

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

PHOTO AND VIDEO ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

May 2007

\$4.50

Changing the face of digital photography
page 36

How to get home movies into the computer
page 46

How to Guide: Secure your flash drive cap
page 44

General Meeting:
page 9



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Alamo PC Organization

Alamo PC Organization is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase its members knowledge and effective use of personal computers through presentations, instructional programs, other membership services and access to the expertise of other members.



To register for a Class, Study Group or Sr. Comp classes call:

Registration number **210.736.0080**

If you **didn't receive your issue** of *PC Alamode* or have questions about your **membership** e-mail:

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210.736.0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210.226.2460**

If you have questions about advertising call

Joseph de Leon
send e-mail to editor@alamopc.org

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

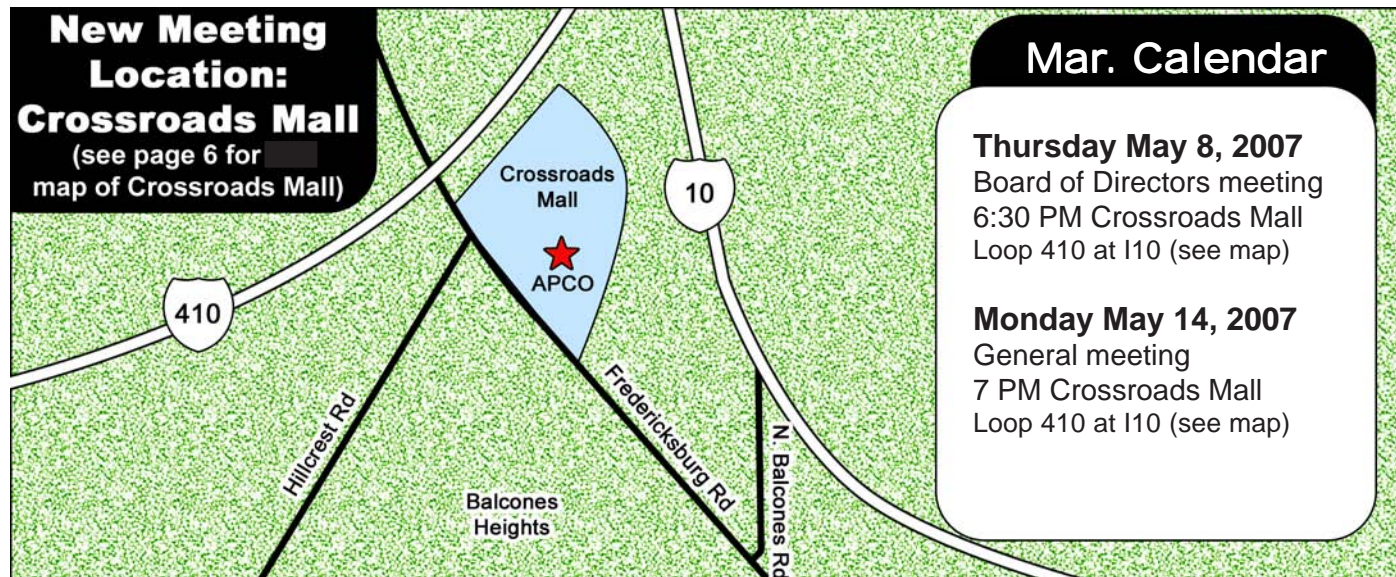
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

Monthly program meetings are normally held the second Monday of the month. Meetings are held at the Crossroads Convention Center (across from the Learning Center) located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 7:00PM. Open to all members and the public.

The Board of Directors meets normally on the Tuesday prior to the monthly General Meeting. The BoD meets at the Alamo PC Learning Center located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 6:30PM. Any changes will be announced via the Voice Mail/Hot Line (736-0700) and on the Calendar of Events. Open to all members.

New Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 6 for map of Crossroads Mall)



Mar. Calendar

Thursday May 8, 2007
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday May 14, 2007
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

Featured this month

Photo

The Changing Face of Digital Photography
Digital Resolution Made Confusing
Picture and Video Files: Size Matters
Digital Photography: Try it, you'll like it

How to Guide

Secure your flash drive cap
Guilty!

Video

How to get home movies into the computer
Buying and HDTV

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PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 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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Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

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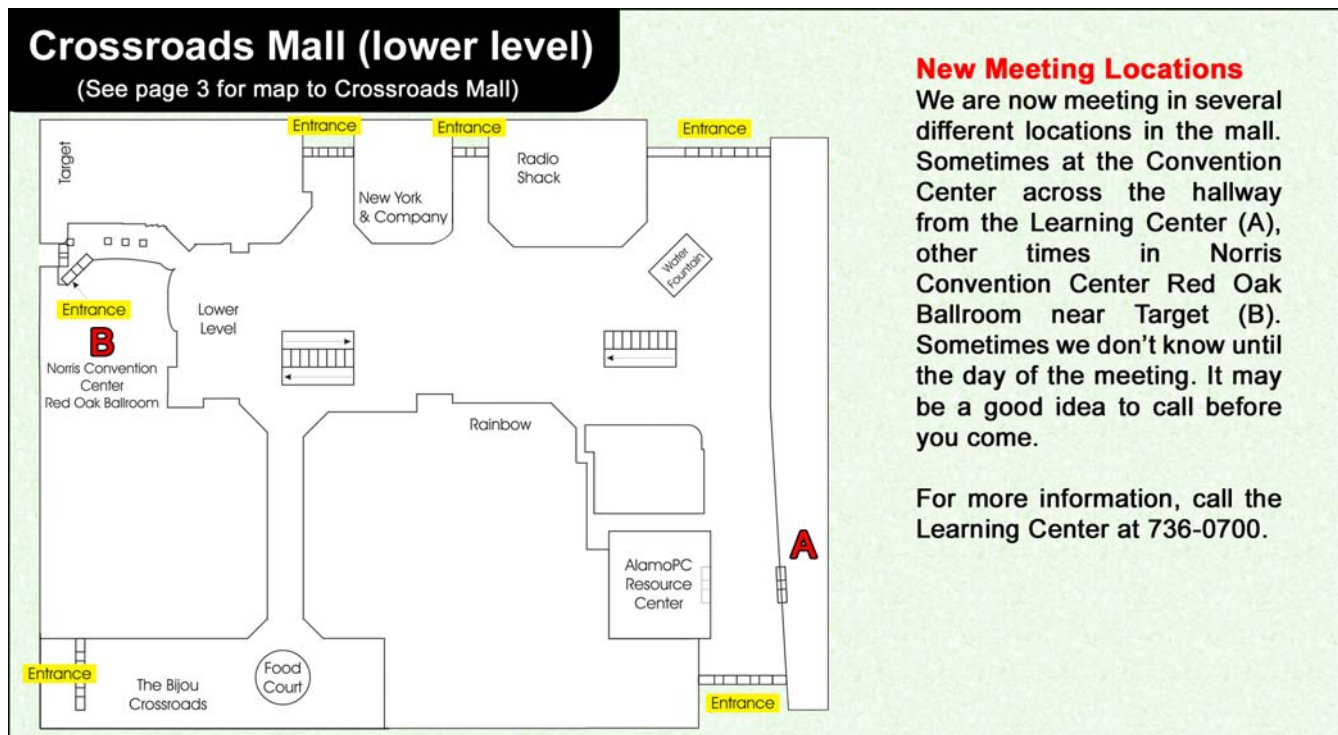
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

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



PC Alamode Links List



Monk-e-mail

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/monk-e-mail/>

Amaze your friends with an e-mailed chimp, which sponsor CareerBuilder lets you send for free. Choose clothes, a hairdo, glasses, and a background. Then, select a voice track or type a text message and your monkey will speak the passage out loud.



Age-o-matic

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/age%20o%20matic/>

It's just like Monk-e-mail, but upload a photo of your favorite person and let the age-progressed hilarity begin! The extent of the progression depends on how you answer questions about your job.

← enter

Happy spring! No, this photo isn't announcing another contest, it's just a beautiful shot of a farm house near Marble Falls taken by Alamo PC member Dean Kennedy. Dean has been kind enough to share the pictures of his various trips over the past few years and I thought it fitting to publish one in this issue. Got any nice pictures of the beautiful landscape? Send them in!

Joseph M. de Leon



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

"May" - May Day, Graduation, Memorial, Meeting

If I am correct, I believe this is the only month to have a day set aside unto itself as it begins - May Day. Around the world, it is usually the time when some of the more powerful countries "parade their military might" before their own people, and tell the rest of the world, "Look what we've got!" This month also marks the long awaited time for many folks in school - GRADUATION! With so many varied schools comes as many varied dates for the event, not to mention "gifts for the victors."

Other May days that are important to someone are: 6th - Nurses Day; 8th - National Teachers Day; 13th - Mother's Day ("I pity the fool" who forgets this one); 19th Armed Forces Day; and 28th - Memorial Day ("Race Day for those who enjoy watching select drives maneuver expensive cars around an oval track at high speed, and occasionally do a little "demolition derby" for the spectators). For the Computer enthusiast, May 14th should be the day to watch. It is the day of the monthly General Meeting for Alamo PC, and should be near the top of the interest list for all members.

At the time of this writing (late Apr) our Programs official had not secured a presenter for the May General Meeting. He was hopeful a Microsoft representative could be scheduled to talk about VISTA (the new OS released in January). Check the website or Learning Center for the latest information, but plan to come and bring some friends. If Microsoft and VISTA is scheduled, with some of the written reviews and comments that I have seen, things should be interesting. Keep in mind that a manufacturer's representative will be telling you a great deal about how good the product is, very little about problems with the product (it hasn't been out very long), how much it can do for you, how much you "need" it, and how "low" the price is for the software "package" assigned to various markets - home, business, etc.

Don't forget that during June we hoping to have Gene Barlow, a 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. For me, his presentations have always timely and informative.

I was gratified to see about 100 people present on April 9th for the monthly meeting. Dave Whittle, a technology and security expert, talked about his "Whittle's Picks." These are hidden gems associated with computer related technologies, helps and security. Believe those present benefited from his visit.

I continue to ask current members to consider 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 - marketing, advertising & sponsors, software for evaluation, general meeting set-up & tear-down, trade shows, learning center volunteer, class teacher, etc. Please remember for this organization to survive WE must each continue to be a supportive member, through renewals and participation at some level.

Continue to 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.

We are also looking at member requested classes to determine if and when a new area of study should be scheduled. If you have a suggestion, let the Director of Education know <education@alamopc.org>. That is how several classes have been started, including the ones in the next paragraph.

The Doctor is In



Each Friday from 9:00am until 12:00 noon

Diagnose your software and hardware problems

Trouble shoot major applications

Run tests

Solve Operating System mysteries

For information call 736-0700



Owner must stay with computer during repairs

Continued on page 9

Don't forget about our popular Digital Camera & Photography classes (4 different levels, each repeated once during the year). Picture opportunities are available throughout the year, not just during holidays. After taking one or more classes, every picture day should be considered a "Photo Holiday," and produce good results.

We are still trying to improve member retention, although new members have almost been sufficient to offset non-renewing members. We continue to try to "grow the membership" through each member renewing and trying to encourage someone to join. 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!

As, I have said before, the future of OUR organization will always rest in the hands of its members. Whether WE continue (or not) depends on OUR interest and involvement. 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 May General Meeting. It will be in a Norris facility (when I last checked it was to be from our Learning Center).

May Program

Bill Klutz

At the time of this writing (late Apr) our Programs official had not secured a presenter for the May General Meeting. He was hopeful a Microsoft representative could be scheduled to talk about VISTA (the new OS released in January). Check the website or Learning Center for the latest information, but plan to come and bring some friends.

The May General Meeting will be in a Norris conference facility (when I last checked it was to be across from our Learning Center).

Obituary

Former Alamo PC president passes

Mark Evan Lauterbach, 73, went to be with his Lord on April 27, 2007. He was born to Paul A. and Ada Lauterbach on August 1, 1933 in Sac City, IA. He was the youngest brother of Ted, Bob, Paul, Ruth and Carl. He was very active in athletics, music and drama. He married Pauline Glass in 1954. Together they had four children: Debbye, Becki, Tim and Pam.

Mark graduated from the University of Iowa in 1957. He proudly served his country in the Army. He worked for Panhandle Eastern Pipeline in Kansas City, KS and National Helium in Liberal, KS. He moved his family to Houston, TX to again work for Panhandle Eastern.

He became involved with small carpentry jobs at the family church and with the booster club at Stratford HS, where his children attended. Later, he began working at Valero Energy, which brought his family to San Antonio, TX. He built a lake house for his family, where he and Pauline loved to entertain family and friends.

He enjoyed spending time with his children and grandchildren and proudly supported the activities they were involved in. Mark retired then opened several small businesses. He loved the game of golf and played as often as he could. He and Pauline became members of Coker United Methodist Church, whose members were very supportive during his illness. He was a lifetime lover of animals, many times taking in strays and unwanted pets.

Mark is survived by his wife, Pauline of San Antonio, TX; his children: Debbye and Pat Hughes of Colorado Springs, CO; Becki and Darrell Kempf of Natalia, TX; Tim Lauterbach of Nashville, TN and Pam and Mike Wozniak of Pflugerville, TX. Also his grandchildren; Matthew, Dillon and Marshall Kempf; Kristina, Nikki and Kyle Lauterbach and Stacey, Stefanie and Shannon Wozniak; his sister, Ruth; a brother-in-law; several sisters-in-law; numerous nieces and nephews and many friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Pipe Organ Fund at Coker UMC, 231 E. North Loop Rd., San Antonio, TX 78216-1896. You may sign the online guest book at www.missionparks.com under the obituary section. Mission Park Funeral Chapels North.

Volunteer of the Month

Pete West



News Brief

Cheap Ink

The Buzz: Line up all the pages you could print using a gallon of ink, and you'd get almost as far as you would on a gallon of gasoline. Unfortunately, that gallon of ink would cost upwards of \$3500. And you thought gas prices were out of control. Well, Kodak aims to change that with its new line of EasyShare all-in-one inkjet printers that make use of cheaper pigment-based ink and special paper. (For a detailed discussion of Kodak's reentry into the full-size printer market, see Danny Allen's Print Shop column, "Kodak Announces New Multifunction Inkjet Printers.") Kodak says a color cartridge for one of the new models will go for \$15, or a little over half the cost of most competing inks. That should drive the cost of printing a 4 by 6 photo down from 25 cents to around 10 cents. A black ink cartridge good for 300 pages will retail for \$10, compared with competing offerings priced at about \$17.

Bottom Line: We'll have to wait and see how the output looks before we can render a final verdict; still, any news of cheaper printer ink--from a company as solid as Kodak, no less--is always welcome.

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Trouble shoot major applications

Run tests

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

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

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Bare Bone Systems
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Location:

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

Show Dates:

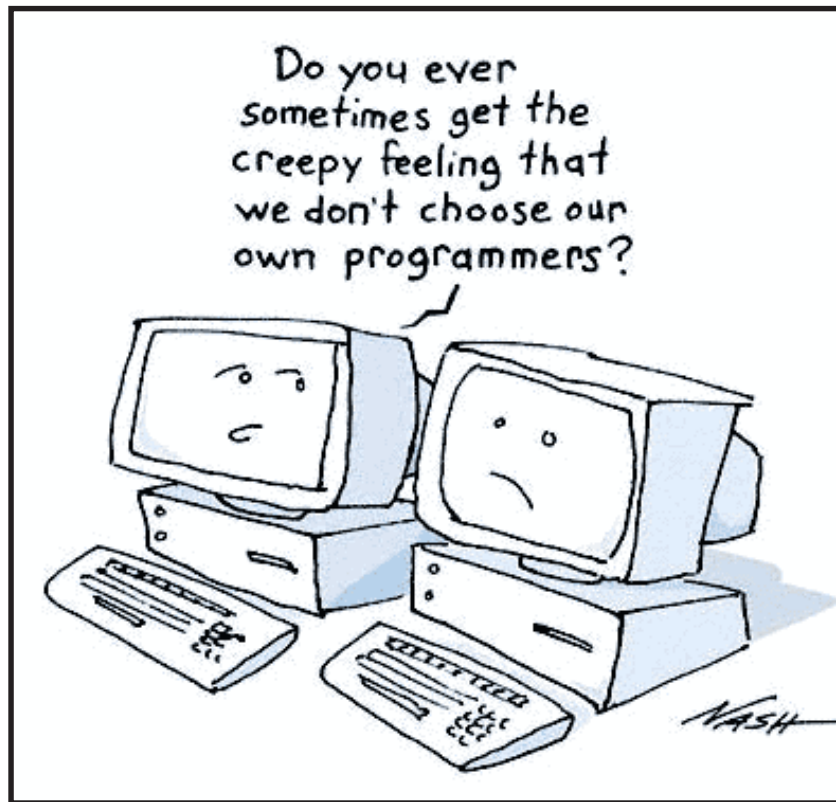
May 12, 2007
June 30, 2007
Sept. 29, 2007
Dec. 8, 2007

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.

We recently worked the National Association of Builders show and it was very large with over four million pounds of freight just to build the booths, and 105,000 attendees. Six large two-story modular homes were assembled in the parking lot for display, one worth over a million dollars, and many booths in the exhibit hall had a second floor. However, something very impressive to me was the Kohler booth. There was a stage for their selling activities and the background for it was a waterfall about 20 feet high and the same wide, but like no other waterfall you have ever seen. Yes, the water was tumbling down in variations, but it did other things. All of a sudden the water would stop its normal waterfall display, and the individual letters for KOHLER would drop formed with water, one at a time, then the entire name would fall, followed by other messages, all spelled out with well formed letters made with falling water. Many other patterns were also formed by the falling water. I watched it for about ten minutes and it never repeated the entire same pattern of messages during that time. It was a highlight of the show and I'm sure that display cost Kohler many bucks. I wish I had asked to see the control room.

*Feedback!

Thanks for the comments that I received on the side effects of medication. Not many responded, but the comments were interesting and so far, the respondents agreed with me, but I would also be interested in other opinions. Perhaps I should start a blog about all this.

*A Little Fun In The Sun

My wife and I decided to introduce our son and his wife to cruising during their stay at our beach condo, and while we did not want to take another Carnival cruise after our last experience, the spring break season gave no opportunity for deals. We finally settled on a Carnival 4 night cruise to Cozumel only because Carnival offered us the best price. We felt that since our son and his wife have never cruised they wouldn't know a good one from a bad one, but we ended up being pleasantly surprised at how good the Inspiration (Carnival's ship) turned out to be. The food was excellent, the shows were fantastic, and all in all, it was a great trip. As expected, it was a much younger crowd, including a lot of spring breakers, but we tried to stay clear of them the best we could, and had a good time. Shopping was fun in Cozumel. That ship did things much better than the Carnival Miracle we previously cruised on. Since the Inspiration was an older ship, there were a few things that needed improvement, but it will be going into dry-dock in September for some refurbishing and hopefully they will improve some of them. However, the shortcomings were nothing serious.

*Here is an announcement, but remember I have not tried this or any of the others, and since I have edited to shorten them, be sure to check it out thoroughly on their Web site.

*Remote Desktop Monitoring is Here, But Think of it as a Spy!

You can monitor the activity of all the PCs in your classroom remotely. Plus, you can share your screen with your students' PCs, making demos and presentations much easier. Classroom Spy Professional from EduIQ.com <<http://www.EduIQ.com>> enables remote interaction between the user on the administrator's computer and users of individual computers, even over LAN, WLAN, VPN and the Internet. Once installed and configured, the program lets you see what's taking place on the screens of remote machines and, if needed, take full control over the mouse and keyboard of any machine. There is also an ability to show your own screen to remote users and execute some administrative operations. The program encrypts screen data as well as mouse and keyboard input.

Because the program can run as a service on Vista, the login page and User Account Control (UAC) prompt are accessible. There is a live picture of the remote computer screens. Due to some optimization, the live screen doesn't use a high bandwidth, but even when the lower network bandwidth is required, the refresh interval can be extended using one mouse click. The activities of any student can be recorded for further analysis and assessment. The teacher can use the existing computer infrastructure to deliver a presentation directly to the screens of remote users.

It's also possible to execute various administrative commands, for example, log off users, turn off, restart, hibernate, or suspend one or all remote computers at once with a single mouse click. There is also an ability to schedule recording of remote computers desktops, and record remote activities, even when there is nobody monitoring the administrator's computer. The capabilities of Classroom Spy Professional can effectively be used not only in a classroom but also in offices.

Classroom Spy Professional 2.4.2 runs under Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista, and costs \$49.95 (US) for a three-computer license. User Group members are offered a 15% discount at <<http://www.ClassroomSpy.com>> using the coupon code PRUG788243. For other types of licenses, please refer to <http://www.ClassroomSpy.com/classroomspy_pro.htm>. Licensed customers are entitled to free technical support by e-mail. Additional information on the product, as well as a free 30-day evaluation copy is available from the Web site.

Direct download link: <<http://www.ClassroomSpy.com/dwn/classroomspypro.exe>> (3.6 Mb)

***A Bonanza of Goodies**

Paul Witheridge from the Sarnia Computer Users Group in Sarnia, Ontario, sent me some items that my readers might be interested in. I'll list them, but be aware that some may already be expired by the looks of the coupon codes. I'm sorry that I didn't have room last month. I'm making them short so I can fit them all in. It's always good to have a friend with a sharp eye.

Acrobat is an expensive product and now they have their product activation which many resent. Here is a deal on another PDF product. How about a \$20 discount on Nuance PDF Converter Professional 4! Coupon code

PDF\$20OFF; <http://www.digitalriver.com/dr/v2/ec_MAIN.Entry17c?CID=0&PN=5&SP=10007&SID=19198&PID=855990&ClickID=dwkrzzowcsmxhoybzkkkt2wmmk0mksc2txw&CUR=840&DSP=&PGRP=0&ABCODE=&CACHE_ID=0>

DealsGuy note: I read a negative review of PDF Converter in the December issue of SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization's DATA BUS. <<http://www.semco.org>>

10% off any purchase at the CA store. Coupon code DecAFFOFF10; <http://store.digitalriver.com/servlet/ControllerServlet?Action=DisplayHomePage&SiteID=caconsum&Locale=en_US&Env=BASE&ClickID=bdesuukdflyvqkgneeezmdyyelyelfmzne>

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10% off Roxio Easy Media Creator 9 Suite. Coupon code SAVE10C9; <<http://www.roxio.com/enu/products/creator/suite/overview.html>>

\$10 discount Roxio Popcorn 2 (DVD copier). Coupon code P2SAVE10; <<http://go.lockergnome.com/657>>. <<http://www.roxio.com/enu/products/popcorn/standard/overview.html>>

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25% off ACDSee Pro Photo Manager. Coupon code AFFPRO25; <<http://www.acdoffers.com/en/na/acdseepro/index.htm>>

\$400 discount TurboCAD Deluxe v12.2 Upgrade; <<http://www.turbocad.com/prodinfo.asp?t=1&mcid=382>> (DealsGuy note: There is a problem with the stated discount, which doesn't make sense, so you should check on where the mistake is.)

20% off Net Nanny products. Coupon code 270355; <<http://www.netnanny.com/>>

\$5 savings on Big Hammer Patio Designer; <<http://www.bighammersoftware.com/affiliates/patio.aspx>>

\$5 savings on Big Hammer Deck Designer; <<http://www.bighammersoftware.com/affiliates/deck.aspx>>

\$10 savings on Big Hammer Garage and Shed Designer bundle; <http://www.bighammersoftware.com/affiliates/garage_shed_bundle.aspx>

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10% off on Markzware (Tools for Printing). Coupon code PILOT10; <http://www.markzware.com/store_usa/>



Do shield laws extend to bloggers?

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

The first amendment to the US Constitution contains a number of important personal rights. It reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Analysis of the amendment confirms why the courts have been given the task of interpreting the language through the years.

One of the important parts of the amendment is freedom of the press. In order to protect the press, approximately 31 States have enacted "shield laws." Journalists are protected by a qualified (limited) First Amendment right protect their confidential sources. Many of the federal circuits have held that a qualified privilege exists. However, journalists are frequently challenged to reveal their confidential sources. This privilege has received attention recently in the New York Times Co. v. Gonzales case that involves the phone records of Judith Miller. An interesting variation to this issue is whether Internet journalists have the same protection as print journalists. A recent case in California has examined this issue. The case involved some Internet web site and Apple Computer.

Apple brought an action in California alleging that persons unknown caused the wrongful publication of secret plans on the World Wide Web to release a device that would facilitate the creation of digital live sound recordings on Apple computers. In an effort to identify the source of the disclosures, Apple sought and obtained authority to issue civil subpoenas to the publishers of the Web sites where the information appeared and to the email service provider for one of the publishers. The publishers moved for a protective order to prevent any such discovery. The trial court denied the motion on the ground that the publishers had involved themselves in the unlawful misappropriation of a trade secret. A California Court of Appeals held that his was error because (1) the subpoena to the email service provider could be enforced consistent with the plain terms of the federal Stored Communications Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 2701-2712); (2) any subpoenas seeking unpublished information from petitioners would be unenforceable through contempt proceedings in light of the California reporter's shield [note: California has a shield provision in the State Constitution] and (3) discovery of petitioners' sources is also barred on this record by the conditional constitutional privilege against compulsory disclosure of confidential sources. The Court of Appeals issued a protective order.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is directly involved in the litigation. The following is extracted from the EFF web site. "The whole mess began in December 2004, when Apple filed suit against 20 unnamed and presumably unknown individuals, referred to in the court filing as "Does," for leaking confidential materials on an Apple product under development to several Web publications. As part of its investigation, Apple subpoenaed Nfox -- for communications and unpublished materials obtained by PowerPage publisher Jason O'Grady. A Santa Clara trial court upheld the subpoena in March of 2005 and the EFF appealed.

"In a 69-page ruling, the 6th District Court of Appeal ruled that bloggers and webmasters are no different in their protections than a reporter and editor for a newspaper. "We can think of no workable test or principle that would distinguish 'legitimate' from 'illegitimate' news," the judges wrote.

"Any attempt by courts to draw such a distinction would imperil a fundamental purpose of the First Amendment, which is to identify the best, most important, and most valuable ideas not by any sociological or economic formula, rule of law, or process of government, but through the rough and tumble competition of the marketplace," they wrote.

"Today's decision is a victory for the rights of journalists, whether online or offline, and for the public at large," said EFF Staff Attorney Kurt Opsahl in a statement. Opsahl ar-

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Continued on page 16

gued the case before the appeals court last month. "The court has upheld the strong protections for the free flow of information to the press, and from the press to the public."

"Apple argued its right to trade secrets trumped Constitutional rights, and it had exhausted other sources to determine the source of the information, even though Apple had not deposed employees who were in a position to know, Kevin Bankston, a staff attorney for the EFF told internetnews.com. The lower court decision agreed, and said Apple's trade secrets rights would trump any journalist's rights to source confidentiality.

"Bankston said the ruling is a win for anyone who uses email. "A lot of people will hear about this decision and think it doesn't affect them since they are not journalists, but it has a broader impact because of the number of email providers, particularly the number based in this district," he said.

"The court read Federal privacy law to forbid civil litigants like Apple from subpoenaing an individual's e-mail from e-mail providers. Instead, the court said civil litigants must subpoena you directly, and if you are a journalist, you can assert your rights of confidential sources.

"So they have to subpoena you rather than doing an end run around your rights and going straight to your e-mail provider," said Bankston.

If Apple chooses to appeal, the case goes to the state Supreme Court. Thus far, the sources for the original story have not been revealed, "and hopefully based on this decision they never will," said Bankston.

This is an interesting issue. The California case is far from over and this issue will continue to be litigated across the country.

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The Uninterruptible Power Supply

Rob Rice, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Rob Rice is a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at <articles@isp.com>

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.

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

Preventative Maintenance Part XII

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

If you can't start your computer, then perform the following actions: Check for loose PC and monitor power cable connections <<http://pcsupport.about.com/od/fixtheproblem/ss/loosepower.htm>>. A loose or unplugged power cable is the number one reason why a computer doesn't start. Perform a "lamp test" to verify power is being provided <<http://pcsupport.about.com/od/toolsofthetrade/ht/lamptest.htm>>. Your computer isn't going to work if it's not getting power. Many computers have power switches on the power supply <http://pcsupport.about.com/od/componentprofiles/p/p_ps.htm> located on the back of the PC's case <http://pcsupport.about.com/od/componentprofiles/p/p_case.htm>. Check this switch, often called the rear power switch, and make sure it is set to ON and then attempt to power on your computer again. Note: On is indicated by the "I" symbol and off is indicated by the "O" symbol. Most monitors have a small light next to the power button that can change between various colors. If the screen is blank, this light is your main source of information.

The next few steps involve troubleshooting with this light as an indicator of possible causes why your PC will not start. If the monitor light is green it typically means that the monitor is working properly and that it is receiving some kind of information from the computer itself. Try restarting your computer again but continue troubleshooting if this is unsuccessful. If the monitor light is amber or yellow it typically means that the monitor is not receiving any information from the computer. This situation could indicate any number of issues with the computer.

It could also mean that there is an issue with the monitor itself. If the monitor light is not on and you've thoroughly checked the physical connections in the first few steps, the monitor may be the culprit. The computer case usually has two LED lights, one to display the power status and another to display hard drive activity. Also, many computers will sound short beeps which are used to report errors. The next few steps involve troubleshooting with these lights and sounds as indicators of possible causes why your PC will not start. If the power light on the case is on, the hard drive light is flashing, and no beep codes sound, it typically means that most of the PC is working properly.

Assuming the monitor is working, the most probable component that needs replaced is the video card. If the power light on the case is on and beep codes sound, it typically means that the computer, during its start-up diagnostics, identified a problem and halted the computer from continuing to power up. Troubleshoot the beep code <<http://pcsupport.about.com/od/nonworkingcomponent/ht/beepcodestb.htm>> and service the computer as necessary. If the power light on the case is off, there's probably an issue with your power supply. Replacing the power supply will likely correct this situation.

Computer Battery

If your computer clock keeps losing time and/or your computer suddenly stops working with no image on the monitor, no keyboard or mouse response, the problem probably is caused by a bad computer battery. The CMOS (Complementary Metal-oxide Semiconductor) battery is attached to your system's motherboard. This battery provides enough power for your computer to maintain data, such as the date, time, and system settings, even when your computer is turned off or unplugged. The procedures for replacing the CMOS battery vary from one motherboard to the next. It's best to check your PC's or motherboard's users manual or the manufacturer's Web site. Installation instructions for the new CMOS battery will vary, but generally, you'll take the following steps. First, shut down your computer, unplug it and any attached accessories, open the case, and touch something metal other than the computer or its components to ground yourself. You may also want to wear an antistatic wristband. Next, remove the old battery according to the PC or motherboard manufacturer's instructions. Attach the new CMOS battery. Close the case, reconnect any data or power cables that you unplugged, and turn on your computer. You may want to double-check your system's BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) settings to ensure that they are correct. You will probably also need to change the clock to the correct time. You might just be able to remove the battery and try to obtain an identical replacement at a jewelry store.

Critical Patches

A recent patch for Windows Explorer, circulated by Windows Update, essentially rendered Office unusable for many people according to a recent issue of PC World Magazine. You can avoid patch crashes by installing these patches at your command instead of allowing Windows Update to automatically download them. You can therefore have a say in their installations. In this manner you can see a short description of each patch as well as its Microsoft's (MS) Knowledge Base (KB) number. You can use that KB number to search for any reported problems at MS' Security Response Center Blog or the company's Windows Update

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security newsgroup. If you decide to install a patch, set a restore point in WinXP. If there's a problem with the patch you can recovery from it.

Deleted Files Recovery

There are several programs that will help you recover deleted files on your computer such as FreeUndelete, Undelete Plus and PC Inspector File Recovery <<http://www.komando.com/downloads/category.aspx?id=2663>>. They all work, but, of course, some may be better than others. It's recommended that you download one of these programs onto a USB thumb drive which can be plugged into your computer. Downloading a program to the hard drive could overwrite deleted data. You can run the program from the thumb drive. It will return a list of deleted files on the drive. Some programs will tell you the condition of the files. Then, you'll have the option of recovering some or all of them. Recommend that you also use an external hard drive. Recover the files to the external drive. You shouldn't write to the hard drive until you've recovered everything. When you finish the recovery, move the drive to another computer. Sort the files. Some may be gibberish; others may be incomplete. But hopefully, you'll be successful. All this may be more than you want to tackle. In that case, consider a data recovery service. Such services can be very expensive. Recovering the data likely would run into the hundreds of dollars. You should be able to find local file recovery specialists. If not, plenty are on the Internet. Do some cost comparison. The recovery specialists will probably examine the drive first. They'll provide you with a list of recoverable files. In most cases, you only pay for the files you want.

Event Viewer

Every time WinXP starts, it begins keeping a record of events that happen on your system. Specially, it records the details of Windows' startup, long-in, the services that start and stop in the course of a session, system crashes, etc. Event Viewer is useful for diagnosing Windows problems and for learning about what's going on with the operating system. It's a good tool to look for clues if an unexplained problem crops up with your computer. To start Event Viewer, select Start, All Programs, Administrative Tools, Event Viewer. Event Viewer's left pane lists separate folders for the three types of events that Windows logs; Application, Security, and System. The System event log can be particularly useful for uncovering problems with hardware devices or with Windows. Click a folder to display the events for that type in the right pane. You can sort the events by type, date or other column heading. The events icons in the right pane indicate their severity: Information, Warning, or Error. If you want more information about a particular event, double-click its entry in the right pane to see its Properties and to read a description of the problem.

Hard Disk Check for Errors

Today's hard drives rarely have errors, so you probably don't need to check for any. But, if you think your hard drive's acting strangely, and defragmenting it doesn't fix the problem, tell Windows XP to check it for errors. Open My Computer, right-click on your hard drive, and choose Properties. Click the Tools tab

and click the Check Now button but leave the two options blank. Click the Start button, and you hear your hard drive whirring away as Windows probes it for problems. If it finds any, follow the Windows instructions for making repair attempts. Also start saving your cash and backing up your data -- repeated errors mean your hard drive may be on its last legs

Hard Drive Problem

If you have a hard drive that runs all of the time, it may be infected by malware or spyware. Those programs will run constantly as they perform their malicious work. It's advisable to install and run antivirus and antispyware software to help you avoid and remove such dangerous code.

Hard Drive Warning

On boot up, you could see a message: "Smart failure predicted on primary slave. Warning: immediately backup your data and replace your hard disk drive. A failure may be imminent." Modern hard drives have built-in monitoring tools. These tools are referred to as S.M.A.R.T., or Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology. These tools look at the internal workings of a hard drive. When they detect a problem, you should get a warning. Any number of things can trigger a warning message. It could be a result of overheating inside the drive. Or, it could have to do with the time it takes the hard drive to spin up. When you receive a warning like this, act fast. Back up your data immediately. You should not continue to use the drive. It could die at any time. Hard drives are relatively cheap. Plus you can replace a hard drive fairly easily. There are two kinds of hard drive failures. The first is predictable. This is what S.M.A.R.T. helps detect. The second is unpredictable. You could drop your laptop. Or something inside your machine could fry your hard drive. When this happens, it is too late to protect your data. Also, there are problems with S.M.A.R.T. Not all hard drives and motherboards support it. And the technology relies on several sensors. Legally, a manufacturer could include only one type of sensor and claim S.M.A.R.T. compliance. If so, you might get a warning on specific kinds of failures. Others would come out of the blue. S.M.A.R.T. isn't the only warning service.

Western Digital, <store.westerndigital.com>, has an external hard drive, Model WDXB2500JBRNN which also includes Dantz Retrospect Express backup software. The software turns the drive into more than just a hard drive; it's a backup machine. The Combo Drive supports Window's drag-and-drop feature. You can open the hard drive through My Computer window and drag files or folders into it from your own hard drive. It can also save certain file types or your entire operating system. Western Digital offers the Combo in three capacities: 420GB, 160GB, and 120 GB. All of the drives act as USB 2.0 and FireWire hubs. Each drive has two extra FireWire and to extra USB ports. You can, of course, also use CD's, memory sticks, floppy disks, and several of the other now older generation tapes and/or zip drives to save and backup your files. However, none of the latter options offer as much memory space as the Dual-Option Combo external hard drive.

New Trend: Convert that hybrid

A few small companies will start to offer services and products for converting hybrid cars like the Toyota Prius that currently get around 50 miles per gallon into plug-in hybrids that rely more heavily on electrical power and can get about 100 miles per gallon. But conversion won't be cheap—at least initially. California's EDrive Systems will charge around \$10,000 to \$12,000 to install the extra lithium batteries needed to turn a standard Prius into a plug-in hybrid when its service begins later this summer. At that price, and with gas at \$3 a gallon, it would take around 160,000 to 200,000 miles of driving to break even. But some groups are looking to the do-it-yourself crowd for a cheaper solution. CalCars is working with independent inventors to bring the price of a DIY kit based around an open blueprint to about \$3,000. Mass manufacturing, though, could lower the prices dramatically over time. Andrew Frank, a professor of mechanical engineering at the University of California at Davis said "We can't switch from where we are today overnight. It will take 20 years or more to take the PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) to get into our society," Frank said. Nonetheless, "we can greatly reduce the amount of liquid fuel we use for transportation,"



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New, Best and Worst

Globalization, spam and free software

Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

Robots have come a long way in the past 85 years or so. The first "Robot" appeared in a Capek play in 1920 as an artificial worker. The word was derived from the Czech "robota," meaning labor. In the 1940s and '50s Asimov created the intelligent robot R. Daneel Olivaw, indistinguishable in looks and behavior from humans. Asimov did not specifically equip his robots with computer brains since computers were still thought of as fancy calculators and Artificial Intelligence had not yet been defined. That happened during the 60s, and the computer HAL 9000 in Clarke/Kubrick's 2001 Space Odyssey became a famous example of a computer with an intelligent brain, seemingly capable of using its own free will.

To this day artificial intelligence remains an unresolved problem. The question remains to what extent a computer will ever be able to simulate the workings of a biological brain. Although they are sometimes called electronic brains, computers have nothing in common with biological brains. Electronic computers are binary digital, in that the basic elements can only be "on" or "off." A biological brain is analog and its basic elements (synapses) can assume a continuous range of values. The materials of construction are totally different. The complexity of the brain is orders of magnitude greater than that of even the most advanced computer. And the most important difference lies in the way information is processed.

Electronic computers are literal-minded idiots. They need a program that tells them step-by-step how to do a task, and they'll follow their instructions in sequential order. With a given input there is just one possible result (although not always what's expected!). A robot with such a brain is totally predictable – no whimsy, no learning from experience. It never gets bored either.

On the other hand, the 100 billion or so connections in the human brain, called synapses, can assume many states, from off to fully on. They are also very highly interconnected, with some of them connected to as many as 10,000 others, and the state of each synapse depends on the states of the synapses it is connected to. In other words, the brain operates in an extremely parallel fashion. Every thought and every observation affects millions of the synapses in a process we know as learning from experience.

The structure of the brain makes it a relative slowpoke in performing the straightforward serial operations that electronic computers excel in. But because it learns from experience the brain excels in performing very complex tasks that are almost impossible to achieve with electronic computers. I can locate my wife in the back of a crowded store from a glimpse of the back of her head. I recognize the sender of a letter from his handwriting. I know the difference between happy and sad, love and hate, loyalty and treachery. Try that on your laptop. They are tasks I know how to do without knowing how to provide step-by-step computer instructions.

The mode of operation of the brain has been emulated with electronic computers imple-



menting so-called neural networks. The way synapses interact and modify each other's states has been simulated in software modules, called neurons, combined in highly parallel networks. Even with a very limited number of neurons these systems achieve startling results in performing tasks that are almost impossible to achieve with traditional programming.

Neural networks are used in applications such as vehicle control, handwriting recognition, medical diagnosis, chess games, facial identification, and email spam filtering, amongst many others. Significantly, they are not programmed in the traditional way but are trained by example and experience, trial and error, similar to the way living beings learn. Values of the neurons resulting in correct answers are increased and values leading to incorrect answers are decreased. It is frustrating that there is no way of telling how and why the neural networks perform as well as they do, even when the number of neurons is fairly small.

It is not inconceivable that someday someone will implement the hardware equivalent of biological synapses connected in a 3-dimensional network to simulate a biological brain. What all could we expect of a robot with such a brain? Given visual, auditory, and tactile sensors, it would almost certainly recognize its operators. But would it appreciate a good joke? Without the powerful stimulants of sex, greed, and ambition, what would motivate it, if anything? We might expect it to be superior at logical reasoning, but could it have artistic creativity? A possible Einstein, but never a Beethoven?

Intriguingly, would it have a will of its own to distinguish it from the robots with a serial electronic brain? It is difficult to see how this could be. Free will assumes that there is a choice between alternatives, a fork in the road. Who or what is going to make the decision which road to take? If the brain's hardware determines which road is preferable, the outcome is predetermined and there is no free will involved. If the choice is made randomly the outcome is not predetermined, but we can't call that the action of a "conscious" free will. Scientists, philosophers and theologians have not yet agreed on what this consciousness is, or if it is a figment of our imagination.

Humans feel certain that they can do things "out of their own free will," even in the face of the compulsive behavior of addicts, repeat criminals and persistent nail biters. We make some important decisions over the years that affect us the rest of our lives. Choices of schooling, marriage, career, emigration for some of us. What is it in our brains that set us on the chosen courses? If our brains did not determine the outcome based on the states of its synapses, what was it that chose which road to follow? Maybe after all, we too "ain't nothing but robots?"

Think about this next time you are tossing and turning in the dark. You'll be asleep in less than no time!

(Inspired by articles about the brain in TIME magazine of 1/29/07)

News Brief

Bricks now have intelligence

Lego expects to release software, hardware and Bluetooth developer kits. The firmware code and the developer kits should be available by August when Mindstorms NXT is publicly available. 114 Mindstorms fans have been taking part in an invite-only developers program. The idea is that they will be able to write books about Mindstorms, as well as create new software and designs for it. the developer program participants are now free to discuss their projects, and much of that work should begin appearing on the Mindstorms Web site <http://mindstorms.lego.com/?domainredir=www.mindstorms.com> soon. the Bluetooth developer kit details the Bluetooth protocol built into the NXT microprocessor. That should enable users to design programs allowing any Bluetooth device to interact with Mindstorms NXT robots



Windows Vista: Various Versions

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

Well, it's finally here and Microsoft has produced a staggering number of versions and price points for Windows Vista. I tend to wonder if their own sales staff know what their selling! So, to assist you in your purchasing decisions, I'm dedicating this article to highlighting the major features and price points of the various consumer versions of Windows Vista.

Vista Home Basic

- No Aero Glass
- No Media Center
- No Mobility Center
- No Xbox Connectivity
- No Drive Encryption
- Can't Connect to Windows Domains
- Full Version: \$200.00 / Upgrade: \$100.00

Vista Home Premium

- Aero Glass
- Media Center
- Mobility Center
- Xbox Connectivity
- No Drive Encryption\
- Can't Connect to Windows Domains
- Full Version: \$240.00 / Upgrade: \$160.00

Vista Home Business

- Aero Glass
- No Media Center
- Mobility Center
- No Xbox Connectivity
- Drive Encryption
- Can Connect to Windows Domains
- Full Version: \$300.00 / Upgrade: \$200.00

Vista Home Ultimate

- Aero Glass
- Media Center
- Mobility Center
- Xbox Connectivity
- Drive Encryption
- Can Connect to Windows Domains
- Full Version: \$400.00 / Upgrade: \$260.00

So, what are these new features?

Aero Glass: This is what Microsoft is telling you Vista's all about. It's the new Windows experience—the user interface. If you've taken a look at the OS using a 3-D graphics card capable of showing Vista in all its glory, it's beautiful. However, since this graphics rendering is GPU intensive, it requires a hefty video card to get the job done. If you don't have a fairly current card with around 128MB of video RAM or greater, you're making a trip to Fry's or hopping online to NewEgg.

Media Center: Most everyone is already familiar with Microsoft's Media Center. Anyone who's shopped for a home PC in the last few years has had Windows Media Center Edition shoved down their throats. Basically, it's an overlay to Windows that allows you to sort and manipulate your media files, like your music and your pictures. Instead of making it a separate operating system in and of itself, Microsoft has now incorporated it into the Vista operating system.

Mobility Center: With more and more people taking their machines on the road, features that deal with mobile issues are more important than ever. In previous versions of Windows, many of these features were available. However, they were scattered throughout the operating system. It was often left to the manufacturer of the laptop to create a third-party application to create a "control panel" application to integrate these tools into a centralized area for easy user control. Vista provides its own utility with tools for controlling your computer screen's brightness, orientation, and presentation; its power management, and its WiFi.

Xbox Connectivity: Microsoft is pushing the integrated home entertainment environment. One of their key initiatives is connecting a streaming media PC to your Xbox 360 connected to your HDTV. In order to be able to do this, you must have a media extender and a version of Windows Vista that supports streaming media from your PC to your Xbox. This allows you to send your video and music files over your local area network directly to your Xbox, anywhere in your house. This can be accomplished over either a wired or a wireless LAN.

Drive Encryption: Microsoft's introduced a new form of hard drive encryption called Bitlocker. It's available on the Ultimate edition of Vista. It requires a hardware component called a TPM chip on the encrypted computer to provide full functionality, or an encryption key stored on a USB key (or on an Active Directory server). The benefit of this, over previous versions of drive encryption, is that the key is required to decrypt the data. Gaining physical access to the drive won't allow a hacker to access the data, which was possible with certain tools in the past. The downfall is that if this key is lost, it is impossible to decrypt the data.

Windows Domains: In the business world, and even in the home market where servers are popping up in home offices, Windows Domains are becoming more common. For a computer to participate in networks where business class servers control these domains, they must be running an operating system that is capable of connecting to such a domain.

There you have it. Those are the major features and price points of the consumer level versions of Windows Vista. I hope that gives you a better picture of your options and helps you when making your choices. Perhaps the next time you go to make your computer purchase, you can let the computer salesman know just exactly what they're trying to sell you!

The Switcher



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

Use your iSight camera as a copy machine

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

I recently ran across a tip in MacWorld on dealing with the problem of making copies of documents when you don't have a copy machine or scanner. You can actually use your iSight camera (which is now built-in to several Mac models) to make digital images of your documents. Simply hold the document up to the camera and click away. This will provide a nice digital image of your document.

VMware vs. Parallels in Windows Virtualization on the Mac

In late February, VMware released its second beta of Fusion, its virtualization software for running the Windows operating system on Macs. Since Microsoft discontinued support for Virtual PC for Mac, this is the primary competition for Parallels. This version includes the ability to run Windows-designed 3-D gaming software, as well as both 64-bit and 32-bit modes, while Parallels only supports the older 32-bit standard.

Analysts say Vista's interface is a step backward

French analyst Andreas Pfeiffer recently stated that Vista's user interface is actually a step back for Microsoft in its pursuit of Apple's Mac OS X. Pfeiffer oversees testing of operating system user interfaces, and what he calls "User Interface Friction." The UIF measures interaction times of an OS to a user. Pfeiffer explained that, while there are aspects that can't be measured, certain elements of the UI slow users down.

Tests run last year (Windows XP vs Mac OS X), and this year, adding Vista to the mix, were benchmarks testing menu latency, common desktop chores, and precise mouse positioning. "Menu latency is the time it takes an operating system to display a menu," said Pfeiffer. "In Windows, it's not immediate. That's not a speed or performance issue, but a design choice." Pfeiffer states that results from the latest UIF data put Windows Vista, and its Aero graphical interface, behind Windows XP. Menu latency, Pfeiffer said, tested 20% slower than XP. "Windows XP was a major step forward from Windows 98, but Vista is back..." Pfeiffer said. Pfeiffer found that the time it took to open a folder, delete files, etc., on Vista running Aero was 14% slower than XP. Pfeiffer's Vista "mouse precision coefficient," measuring accurate response to user input, was 30% percent worse than XP. While the new interface might look "great," Pfeiffer states that "...you realize you're losing time waiting for that."

When compared to OS X, Windows scored significantly poorer in all the benchmarks. "But this isn't a Windows versus Mac thing," Pfeiffer said.

Apple releases Mac OS 10.4.9

Specific changes in the 10.4.9 release include improvements to raw camera file support; handling of large or malformed images that could cause crashes; image capture performance; mouse scrolling and keyboard shortcuts; font handling; playback quality and bookmarks in DVD player; USB video conferencing cameras for use with iChat; Bluetooth devices; browsing AFP servers; Apple USB modem; Windows-created digital certificates; Open and Print dialogs in Rosetta-based applications on Intel-based Macs; time zone and Daylight Savings Time changes for 2006 and 2007, and security updates. Update details can be found at <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=304821>. These updates improve .Mac sync performance and sync issues; fixes for wake from sleep issues with Bluetooth peripherals; changes to iCal; support for USB Video Class webcams in iChat; iSync support for more devices; WPA2 encryption support in Network Diagnostics; performance issues related to Intel iMacs working on high-speed network switches; improvements to OpenGL graphics reliability in World of Warcraft and more.

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News Brief

A new way to manage software

Virtualization provides not only a way to use computers more efficiently, but it also offers a new, relatively painless way to install software. VMware and other virtualization advocates are working hard to promote the software distribution and installation technique. However, licensing constraints pose a significant impediment. VMware, long considered the market leader for virtualization software, potentially changed the virtualization software market by announcing that the upgrade to their GSX Server product would be renamed VMware Server and made available for free to anyone who wants it. Although VMware Server is free to download, test, and deploy, it may not be totally free to run in perpetuity. VMware plans to sell support plans for VMware Server that are anticipated to cost \$350 - \$400 per installation. These plans will be made available once VMware is out of beta and released.

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Making Photos Load Faster

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a former president of Alamo PC. She archives these columns on her Web site, www.susanives.com/. If you visit, you can cut-and-paste the code instead of retyping it from the magazine – the ultimate in lazy Webmastering!

If you've hung around the Web for a while you probably remember when the height of chic was black text on a gray background. Boring – but it sure did load fast. That was also the days when most people had 28.8 modems, so load time was more of an issue than it is now. But don't discount it. Fewer than 10% of the people viewing your site have high-speed connections, such as DSL or Cable. The rest are still viewing your site at dialup speed.

My design relies heavily on graphics. I like my sites to be inviting. But I am careful, always careful, to make my graphics load as quickly as possible.

Size matters

It seems obvious, but just making a graphic smaller will make it load faster. It is possible to manipulate the size of your inline graphic by using HTML code. The digital photos that come from my camera are 2048x1536 pixels. The lowest screen resolution is 640x480 pixels. Let's say I want a photo to take up half this screen, or 320 pixels.

I can force the photo to look smaller on the screen by using these attributes in the HTML code:

```
<IMG SRC="photo.jpg" width="320" height="240">
```

But there's a catch. This JPG straight from my camera is 638KB. That's a lot of download time! If I use HTML code to make the photo look smaller, it will still be 638KB. If I use my graphics editing software to make the photo physically smaller, downsize it to 320x240 pixels, I can get the weight down to less than 165K. Using a 56.6 modem, the larger file would take about 100 seconds to appear on the screen, the smaller photo about 25 seconds.

Drag-and-drop programs make it convenient to resize the appearance of a picture while leaving the original size intact and the download time long. It pays to take the time to physically alter the size of your photos.

Quality matters

Twenty five seconds for one photo is still a pretty long wait time. What else can we do to make the photo smaller? We can decrease the quality. Screen resolution is 72 dpi (dots per inch). If you are used to working in print, you are more likely to think in terms of 300dpi, 600 dpi or even higher. Change your thinking. Anything over 72dpi is wasted pixels when viewed on a monitor. When working with the JPEG format (on-line photos should always be JPEGs) you have a choice of selecting a quality level between 0 and 100, or low, medium, high and maximum. I've found that a low resolution is often good enough, almost indistinguishable from the original. This same 320x240 photo saved at a low resolution is less than 13 KB and will load in about 2 seconds with a 56.6 modem. Saved at a medium resolution still saves you time and space: it's about 21KB and loads in a little over 3 seconds.

Making your images use fewer kilobytes without a noticeable loss of quality is called optimizing your images. Many software programs take the guesswork out of this, including JASC Paintshop Pro and Adobe Photoshop Elements. Both retail for \$99. If your graphics program doesn't do this, one of these programs would be a good investment.

If you would like to test-drive a graphics optimization program, download the 30 day free trial of WebGraphics Optimizer. The standard version costs \$39. A free program is Paint Studio Lite.

Thumbnails and galleries

If you have a large number of photos that you need to display, one way to present them is in a thumbnail gallery. A thumbnail is a small copy of a photo, about 90x120 pixels or smaller. When you click on the thumbnail, it links you to a full-size photo on a new page. Many graphics programs have a gallery wizard that will do this for you. If yours doesn't, you might want to look into purchasing a program such as Thumbnail (get a free trial or purchase it for \$28.99. You can see an example of a gallery. These were created using Adobe Photoshop.

GIF vs. JPG

There are two common file formats for Web graphics: GIF and JPG.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) is a way of compressing graphics to send over telephone wires. It is a "lossless" format, which means it keeps all of the graphics data intact. GIF is limited to 256 colors. It is best used for graphics that have flat areas of color (like line art and text). GIF is used for animations and for transparent backgrounds: graphics where the background color or image shows through.

JPG (Joint Photographic Exchange Group) is a lossy format, which means that some of the file data is discarded in the compression process. JPG should always be used for photographs or other art where there are a lot of color gradations.

Many graphics fall somewhere in between. In these cases it pays to experiment to find the format that gives the best quality for the lowest pixels.

Save your original

A final word of advice. When you start messing with graphics — cropping, adjust color, playing with file formats or bit depth — work off of a copy, not the original. Save the original in its native condition. That way, if you make a mistake, need a higher resolution for a print publication or change your mind about the crop, you have a fallback position. Periodically archive your photos on a CD to clear room on your hard drive.



Adobe Photoshop CS2

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.



Figure 1



Figure 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Figure 3



Figure 4

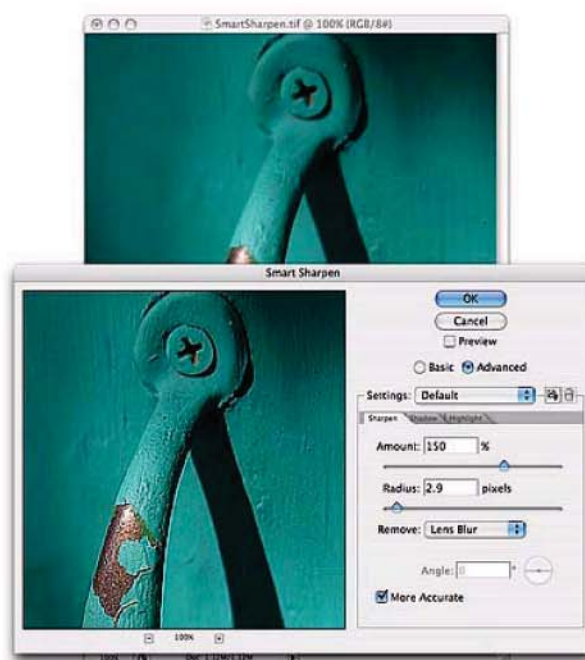


Figure 5

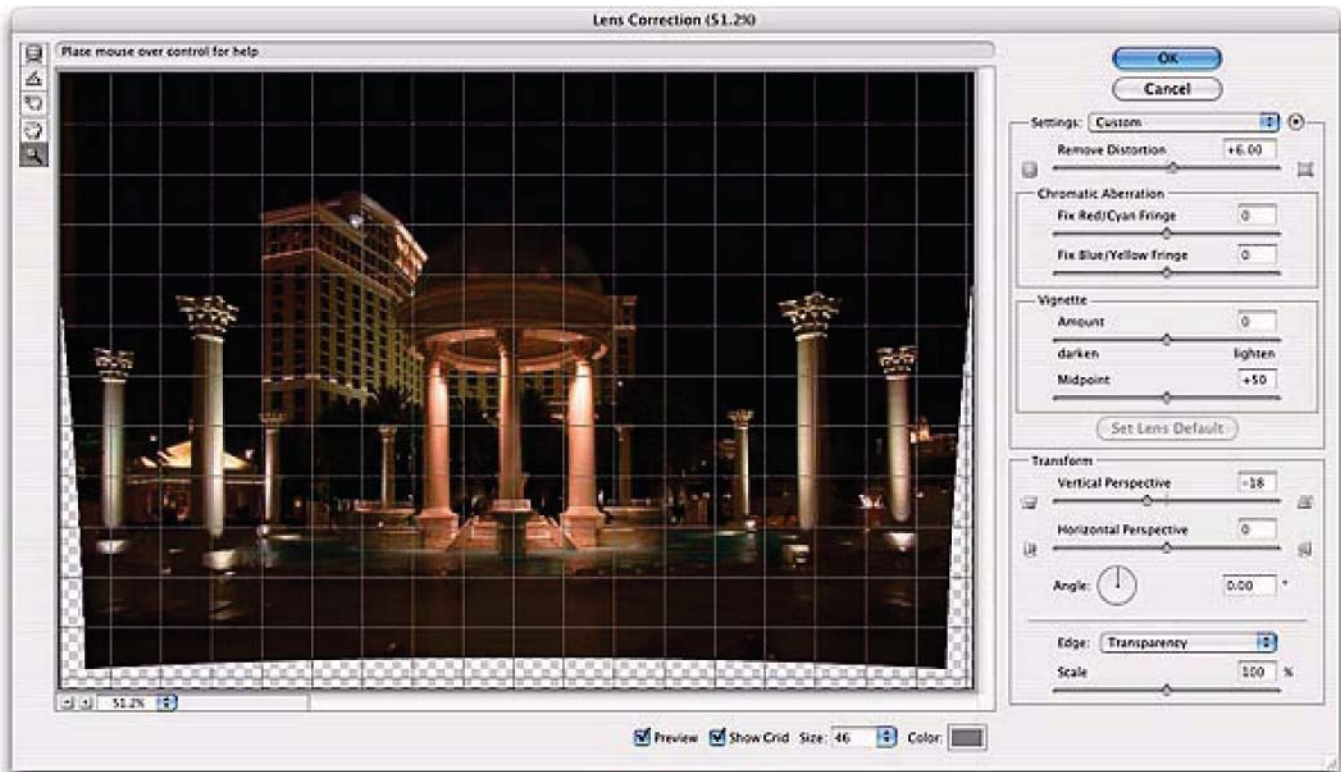


Figure 6

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

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

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

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

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

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

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News Brief

What is APCUG? It's the Association of Personal Computer User Groups.

Do you know that our Club is a member of APCUG?

IF Yes! Then have you explored the many other clubs located in the USA, Canada, Japan and Australia that are also members? If not, you are missing something.

IF No! And you are interested in finding out—click on <http://www.apcug.net>

Oh! Too much to click on, of course. Start with Newsletters ? then Online newsletters? States ? Pick the State you want.

What state should I pick first?

Why not Michigan? The Henry Ford Village Computer Club AND the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. <http://www.semco.org/> are members of APCUG. OR—Find Florida in the list of states & click on Central Florida Computer Society. <http://www.cfcs.org/newsletter.asp> OR—Find the MOTHERBOARD, a publication of the Computer Users Group of Redding, CA. Of course look in the California list of clubs. <http://users.snowcrest.net/ibmpcugr> Ohio is near—check out <http://www.apcug.org/site3/presentations.htm> (Akron Canton PC Users Group) and click on Past Newsletters. Look at all the sites you can contact from their Web site. There are over 300 Computer Clubs that belong to APCUG.

Why Bother?

Of course, to read the Computer Club newsletters—current & past issues— and find what they are doing. Get helpful tips and tricks that other Club members have found and are sharing. If you


find a good one to share, send it to your Editor. Try Canada, our neighbor. Big Blue & Cousins: <http://bbs.bbc.org/newsletter/index.php>

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Microsoft Works - Word Processing Docs

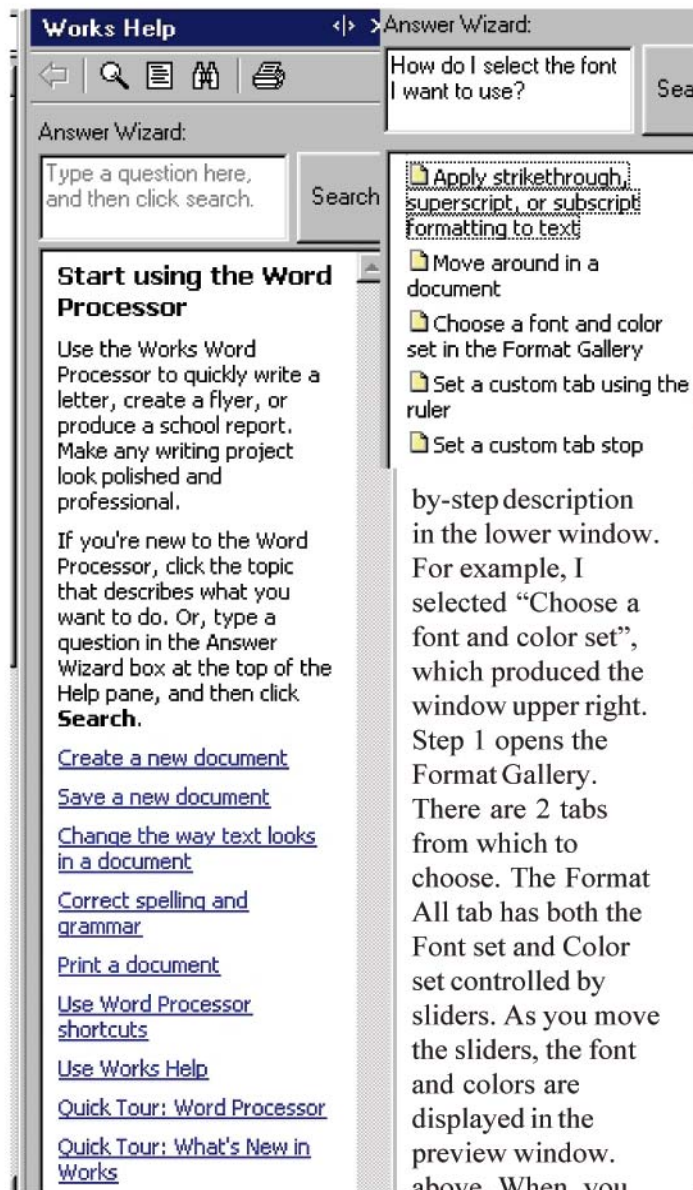
Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC User Group

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 discussed the Toolbar at the top of the Works Help Window. Now we'll look at some of the rest of the features.

The Answer Wizard is common to many Microsoft programs. As you see, it tells you to type a question and then click search.

As an example, I ran the search seen below, which produced 5 answers. Each of the items opens a step-



by-step description in the lower window. For example, I selected "Choose a font and color set", which produced the window upper right. Step 1 opens the Format Gallery. There are 2 tabs from which to choose. The Format All tab has both the Font set and Color set controlled by sliders. As you move the sliders, the font and colors are displayed in the preview window. When you

Choose a font and color set in the Format Gallery

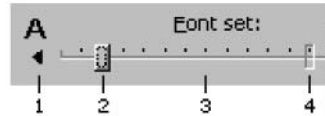
Why choose a font and color set?

1 On the **Format** menu, click **Format Gallery**.

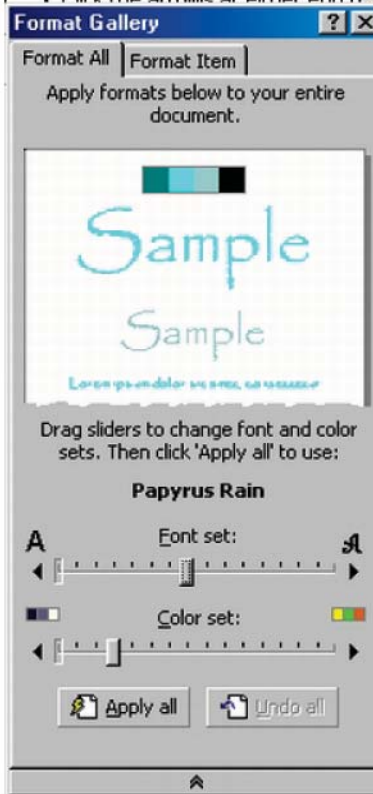
2 If it isn't already selected, click the **Format All** tab.

3 Under **Font set** and **Color set**, use sliders to choose a font and color.

The location of the slider indicates the particular font or color set. As you move along the bar, you see examples of currently selected sets in the preview area, and the names of the sets appear above the two slider bars.



1 Click the arrows at either end of the slider.




find the one you want, click the **Apply all** button. If you're not satisfied with what you've selected, Just click the **Undo all** button to revert to the original settings.

Having chosen the font and color you want to use, you may try another of the processes from those in the Wizard. Let's look at **Apply strikethrough, superscript, or subscript formatting to text**.

Selecting this item from the list opens the window seen at upper right. You may select (highlight) any or all of the text in your document to which you will apply this formatting. That done, you are directed in Step 2 to click **Font** on the **Format** menu. This will open the **Font** window seen at right. Since you have already selected the desired font, style, and color, Step 3 directs you select the checkboxes for the formatting you want to use under **Effects**. Take a look at those in the second and third

Continued on page 33

Apply strikethrough, superscript, or subscript formatting to text

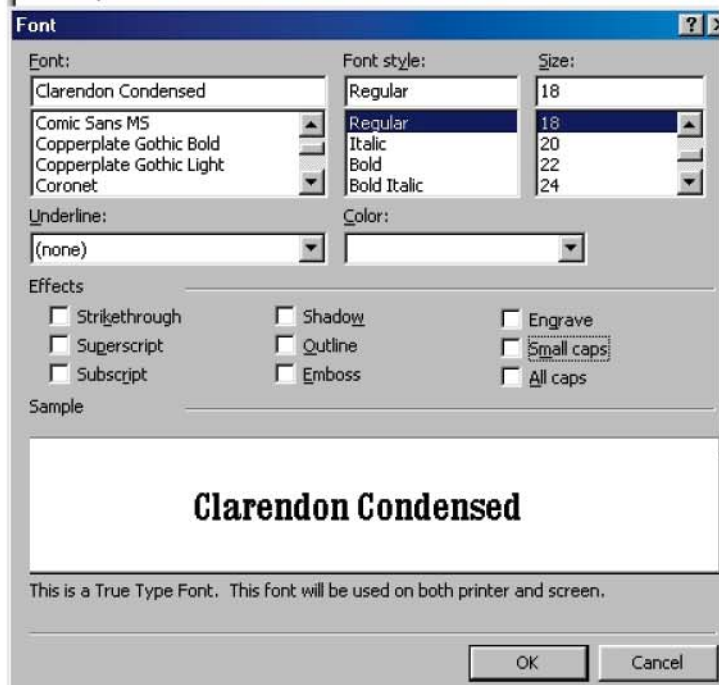
 What is the best way to use strikethrough, superscript, or subscript formatting?

- 1 Select the text you want to apply formatting to.
- 2 On the **Format** menu, click **Font**.
- 3 Under **Effects**, select the check boxes for the formatting you want to use.
- 4 Click **OK**.

Note If you don't like the new formatting, click **Undo Font Formatting** on the **Edit** menu.

Tip

Works cannot apply superscript and subscript to the same text.



tions, greetings or signs. You might also use these effects to create a template for your personalized stationery. (I would suggest that you not do this for you email messages. Although they can perhaps add interest or reflect your persona, they can burden recipients who are on dial up Internet connections.) Save this type of thing for those letters you are going to print.

One final option in the Answer Wizard is instruction on how to move around in a document. Clicking on this item gives you the choices of doing so by scrolling through it by using the mouse, or using keyboard

columns. The first column items are very specific to certain scientific or perhaps editing documents, and will not likely be of use to you. The remainder may be used in a variety of ways to spice up the appearance of your document. This would not be true so much in a letter, but could assist you in creating invita-






shortcuts to move about. Let's look at scrolling through a document. Forgive me if this is something with which you're already familiar. Choosing the scroll option

Scroll through a document by using the mouse

 What does it mean to scroll?

Scrolling means to move quickly through a document by clicking the vertical bar at the right or the horizontal bar at the bottom of the window.

You can use the scroll bars when you want to see a part of a document that doesn't appear on the screen. For example, you can scroll to see information above, below, to the left, or to the right of the window edges.

To scroll	Do this
Up one line	Click the up scroll arrow 
Down one line	Click the down scroll arrow 
To the left side of a document	Click the left scroll arrow 
To the right side of a document	Click the right scroll arrow 
To a specific area of a	Drag the scroll box 

opens the window at left in the wizard.

The main use for scrolling in this case is to allow you to see parts of the document that don't appear on screen. The description at left requires no further explanation on my part, with the possible exception of the last item, **Drag the Scroll Box**. Perhaps I read too much into this, but it took me a little while to figure out that they refer to the bar in the scroll area between the referenced

arrows. I have always referred to this as the scroll bar. It varies in length with the length of the document or list. For a document less than a full page, the "Box" will be approximately equal to the vertical space occupied by the document. For a much longer document or list, the "Box" may be equal to only one or two lines in height. If you drag the box vertically, you may move quickly through the document, instead of advancing only one line at a time.

This explanation should allow you to navigate a document successfully using the mouse. The next option in the wizard, "Use the keyboard shortcuts to move through a document", will show you how to accomplish this more quickly because your hands don't leave the keyboard.. We'll look at this in detail next month. In the meantime, take some time to go through the steps here on your own. Repetition is the key to understanding.

Memorials and Memories

Charlie Sickels, Managing Editor, Hard-Copy, Chicago Computer Society
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In the US, the end of May is a national time for remembering people and events, a time to recall and to honor. Some of it is public; some is personal; it is all profound and deeply felt. It is well and good that we should engage in this process. It is affirming and appropriate that we honor what is worthwhile and often bought at heavy cost. Our lives and society have been affected for good or ill by what has gone before. Some will come again and it is up to us to learn from the past and keep watch on the future.

No less profound, but with less emotional content, is the march of technological progress. This journal is concerned with many aspects of personal computing, what it does and can do, what we believe it will do if properly managed, where it will go. But this may also be a time to consider where it has been, not necessarily how it got here, just what it was like in an earlier era.

Those of us of a certain maturity and extended contact at whatever level with the world of computing can surely recall many steps along the way, glimpses both trivial and meaningful on the decades-long path we have trod. Let us try a hasty and hazy recollection of those steps and share some here.

We refer to the earlier and later days of what has become both common in our lives and essential to them. We speak not of the Cray and Lord knows what other supercomputers are now extant, whether acknowledged or secret, but of the early surge in size and power, names like Burroughs, RCA, Honeywell, and the prince destined to be king, IBM.

We may all remember the Big Iron years of heavily air conditioned big rooms of big machines with rows of tape drives the size of refrigerators, all color matched in IBM Blue, IBM Red, or IBM Gray. Spinning inch-wide tape reels were the size of huge dinner plates and gave way in time to the real and early floppy disks. The machines were handled by skillful computer operators and used information digitally coded by intense computer programmers, the new elite career of the time which sheltered nerds and geniuses alike from the world of the commonplace.

Changes came. Evolution brought "distributed processing", which evolved into microcomputers still with linkage to the heavy hardware and equipped with the arcane language of DOS. Then massive increases in memory capacity enabled the Graphical User Interface, GUI, and the dam began to give way. GUI and Windows fostered independent personal computers, growing from ever increasing memory, speed, and what vendors loved to proclaim, "increased productivity". Then, being linked to the wondrous Internet made having a home computer as reasonable as having a car. Or two.

Fame and fortune has shifted to the little machines spread throughout the land, their developers, their makers, and their users. In our marvels of expanded access to information and communication, this can be a time to pause and honor those who made it all possible by many years of work and logical choices. Most of them are not famous and I do not know their names, but no less do them honor. Those who are famous already have what they deserve, or more.

In honoring ingenuity, I'd like to relate a lesser-known incident from the early days of Big Iron's reign. IBM was establishing new information hubs at major international cities. The Paris center was having mysterious problems with new information tapes and periodic updates. Emergency calls for replacements brought new tapes and similar though slightly different problems. They were undamaged but still faulty.

Poughkeepsie sent an international systems engineering team to Paris to discover the problem's cause and find a solution. They carried a fresh set of calibrated tapes proven functional. They watched them disappear into and re-emerge from French Customs, whereupon they too proved faulty.

Careful inspection revealed that the tapes were a bit shorter. Sure enough, the suspicious French Customs officials were routinely clipping several meters from the start of every tape for later analysis. With this deduction, IBM simply moved the initialization instructions some fifty feet deeper preceded by sacrificial random data. Success was immediate. No protestations needed; no excuses received; no announcements made. We also honor enterprise.

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STUDY GROUPS

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

Tweaking Windows' Taskbar

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

It's easy to use a key part of Windows' screen real estate, the taskbar, without really noticing it. Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components summarize what's happening on your computer and access running software. But unlike your car's dashboard, the taskbar can be customized for individual needs and preferences.

www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/howto/tweaking_windows_taskbar.html

Fun with Windows' Taskbar

I've read reports that most people can't accurately draw their car's dashboard, no matter how many hours or years they've stared at it. Similarly, many of us look at and use a key part of Windows' screen real estate -- the taskbar -- without paying much attention to it.

Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components -- Start button at one end, notification area icons at the other, and application buttons in between -- summarize what's happening on your PC and give quick access to running software. But the taskbar is more interesting than a car dashboard: you can customize it for your individual needs and preferences.

This article describes Windows XP's taskbar; other Windows versions have mostly similar facilities. People sometimes worry when their taskbar disappears or suddenly looks odd -- or moves to an unfamiliar place on the screen. We'll see how such glitches are easily fixed.

Right-clicking a blank taskbar area displays Windows' familiar context menu, showing available options. Clicking Toolbars lets you display or hide built-in toolbars (groups of icons representing programs, folders, or files) or create your own. My favorite toolbars are Desktop (a handy pop-up list which duplicates desktop icons) and Quick Launch (which

holds the few key icons I always want immediately available). Other standard toolbars are Address and Links. Cascade and Tile options specify arrangement of open application windows: fanned like playing cards or arranged in a grid. A key option -- Lock the Taskbar -- controls whether you can change the taskbar. When the taskbar is unlocked, you can change its size by dragging its edge away from or towards the screen's edge. You can move individual toolbars by grabbing their handles (perforated line near each one) and move the taskbar by grabbing a blank area.

Clicking Properties brings up a detailed options dialogue box. It's safe to experiment but only change one thing at a time until you learn your way through all the choices. The Taskbar tab customizes the taskbar itself and its notification area. You can auto-hide the taskbar -- handy on small monitors to reclaim space for application windows. When it hides, moving the mouse near it makes it visible. You can always keep the taskbar on top of other applications, or allow it to be covered. If it's hidden, pressing ctrl-esc displays it.

Similar task bar buttons -- for example, representing multiple Word documents -- can be grouped to save taskbar space, or spread out. If they're grouped, left-clicking the group displays all open files, and right-clicking lets you manipulate the files simultaneously.

You can add and delete Quick Launch toolbar icons by dragging them on or off the toolbar. I trimmed mine to two icons: Show Desktop and Windows Explorer. From a Windows keyboard, these are available by pressing Win-D and Win-E, respectively.

The notification area (called the "tray" in earlier Windows versions) shows icons for small applications or utilities that are running, plus your clock. Mousing over an icon pops up its name. You can control which icons are displayed and whether inactive icons (representing programs you haven't used for a while) are hidden. Each program running consumes PC resources so it's worth monitoring these icons and pruning any which aren't necessary. Right-click an icon to display options. Closing some applications prevents them from automatically starting at system boot, while others offer an explicit option.

Continuing our tour through taskbar properties, the Start Menu tab lets you specify Start Menu appearance and operation. You can pick large or small icons and determine how many shortcuts are saved in it for recently used programs. Key programs can be "pinned" to the Start menu by right-clicking a desktop icon or dragging an icon to the Start button, and placing it in the permanent top area. The Advanced tab determines Start menu behavior and lets you select modern or "classic" Start menu format.

Finally, when the Taskbar is unlocked, three extra toolbar right-click options are available: View, Show text, and Show title, for fine tuning your PC's "dashboard".

While Windows operates just fine as it's installed, tweaking taskbar settings and other options can make it faster and more pleasant to use. And since there are usually multiple ways to accomplish tasks in Windows, it's worth exploring -- for example, right-clicking to explore context menus and clicking various options/customize/advanced buttons to see what's available. Don't be afraid to tinker, but remember what you change so you can undo it!



The Changing Face of Digital Photography

Or, What to Buy in a Digital Single Lens Reflex Camera

By **Jerry Schneir**, a Member of the Los Angeles Computer Society
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When Canon first introduced their dSLR – the Digital Rebel (EOS-300D) in 2003, it was an earthshaking event insofar as digital photography went. They broke the \$1000 barrier and allowed rank amateurs to enjoy (and to be frustrated) by dSLR. Up to that time digital SLRs were priced well above \$1500 and if you wanted something a little bit more advanced, it could easily cost \$3,000 or more, and more was the operative word.

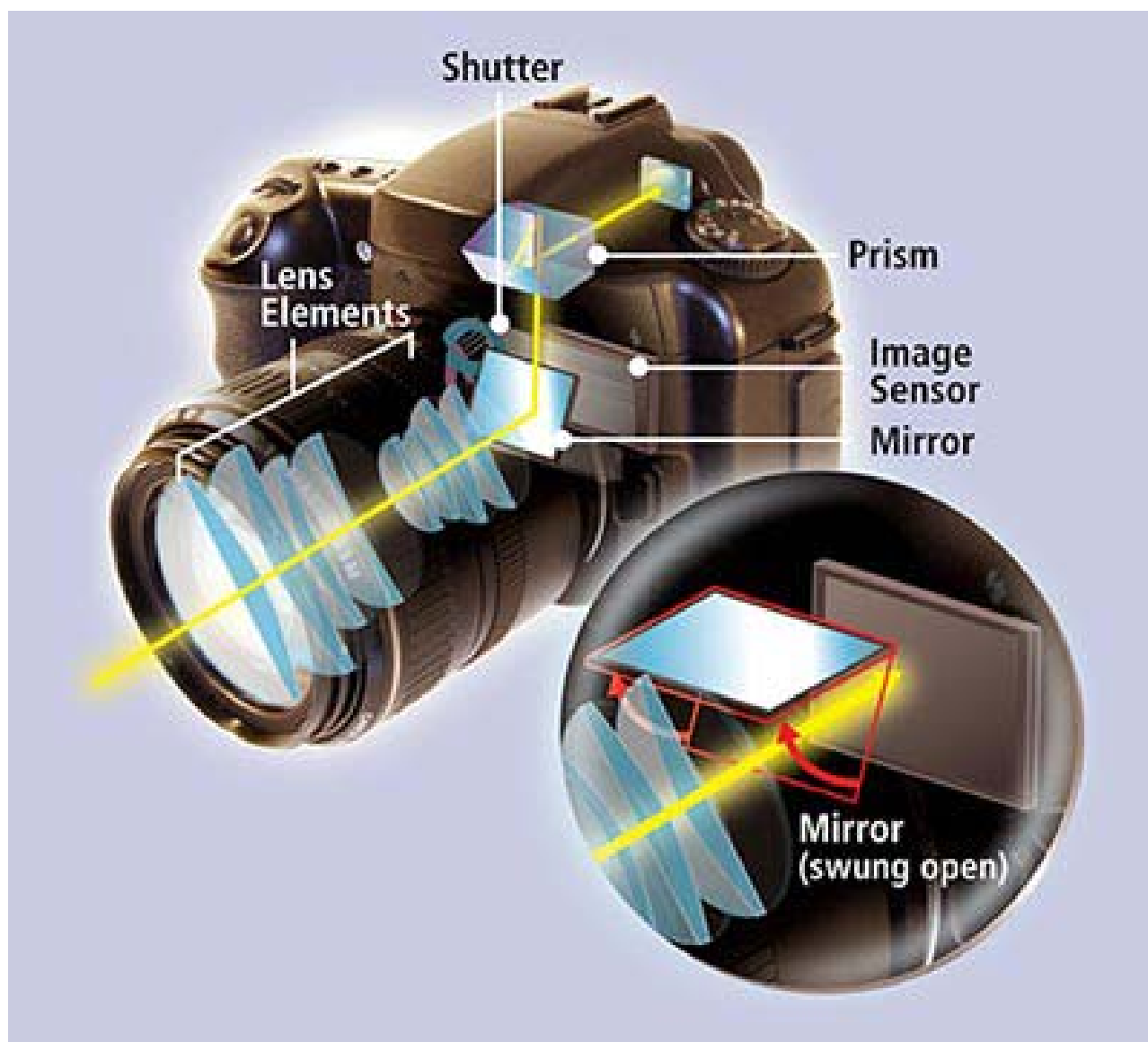
Photo

Then along came Nikon, Minolta, Olympus and Pentax with dSLR cameras all priced south of \$1,000. Now, be prepared for dSLR cameras just slightly more than \$500 and with features that rival their semi-professional big brothers, and in some cases features their big brothers do not have, such as image stabilization built into the camera itself and not the lens.

Last year and this we have seen mergers and cooperative efforts between big camera and electronic companies. Look at Sony taking over Konica-Minolta and producing the Alpha 100 (priced at \$999); Olympus and Panasonic merging technologies and producing a whole line of very different cameras at a wide variety of prices (\$699 all the way to \$1999 for the Panasonic). Then Pentax/Samsung introduced a whole range of cameras from \$400 to \$800 (street price with and without lens).

And now, along comes Canon with their new 10MP Digital Rebel XTi with a host of interesting features at a very attractive price of \$799. Nikon also announced their new D80. Other lower priced models are sure to follow. If one is to believe all the hoopla, digital SLRs are selling big time and most manufacturers think they will outsell the point and shoot variety (those with 4x or less of optical zoom) within a few years. And now comes the dilemma for those who still have their film SLRs and collections of lenses, what to do, what camera to buy?

Just because you have three or four good lenses for your SLR doesn't justify buying the same brand just so you can use your existing lenses. First off, you may NOT be able to use your existing lenses in a digital camera of the same brand (lens mount). If some of your existing lenses are 3rd party lenses, i.e., lenses made by Sigma, Tamron, Tokina, etc. they may or may not work well or at all with the digital SLR version. Sigma lenses from 5+ years ago have a tendency to produce the dreaded ERR099 message when placed on a Canon digital SLR. These lenses must be updated by Sigma. A new chip has to be installed in the lens. Unfortunately, Sigma may not have the chips needed so you may be out of luck. If you are buying a camera because you have



lenses that will fit it, make sure they work. Bring ALL of your lenses to the store and try them in the camera, turn the camera on and go through all the shooting modes.

Photo

And then there is the “focal length multiplier” problem. On most Canon cameras the multiplier is 1.6. Thus a 50mm normal film lens becomes an 80mm lens, a 75-200mm zoom lens becomes a 120-320mm lens, and a nice wide-angle 24-50 zoom becomes a not so interesting 38-80mm zoom. On most Pentax and Nikon brands the multiplier is 1.5 while on the Olympus/Panasonic the factor is 2x.

This writer thinks that Panasonic misread the photo market with the \$1999 camera. I think we shall see a much more attractively priced camera from them under \$1000, probably around \$800. Panasonic as well as Sony have a strong vested interest in not producing SLR cameras in the \$500-\$800 range since they already make a number of very nice SLR style cameras with large zooms and real dSLRs would cannibalize that market. Canon and Nikon both make very expensive image stabilized (shake reduction) lenses and may be loath to produce a camera with built in image stabilization such as being done by Sony, Olympus/Panasonic, and Pentax/Samsung.

So, what is a prospective buyer to do? In my case it was easy. I had already sold all my film and dSLR cameras along with their lenses (e-Bay) so I was starting from scratch. I knew that I wanted image stabilization (I.S.). I had tried it on the Canon S2 IS and loved it. I also knew that Pentax/Samsung was bringing out an image stabilization system based upon sensor compensation rather than the lens. The Sony/Minolta system is similar. This meant that all the lenses for those cameras became image stabilized, you could easily get by with far less expensive lenses and the total package would not break the bank.

Then there is the question of overkill. Do you buy a camera with features you will rarely if ever use, or even have occasion to use? Is it really necessary to have a camera shoot 5 frames per second over one that only does 2.5? What about 10MP versus only 6MP? How many shots can you get in a burst, 2.5, 5 or 10, and how many are really needed? There is very little actual difference in the images taken with a \$3,000 and a \$500 camera. Do you need a camera with a 150,000 MTBF (mean time between failure) shutter cycle versus one with only an 80,000? The \$500 to \$800 cameras available today easily rival the \$5,000 cameras used three or four years ago, and in many respects they are better.

In my case, I read the ads and found a Pentax *1stDL (6.1MP) on sale at Samy's with a boatload of extras, very usable and worthwhile extras, extras I would have bought in any case. The camera was advertised for \$549 (including 18-55 lens) and had a \$100 rebate from Pentax which brought the cost down to \$449. The freebies (SLIK tripod, 1 GB chip, 300 digital photos, and case) were worth about \$150, so my net cost was about \$300. No, the camera doesn't have I.S. but Pentax/Samsung just introduced their K100D/Digimax GX-1S (6.1MP - \$600 - \$700 street price) which does have I.S. and will soon have a K10D (10MP) also with I.S. The DL will become my backup camera when I buy the I.S. version. Of course, should I decide to, I could probably sell the DL for close to what I have invested in it, but in the meantime I have had the pleasure (and some minor frustration) of using it, a really nice dSLR.



Digital Resolution Made Confusing

By **Dave Chrestenson**, Member of the Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois
Digital Photographer/Hobbyist

There seems to be a plethora of articles on the number of pixels required to create your photos to their full glory. Many of the articles disagree with each other and some are mystifying (to say the least); occasionally a few are wrong. So here I will approach it from a different point of view, I'll give you the knowledge and let you decide what you need. Ready? Here we go!

Let's start with some facts. (I'll reconsider these later, but we have to start somewhere.) First, the average eye, relaxed, focuses at a distance of about fifteen inches. So that's about the distance people view their prints.

Second, the angle of comfortable vision (not acute) is generally agreed to be about fifty to fifty-five degrees. Beyond that is peripheral vision. Now, fifty degrees at fifteen inches subtends a distance of about thirteen inches, just covering the diagonal of an 8x10. Is it any wonder that size is so popular?

And third, the typical eye has a resolution of about one minute of angle. This works out, at fifteen inches, to about .004 inches, or approximately 229 dots in an inch. (For purposes of clarity I will use the term pixels when referring to the camera sensor and dots when referring to the print. But in this discussion they can be considered equivalent. (Don't compare this with the resolution (normally also referred to as dots) of printers. They are completely different animals. (Subject for another article?))

For convenience and to assure a tolerance, for now let's round that up to 300 dpi. This means that we need 300 dpi (at 15 inches) on the paper to assure that we won't see individual dots. Now, it's easy enough to work backwards from there. Assume that we wish to print an 8x10. Ten inches across at 300 dpi is 3000 dots. Eight inches down at 300 dpi is 2400 dots. So we need a camera of 3000 x 2400 pixels, or 7.2 meg. (This is assuming a camera with square pixels, not all have that, the Fuji S3 for example has hexagonal pixels, two sizes, no less. (Subject for still another article?)) Simple huh? Maybe.

But let's try another example first. Assume you just want to print a picture half that size, 4 x 5 is more common. Then 4 times 300 equals 1200 and 5 times 300 equals 1500, so our camera need only be 1.8 meg. That's not so bad, is it? But before you dash right out to buy a 2 meg camera on sale, let's take a look at some of those original figures.



I said that the average eye views an image at 15 inches. That's an "average" eye. It can vary from that... a lot. Depending on age, it can go from 3 inches (a youngster) to more than 6 feet. (An old timer.) And that's for an eye that's working well. Near-sighted? You'll hold the picture closer. (Assuming you don't wear correction lenses, of course.) Far-sighted? Further away. Have astigmatism? A mess! So, if you hold your picture at 7.5 inches, you will need twice the number of pixels, or 600, per inch. An 8x10 would require a 28.8 meg camera. Good grief! Thirty inches viewing distance is a lot easier, a 1.8 meg one will do the job. Also, some eyes can see significantly better than one minute of angle, some can reach ½ minute. That's even worse, you need 600 dpi at 15 inches, which means we're back to a 28.8 meg camera for an 8x10, and a 7.2 meg one for a 4x5. But you can do the math. And do you really need to have the dots as small as theory suggests? Well, to make it more confusing, there are other considerations that affect that. Bright lighting needs higher resolution, dim lighting needs less. Glossy paper? Higher resolution. Matt paper, less. High contrast image, more, low contrast, less. Ad infinitum.

Finally, what if you have taken the definitive photo of Yosemite, the one to equal Ansel Adams, and you want to have it printed at, say, 16x20 and frame it. Do you still need 300 dpi? Probably not. After all, people don't normally hold a 16x20 in their hands and look at it from 15 inches. Remember the 50 degree vision. So, you'll probably be hanging it on the wall, where they will view it from a distance. Experience shows that people will move backward or forward when viewing a picture until it subtends that 50 degree angle. So you might well get away with 150 dpi.

But, getting back to the more normal usage, handheld prints, do you need 300 dpi there? Again, maybe. In many cases you may get away with less. But if you go below 150 dpi you are almost certain to get obvious visual pixilation at that distance. Of course, Photoshop to the rescue, you can resample upwards and increase the number of pixels to what works. You're not adding detail, but at least you're getting rid of those annoying "jaggies."

Clear? I didn't think so. Remember, I said "Made Confusing." But at least you are now confused on a much higher plane! Good luck.



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Picture and Video Files: Size Matters

Timothy Everingham, The User Group Network, Granada Hills, CA, <teveringham@acm.org> is Vice Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH, the largest chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques

You may have gotten a bunch of spam that try to sell you some thing because they are telling you that size matters. However even though they may be trying to con you, in regards to the size of picture, graphics, and video files size does matter. Some of it is because it is related to image size. However, when you try to compress files there reaches a point where you start to lose something.

First you have to understand that if it is either an image or video file each little pixel or time interval is represented by bits of data. You may have heard 8, 16, 24, 32 bit color. The number of bits represents the color of each pixel. On an 800x600 image you have 480,000 pixels (800 multiplied by 600). Then you multiply the color bit depth to get the size of the image representation (800 x 600 x 24 bit equals 11,520,000 bits). Divide by 8 and you get the number of bytes (11,520,000 bits divided by 8 equals 1,440,000 bytes). It get worse with video because you have to multiply by the frames per second and by the number of seconds in the video (at a standard 30 frames per second it would be 41 Megabytes per second or 2.4 Gigabytes per minute).

Now if you have a lot of large image or video files you are trying to transfer through a dial up connection to the Internet you have problems. If that is the case, you just figure you will save and send things using a smaller image size and blow up when it will be used. The problem is that when you go to a smaller image size you loose detail in the process. Then when you try to blow it up again it just gets blocky. The same thing goes for video files, the smaller the file size the less detail and nuances are in the file. This really shows up when you take a small image and then try to project it using a good LCD projector. So if you want to project it, show it on a large monitor, or print it out large you need to keep the image size up. This is one reason there is so much hype on the amount of megapixels a digital camera has.

So how then do we get the small file size of images we do. We use compression algorithms, also known as codecs (compressor/decompressor). There are lossless and lossy compression algorithms.

But how can there be lossless compression? It is because nature is filled with patterns and uniform things, which is what we take images of. So if we record info about the pattern instead of each pixel of it a lot of file space is saved.

An example would be if a person in your image is wearing a blue sweater. Instead of recording every pixel individually you record this area of the image, where the sweater is, in blue. The Tiff image format (.tif) uses only lossless compression techniques, so it is a good format for achieving purposes or something you may wish to edit later. But then there is lossy compression. You lose some of your detail, but a lot less than if you just shrank the image. One of the regularly used lossy compression techniques is color palette reduction. With 24 bit color you have 16 million colors available. However, there are far less that many colors in an image.

It takes less space to analyze which colors are in an image, and create a custom color table that will represent all the color in the image in less than 24 bits, write the color representation of the pixels with the custom table code, and then include a copy of the table in the file. This can be used as a lossless technique, but usually this is taken one

File size at 300 resolution

8" X 10"	21.6MB
11" X 14"	41.6MB
13" X 19"	66.7MB

Source: Epson America

step farther. In the analysis of the image it is detected how often each color is used and ranked. As the compression rate increases then the number of colors that are less used are converted to colors that are close to it but are widely used in the image.

This compresses the size of the color table, which decreases the bits per pixel representation of a color used and the blending to nearby colors increases the space that areas of the image that can be described as having one color (this is a situation of compression techniques complementing each other). Some formats start out using only lossless compression techniques but as the level of compression increases they start to use lossy compression. Some common formats that use a combination of lossless and lossy compression are GIF (.gif) and JPEG (.jpg). Remember once you lose image data using a lossy technique you will not have it anymore unless you still have the original or a lossless copy. The compression methods discussed so far are referred to as spatial compression because they reduce the file size by compacting the description of the visual area (space) of an image.

Video is made up of sequential images played over time. This means we can not only use spatial compression; but also use temporal compression, which compresses the file using analysis of the difference and similarities of the frames in an image. This usually exhibits itself by the first frame in a video sequence being compressed just like a still image using spatial compression, but in the following frames only the changes from the previous frame is recorded. Periodically or when there are major changes between frames, a new initial frame, also called a keyframe, is produced followed by more just recording of differences between frames. These temporal compressions can be lossy or lossless. As with still images you should achieve them using only lossless compression. However, using only lossless compression may be impractical because of the limitation of your computers or hard drives' speed or hard drive space, but keep lossy compression at a minimum.

If you are creating a video DVD for achieving that uses the MPEG-2 format that uses both lossy and lossless compression techniques, it is better to achieve the file using the DV codec it was originally imported in from your video camera and writing that file to a data DVD or CD. Be aware that some compression techniques and settings are better for some types of video than others. If you just have a talking head in your video with a static background you can compress it greatly without degrading the image much. But if there is a lot of fast action or panning of the camera, the amount of compression you can successfully have you have to be more picky on what codec you should use.

File size matters because it limits what you can use the file for. If you just want a small file you can send to a friend's dial up connection or have friends using a dial up connection view via a website a small file is good. However in printing large photos, showing on a large computer display or having it projected on a screen small files are not good. Use only lossless compression techniques on things you want to achieve or edit later because it keeps your options open. Keep your archival file large and make smaller copies of it for other purposes.

It is fortunate that hard drive and DVD and CD blank prices have come down a lot so doing this does not cost a fortune, but not planning ahead on image size and which compression techniques can cost you not being able to fully use your precious digital photos and videos.

Screen size (72 resolution) to print size (300 resolution) conversions:

320x240 translates into approx. 1" x .75"

640x480 translates into approx. 2" x 1.5"

800x600 translates into approx. 2.75" x 2"

1024x768 translates into approx. 3.5" x 2.5"

Source: Epson America

Creating and printing digital photo files

150 dpi — Minimum for photo quality.

240 dpi — Good photo quality - moderate file size.

300 dpi — Minimum for professional quality results.

360 dpi — Best photo quality

Source: Epson America

Digital Photography: Try It! You'll Like It!

Photo

Sandy Brown, Alamo PC

Toying with the idea of getting a digital camera but just not sure you're ready to tackle the technology? I wasn't even at the "toying" point recently when suddenly choosing and learning how to use a digital camera quickly became a necessity.

Experienced digital camera users are unlikely to find any useful kernels of wisdom here. It is by no means intended to be a how-to article. Rather, it is written from a novice's perspective, aimed only at encouraging other nervous novices to take the plunge.

And in hindsight, I'm here to tell the latter that if I can do it, so can you! Not that I'm an expert yet, but I'm no longer nervous, either. The camera I'm using is a Fujifilm FinePix A210, but this is a generic overview of digital cameras, not a product review per se.

REASONS TO GO DIGITAL Flexibility: If you take photographs for whatever purpose, a digital camera will save you time and money and give you much more control over the quality of your images. (Image, by the way, is digitalspeak for photograph.) Perhaps best of all, you can do so much more with digital images than you can with regular photographs or slides. You can edit them, e-mail them, and post them on a Web site for family and friends to see, or use them on any kind of Web site you might create personal, non-profit, educational or businessrelated.

Remember what they say, "a picture (image?) is worth a thousand words!" Freedom from film: Images are captured on a small picture card (just over an inch square) that, once inserted into the camera, stays there. If you wish, you can immediately erase any image you don't like, and loading images onto your computer automatically deletes them from the card.

The number of shots you can take before uploading and/or erasing depends on the quality mode, which you set according to how you intend to use the images. The highest setting on the A210 is 3 MB, for high-quality prints. Only 18 frames per card fit. Images for the Web however can be as low as 0.3 MB. At the very lowest Digital Photography: Try It! You'll Like It! Sandy Brown, Alamo PC quality setting, the card will hold almost 4,000 images!

See images immediately: Release the shutter, turn the mode knob from still photography to playback and look at the image you just took on the camera's LCD monitor. View images one at a time or all of them as a slide show. Now is the time to look for flash reflections, cluttered backgrounds or any other distractions from your primary subject.

It's also a good time to let a human subject choose his or her favorite or ask you to "Take another, please." And here's a thought: If something's blocking your view, hold the camera above or around it and snap -- as long as you can see the monitor, you don't need the viewfinder! The paparazzi must love these things!

Editing: Your software should come with some basic editing capabilities like cropping, image quality adjustment and "red eye" correction. Sufficient for most casual photo buffs, but if your needs are more sophisticated, you'll want to invest in a more sophisticated photo-editing program.

And speaking of software, remember, not all camera software is created equal. Before I had ever touched a digital camera, I'd felt confident I could help a friend figure out what to do with her images once she got them transferred to her PC (I have no pride when it comes to using "Help"). It still proved complicated.

In comparison, the A210 software is a breeze. If possible, try out the software for the camera you're considering and make sure it's user-friendly. One sure-fire way to do this is ask an experienced user for advice on what camera to buy - that's what I did!

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Secure Your Flash Drive Cap

How to guide

By **Fran Damratowski**, Refurbishing SIG Leader, Chesapeake PC Users Group, MD,
www.chesapeakepcusersgroup.org, refurbishing@chesapeakepcusersgroup.org

Have you ever misplaced your flash drive cap? No need to ever do that again. Secure it with a button. You will need

- a shirt button,
- some heavy thread such as carpet thread,
- double sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam,
- double sided sticky tape, and
- some colorless nail polish.

1. Run the thread diagonally through two of the buttonholes and secure with a square knot.
2. Place the knot on the top of the button not on the flat bottom of the button.
3. Cut the thread long enough to secure it with enough play to remove the cap.
4. Cut a small piece of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam about the size of the button.
5. Remove the backing from one side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place a small piece of the double-sided sticky tape on the sticky side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam. (The double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam does not hold well without the sticky tape. The tape alone does not hold well either.)
6. Securely attach the flat side of the button to the sticky tape.
7. Trim the excess tape and foam using an x-acto knife.
8. Remove the backing from the other side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place another piece of double sided sticky tape on the foam.
9. Securely attach the button foam and tape to the flash drive cap.
10. Secure the other end of the thread to the flash drive or lanyard.
11. Leave enough play to easily remove the cap, but not get tangled.
12. Use the colorless nail polish to secure the knots so they don't become undone.
13. After the nail polish dries trim the thread.

OR

You could go to your local photo shop and buy a \$2+ button size lens cap keeper (or cap retainer) and modify it as needed. Most of them appear to come with elastic bands that are placed around the lens barrel as opposed to a leash that can be attached to another part of the camera.



Guilty!

By **Berry F. Phillips**, a Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and a monthly contributor to the e-Monitor, www.ccokc.org, bfpdata@1access.net

Guilty, the strange judge shouted as he banged the gavel. The defendant will rise and receive his sentence. You have been found guilty of dirty deeds done to your computer and are sentenced to electrocution!" I thought to myself, with my knees shaking, there must be some kind of an appeal process since the judge and jury all had heads that looked like monitors and bodies like upright computers and could easily be biased and not in my human favor!

I did find the testimony at my trial to be informative. A clean environment does not require computer cleaning usually more than once a year. Many computer users like to do the cleaning when they are doing their annual spring house cleaning. The dirtier the environment the greater frequency of cleaning needed. A clean computer cuts down on downtime, repair bills, and minimizes health risks. **DO NOT EAT, DRINK, SMOKE, OR USE MAGNETS NEAR YOUR COMPUTER AFTER ALL IT IS NOT A FAST FOOD JOINT!**

Here are some tips:

- 1) shut your computer down properly,
- 2) run scan disk and defragmenter at least monthly,
- 3) Delete files and programs you no longer need,
- 4) use antivirus, anti spyware programs and a good hard drive cleaner like the freeware CCleaner and a registry cleaner like the freeware RegClean to keep your hard drive healthy,
- 5) **BACK UP YOUR DATA IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY!**

When cleaning your computer case, use a damp lint free cloth. **NEVER SPRAY WATER ON A COMPUTER OR OTHER ELECTRICAL DEVICES.** Place liquid on the cloth not directly on the system and normally 100% alcohol which has no water content. Use a pencil eraser on hard to remove marks.

The monitor can be cleaned with a commercial glass cleaner using a damp clean lint free cloth. Using an anti static wipe or a dry cloth with anti-static fabric softener will reduce the dust attracted by static discharge. The keyboard can be cleaned by turning the keyboard upside down and shaking the gunk out of it while singing, "There is a whole lot of shaking going on."

Clean the keyboard surface with a damp lint free cloth with 100% alcohol. **DO NOT TAKE THE KEYBOARD APART OR YOU MIGHT NOT GET IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!** Clean the mouse by taking it apart using a damp lint free cloth and clean the rollers inside of the mouse (be sure to rotate them) with a clean cotton swab with 100% alcohol solution. After the mouse has dried put it back together reversing the steps you did when taking it apart.

The inside of your computer is a dust magnet. An annual cleaning in a normal computer environment is a good idea. **YOU MUST BE VERY CAREFUL IF YOU DECIDE TO CLEAN THE INSIDE OF YOUR COMPUTER OR YOU COULD DO DAMAGE TO YOUR SYSTEM!** Whenever, you go into the case of your computer it is a good idea to wear a grounding strap to reduce the risk of a static discharge. Blow out dust with compressed air or a vacuum cleaner. Avoid touching chips or electronic components on your system.

Electronic components run hotter when covered with dust blankets, and it shortens their normal life span which is why your computer needs to be cleaned internally periodically.

I have to go now to get a human attorney to appeal my case so I can avoid electrical execution so there will be another article in the Computer Hysteria Column for next month. However, I do have one final question for you, "Are you guilty?"

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How Do I Get My Home Videos Into the Computer?

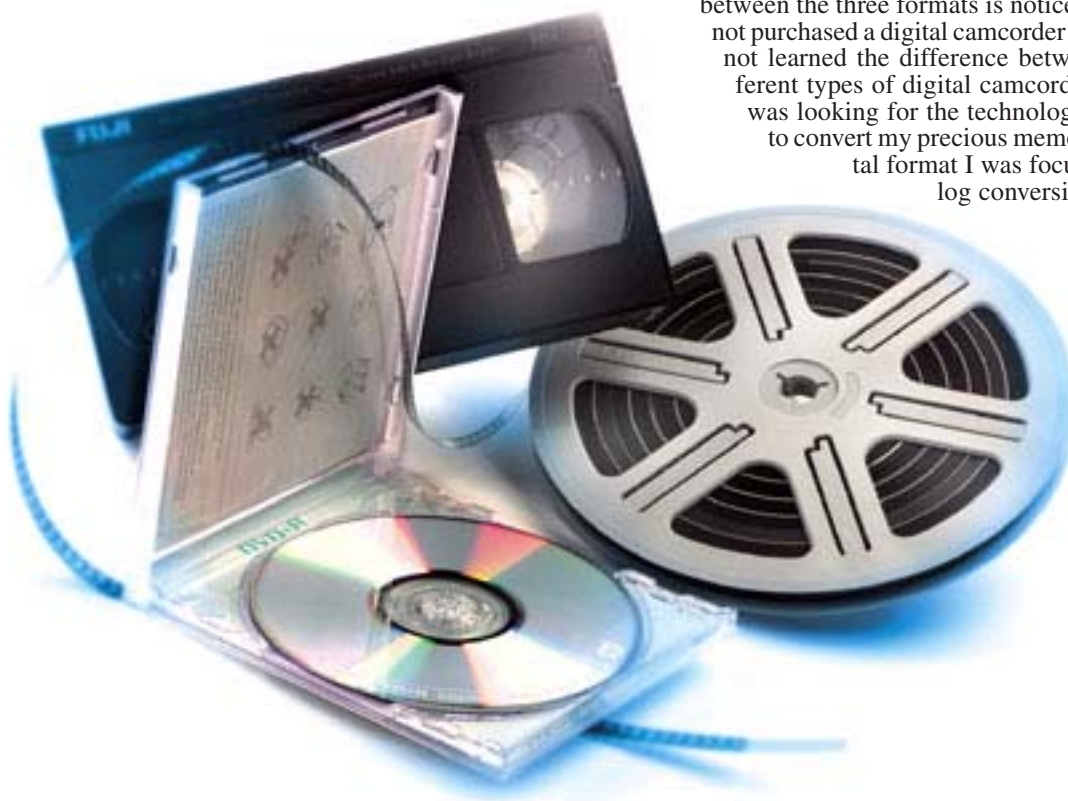
By **Elise Edgell**, President, North Orange County Computer Club,
California <http://www.noccc.org>, eliseedgell@aol.com

I have stacks of VHS and 8mm tapes that I want to convert to digital format before they are no longer accessible. I know that once I get the analog videos converted to digital format I can preserve them, edit them, back them up, etc. But, what technology is available to me?

First of all, let me explain that I have never been good at reading about a technology, learning all it's terms and features before I have had a chance to use the technology. When I am making a decision about software, frequently the feature, which sounded so good on the box and enticed me to purchase it, is not the feature which I really use. It often is something that I was unaware of when I initially got the program but which I use the most and like the best. An example of this is the "Reveal Codes" feature in WordPerfect.

When VCRs first came on the market, I wanted one. I heard about the pros and cons of VHS and BETA formats. I had a hard time remembering which was which. I had never used a VCR before I purchased a VHS model. I rapidly learned the different recording speeds and how they affected the quality of the image. The next VCR I purchased was a BETA format. The image quality was much better and I couldn't understand why it was not the format of choice for everyone.

Since that time, I have had a VHS camcorder, an 8mm and a Hi8. Again, the quality difference between the three formats is noticeable. I have not purchased a digital camcorder yet so I have not learned the difference between the different types of digital camcorders. When I was looking for the technology necessary to convert my precious memories to digital format I was focused on analog conversion devices.



Video

The first analog capture device connected to the computer with a USB1 cable. That did not work well and I put the project aside for a while. I then received a ADS Instant DVD USB 2 capture device as a gift. By this time I had acquired a couple of video editing programs. I had installed them, read the documentation (much of it was incomprehensible to me without actually using the program), and attempted to capture some video from a Hi8 tape. This did not work well. I found that software programs are very touchy about which video capture device they will talk with. Fortunately, the video capture device came with capture software so I am able to transfer my analog video to digital. But, not in the way I wanted and I am still learning the terminology.

I wanted to write this because some of my confusion may be the same as yours. The software programs say that they can "capture" both analog and digital video. They also talk about "capture card" for the digital video. It is necessary to have a "capture card" or "capture device" to take the analog information from your VHS (or other analog input) and convert it to digital information. This is usually accomplished by connecting the video-out and audio-out from your analog device (VHS player, camcorder, etc) to the input section of your capture card (this may be your video card) or external device. When you are in the process of capturing the video, the analog information is converted in the capture device to a digital format (there are several such as MPEG1 and MPEG2) and then stored on your computer. Once stored, they can be used by video editing programs or can be burned to a disk.

Please note, if you have a digital camcorder, you do not need a conversion device. The information that is on your camcorder is already in digital format. Depending on the type of camcorder the digital information may be stored on a tape, memory card, hard disk, or even on a DVD. If you cannot remove the storage device and put it into a reader on your computer then the way to transfer data is through a FireWire or USB2 connection to your computer. If you are using a video editing program to enable the transfer, there are some nice things that the program may be able to do with the data as it is received. It may automatically create chapters and provide other information that is handy when you want to edit the information (rare is the tape which cannot be improved with cutting out the unintentional video of the pavement).

There are programs which let you transfer your converted VHS tape directly to a DVD.

The reason to do this is to get the analog tapes preserved. I know that I will never have the time to edit all the old tapes which I have, but I do want to preserve them. The CapWiz program which came with my ADS Instant DVD USB2 capture box has this feature. If you purchase a program that is not bundled with the capture box (or card) be sure that specific version of that program will work with your model of capture device.

Expect to put in some time learning the terminology. Read carefully what the program will do and what it will not do so that you are realistic in your expectations. Keep in mind that what you are working with, once you have your video in digital format, is a file. The file can be in several different formats with different characteristics. What I mean is that, just like with digital photos, a file format which is really compressed will not look as good as a larger file with more information. When dealing with video information, you must remember that you need a lot of storage on your disk and it really helps to have a disk with fast response time.

A fast computer with lots of RAM is also important. It is only recently that video editing has become practical for the home user. Before really large, fast hard disk storage was affordable, the home user was very limited in the size of file that could be edited. With today's fast computers, inexpensive RAM, large storage disks, and inexpensive DVD writers it should be within the reach of many home users to be able to preserve valuable analog tapes. Plus, be able to make home movies from them that friends and family are willing to watch.

If you are planning to buy a new computer in the near future, keep in mind the requirements for video editing as well as the requirements for VISTA. Fortunately, the requirements for the Ultimate version of VISTA are also good for video editing purposes.

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Buying an HDTV

By **Pim Borman**, Webmaster, with notes by Kay Anne Peake, Member of SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., <http://swipcug.apcug.org/>, swipcug@sigecom.net

Robert D. Covington was the featured presenter. He explained that he does not sell TVs but learned a lot about them while advising a variety of companies as CTO of Rhysome, a provider of Enterprise Software.

Bob explained how TV broadcasters are in the process of changing from analog to digital technology. The change will result in more efficient use of the available transmission frequencies and improved image quality. The US Government also had a \$14 billion windfall from auctioning off the available frequency bands to interested parties. As long as there is adequate signal strength digital TV presents a sharp picture, free of snow and distortions. When there is poor reception an analog TV might still present a recognizable picture, but the digital TV won't show any picture at all. It is easier to manipulate digital transmissions, and to make and store perfect copies. The downside is that digital data can be compressed to reduce bandwidth requirements, resulting in loss of quality, and that they are wide open to all sorts of Digital Rights Management (DRM) restrictions that so far have caused problems and remonstrations.

February 17, 2009 is the currently expected date when broadcasters will stop sending analog signals. TV sets will continue to receive programs from cable and satellite providers who will supply conversion boxes to their customers. TV receivers connected to an antenna will no longer work, unless provided with a converter box and a suitable antenna to receive the digital signals. Starting in 2008,

the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will provide up to 2 coupons per household, worth \$40 each, towards the purchase of the converter boxes. The required antennas are similar to those used for UHF reception on analog TVs, but they are more sensitive and can be placed almost anywhere in the house. For more details see <http://www.ntia.doc.gov>.

Concurrent with the change to digital broadcasting, the aspect ratio of the picture is being changed from the current 4:3 to 16:9. The 4:3 ratio was originally chosen because it was similar to the 35 mm slide format. The 16:9 ratio is the format used for most current Hollywood movies and is therefore preferred for the best display of movies on a TV screen. Many TV programs and commercials are already being produced in the new format and show up on current televisions as a "letterbox" across the screen, unless the receiver has the new, wider format.



Video

Digital broadcasts will use different protocols depending on the transmission medium. Over-the-air transmissions to antennas will use ATSC (8VSB), satellite broadcasts use QPSK, and cable systems use QAM ("kwam"). When buying a converter box it is important to make sure it supports the correct protocol. Cable and satellite providers are likely to provide the correct boxes, but over-the-air (antenna-based) receivers will need an ATSC-capable converter. Newer TVs may also have built-in QAM conversion. In that case the cable provider only has to install a circuit card to configure the connection.

As with all things digital, what used to be simple and good for a lifetime of use gets complicated and subject to early obsolescence with digital TVs. The buyer will be faced with many choices to make in addition to the screen size he prefers and can afford. The next most important choice involves the type of display. Bob described 3 kinds, current Standard Definition TV (SDTV), Enhanced Definition TV (EDTV), and High Definition TV (HDTV).

SDTV and EDTV both use a screen with 480 lines of 640 pixels wide, but EDTV also provides a choice in screen dimensions with 4:3 ratio or 16:9 ratio, and progressive or interlaced scanning. As Bob explained, with interlaced scanning as currently used each frame is generated in 2 steps, first painting the odd-numbered lines followed by the even-numbered lines. If each step takes 1/60th of a second, the resulting frame rate is 30 fps. In progressive scanning all the lines of each frame are painted in a single step. In fast-moving scenes, such as sports broadcasts, interlaced scanning can result in a slightly distorted picture on large monitors and the (more expensive) progressive method is then preferred.

HDTV is available in 2 screen resolutions, 720 lines of 1280 pixels progressive only, or 1080 lines of 1920 pixels with a choice of interlaced or progressive. How's your headache so far? But wait, there's more! With EDTV and HDTV you also have a choice of frame rates, usually 24, 30, or 60, depending on the other parameters chosen. Not many broadcasts are of the highest possible quality, as the broadcasters may prefer instead to use their allotted bandwidth to transmit several different programs at the same time, using various compression levels and display parameters. The difference in quality may not even be noticeable except on the largest displays. But there is no point in paying for the best quality if no matching broadcasts are available.

Bob discussed what to look for when you buy a digital TV. One of the specifications is the luminance (brightness) of the display in candelas per square meter (cd/m²). An LCD or plasma screen should have a minimum of 250 cd/m² while a projection system should have at least 1200 cd/m². The other display specification is the contrast ratio between white and black areas, at least 800:1.

To support digital connections between digital devices, new cable standards have been developed to make connections between units of a digital home system. The new Direct Video Interface (DVI) standards are labeled DVI-D for carrying digital signals only, and DVI-I for carrying digital-to-digital and analog-to-analog signals. A DVI-D plug will fit in a DVI-I socket, but not the other way around.

Converter boxes usually carry a complete set of outlets compatible with DVI as well as the older RGB, 3-wire composite, and S-video connections. A more recent standard, High Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI), carries both digital video and sound but is only useful if your whole home theater is newly digital and supports the cables.

CRT displays are rapidly disappearing because of their bulk and difficulty in forming a sharp color image across a large screen. Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD) are currently the most economical but suffer from limited contrast, brightness, color depth, slow refresh rates, and fixed screen resolution. Plasma displays depend on micro fluorescent light sources to provide bright images with excellent color, a wide viewing angle, and high contrast.

They are still expensive and limited in size and have a limited lifetime. [However, when they burn out they have probably become obsolete already anyway, and a new unit of higher quality may be available at lower cost – Pim.] Finally, for large sizes projection displays have been used. They are based on Texas Instrument Digital Light Processing (DLP) technology that uses a chip with thousands of tiny mirrors that can flip up and down to direct light beams to the screen. They use an expensive, bright light bulb of limited lifetime.



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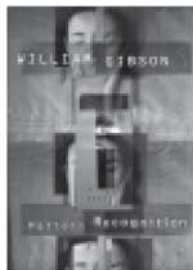
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Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Pattern Recognition, by William Gibson

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



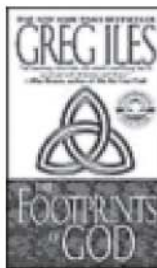
Cayce Pollard, a market researcher with uncanny intuition and a physical allergy to name brands, is hired by a tycoon to uncover the source of "the footage," video snippets that appear on the Internet a disjointed clip at a time, attracting a cult following. Her search takes her to London, Tokyo and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

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

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

The Footprints of God by Greg Iles

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



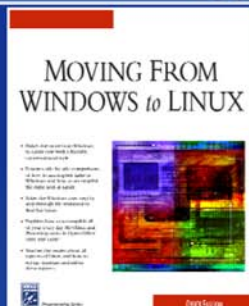
Medical ethicist David Tennant works for Project Trinity, a secret government organization attempting to build a quantum-level supercomputer. Using advanced magnetic resonance imaging techniques, six top scientists have supplied Trinity, the experimental computer, with molecular

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

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

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

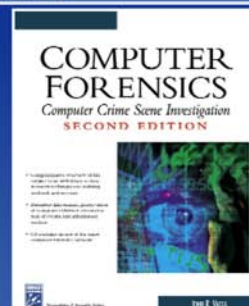
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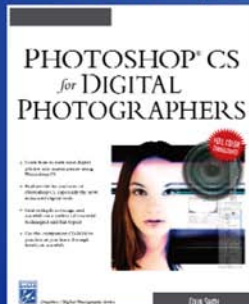
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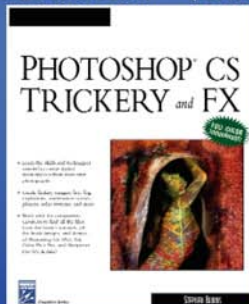
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BookReview

Photoshop Workflow Setups -- Eddie Tapp on Digital Photography

by Eddie Tapp

\$29.99

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by John Donan, a Member of the North Orange County Computer Club, CA, www.noccc.org, editor@noccc.org



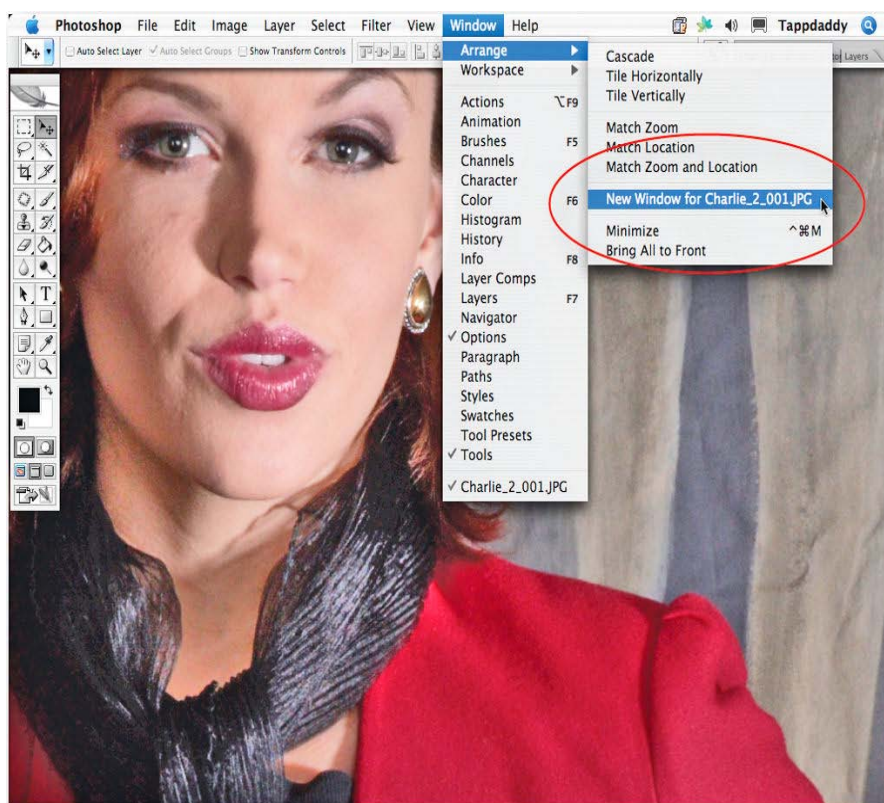
I knew I had seen that girl before when I found her on the frontispiece facing Chapter 1. There are also eleven other excellent full page images, some used in examples, five are facing the other chapters. I had seen the frontispiece on the Creativepro Website, under "Photoshop How-To: Tame the Beast," (<http://www.creativepro.com/story/howto/24366.html>) which turns out to be Chapter 1 of the book which I also found at <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/photoworkflow/>. I found these in my early research for the book. When I start a review, I browse for a cursory knowledge of a book's content then I research the author. I also find comments of other reviewers in case there is something I might overlook. Eddie Tapp, this author, is an award-winning photographer, lecturer, consultant, and author on digital imaging issues with over 20 years of experience in computer technology with a very impressive resume. From what Scott Kelby states on the cover, "If Eddie's teaching a session, I want to be there!" it implies that teaching is one of his strong points.

A statement preceding Chapter 1 says, "Adobe Photoshop has so many different work areas and tools that it can become confusing or even intimidating for digital photographers to use in a production environment. The fact is, there are only three particular zones or areas that you really need to become familiar with: tools, menus, and palettes." Upon examining my version of PS CS2, I find 58 tools and 198 menu items which include the choices for the 19 palettes. Sixty of the menu items have further choices, as high as 20 or more in fly out menus as do all the palettes as well. Each of the tools has settings, relative to its function, which are made in its option bar. To place an order of magnitude on all this I assumed the number of secondary choices to be ten, it can easily be justified that there are over one thousand choices possible. You can add to this, keyboard shortcuts. There are 521 of them, I have counted. What can be done in Photoshop seems unlimited when multiple processes are involved. I created an effect using an adjustment and a filter; when I reversed their order the result was entirely different. Combine more than two such executions and the possible combinations and permutations grow tremendously. This is why the author says, "What is important is learning this information one step at a time, finding the option or settings that are important to your workflow and then building from there." This book intends to make this humongous set of choices manageable.

In 207 pages, the material covered had to be limited. Instead of picking apart a mass of nitty details the book provides guidance in overall effective usage. The book starts with efficient organization of the workspace. Anyone using Photoshop knows how quickly palettes hog the visible area (Tools and Options are palettes by the way). I cleaned up my work space by his example most of which is ignored in teachings elsewhere. This first chapter covered using a second window (see figure 1 which is typical of the illustrations of the book) and also tiling images, neither of which I had done previously nor had I ever considered the 9 settings possible for the status bar, via its black triangle. The rest of the first chapter concerns the Bridge.

Figure 1, Photoshop opens a second window of your active image when you select Window > Arrange > New Window. It's perfect when you want to do detail work and see the entire image at the same time.

About 20% of the book concerns the Bridge, Photoshop's file browser. I had read where another Photoshop author refuses to use the Bridge because he feels it is yet too early in its state of development. This



appears to be the case with my software for it will not open either Photoshop or JPEG images in Photoshop a feature of its main usefulness. To correct this will be expensive. Adobe technical support has told me that they require an advance payment of \$39 to address either of these problems (\$78). For those who are able to properly use the Bridge, or willing to pay to make it work, it is covered in Chapter 5 of the book.

All palettes are covered and should one want to get a quick handle on a palette you don't use, such as Layer Comps, the information is there. Although the information for this palette is held to one page, it is adequate enough for me to have now mastered its use. The key palettes are stated to be these: Layers, Channels, Actions, History, Histogram, Color, Styles, Paths and the Info window. To unclutter his workspace, Tapp places his most active palettes in the Docking Well, cycling them as he needs them. By saving this configuration, it is always available as a starting workspace at some future time. One of his notes in this part of the book introduced me to the Scrubby Slider. It has been in existence since CS. When the mouse cursor is in the vicinity of a slider label, it changes allowing the slider value to be changed without having to grab the slider exactly.

Preferences allow you to tailor your work to your needs. Of course some are more important than others. Chapter three considers those the author has found to be most important. As with other Adobe programs, the Preferences dialog box can be accessed via Ctrl-K. Nine dialogs are selectable. A point came up regarding image interpolation and the General Preferences dialog which is not widely known. For Image Interpolation: Bicubic Smoother is designed for up-sampling images, while the Bicubic Sharper is designed for down sampling images. Compared to some of my 600 page books, there is twice as much

The chapter "Customizing Keyboard Shortcuts and Menus" is brief (12 pages) but handy, should one want to specialize either of these for personal use. An adjustment, which I regularly use, is Shadow/Highlight. It is also frequently used by the author. He has assigned for it the shortcut Shift+Ctrl+M which I have now also done, thanks to this chapter. Should I lapse into my old ways and traverse Edit>Adjustments>Shadow/Highlight the selection is handily highlighted in red (my choice.)

In the preface for the last chapter (Tapping into the Tools), the author states: "What is your favorite tool in Photoshop? Most people will say without reservation, the Clone Stamp tool. Yes, it's a very powerful tool indeed, but the Clone Stamp tool can also be the most dangerous if it's not used properly." What he is referring to is repetitive patterns which aren't seen until after the image is printed. In slightly less than a page the use of this tool is completely covered. In fact this concise coverage brought home to me two features I had overlooked using.

I will continue using this book as a handy reference as can others whose PS skills may vary anywhere from beginner on.



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Software Review

Renew the Artist in You: ArtRage 2

\$19.95

Published by Ambient Design

A Review by Rob Rice, a computer specialist living in Anchorage, Alaska and a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, <http://www.ccokc.org>, articles@isp.com

Spring is a season of light, color and renewal; it is a season that can bring out the artist in all of us. When I look at a product like ArtRage 2, by Ambient Design, I can feel some of that same renewal that spring offers right there on my computer screen. A clean, well behaved and very intuitive product, the free version of ArtRage 2 is about as difficult as finger painting.

Coded in the low stress environment of a New Zealand forest, just outside of Auckland, ArtRage is a nice blend of a simple user interface with the power to create high quality work. I say that ArtRage is about as difficult as finger painting and I mean that, but do not think that it shares finger painting's limitations. One look at some of those samples on this page (From the Ambient Design website) should be obvious.

Since its initial release by former MetaCreations Corporation employees Andy Bearsley and Matt Fox-Wilson in 2004 as a free product, ArtRage has been steadily polished and improved. Available in English, French and German versions, for both Windows and MacOSX, a new edition for the UltraMobile PC is also available.

A recipient of many awards, ArtRage comes with a good user's manual and several helpful tutorials are available on the Ambient Design website, such as how to paint a Macaw.

Installing and opening ArtRage 2 offers no surprises, such as ads, spyware, or pressure to buy the full version. You are greeted with a clean interface. On the lower left is your Tool Picker which contains:

- Oil Brush
- Pencil
- Palette Knife
- Eyedropper
- Felt Pen
- Chalk
- Crayon
- Eraser

More tools are added in the full version such as Airbrush, Paint Tube, Glitter, and Paint Roller. On the lower right is the Color Picker. At top is a menu containing such familiar options as File, Edit, Tools, and Help.

Various other menus are located at the sides which allow for brush pressure and tilt angle. One of my favorite features is the Tracing Images and References feature. With Tracing Image the original is projected on to your canvas so that you can use it as a guide while you sketch and paint. Other features include (From the Ambient Design website):

- Layers: Paint on transparent layers to build up more complex images without the paint blending with your underlying work. The texture of the underlying paint will still show through, as if it were dry on your canvas. ArtRage also provides full support for all 23 Photoshop layer blend modes.
- PSD Support: Import and export PSD files, with their layers intact.
- Custom Colours: Load and save custom colour set and colour pickers to fine tune your colour work.
- Crop & Resize: Crop and resize your paintings during work.
- Simple, Intuitive Interface: The ArtRage interface is easy to understand and doesn't get in the way of your work. In fact, it even gets out of the way while you're painting...
- Customizable Canvases: Change the grain, colour, and even metallic nature of your canvas at any time during your work.
- Canvas Positioning: Move, Scale, and Rotate the canvas to your preferred angle.
- Tablet Support: ArtRage uses your tablet's pressure and tilt support where available.
- Tool Cursors: Every tool has a cursor that tells you exactly how big the tool head is, to make it easier to see what's going to be applied.
- Multi-Monitor Support: ArtRage supports multi-monitor systems.

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Durand C. 'Randy' Waters

It appears that every effort has been made to make the painting and drawing as realistically as possible - even down to providing a water glass to clean your brush in!

Paints blend predictably or not at all, your choice. Textures, blending and smudging all appear extremely accurate.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a Full version which sells for \$19.95. It unlocks several features such as the Metallic Paint option; with this feature enabled you can paint with gold and silver oil paints, sparkling glitter, silver leaf sprays and more. Tools can be switched to Metallic mode for a range of effects.

Checking with the forums to see what users were saying about the product, a common topic was how, after using the free version of ArtRage, they bought the full version and never looked back. After playing with the free edition, I can see why. ArtRage 2, is a terrific program and worth the money. ArtRage 2 is rare combination of a program that can do high quality work and yet make the computer fun again!

Windows: Windows XP, 2k, or Tablet PC. 800 MHz processor or faster and 256 megabytes of RAM.

Macintosh: Macintosh OS X 10.3.9 or later. G4 processor or faster and 256 megabytes of RAM. ArtRage for OS X is a universal binary.

Ambient Design, <http://www.ambientdesign.com/>

ArtRage 2 at Ambient Design, <http://www.ambientdesign.com/artrage.html>

ArtRage 2 Quick Start Guide, <http://www2.ambientdesign.com/files/quickstart.zip>

NOTE from Judy: I thought I'd ask if we could have a discount for this program and Ambient was gracious enough to offer UG members a 15% discount (\$19.95 MSRP) on the program for either Windows or Mac OSX. The code is valid until July 20th.

The code is: 0B6D7A19D

When a potential customer uses the online store (http://store.kagi.com/cgi-bin/store.cgi?storeID=6FCJJ_LIVE&&), they enter the platform they'd like to purchase ArtRage for (Windows or Mac OSX) and when they view their cart to enter payment details, there is a Coupon/Promotional Code entry box in which that coupon ID can be entered.

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

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ing repairs

Book Review

Finally! Essential Tech Books for Non-Dummies

by Sandy Berger

\$20 each

Published by Que

Reviewed by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, www.compukiss.com,
gabe@gabegold.com

With holidays just past, many people reading this article from AARP's Web site will need techno-wisdom for dealing with gifts received by family, friends, and themselves. But with conflicting suggestions from mailing lists, Web sites, stores, and manufacturers all around us, a trusted guidebook is valuable.

The books are "Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology", "... to the Internet", and "... to Gadgets & Gizmos". Their common design is open and uncluttered; accessible language is clear but not dumbed down; there's no mention of dummies or idiots.

Good personal-style writing engages the reader, calming and building confidence. Sandy shares her sense of excitement and discovery and offers clear opinions on technology and how it affects us. That's pleasantly different from most technology books. And agree or disagree on individual items, you'll certainly know where she stands.

Ideas and technology are amply illustrated by easy-to-read screen images and clear photos. I'd have liked a "lay-flat" binding for easy reference at the computer.

The "Great Age" title credits Pablo Picasso with saying, "Age only matters when one is aging. Now that I have arrived at a great age, I might as well be twenty". Chapters begin with other thought-provoking quotations. My favorite, highlighting the empowering nature of the books' subject matter, comes from marketing guru Greg Arnold: "All

greatness is achieved while performing outside your comfort zone". Fear often comes from lack of understanding; don't worry, the books aren't uncomfortable reading -- but they may challenge you to try new things.

The books open onto Contents at a Glance -- a list of chapter titles and page numbers. That's handy, giving a quick focus without requiring flipping past usual book-front boilerplate. Each book includes a brief "What's Inside" write-up, noting that there are no special instructions for reading, and highlighting unique design elements. The Technology and Internet books include valuable sidebars calling out Sandy's Tips,

Blooper Alerts, Lingo, and Trivia. Selected items in Gadgets and Gizmos are designated Sandy's Favorites.

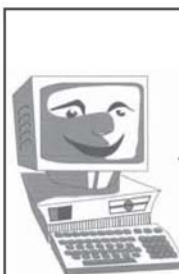
Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology reminds us how pervasive technology is, how much things have changed in our lifetimes, and how change is accelerating and never-ending. It covers topics such as how families can use the digital world, how technology has affected shopping, travel, health, finances, and even meeting people. Throughout, it encourages continued learning at any age

-- after all, we know HOW to learn. This book shows much that's worth learning. It's not preachy or prescriptive. For example, it lists diverse search engines, giving attributes and advantages for each. Many are specialized, less known than Google/Yahoo/ etc., and yet may be best for fulfilling certain quests. I'm happy that it highlights the

wonderful Library of Congress. This treasure, local to me, is available to all online.

Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to the Internet focuses on getting online, learning the language of the Internet, having fun and communicating, and avoiding problems and staying safe. It reports scientists believing that humans use about 10% of their brainpower, and speculates that most people use about 10% of their PC's power -- and

aims to help raise both numbers. The book starts gently, introducing Internet concepts and terms, and assembles them into tips and tricks for Web searching, e-mailing, understanding Web advertising, and even building our own Web pages. It gives tips for picking an ISP (Internet service provider), demystifies browser windows components, and offers netiquette advice for instant messaging. I take issue, though, with its use of the term "hacker" as bad guy; I grew up hearing it as a term of praise [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker].



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Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to Gadgets & Gizmos is a different sort of book, a bit hard to categorize. It's a catalog, shopping guide, and a tour through current and future technology. It offers gift ideas for oneself or Santa; if you observe someone reading it with widened eyes, you'll guess what they'd like gift wrapped for them. It's not Consumer Reports, since it doesn't compare choices head-to-head. But its interesting and opinionated narrative gives products' good and bad news; general advice and principles are interleaved so it won't become outdated as fast as a simple products list would. If Santa had watched me, he'd have seen me reading carefully about phones and clocks - two of my interests.

As you've seen, the books are complementary -- it's worth collecting them all. They're easy cover-to-cover reads, or you can refer to them for specific ideas, services, and products. Good indexes locate topics quickly; because the books topics are inter-related, a consolidated index of the three books' topics would be useful. Perhaps the publisher will provide one online. There's some necessary overlap but they provide

different information with varying orientation and emphasis. Overall, the books fulfill their "Better Living Through ..." titles' promise, delivering usable information about evolving technology areas.

Book Title: Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 272 pages

ISBN: 0-7897-3440-0

Book Title: Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to the Internet

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 268 pages

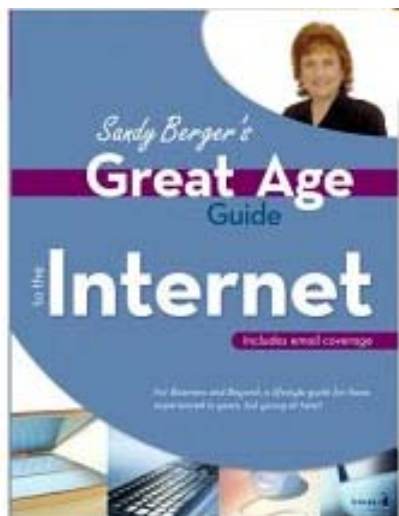
ISBN: 0-7897-3442-7

Book Title: Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to Gadgets & Gizmos

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 242 pages

ISBN: 0-7897-3441-9



Website Review

www.ixquick.com

A Surprising New Search Engine

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

Google has been my search engine of choice for several years, but recent developments have made me change my alliance to a new search engine.

Perhaps you read about it. A few weeks ago, 20 million of AOL's customers Web search queries appeared on the Web. These included the user's ID, the query they typed into the search engine, and other information.

Newsmakers picked up on the story because of some of the dramatic Web searches performed. For instance, AOL user 2708 searched for "I hate my ex boyfriend," "how to humiliate someone," "free angry stuff to send to an ex lover," and "makehimpay.net". User 17556639 looked for even more vicious information with searches on "how to kill a wife", "photo of dead people," "decapitated photos," "wife killer," and "steak and cheese." (Guess they got hungry.)

After the sensationalism died down, many people realized that the true story was that search engines are keeping a collection of information that can lead to a personal dossier of an individual. AOL's information included user numbers that were identified by cookies, but users can also be identified by Internet addresses, bringing them closer to our true identities.

All of the big search engines keep such information. Recently Google, AOL, Microsoft, and Yahoo were subpoenaed to turn over information of this type to the Justice Department. Of the big four, only Google refused to release the information.

In response to this story, one search engine, Ixquick, immediately issued a press release stating that they are taking steps to provide privacy protection for their users. Ixquick stated that after a search, they will immediately and permanently delete all personal search details.

I was impressed by a company who thought that protecting our privacy was more important than gleaning information from our searches and selling data for marketing purposes. I had never heard of Ixquick, but I immediately surfed over to www.ixquick.com. I was impressed with what I found.

Ixquick, which is owned by a Dutch company, is a metasearch engine. That means that it searches several databases to get its search results. Ixquick uses Yahoo/Alta vista, Gigablast, Ask Jeeves/Teoma, Open Directory and 7 other search engines. It is available in 18 languages.

Ixquick marks the search results with stars, one star for every search engine that chooses that particular Web site as one of the ten best results for your search. This effectively gives you the relevancy of the search results. Also, the Ixquick interface is clean and easy to use. It allows you to quickly choose if you want your search to find only one of the words of your search phrase, all of the words, or the exact phrase. There is also a place where you can easily enter words that you may want to eliminate from your search. You don't need to fool around with pluses, minuses, or quotation marks as you do with some popular search engines.

I was extremely impressed with the Ixquick's International Phone Directory.

Just type in a name and city or state and you can actually find people. Ixquick's Reverse Directory can tell you who's calling when you enter a telephone number. With Bigfoot and most other people directories now charging for people searches, this is an extremely useful free search tool.

Ixquick also has a comparison shopping service and an image search feature. Like Google and others, Ixquick offers a search toolbar.

After using Ixquick for a few weeks, I can honestly say that I have been very happy with the results. Using it in conjunction with Google gives you a wonderfully wide selection of search results. If, however, you want to really keep your searches private, then you will want to use Ixquick exclusively. After the recent AOL debacle, I feel that Ixquick is providing a great service not only as a search engine, but also as a leader on privacy issues.



MAY 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Class 6 of 8 *PRR** Advanced Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 1 of 4 *PRR** Open Source and Freeware Software 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Class 3 of 4 *PRR** eBay - Intro to Internet Auction 7 - 9 P.M.	2 Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Internet & Email 1 - 3 P.M.	3 Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 1 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 4:30 P.M. (a/r) High Growth Stock Investing 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Net Web Development 7 - 9 P.M. Class 1 of 4 *PRR* Excel 7 - 9 P.M.	4 *PRR* Small Business Server 2003 8 - 10 A.M. PC Clinic-Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 1 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 5 P.M. PC Alamode Magazine & Acrobat-PDF reader 7 - 9 P.M.	5 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Class 6 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M. C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
6	7 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	8 Class 6 of 8 *PRR** Advanced Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. BOD 6:30 - 9:30 P.M. Class 2 of 4 *PRR** Open Source and Freeware Software 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Class 4 of 4 *PRR** eBay - Intro to Internet Auction 7 - 9 P.M.	9 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Home Page Jumpstart 5:30 - 7 P.M. To Be Announced Class 1 of 2 *PRR* PowerPoint 7 - 9 P.M.	10 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 2 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 4:30 P.M. Class 2 of 4 *PRR* Excel 7 - 9 P.M.	11 PC Clinic-Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 2 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 5 P.M.	12 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon
13 Mother's Day.	14 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter: Tentative not confirmed	15 Class 7 of 8 *PRR** Advanced Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. Class 3 of 4 *PRR** Open Source and Freeware Software 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	16 Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. Class 2 of 2 *PRR* PowerPoint 7 - 9 P.M.	17 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 3 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 4:30 P.M. Class 3 of 4 *PRR* Excel 7 - 9 P.M.	18 PC Clinic-Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 3 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 5 P.M.	19 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
20 Alamo PC Open House and Volunteer Regoginition at the Computer Learning Center 1 - 5 P.M.	21	22 Class 8 of 8 *PRR** Advanced Digital Photo Editing 9 - 11 A.M. Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. Class 4 of 4 *PRR** Open Source and Freeware Software 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	23 Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon Class 2 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	24 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 4 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 4:30 P.M. (Dot) NetNuke Portal 7 - 9 P.M. Class 4 of 4 *PRR* Excel 7 - 9 P.M.	25 PC Clinic-Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 4 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 5 P.M.	26 *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M. Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M.
27	28 Memorial Day (Let's remember those who fought & died for our freedoms.) CorelDRAW X3 6 - 8 P.M.	29 Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M.	30 Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon Class 3 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M.	31 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Class 5 of 9 *PRR* Photoshop Beginners 1 - 4:30 P.M.		

ALAMOPC ORGANIZATION



The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

COMPUTER CLINIC

The Doctor Is In

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

What to bring with you:

- Your Alamo PC membership card
- Your computer and all connecting cables, cords, software drivers or programs related to the problem area
- You do not need to bring your monitor, mouse, or keyboard unless you are having a specific problem with those items. Make sure you have the keycode for all of your software.
- If you are having problems with your scanner, printer, or something that hooks up to your computer; bring that item in addition to your computer etc. plus all connecting cables and software (don't forget the keycode for your software)

When: Every Friday 9 am to noon

Where: Alamo PC Organization
Computer Learning Center

Prerequisites: Bring your hardware and all connecting cables, cords, software drivers or programs related to the problem area

Tuition fee: Donations for this service are requested, the funds are used to purchase testing and other equipment to use at the Dr Is In sessions.

Technical Rating: ★

STUDY GROUPS

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★

C/C ++ Study Group

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

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

When: First and Third Saturday, 2:30 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★★ - ★★★

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: ★ - ★★★

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.

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.)

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 ★ - ★★★

CLASSES

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

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to

leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★

The next three free or low-cost classes provide instruction on the basics of using a computer, the Windows Operating System, and how to use Adobe Acrobat to obtain your PC 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
stephentechnjr@yahoo.com

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

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

We're initially only going to meet on-line, through the mailing list I've established using Yahoo! Groups. Membership is limited to Alamo PC members, but anyone can join the list by sending a message to <apcoretro-subscribe@yahoogroups.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@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on <APCORETRO@yahoogroups.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
<stephentechnjr@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: ★ - ★★

Open Source And Freeware Software

Students will learn how to download, install, configure and use Open Source and Freeware applications such as Mozilla Firefox, Open Office, AVG Free Antivirus and many others.

Instructor: Tod Bruning
TodBruning@Hotmail.com

When: The first four Tuesdays in May 6:30 to 8:30 pm

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

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

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; Thursdays May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 June 7, 14, 21, 28; 1 to 4:30 pm

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

The four session class will allow you to buy and sell at Internet auctions effectively and with confidence using the eBay À system. The class will cover searching & browsing, registering, buying, selling, how to research your items to buy or sell, how to evaluate your prospective customers and sellers, basic html, digital photo hosting and much, much more! You will also actually use the system in a real-time mode and you can feel the adrenaline rush during the last few seconds of our auctions. Automobile and real estate are excluded.

Instructor: William Hudson
WilliamTheRebel@gmail.com

When: Four sessions, choose one set: (Preference will be given to those who have placed their name on the waiting list for this class)

Set 1) Tuesdays April 17, 24, May 1, 8; 7 to 9 pm

Set 2) Thursdays April 19, 26, May 3, 10; 7 to 9 pm

Where: Learning Center, Room 1

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

Technical Rating: ★

Microsoft Excel

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 should be familiar with operating a mouse, keyboard and Windows Operating

System. Knowledge of another program such as Microsoft Word is helpful.

When: Four sessions, choose one set
Set 1) Thurs May 3, 10, 17, 24; 7 to 9 pm
Set 2) Thurs June 7, 14, 21, 28; 7 to 9 pm

Where: Learning Center

Instructor: Cheng Yuan

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

Home Page Jumpstart

This is a general introduction to developing your own Internet web page. It is not a course on HTML. Includes a 20+ page manual, training disk, and a walk through the development process.

Contact: Susan Ives

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

When: ONE session, the second Wed. of the month 7 to 9 pm. Class does not meet each month, please check the calendar or call the Computer Learning Center to confirm meeting dates 210-736-0080

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: Vade 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: The first four Tuesdays in June 6:30 to 8:30 pm
MS Word Advanced: to be announced

Instructor: Tod Bruning
TodBruning@Hotmail.com

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

Student Practice Lab

A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab One (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. The Practice Lab is monitored and the instructors will help when possible. The Practice Lab is for Class Work Only. Those abusing the system will be asked to leave. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis. If necessary a time limit will be imposed.

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Content Ratings

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

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

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

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

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

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

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★

Help Numbers

Can you help a new member with a new computer? Are you proficient in software not listed? Can you help with a title currently showing only one volunteer? Call Linda Bianchi at 226-2460 or email her at <education@alamopc.org>.

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

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

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

Step One

1 Computers for Beginners

2 Windows 98

3 Windows XP

Microsoft Office

4 Word

5 Excel

6 PowerPoint

7 Publisher

8 WinFax Pro

Corel Office

9 WordPerfect

10 CorelDraw

11 Quattro Pro

12 Paint Shop Pro

Photoshop

13 Adobe Photoshop

Internet and E-mail

14 Internet Basics / ISP Connection

15 Web Page Development

16 Internet Explorer

17 MS Outlook Express

18 Opera

19 Mozilla

20 Dreamweaver

21 .Net

22 Flash

23 RoadRunner

Open Office

24 OpenOffice

Financial

25 Quick Books

26 Quicken

Auction Online

27 eBay

Genealogy

28 Family Origins for Windows

29 Genealogy

Communications / Management

30 Time&Chaos

31 Act

32 Goldmine

Data Base

33 Access

34 AlphaFour

35 dBase

36 Paradox

37 MySQL

Networking

38 Networking

Other

39 Hardware / Setting Up A New PC

40 Maintenance and Security

41 Home Help

Step Two

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

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

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Classified Ads

E-mail 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 donated working, or small repair cost, copier(s) . Latest model with low operating cost (toner & drum) preferred. Pickup of item will be arranged. Call 210-532-9122 to provide make, model, features available or additional 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.

