools. (You may also have Administrative Tools directly on the Start menu.)
- Double-click Computer Management.
- On the left side of the Computer Management console, select Disk Management.
- On the right side, you should see a device listed as a removable drive, probably with the same letter as another drive you're already using.
- Right-click the white bar where it shows the letter, then select Change Drive Letter and Paths.
- Select the letter, then click the Change button.
- Pick a letter not already in use from the list, then click OK.
- Click OK on the warning message, then click OK again. (I assign U: to all USB flash drives, since I never use more than one flash drive at a time.)
- Close the Computer Management console. When you go back into My Computer, you should see the USB drive with the new letter.

Another common problem is running out of ports. When USB started being implemented, the idea was that you would daisy-chain the devices together. So computer manufacturers would put in only two ports (always in the back) and only one port on laptops. For a variety of reasons, the daisy-chain idea never caught on, and computers made today typically have four ports in the back and two in the front, for quick access.

If you run out of ports, you can fix the problem -- as with so many others -- by applying cash. Buy an external USB hub for anywhere from \$10 to \$40, depending on size, number of ports and power. A hub will split a single USB port into several more. The better ones have their own power supply, so your devices don't have to rely on the computer for powering the USB connection. When there isn't enough power to go around for all the devices, they can go offline.

This brings me to the last problem I'll mention: USB devices going offline because of reasons unrelated to power shortage. This was fairly common when you had many devices connected using USB 1.1 in versions of Windows older than 2000, where the devices had to supply their own software to get USB to work. (Native USB drivers were first included with 2000, then made more robust in XP -- and Vista, presumably). If this happens, simply unplug all the USB devices, then plug them back in one-by-one. If any are daisy-chained together, connect the parent devices before connecting the child devices.



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XP Disk Maintenance Tools

By **Dick Maybach**, Member of the Brookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey
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Windows disk operations have improved greatly over the years to the extent that we seldom have problems with XP. However, XP does include tools to inform you about your disks, to improve their operation, and, if needed, to repair the data on them.

For general information on your drives, use the Disk Management tool – right-click on My Computer; select Manage; and select Disk Management (under Storage). You will see a table showing the properties of all your partitions as well as a graphical summary. Select a volume in the table or on the graphic, click on the Action menu item, and then click on All Tasks to see a list of the actions you can perform. Be careful, as some of these are drastic and irreversible, e.g., format and delete the volume.

If you suspect that a hard disk is corrupted, double-click on My Computer, right-click on the desired drive, select Properties, select the Tools tab, click the Check Now... button in the Error-checking section, and click the Start button. This will run an updated version of the old chkdsk. Don't select either of the options. If you do find problems, run the program again, but before you click Start, select Automatically fix file system errors. You may have to reboot for the operation to complete. Also, be aware that this may result in the loss of some files. If there still errors, run the program again, but select both options. (You can also run this program from the command line; type "chkdsk /?" in a Command Prompt window to see the options. I prefer the command-line version, because it's more informative.)

With time, Windows collects many unneeded temporary files. To clean these up, double-click on My Computer, right click on the desired disk, select Properties, and click the Disk Cleanup button under the General tab. Windows will take a few minutes to analyze your disk, and then will display a list of actions and how much space each will recover. You can single-click on each name to see its description. I select everything except the last two (Compress old files and Catalog files for the Content Indexer). Clicking the More Options tab shows other ways to recover space by removing Windows components, removing installed programs, or deleting old system restore points. Under the General tab, you will see two check boxes, Compress drive to save space and Allow Indexing Service to index this drive for fast file searching. By default, the first is not checked and the second is; don't change these. Large disks are very cheap, and if you are running low on space, a much better solution is to install a second disk and keep your user data on it. Compression adds complexity, and I've seen it cause serious problems.

With use, a disk gradually becomes fragmented. That is; long files are broken into parts and scattered over the disk. You can correct much (but usually not all) of this with XP's disk defragmenter. Double-click on My Computer; right-click on the desired drive; select Properties; select the Tools tab; click on the Defragment now... button in the Defragmentation area; and click the Analyze button. Usually, you will be told that there is no need to defragment the volume. If so, take the advice. If you do decide to defragment the disk, bear in mind that there is a small risk of destroying its contents, since many files will be deleted and rewritten – a power failure could be catastrophic. Before you defrag a disk, run chkdsk or, even better, back it up.

A little-known command-line utility is fsutil. To run this first open a Command Prompt window (found in the Accessories group), then type "fsutil" to produce a list of fsutil commands. Usually, you will have to stack up several fsutil commands to do anything useful. For example, typing "fsutil dirty query c:" will show you whether you need to run chkdsk on C:. It can be worthwhile to explore the other features this command, being careful of course that you don't make any changes to your file system.

The recover command will make undamaged portions of a damaged file readable. For example, to recover the damaged file c:\n2nd\junk, open a Command Prompt window and type "recover c:\n2nd\junk". Like most command-line programs, you should be careful when using recover.

A very powerful command-line program is debug, but you can do a lot of damage with it if you are not an expert; I recommend that you avoid it. If you are curious, type "debug /?" in a Command Prompt window to find out more about what it can do.

The NTFS file system is superior to the older FAT32 one. If you are still using FAT32, seriously consider converting it to the NTFS format. For example, to convert your C: drive to NTFS, open a Command Prompt window and type "convert c: /fs:ntfs". There are two caveats: (1) the conversion is not reversible unless you buy third-party software, and (2) if you dual-boot both XP and an earlier version Windows on the same PC, the old version can't read NTFS volumes.

User Group Weblog & Trackbacks

Several User Groups are now offering Weblogs (aka Blogs) in addition to their regular Web sites. Blogging is a great way to convey new information to members and the public at large.

Depending on how the blog administrator has set it up, members who have registered may post to the blog. Generally the administrator will be notified of a new post that needs moderation/approval. Likewise members may wish to comment on a particular posting.

This has led to the question of sharing related information between User Group Blogs. This question arose recently when I had information on Windows Vista I wished to share on the APCUG Blog. Not having permission to post, I contacted Don Singleton and he suggested using "trackback". Being new to blogging and having only recently set up the SWIPCC Blog, I did not have any idea what Don was referring to. Undaunted, I delved into the subject and this report is the sum of what I have learned.

The information to be detailed here deals specifically with the Wordpress Blogging package available free at <http://wordpress.org>.

The principals and procedures should apply to all Blogging packages which have the track back feature.

First – what is a trackback?

Trackbacks – also known as pingbacks is a method of having two different Weblog articles linked together. Let's say I write an article on the latest and greatest gadget and want to link to a similar article on a different Weblog. First I need to find out the trackback URL of the Weblog post I wish to link to. If the Weblog is using Wordpress, open the post comments and just above "Leave a Reply," you will see trackback which is hyperlinked. Right click and copy the link. Return to your Weblog and enter your post as normal, scroll down the page and locate "Send trackbacks to:" and paste the URL in the space provided. Save and publish your post and in a few moments an excerpt and Linkback URL should appear in the comments of the article you wish to link to. Well maybe it will.

Things to be aware of:

Do not enter trackback more than once and do not enter the URL of the Weblog site. Doing so will risk confusing the trackback script and result in no valid trackbacks being sent. The trackback URL can have several forms:


- <http://www.swipcc.org/blog/?p=123>
- <http://www.swipcc.org/blog/2007/01/25/sample-post/>
- <http://www.swipcc.org/blog/archives/123>

The last two use .htaccess re-write rules which is beyond the scope of this article.

If you have the Askimet Spam blocker plug-in activated it will block the trackback from being sent to moderation. The administrator will have to monitor Askimet Spam and determine if the trackback is legitimate and whether to accept it. Once approved, the trackback will be posted and no further moderation is necessary.

Note: You should consider contacting the administrator before sending a trackback. The administrator may not wish to have trackbacks. Be Considerate. That's it. A nifty tool Web Administrators can use to advantage.

*By George M. Holloway, Webmaster, Southwest International PC Club, Texas
<http://www.swipcc.org>, gh6539@sbcglobal.net*



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The Big Red X

How to guide

by **Vinny La Bash**, a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida
www.spcug.org, labash@spcug.org

Email, along with the spreadsheet, is one of the greatest computer applications ever developed. Along with its usefulness are a few minor, but irritating inconveniences. The one we'll address in this article is the frustration with observing a red X where an image should appear.

There are several possible causes for pictures failing to materialize. They are not particularly difficult to correct, but the method is far from obvious. Start by right-clicking the red X and from the popup menu select "Show Picture". If this works, consider yourself blessed. More likely is that either your email setup is not allowing the picture to be viewed or the sender's options are not allowing the picture to be sent. Let's make sure that your setup isn't causing the problem, and then we'll figure out what to do with the sender.

If the problem is at your end, it could be caused by having Internet Explorer's email settings too restrictive.

To reset the default settings for Internet Explorer 6.0 open Internet Explorer, click Tools from the top menu bar, and select Internet Options.

1. Click on the General tab to make sure it's active.
2. Click Delete Files.
3. Check Delete All Offline Content, and click OK.
4. Click the Delete Cookies button, and click OK.
5. Click the Settings button.
6. Set cache to 25 MB or less, and select Every Visit to Page, then click OK.

Next, make the Security tab active by clicking on it. There are four zones listed on the security tab: Internet, Local Intranet, Trusted Sites, and Restricted Sites.

1. Click Internet.
2. Click the Default Level button.
3. Repeat the steps for each of the remaining zones.

Third, click on the Privacy tab, and click the Default button. If the Default button is grayed out, ignore this step. Now click the Connections tab.

1. Click the LAN Settings button.
2. Make sure nothing is checked, and click OK.

Last, click on the Advanced tab.

1. Click Restore Defaults.
2. Click Apply and OK.

Internet Explorer 7 is similar, but there are enough differences to warrant its own set of instructions. Open Internet Explorer, click Tools, and select Internet Options.

Continued on page 53



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First, look at the General tab.

1. Click the Delete button.
2. The Delete Browsing History dialog box appears. Click the Delete Files button.
3. Select Yes in the confirmation box.
4. Repeat step 2 for the Delete cookies, and Delete history buttons.
5. Click Close.
6. Click the Settings button in the Browsing history section.
7. Select "Every time I visit the webpage," then set the "Disk space to use" value to 50 Megabytes or less.
8. Click OK.

Next, click the Security tab. There are four zones listed on the security tab: Internet, Local Intranet, Trusted Sites, and Restricted Sites.

1. If the Set all zones to default level button is not grayed, out click it and you're done with this section. Otherwise continue with step 2.
2. Click Internet.
3. Click the Default level button (if it is not grayed out).
4. Repeat the steps for the remaining zones.

Click on the Privacy tab, and click the Default button unless it's grayed out. Then click the Connections tab.

1. Click the LAN settings button to activate another dialog box.
2. Make sure nothing is checked, and click OK.

Finally, click on the Advanced tab.

1. Click the Restore advanced settings button. Don't, repeat don't click the Reset button as that will delete any forms and passwords saved through auto-complete.
2. Click Apply and OK.

That takes care of your browser. If you're using Outlook or Outlook Express, you need to check several more options that control how images are received or sent. There are two ways to send pictures in Emails. You can embed the picture in the email or you can send the picture as an attachment. Whichever way you choose, you need to set your email client so it can handle pictures, and you do that by setting your email to work in HTML format. We'll start with Outlook Express and finish up with Outlook.

We'll make a big assumption that all of your recipients are set up to receive their Email in HTML format. You need to make sure that you have Outlook Express set up to send Email in HTML. Service Pack 2 should be installed on your system. Because of its extra security features, you need to avoid blocking attachments when you send or receive email.

1. Open Outlook Express, go to the Tools/menu, and click "Options",
2. Click the "Send" tab, and then select "HTML" as the format to send mail.
3. Click the Button to the right that's named "HTML Settings", and put a check in the box that says "Send Pictures with Messages". Be sure that "Quoted Printable" is the selected in the "Encode text using" box.
4. Click OK.
5. Click the Read tab.
6. Confirm that the "Read all messages in plain text" is not checked.

Your machine is now setup to correctly send and receive images. If people who are receiving your email complain about red Xs, send them these instructions. If you want to check out your system, try sending some emails to yourself.

If you're using Outlook, perform the following check.

1. Open Outlook and select Options from the Tools menu.
2. Select the Mail Format tab.
3. In the "Message format" section select HTML from the drop down menu.
4. Click the Internet Format button
5. In the HTML options section, confirm there is no checkmark in any of the boxes in the dialog box.
6. In the Outlook Rich Text options section, select "Convert to HTML format" from the drop down menu.
7. Click OK to save the settings.
8. Click OK to exit.

Other possibilities that could prevent pictures being displayed in your email are your anti-virus and firewall settings. You may need to relax the security settings on these programs. We can't provide instructions for this because we don't know whose software you're using. You may need to contact the producer of the software for information. If you create and send an email with a photo image or forward an email with a photo in it and the recipient gets a red X instead of the picture, you can be fairly confident that their email, firewall or anti-virus setup is preventing the picture from being seen. Send these instructions to them.

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

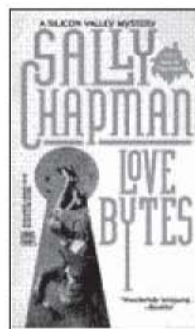


scenes at a time when it was a fairly new technology -- the crimes were rehearsed using VR -- and a few details about computer-assisted embezzling. Chapman is a University of Texas graduate who worked for IBM for nine years.

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 mur-

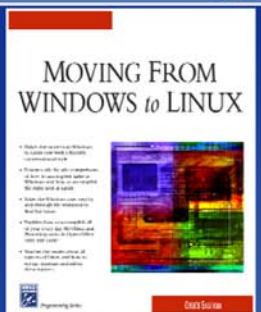


dered, they partner with the police to find the killer.

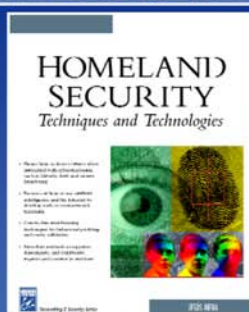
The techno-highlights are a virtual reality wedding, with all the guests plugged into the ceremony on a computer-generated Saturn and a precious scene where Julie, sprawled on the floor in her purple chiffon bridesmaid dress, fixes the VR server while a dozen engineers look on in male chauvinist humiliation. 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.

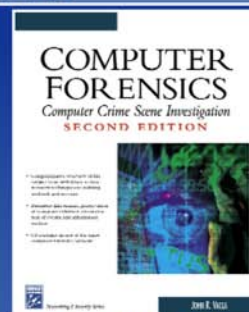
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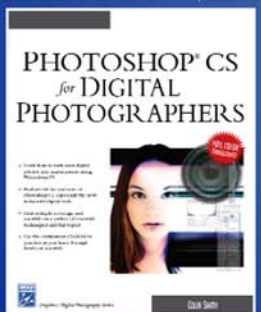
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



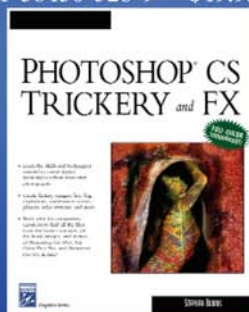
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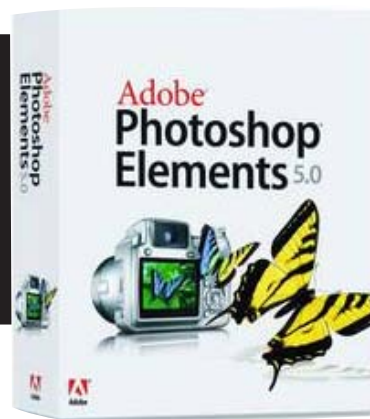


Adobe Photoshop Elements 5

\$99.99

Published by Adobe

Reviewed by Nancy Dennis, Membership Chair, Sarasota PCUG, Florida,
www.spcug.org, membership@spcug.org



Adobe Photoshop Elements 5 is a photo editing and organizing program that also includes easy to use features to backup your photos, and really fun creative ways to show off your photos to family and friends.

Adobe Photoshop is the top of the line photo program for the professionals and costs hundreds of dollars. Elements (under \$100) has many of the same features as the professional version with a lot of fun and easy features added in, making it the software choice for the non-professional user like you and me.

The software installs the Adobe Photo Downloader in your system tray and is ready instantly whenever you plug in your camera or memory card. Your photos are downloaded into the Organizer where you have easy access to them for viewing, tagging, creating collections, printing, emailing, creating all the fun projects, or switching to the Edit mode for a Quick Fix or Full Edit. Your photos are identified by Elements in Catalogs. You can have multiple catalogs for different users of your computer in the family, or say for photos that you may use for work which you want to keep separate from home photos. You can even use the Organizer to select photos to order prints online or size and send through your email client. Your photos are managed by date with a timeline across the top of the screen that is very easy to navigate when you are looking for a photo at a specific time on the calendar. The Tags and Collections feature takes a few extra minutes when you first download the photos, but sure makes it easier to select certain photos when you are ready to create a project. Tags can be given for photos of specific family, friends or places and events. Collections work in a similar fashion but could include several different people, say in a vacation.

Since software packages come with little or no manuals, I find that one of my first places to explore is the Help feature. The Adobe Help Center, which is on the Help menu, includes a very extensive index of help on the program as well as hyperlinks to video tutorials on the Adobe web site. The Help Center includes a very good Search tool with easy navigation and even a Bookmark feature where you can bookmark a topic that you may want to return to again quickly. I was also offered free online tutorials from Adobe after I registered the software. Be sure to take advantage of this offer. There are eleven video tutorials that give a very good overview of everything from getting your photos into Elements to creating fun creative projects. Another quick way to get to help on any of the tools on the screen is to hover your mouse over the tool and a link appears that takes you directly to the Help Center on that tool. You will find that you don't miss the manual with this complete Adobe Help Center.

When the Elements program starts there is a Welcome Screen where you can choose to open the Organizer, Quickly Fix Photos, Edit and Enhance Photos, or Make Photo Creations. Once you decide which mode you want to begin with you can set the Welcome Screen to always open in that mode or stay with the Welcome Screen. Since you need to open a photo in order to edit it or select several photos for projects it made sense to me to always open in the Organizer mode.

With a right click of a photo in the Organizer you can select the Go to Quick Fix feature as a truly "quick fix". With this feature you are able to fix the most common problems with your photos without having to know any of the more advanced features. Now mind you the advanced features are in Elements, but you may find that you seldom need to go into that mode to get the results that you want. With Quick Fix mode you have auto buttons for lighting, color, sharpen and red eye. Then if the auto button doesn't quite get the photo like you want there are fine tuning levers to adjust to finish the job. If you just can't get the look you want you can click the Full Edit tab from this window and go into the more fully featured mode of Elements to complete the task.

Some of the new features for editing in Elements include correct lens distortion, sharpen blurred edges, fine-tuning with curves, creating dramatic black and whites and support for raw files. One of my very favorite features of Elements in the Full Edit mode is the Artwork and Effects Palette. From this palette you can pick from dozens of backgrounds, frames, graphics and shapes. Then select a

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style for that object from a dozen more selections and just drag and drop onto your photo. This palette includes different themes for effects, filters for effects and text styles, all applied with a double click. There is even a Favorites area where you can drag an effect that you especially liked and want to get back to quickly. A couple other favorites of mine in the Full Edit mode are the Adjust Color for Skin Tone and the Spot Healing Brush. If you have a photo where the skin color just doesn't look right you can use the Adjust Color for Skin Tone feature to quickly change the skin tone by using the eyedropper over the skin. If you want the result a little more tan or blush there are easy adjustments in that same dialog box. The Spot Healing Brush works wonders for those marks and blemishes just by clicking over the area. There is also a new feature called Magic Extractor that provides an easy wizard to extract an object (or person) from your photo. Again there are fine tuning options in this wizard if the extraction is not quite what you want. I found that this features works very well. The red eye fix in Elements 5 is by far the best red eye fix that I have used in a photo editing program. There is even an option to have red eye corrected as your photos are being downloaded from the card reader.

Elements 5 has added a Back-Up and Restore feature that allows you to back up your photo catalogs to a server online (you have to sign up for this service). The online back up service through Adobe Photoshop Services gives you a 30 day free trial. There is also a Back-Up feature that will do Full and Incremental back ups of your catalogs to a CD or DVD, another drive, or another folder on the hard drive. This feature is Wizard driven and makes this very important task quick and easy, without leaving the Elements software. This feature is right there on the tool bar along with all the other online services.

Once you have your photos downloaded, edited and backed up it is time for the really fun part of Elements 5 – creating projects like photo book pages, photo layouts, album pages, greeting cards, CD and DVD jackets and labels, slide shows, VCD's with menus, photo galleries and flipbooks for the web, photo calendars, and PhotoStamps. Most of the print projects can be printed on your own printer or ordered through an online service that can be set up with a wizard right in Elements. I didn't register for the online service but was very tempted by some of the neat projects that can be created and then sent off for printing and delivery. For instance the photo calendar can be created with 12 of your photos and then step through the wizard to choose the cover, page layout, and title, etc. Then through the wizard the calendars will be printed, bound and mailed – what a great idea for Christmas gifts!



I decided to create a slide show with photos taken at Disney World. After selecting the photos from the Organizer and then selecting Slideshow from the Create menu the wizard started with slide show preferences and then the main Slideshow Editor opens with very full featured options that are available in most of the stand alone slide show programs. This feature is like a program within a program – I am really impressed with the scope of the Slideshow Editor. There are transition options, panning and zooming, audio and narration, and adding blank sides and graphics and text.

Once you have the show the way you like it the Output feature opens another wizard for options to save the show as a file, burn to disc, e-mail the show or send to a TV. The wizard works great burning to a Video CD format. (The only option that I would like to see added would be to burn to DVD.) If you have several slide shows that you would like to burn to one CD you can select the Create a VCD with menu and the wizard will allow you to add multiple slideshows and then create a menu before burning.


The next project I tried was to create a Photo Gallery. With the same Disney photos selected the Photo Gallery opens a wizard with three types of galleries; Web Galleries, Animated or Interactive. With Web Galleries chosen the wizard asks for arrangement of the photos on the page and a style with both options showing thumbnails of how your choice will look. Next the wizard opens a dialog window with more options to customize, such as Gallery Title and Slideshow duration and effects. You then can select where to Share the gallery; either choose Do Not Share (which saves to your hard drive), Photoshop Showcase (more about this later), My FTP Site, or CD. I also tried the Animated and Interactive galleries with the same photos. The wizard makes creating these very complex shows a breeze. If you don't know how to publish to your web space a dialog box offers simple steps to help with that task, or you can register and sign on to the free Adobe Photoshop Elements Showcase feature. This is an online community for users of Elements to upload and share their photos and galleries.

Each project that you create and save is added to the Organizer at the top. If you want to edit a project you just double-click the project file and the wizard that was used to create it opens. All of the print projects like the Photo Book Pages, Photo Layouts and Album Pages, are saved (with multiple pages when applicable) with a .pse extension. The print projects are wizard driven and offer step by step selections for size, layout, theme and then additional options depending on the project chosen. I decided to make a print project of a CD cover and label for the Disney slide show that I created earlier. The wizard walked me through the entire process opening Elements in the Full Edit mode with my selected photo and all the layers in the layer palette created – it truly seemed like magic. Since you are left in this mode you can then adjust or fine tune the project before saving and printing it.

One feature that I was not able to try but may be of interest to some reading this review is the ability to download and upload photos from a mobile phone.

I highly recommend Adobe Photoshop Elements 5. There is an upgrade rebate in the box of \$20, so if you are using an older version you can take advantage of that. The price today at Amazon.com is \$69.99 with free shipping and your \$20 rebate makes the total price \$49.99. There are other special offers at local stores and online. Visit Adobe's web page www.adobe.com for system requirements.





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4	5 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	6 Class 1 of 4 *PRR* Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 1 of 4 *PRR* Basic Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. BOD 6:30 - 9:30 P.M.	7 Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M.	8 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	9 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 2 of 5 *PRR* Photoshop Intermediate 1 - 4:30 P.M.	10 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M. Commodore 1 - 4 P.M. Class 2 of 6 *PRR* HTML 4 - 8 P.M.
11 Daylight Saving Time Begins.	12 Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Norris Convention Center R.O.B. Presenter: Trend Micro Develops, markets, & supports anti-virus software	13 Class 2 of 4 *PRR* Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. Class 2 of 4 *PRR* Basic Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	14 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon Home Page Jumpstart (TBA) 5:30 - 7 P.M. (call) Class 1 of 2 *PRR* PowerPoint 7 - 9 P.M.	15 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	16 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 3 of 5 *PRR* Photoshop Intermediate 1 - 4:30 P.M.	17 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M. Class 3 of 6 *PRR* HTML 4 - 8 P.M.
18	19 Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon	20 Class 3 of 4 *PRR* Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. Class 3 of 4 *PRR* Basic Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	21 Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon Class 2 of 2 *PRR* PowerPoint 7 - 9 P.M.	22 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (Dot)NetNuke Portal 7 - 9 P.M.	23 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 4 of 5 *PRR* Photoshop Intermediate 1 - 4:30 P.M.	24 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M. Class 4 of 6 *PRR* HTML 4 - 8 P.M.
25	26 Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon CorelDRAW X3 6 - 8 P.M.	27 Class 4 of 4 *PRR* Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. Class 4 of 4 *PRR* Basic Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	28 Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M. (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	29 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	30 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 5 *PRR* Photoshop Intermediate 1 - 4:30 P.M.	31 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. (Larry will contact class) Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M. Class 5 of 6 *PRR* HTML 4 - 8 P.M.

AlamoPC Organization



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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

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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, Wed.; 10 a.m. to noon

Set 1) March 14, 21, 28, April 4, 11, 18

Set 2) May 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13, 20

Set 3) August 15, 22, 29, Sep 5, 12, 19

Set 4) October 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov 7, 14

OR

Instructors: Cary Hall, Jean Hall

When: Six sessions, Mon.; 10 a.m. to noon

March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9, 16

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 days Tue. or Sat. Choose one set

Instructors: Audrey Henkin, Ed Henkin

When: 6 sessions, Tue. 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Set 1) March 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10, 17

Set 2) May 15, 22, 29, June 5, 12, 19

Set 3) August 14, 21, 28, Sep 4, 11, 18

Set 4) October 9, 16, 23, 30, Nov 6, 13

OR

Instructor: Don Robinson

When: 6 sessions, Sat. 1 to 3 p.m.

Set 1) March 31, Apr 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5

Set 2) May 26, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Set 3) July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug 4, 11

Set 4) Sep 15, 22, 29, Oct 6, 13, 20

Fees: Registration fee is \$10.00

This class will use the Easy Windows XP book, purchase of the book will be helpful and is recommended but is not required.

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 Alamode 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 Alamode where this text appears, you can join APCO Retro simply by going to <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/>

apcoretro/join>

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolute-powercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★★★

CoreIDRAW 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 - \$

Photoshop CS2 Classes are open to any Alamo PC member who has Photoshop 7, CS, or CS2. Students must have one of these software programs on their home computers. All students are provided a CD with images we will use in the classes plus written lessons to go by and practice at home. Texts will be recommended for those who want to purchase their own as reference.

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

Beginning Photoshop CS2:

This course includes Lessons on Tools and Palettes, Adobe Bridge, Resolution, Cropping, Tonal Range, Color Cast, Restoring Images, Colorizing, Cloning Layers, Channels, Extract, Gradients, Camera Raw, Vanishing Point, PDF Presentations. New Students need to attend free CS2 workshops on Thursdays (or a different day if scheduled) during the beginning session to receive extra help (lead by Jane Montgomery) from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

When: May – June; Fridays May 4, 11, 18, 25, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuition Fee: \$90 for new students \$50 for returning students

Intermediate Photoshop CS2:

Lessons on Typographic Designs, Paths and Shapes, Clipping Groups, Layer Sets, Adjustment Layers, Liquefy Filter, Actions Palette, Layer Styles, Adjustment Layers, Contact Sheets, Picture Package, Text Along Path, Creating Links

When: set 1) Fridays March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

set 2) Fridays July 6, 13, 20, 27 and Thursday July 26; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Advanced Photoshop CS2

Lessons on Rollovers, Animations, Warp Tool, Image Adjustments, Creating Curled Edges, Lighting Effects Creating Patterns, Creating Pencil Sketches, Creating Posters and Post Cards

When: set 1) Thursdays April 5, 12, 19, 26 and Friday April 13; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

set 2) Fridays August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Fancy Photoshop CS2 Class 1

Lessons on Custom Brushes, Stamping, Painting, Design Techniques, Creating background, Papers, Template Designs, Photomerge, Creating Kaleidoscopes, Hangovers, Frameups

When: Fridays September 7, 14, 21, 28 and Thursday Sep 27; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Photoshop Holiday Lessons

Holiday lessons using all of the procedures in CS2 (or possibly a Playing Cards class instead)

When: Fridays October 5, 12, 19, 26 and Thursday Oct 25; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Photoshop Calendar Class (taught by Jane Montgomery)

When: Fridays November 2, 9, 16, (skip the 23rd), 30; 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Instructor: Beverly Bihn assisted by Jane Montgomery

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: ★ - ★★★

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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, e-mail Mike at

<webmaster@alamopc.org>

Technical Rating: ★★

Technical Content Ratings

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

Internet And E-Mail - \$

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

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

When: 6 weeks, Wednesdays, 1 to 3 pm
Set 1) March 28, Apr 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2
Set 2) May 16, 23, 30, Jun 6, 13, 20
Set 3) July 11, 18, 25, Aug 1, 8, 15
Set 4) Sep 12, 19, 26, Oct 3, 10, 17

Instructor: Don Robinson

Fees: Registration fee is \$10.00

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: YES call 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 Wed. 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: ★ - ★★

Microsoft Word

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.

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

When: 4 sessions per class
MS Word Basics: Tuesdays, Odd Numbered Months, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.


MS Word Advanced: Tuesdays, Even Numbered Months, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Instructor: Tod Bruning

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★



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

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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.
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- ★★★★ 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 your ad to the Editor, PC Alamo at: editor@alamopc.org. Copy deadline is 10th of month preceeding publication. Classified ads are free to members of Alamo PC.

For Sale 3 Camera Bags - Universal Style 5" wide X 9" long X 6" deep, Sony DSC F828 case with shoulder strap Lowepro Micro 100 Trekker. All in good condition. Contact Bob Ramert rpramert@sbcglobal.net.

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

Wanted Non-profit organization seeks IT Manager. Call 210.688.3371 x106 for information.



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.

