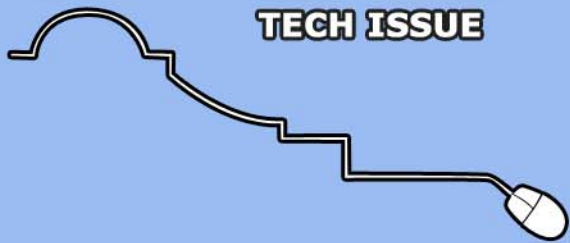


THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TECH ISSUE

www.alamopc.org
October 2007
\$4.50



The phenomenon of Facebook
part III
page 35

Building a PC for Vista
page 40

Help! My vinyl is melting...
page 32

10 Steps to safe computing
page 48





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



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

Registration number **210.736.0080**

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

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210.736.0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210.226.2460**

If you have questions about advertising call

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

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

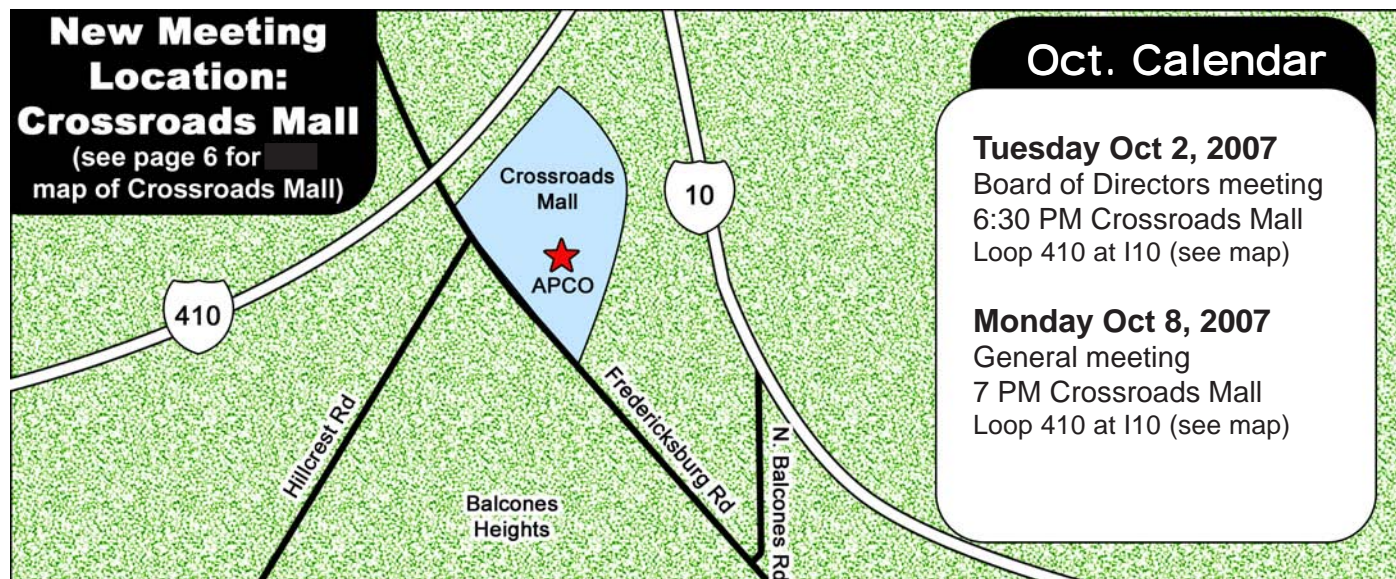
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

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

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

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



Oct. Calendar

Tuesday Oct 2, 2007
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Oct 8, 2007
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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Help! My Vinyl is melting...really!

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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

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Building a PC for Vista

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10 steps to safe computing

McAfee SiteAdvisor

The Inside Security Recovery Toolkit (INSERT)

Finding ghosts in your computer

Why you need a firewall

Special Announcements

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MC2-Microïds releases Dracula 3

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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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**To be paid in advance

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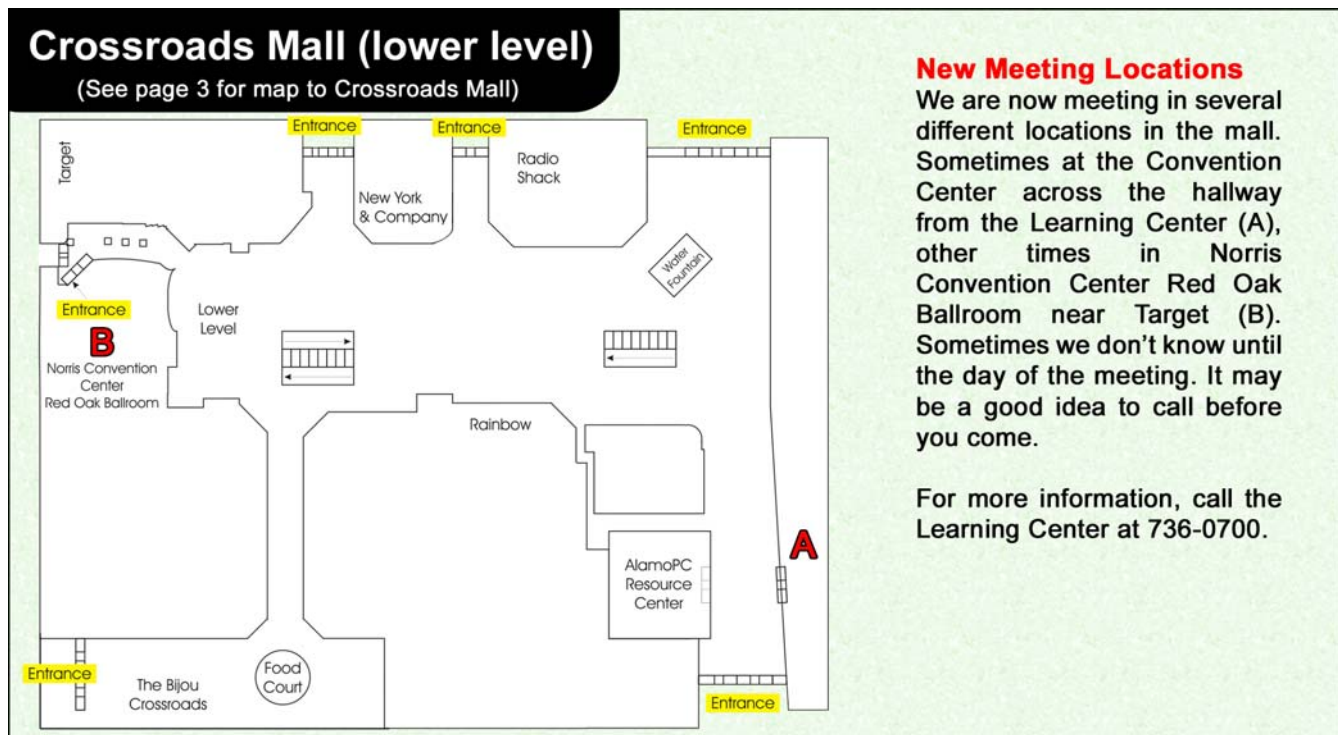
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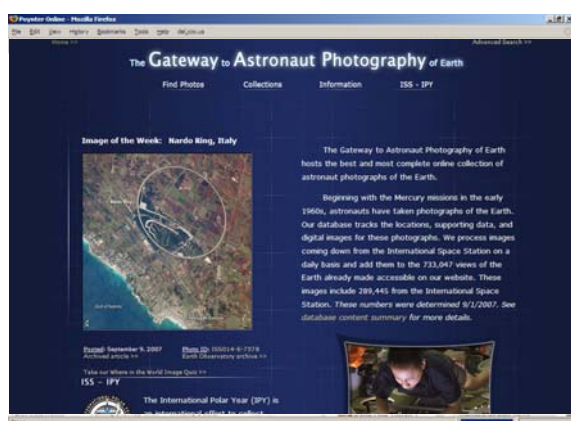
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



PC Alamode Links List



Gateway to Astronaut Photography

<<http://eol.jsc.nasa.gov/>>

This site hosts the best and most complete online collection of astronaut photographs of the Earth.



Earth From Space

<<http://earth.jsc.nasa.gov/sseop/EFS/>>

The NASA Space Shuttle Earth Observations Photography database of images is a national treasure.



Over the past month, I've been restructuring the PC Alamode. Regular contributors from different computer groups were mixed together. Now everyone is arranged by user group, starting with our very own Alamo PC contributors.

Guest contributors, which appear courtesy of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, follow with a couple of news ones, such as Computer Club of Oklahoma City member Elizabeth B. Wright's "This and That" (page 24) and Sarasota PC User Group member Dr. John R. Chait's "Ergonomic Tips" (page 28).

Speaking of local contributors, we have slowly lost several regular San Antonio-area contributors. The trend continues this month, so if you have an idea for a regular column, please let me know.

It requires a monthly commitment for a year. Columnists must write a regular length -- about 1,000 or 2,000 words -- to ensure the page is filled. If you have any questions or suggestions, please write <editor@alamopc.org>.

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

"October" - Columbus, Bosses, U.N., Goblins, Elections

This month marks several things of interest to many: 8th - Columbus Day (Thanks for being a "discoverer"); 16th - Bosses Day (an opportunity to help workers keep their job and a commercialized day for those who reap the purchases made); 24th - United Nations Day (guess that is because the countries represented don't seem to be able to be united on all other days. Do they meet on this day, or just get the day off so as not to spoil their almost daily refusal to be "United?"); 31st - Halloween - A time for kids to have some fun in costumes and get some "safe" treats from trusted individuals.

At the September General Meeting, A representative from AT&T talked about the services AT&T can provide (for a price), and some of the things that are being considered. The meeting was held in a Norris facility because of the anticipated attendance. However, there were not as many as had been expected, but those present were able to receive answers to the questions posed.

Our October General Meeting is scheduled to have another AT&T representative talk about mobile services and products that AT&T has available, compared to other companies offerings, and a brief review of some of the home and business based services addressed at the last meeting. Some future mobile products and services may also be addressed. This should be of interest to individuals who have these type of services, especially mobile services, or who are contemplating acquiring AT&T services and/or products. A topic will be the iPhone and its features/capabilities. Check the website or Learning Center for the latest information on location and presenter, but plan to come and bring some friends.

Elections Process Closed: The election process for Oct 2007- Sep 2008 (Floor Nominations/ Election Committee Names - Submitted NLT Jul 9th [Gen Meeting]; Bios - posted to website ASAP & included in Aug ALAMODE; Online Write-in Voting - Aug 1 until midnight Aug 31; New Board Members identified ASAP - Names available to members ASAP in Sep [Website & at Gen Meeting Sep 10th] and included in the Oct 1 Alamode) closed at midnight on August 31st. Since only three names were submitted during the write-in phase (Linda Bianchi, Cary Hall and Billy Samples), All of whom are currently serving and have at least another year to serve, no bios were needed.


That leaves us with the six individuals currently serving and one vacancy (total positions available is seven). If there is a desire on the part of one or more of the six to not continue, more vacant positions will be created. With only six individuals currently willing to serve, and one vacant position for the past few years, the future of OUR organization appears to be suspect.

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 (especially at the board 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 continue to review 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 one in the next paragraph. Once it is determined that a class should be started, finding a teacher is usually a daunting task.

Continued on page 9



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

Alamo PC logo

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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. (At present, almost all of our new members are derived from "walk-in traffic" at the Learning Center.) We want membership to continue to "grow" through each member renewing and trying to encourage others to join. (Please remember that you can help someone to join through the online process. They don't have to come to the Learning Center.) If you do not choose to renew, send a comment or two as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, with a copy 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 October General Meeting. I am not sure if it will be in our Learning Center (LC) or a Norris conference facility (hopefully across from our LC). Check the website for the latest information.

October Program

Bill Klutz

Our October General Meeting is scheduled to have an AT&T representative talk about mobile services and products that AT&T has available, compared to other companies offerings, and a brief review of some of the home and business based services addressed at the last meeting. Some future mobile products and services may also be addressed. This should be of interest to individuals who have these type of services, especially mobile services, or who are contemplating acquiring AT&T services and/or products. A topic will be the iPhone and its features/capabilities.

The location has not yet been determined. Check the website or Learning Center for the latest information on location and presenter, but plan to come and bring some friends.

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Media Center

Learn all about computers with hundreds of books and dozens of video tapes. Enjoy our large selection of techno-fiction. A comfortable seating area is available. Call (210) 736-0700

Student Practice Lab

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

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

Volunteer of the Month

Sarah Thomas



APCUG Announces Three Big User Group Contests for 2007

Time is getting close to submit those prize winning Photos, Newsletters and Websites. Don't miss these great opportunities to get some recognition for your group.

That's what it is all about. If your UG has a great newsletter, website, or members that enjoy taking digital photographs, September 1st is the date to get those entries in. The procrastinators will have until October 15, 2007 deadline, to get their entries in. Submittals after the October 15th deadline will be disqualified.

The results of the competition will be announced at the APCUG's Annual Convention, January 3 – 6, 2008 in Las Vegas; you do not need to be present to win. After the convention, the results will be posted on <http://www.apcug.net/> and set out via NOOZ and Reports. All submitted Digital Photos will be on display at the conference. Prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and a Certificate of Participation. The winning website and newsletters will also received the appropriate 2007 contest logos for use on the group's newsletter and website.

Please give the widest possible publicity for APCUG Digital Photo contest. It is open to all UG members. See the complete contest rules and criteria for Photo Contest, visit the APCUG website.

Website Contest: submit your club's website URL by completing the .pdf form on the APCUG website. Questions regarding the contest can be submitted to: websites2007@apcug.net

Newsletter Contest: submit 3 of your newsletters in .pdf format to newsletters2007@apcug.net; if your newsletters are on the web, you can submit the URL for each. If they are password protected, please provide a password for access or hard copies.

Mail your hard copies to:

2007 APCUG Newsletter Contest
c/o Melvin Weekley
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Cables & Connectors
Bare Bone Systems
Computer Related Books
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

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

Show Dates:

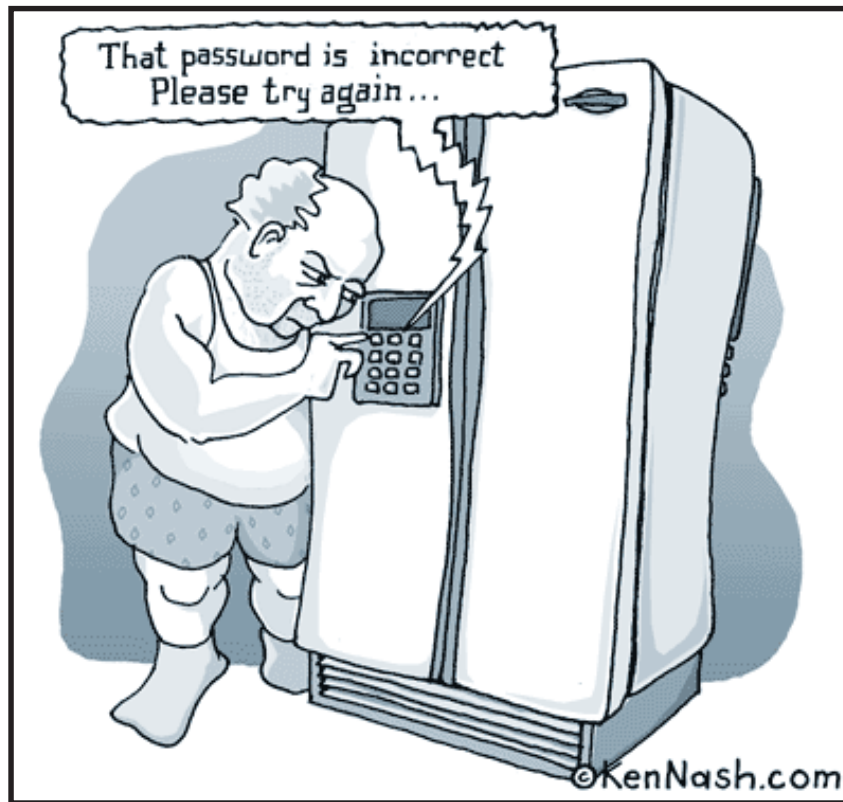
Dec. 8, 2007

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

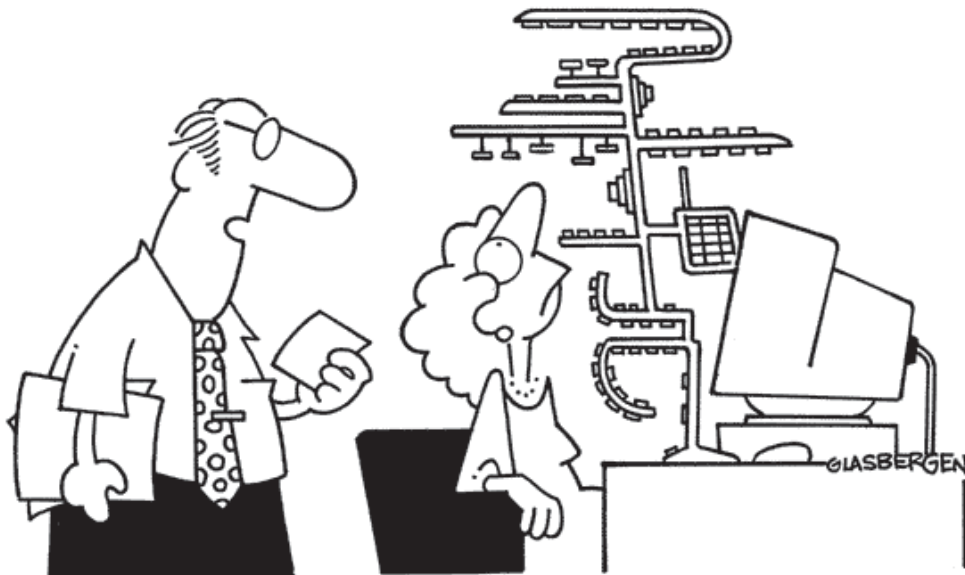


Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



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"It's an ergonomic keyboard. Once you learn how to use it, it will increase your speed by six percent!"



Don't You Have Anything Better to Do?

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

It's been a long day at work. You've handed in all your TPS reports. You've proven your ROI by demonstrating that your willingness to change paradigms led to a significant increase in your overall productivity. Yet, after all that, the clock clicks slowly by and you have nothing to do. Wait—there's hope...

I've found the answer in browser based games!

1. Paper Pilot - Go to <http://www.solidworkspilot.com>, where you can build your own paper airplane. You then use a virtual person to throw the airplane. You can then challenge your friends to see who can throw the airplane the farthest.

2. Flash Element TD - This Warcraft-themed strategy game can be found at <http://www.novelconcepts.co.uk/FlashElementTD>. In this game, you get to kill endless waves of enemies using your tower-based weaponry. And if you suddenly need to "become busy" with actual work tasks, you can simply set your defenses, click Play, and get back to work while the game continues on its own.

3. Bauns - Go to <http://www.ferryhalim.com/orisinal/g3/bauns.htm> to play this game. It's a variation on time proven games like Bubble Breaker and Chuzzle. However, this game is a bit more complicated than its predecessors. It incorporates a challenging shooting method and a mix of power-ups.

4. Silversphere - The objective of Silversphere is to roll a ball into a vortex to complete each level (much like Marble Madness from the 1980's). The board consists of a 2-D maze of squares surrounded by water hazards. The clock is your primary enemy in the initial levels, but additional obstacles arise as you progress. Find this game at <http://www.miniclip.com/games/silversphere/en/>.

5. You Don't Know Jack - This is the browser-based version of the original popular party game. It looks extremely similar to the CD-ROM game and includes quirky questions (just like the original). You can find this gem at <http://www.youdontknowjack.com/node/150>.

6. De-Animator - In this game, you use a six-shooter and a shotgun to ward off a band of evil zombies. Try this title out at <http://www.flash-game.net/game/1491/de-animator.html>.

7. Flash Flash Revolution - This game, like Dance Dance Revolution, requires you to press keys in correspondence to arrows that scroll down your screen. Since you clearly can't bring your dance pad into your cubicle, this is the next best thing (although this game can potentially lead to a severe case of carpal tunnel syndrome). Play this game at <http://www.flashflashrevolution.com>.

8. White Chamber - You are trapped in a room. You must interact with different objects in this room to solve various puzzles and escape. Try this at http://www.fasco-csc.com/index_e.php.

9. Unique IQ Tests - This is a collection of time-based puzzles that test your mental acuity and will provide you a score that sums up your intelligence (reminiscent of the Brain Game series on the Nintendo DS). Start testing your brain at <http://www.flash-game.net/game/2788/unique-iq-tests.html> to find out how intelligent you really are.

10. Virtual Police: The Genome War - This is a first-person shooter, ala 1994. It's got all the high resolution graphics that many may remember from those days. Start fragging your life away at <http://www.thatvideogamesite.com/play.php?id=448>.

11. Tarot Card Reader - Are you wondering what your future holds? You get to choose from Romance, Career, or Friends categories. You ask a question and select three cards. You can then consult the cards to see what fates await. Look into your future at <http://www.addictinggames.com/whatsthedeal.html>.

Well, if you still have any time left in the day—it's your own fault. Try these titles out and see what you think.

The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac
FREE Software!

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

Here are some FREE software downloads that I've come across over the last couple of months:

The Unarchiver 1.6

Have you ever downloaded a new file from the Internet, only to find that it's in a compressed format that your system doesn't know how to unpack? If so, this is the program for you. This program supports ZIP, RAR, and ACE extensions. It also supports Stuffit Expander's SIT format, but not the newer SITX version (so you'll need to have a copy of Stuffit's software to handle those files). Also, realize that this program is only for unpacking files. It doesn't allow you to compress anything yourself. You can find this software at <http://wakaba.c3.cx>.

Backdrop

If you need to take a screen shot on a Mac, you may find yourself distracted by the translucent interface elements. Solve this problem using Backdrop v1.2, by John Haney, which places a background above all the other elements on your desktop. When you launch Backdrop, you get a solid background that fills your entire screen, leaving only the menu bar and Dock visible. You then bring the desired application to the front and take your screenshot.

If you don't like the white background, Backdrop offers an option to choose any color you want. You can even use an image file instead of a solid color, giving your screen shot the watermark effect. Backdrop's default behavior is to "float" between applications to provide a background that blocks everything behind it, but you can also use it as a temporary Desktop background. This gives you a standard screenshot, Desktop and all, but with a different background than your day to day Desktop image or color. Grab this software at www.johnhaney.com/backdrop.

Cyberduck 2.7.3

Do you have the need to transfer files via FTP? This is a great program for accomplishing those tasks. Its open-source (FREE) and supports SFTP, integration with OS X's Keychain, and drag-and-drop file transfers. For Mac users, the interface will seem familiar: it mirrors that of the Finder's list view. One of its strongest features is its ability to resume stopped downloads. Check this software out at <http://cyberduck.ch>.

SuperDuper

Check out SuperDuper at: <<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper/SuperDuperDescription.html>>

This software can make a bit-for-bit copy of a Mac OS X volume. This is a great option for backing up your hard drive. If anything goes wrong with your primary drive, just switch it out with the copy and you're back in business. The interface is easy to use. With the current version, SuperDuper 2.1, you can make four different types of backups: Backup - all files; Backup - user files; Safety clone - shared users and applications; and Safety clone - shared users. You have four different copy options: erase volume and copy; smart update; copy newer files; copy different files. The program even provides "What's going to happen?" summaries. This version also provides scheduling options, which allow you to set the week(s), day(s), and time you want the copy to occur. SuperDuper 2.1 is a Universal application, working natively on Intel-based Macs.

NicePlayer 0.95

Do you need a good way to play QuickTime videos in full-screen mode? Instead of paying for QuickTime Pro, try NicePlayer 0.95 (<http://niceplayer.sourceforge.net>) for an open-source alternative. With the proper codecs installed, this program can handle just about any file format. On top of that, it integrates with the Apple remote to control playback. You can also add playlists, allowing you to access all your videos from one location.

MacFUSE

If you've been playing with Apple's Bootcamp and running Windows on a Mac, then you've probably run into the frustration with Mac OS's inability to write to an NTFS volume. MacFUSE (<http://macfuse.googlecode.com>) is an open-source project that supports writing to new file systems from your Mac. The project doesn't just support NTFS additions. Check out their site for a comprehensive listing of what they support and for updates on where the project is heading.



Troubleshooting Windows Part II

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.

There are several Troubleshooting Tools which can be of assistance to you in resolving computer problems. They include: Disk Clean. Frees the hard drive space by eliminating unnecessary files in Win98/Me/2000/XP. To access it go to Start, Programs, Accessories, Systems Tools, and Disk Cleanup. Network Diagnostics. Scans the system for network hardware and software configuration information in WinXP. Go to Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and System Information then click Net Diagnostics from the Tools menu. Safe Mode. Loads a simplified configuration so you can circumvent serious system problems and get to your data. It's found in Win95/98/Me/2000/XP. You need to press F8 during initial system boot in all of the aforementioned systems except in Win95 where you'd press F5. ScanDisk. Checks for and repairs problems with hard drive files in Win 95/98/Me. Go to Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and ScanDisk. System Configuration. Enables you to view and edit startup files and selectively disable settings and applications to aid in system troubleshooting Win98/Me/XP. The run command for it is Msconfig.exe. System File Checker. Checks for damaged or missing system files and lets you replace any changes files with original versions in Win98/Me. Go to Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and System Information; System File Checks from the Tools menu. System Information. Provides detailed information on system hardware, software, and settings and serves as a launching point for various system utilities in Win 98/Me/2000/XP. Go to Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and System Information. System Restore. Lets you undo changes by restoring system settings to a previous state in WinMe/XP. Go to Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and System Restore.

Computer won't Boot

If you can't boot your computer, try these troubleshooting steps. 1. Check all cables including the plug into the electric socket to make sure everything is hooked up. 2. See if the power supply turns on. Listen for the sound of the computer fan or your hard drive spinning. If you hear nothing, your power supply may need to be replaced. 3. If your power supply is OK but nothing appears on screen, plug in a different monitor. If the monitor proves to be good, try replacing the video cable. If still nothing appears on the screen, your video card may be the problem. 4. If your monitor is working but you detect no hard drive activity and see no display, reset the CMOS. Shut down, the PC, unplug it, ground yourself, and take out the battery on the motherboard. Reboot and see if that fixed the problem. 5. If the PC is still not functioning, bad RAM could be the culprit. Remove one memory module at a time and replace each one with a known good one and then reboot after each test. 6. If none of these efforts work, your motherboard or CPU is probably damaged and will need to be replaced. If the PC's BIOS routine runs but the drive won't spin, your drive may have crashed. Of course, you could always be encountering software issues, such as Windows refusing to start or freezing while it's loading. 7. To test this scenario, boot into Safe Mode. 8. If no results, then try "Last Known Good Configuration" at the boot menu. 9. If you can run Safe Mode, but not regular Windows, try System Restore. 10. If you still can't boot, you probably have major Windows problems. 11. If your PC is still unstable, reinstalling Windows may be your next best bet for solving this computer problem.

Computer Check-up

Today's hard drives rarely have errors. If you think your hard drive's acting strangely and defragmenting it doesn't fix the problem, check it for errors by opening My Computer, right-clicking on your hard drive, choosing Properties, clicking the Tools tab and clicking the Check Now and Start buttons. Windows will now probe it for problems. If it finds any, you just follow the Windows instructions for making repair attempts.

Error Messages

Unspecified error. The best response to correct this error message is to close all open applications and reboot your computer. If the error persists, download and install the latest updates for the programs that may be involved in this problem. You also should run an anti-spyware utility, such as Ad-aware or Spybot Search & Destroy to eliminate unwanted contaminants that may have caused the message to appear on your computer.

Busy and/or Unstable System Error Message. Sometimes Windows locks up unexpectedly which then results in this error message. "The system is either busy or has become unstable. You can wait and see if it becomes available again, or you can restart your computer. Press any key to return to windows and wait. Press CTRL+ALT+DEL again to restart your computer. You will lose unsaved information in any programs that are running. Press any key to continue." The best way to correct this problem is to press CTRL+ALT+DEL again to reboot the computer to eliminate the condition that led the system to lock up. This message is generally linked to memory access errors, so take note of when and under what circumstances it appears on your computer. The resulting information can help you identify the cause of the error. You can then try to correct the problem by

Continued on page 16

reinstalling the offending application, downloading relevant updates, removing unnecessary program from the Startup menu, disabling screen savers, and/or updating drivers. If all else fails at this point, you may want to reinstall Windows.

Illegal Operation Error Message. Have you ever received the following error message? “This program has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down. If the problem persists, contact the program vendor.” If so, resolve the situation by closing all open applications and rebooting. If you then keep seeing the same error, use “clean boot troubleshooting” to identify the program involved and reinstall it. To perform a clean boot, open the Start menu, select Run, type msconfig in the field and click OK. From the System Configuration Utility, choose the Selective Startup option and deselect all but one of the checkboxes listed beneath it, and then click OK and reboot. Repeat the process each time selecting a different checkbox under Selective Startup until you’re able to identify the checkbox item that generates the error. The next step is to choose the tab within the System Configuration Utility that corresponds to the identified checkbox and deselect all but one of the commands contained on that tab. Now reboot and, if the computer boots without any trouble, return to the System Configuration Utility to select a different command. Repeat this process until you isolate the command that’s responsible for generating the fatal exception error. Finally, after identifying the problematic command, contact the relevant software developer or hardware manufacturer to obtain a specific solution.

Fatal Exception Error Message. A fatal exception error message sounds bad but it reveals little information about a computer problem. It usually indicates an internal error, such as an invalid memory request or a coding bug and usually occurs when launching an application or opening and closing Windows. The best method to get rid of a fatal exception error, which usually appears on a blue screen and causes Windows to crash, is to reboot your computer. If the error continues to disrupt your computing sessions, try to pinpoint the source of the problem by performing a clean boot described in the previous tip.

Windows Update Error Message. “Windows Update has encountered an error and cannot display the requested page.” A fix for many errors like this one just involves installing the latest updates for Windows. In most cases you can work around this error by installing the latest Internet Explorer versions. WinXP/2000 users should also install the latest service packs for their operating system.

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.

Disk Defragmenter

If you have trouble with your Disk Defragmenter, then try to resolve the problems with it with the following actions. Tidy up your hard drive. Start by running Disk Cleanup (Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup). Be sure to dump temporary Internet files and clean out the Recycle Bin.

After running Disk Cleanup, check for programs that you don’t use. To delete them, click Start, Settings, Control Panel. Next double-click Add/Remove Programs. Find the programs in the list and click Add/Remove. Use care. Only delete programs that you know you do not use. Hard drive flaws also can stop Disk Defragmenter. So it’s a good idea to run ScanDisk before Disk Defragmenter. You’ll find ScanDisk at Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, ScanDisk. Select Thorough and Automatically Fix Errors. Next, click Options. Under “Areas of the Disk to Scan,” select “System and Data Areas.” Click OK, Start. If Disk Defragmenter just won’t perform for you, try your luck in Safe Mode. This loads only essential drivers and Windows files. To get into Safe Mode, shut down your computer. Wait 10 seconds and boot up. Tap the F8 key during boot up. The boot up process should stop, and you should see a menu. Highlight Safe Mode and press Enter. If you don’t get the menu, reboot and try again. Another possible—though improbable—thing to consider is that spyware or a virus could start in Safe Mode. If so, they could make Disk Defragmenter stop. So, when all else fails, check the processes on your machine. Boot into Windows and pare it down to essential processes. “Process” is a term for any program currently running. You can do this using the Windows Task Manager. Press Ctrl+Alt+Del. You’ll see a list of files there. Malicious programs may be included. If so, they might well have innocuous names, to mislead you. This list also includes necessary Windows files. You don’t want to disable them. Non-essential processes should be shut down. Here are the files that you should leave alone: csrss.exe, dllhost.exe, explorer.exe, kernel32.dll, lsass.exe, msgsrv32.exe, mstask.exe, services.exe, svchost.exe, and taskmon.exe. You probably will find anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall files there. Shut them down, but disconnect from the Internet first. Don’t tempt fate. To stop a process, click it once to highlight it. Then click End Task.



Getting a domain name

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!

To have a home page on the Internet you need at least two things: a Web address and a computer to host your site. I covered the host computer back in June, so let's talk about your domain name. A domain name is a Web address. Mine is susanives.com. How do you get a domain name? You buy it. More about that later.

The Internet actually uses IP addresses to route information. An IP might look like 123.45.678.9. Most people can't remember a random string of numbers, so they give it a nickname that is easier to recall. You don't go to the supermarket and buy *Lycopersicon esculentum*: you buy tomatoes. Same principle. This is called the DNS (Domain Name System).

The last two or three characters are called the TLD (Top Level Domain). The original TLD are .com (commercial), .org (an organization) and .net (having to do with the network.) These three domains are available to everyone: I'm a .com, even though I am just a person.

Others are reserved for specific types of organizations: .mil for the military, .edu for educational institutions and .gov for government. I can't be a .mil.

A few years ago seven new TLDs were added: .biz (small business); .name (a personal site, which uses the format susan.ives.name); .pro (professional, such as doctor and lawyer) and .info (an information resource) are unsponsored domains. Three others, .coop (co-ops), .aero (aerospace) and .museum, are sponsored by interest groups and closely monitored by governing councils. More are in the works.

Every country also has a two-character TLD. The United States is .us, Canada is .ca and Mexico is .mx. You can get a full list at checkdomain.com. These are sometimes called ccTLDs, for country code. I could be susanives.us if I wanted to.

Some countries, like the United States, restrict registration to people and organizations that actually live in that country. Others have opened theirs up to anyone. Moldava, which has the TLD .md, has developed a tidy little business selling domain names to doctors – get it?

Generally, domain names must be between 3 and 63 characters in length. Some TLDs allow you to have two character domain names but most require at least three. Some are more restrictive (.cc domains can have no more than 45, for example) and some browsers and e-mail programs can only recognize 26 characters, even if your domain is longer. The character count does not include the TLD extension (.com, .net, etc.)

They can only contain letters (aAZz etc.), numbers (0123 etc.) and a dash (-). No spaces are allowed and you cannot start or end a domain with a dash.

It doesn't make any difference whether the letters are upper or lower case, although the convention is to make domains all lower case. It's less confusing.

Every domain name has to be unique: I have susanives.com and you can't have it. You could have susanives.net, if it's available, though.

The bit you are working on here is called the second level domain. The beginning part – www – reflects the protocol. WWW means World Wide Web, or a Web site. When you register a domain you are registering all of the protocols – e-mail, ftp, etc.

Although some people complain that all the good domain names are taken, there are still plenty out there. If your creativity needs a spark, check out Name Boy. Enter in a word or two and it will come up with a few hundred possible available domain names. Another way to check if your preferred domain is available, use the search engine like the one at Network Solutions.

The main criteria for a domain name are that it's meaningful, memorable and easy to communicate, both in print and by word of mouth. Run it by some friends and colleagues to see what they think. Especially for a business, your domain name is as important as your company name, so spend some time developing a good one.

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The .com TLD is well known -- .net and .org are also in the public conscious. In other countries, their own domains, such as .au for Australia or .uk for United Kingdom - are top-of-mind. In the United States, .us is less well known but still useable. I'd think twice before using one of the new domains. If you have a business, try to come up with a good .com name before you slide down the comfort scale to a .biz.

Domain names have been deregulated, so they are now cheap. I often use a site called GoDaddy which sells domains for \$8.95 a year. The suggested retail price is \$35 a year, but you can get them as cheaply as \$4.95.

It is easier, if you are new at this, to have your domain registered and set up your Web hosting at the same time through the same company. However, you can register your domain now through any of the registrars and then have it transferred to your host site when you are ready. Make sure to keep all the information you need to accomplish this when you originally set up the domain. Print out a copy and put it in a folder.

You can do all your ordering online, using a credit card or PayPal. You can register the domain for periods of 1 to 10 years. I recommend registering for at least two years. You will get a reminder two months before your domain expires that it is time to re-register.

Some people recommend registering several different variants of your domain while you are at it, to make sure no one else gets a free ride on your good name. If you are registering susanives.com, grab .net, .org and .us while you are at it, and maybe even get susan-ives in all its variations. This is more important for a business than for an individual. You can have all of the variants flip over to the main site. This is called domain forwarding; most registrars offer it for free.

If you want to learn more about domain names a good source is Domains Magazine. It's geared to people who buy domain names for resale but has a lot of good advice for the Lazy Webmaster as well.



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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.

I heard from several readers who said they have been successfully traveling with only a “special” flash drive for some time. I hadn’t seen a review on this, or read about it as a meeting presentation last year if they were available? I read a lot, especially the UG newsletters I get. I only learned about the USB U3 drives last spring when I purchased a San Disk Flash Drive that I thought was a bargain. When I plugged it into the USB port just to take a look, I thought it was installing something on my HD. I was upset and wanted to know what was going on without my permission. Then I read the enclosed folder about the software preinstalled on that “U3” drive, and other software available on their Web site for it. I was confused and tried unsuccessfully to learn more about it. Around the first of the year was the first I read a review, but without understanding it, I was still confused. Last month I included the article about that topic because I know I’m not the only person behind on new technology knowledge.

*Lets Look At The Pluses!

I reviewed Microsoft Money a few years ago and started actually using it when my favorite money program, “Managing Your Money,” turned to providing software for banks. I have differences with some Microsoft policies, such as Genuine Advantage, and their product activation process, but when it comes to MS Money; that tech support is the best in the business. Each version I have used came with three years of support via an 800 number. They try hard to answer your questions and do not speak broken English. So far, I’ve talked to tech support in Newfoundland three times, and they have resolved my questions, followed by an e-mail thanking me for using MS Money and saying that if the issue was still not resolved, they are there to clear it up. The phone waiting time has never been long. What a great value for a product that costs so little. There are things I would like to see improved; such as when I back it up before closing the program, it doesn’t limit the number of backups on my external USB flash drive, but that’s a minor problem.

*Emergency ID And Medical Information

What if you were traveling and became involved in an accident leaving you incapacitated! How would an ambulance medic and ER facility know how to correctly treat you if your medical condition was special, or you had preferences? In my case, I’m diabetic and now take Coumadin (blood thinner) so it would be important for the medic to know that. Identification Devices L.L.C. offers a compact USB Flash drive to hold vital information that could help a medic make the right decisions. Wear it around your neck, or even put it on your key chain so a medic can see it (the Medical logo is on one side) when examining you, and can then plug it into the USB port on their laptop. Instantly, it gives the default choice to open your information screen. That instantly brings to their computer screen a form with your necessary medical and other information, along with your picture. You simply type in all the necessary information yourself, no complicated instruction to follow, just fill in the labeled blanks.

The company sent me one to try and I was impressed with how easy it was to use and type in the necessary data. The data includes your personal information with emergency phone numbers for whomever you designate, and your doctors, drugs, important medical warnings (if necessary), your insurance companies and also your attorney information. There is a spot for your picture in the upper corner, and even a way to load PDF files for important documents such as a living will, power of attorney, your own personal instructions and other important documents if you want them there. I was impressed that most of the blanks in the form could be expanded to a larger space by double-clicking them to insert additional information, such as additional doctors, medications and other vital information. It can be password protected if you desire, but I wouldn’t want that. The MSRP is \$24.95 + \$4.95 S & H.

They are offering DealsGuy readers a \$2.50 discount, but only if you call 1-866-955-0535 to order and mention the DealsGuy column. Larger orders can get a better discount. Ignoring the discount, you can order it on their Web site <<http://www.identificationdevices.net>> using your credit card. I think this product is a great value.

*Be Aware

If you are interested in either of the products below, be sure to do your homework and check their Web site for further information because I edited a lot of information out of them to make them fit. I have not tried either product.

Continued on page 20

*Hope My Wife Doesn't Use This Remote Control Stuff On Me!

Anyplace Control Software released version 4.0 of Anyplace Control, an acknowledged remote monitoring solution. The new version extends the frontiers of remote control and now can bypass routers and firewalls, as well as support PCs with dynamic IPs.

Anyplace Control displays the desktop of the remote computer, letting you use your own keyboard and mouse to control it remotely. At any point in time, and to any place in the world that has Internet connection, you can monitor your PC and get data transferred to or from it. The program can be used in a LAN, and it doesn't need a Web connection. Anyplace Control can connect to multiple computers at a time. With Anyplace Control, you will get the smoothest remote connection experience along with full control over the system without an external static IP address. Another good thing is that the program can automatically bypass routers and firewalls that lie between the remote computer and your machine.

You no longer need to spend time sending files via e-mail because it's easier to transfer them directly. The program can transfer any kind of data, and you can be sure that the information you send will be delivered immediately with no response delay. Home users can use the program to get access to their office computers and work from home, or check their own PC while away from home.

Anyplace Control runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows and costs \$22 (USD) for a single-user license. Licensed customers are entitled to free technical support and upgrades. More information on Anyplace Control, as well as a free trial copy is available free of charge from <<http://www.anyplace-control.com>>.

"I'd like to offer your group a 10% discount. Please contact me at info@anyplace-control.com and name your group to get the discount." (DealsGuy comment: take a close look at their refund policy and the discount!").

Regards,
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yura@anyplace-control.com
Direct download link: <<http://www.anyplace-control.com/anyplace-control/data/AnyplaceControlInstall.exe>> (2.7 Mb)


*A Freebie For Managing Your Downloads

FreeDownloadManager.org announced the release of a new version of their Free Download Manager. The list of FDM features includes accelerating downloads up to 600%, resuming broken downloads, simultaneous downloading from several mirrors, http/https/ftp/bittorrent support, flash video downloads support, video conversion and more. FDM 2.5 is released under the GPL license and is now open-source software.

The new version of Free Download Manager stands out due to its expanded possibilities. Now, FDM works as an upload manager as well, making it easy to share files with other people. FDM now allows downloading files using Bittorrent protocol, as well as downloading video from video sites, such as YouTube, Google Video, MySpace videos, etc. The video can be saved in native .flv format or converted to one of more of the popular video formats. The FDM Team has also added more flexibility to the software providing an opportunity to control FDM remotely, via the Internet. Another new feature, portable mode, will be especially appreciated by users who want to always have the program close at hand. They can easily create FDM portable version and enjoy the software on every computer without another installation.

For more information on FDM, visit the product web site: <<http://www.freedownloadmanager.org>>

Download link: <<http://www.freedownloadmanager.org/fdminst.exe>>



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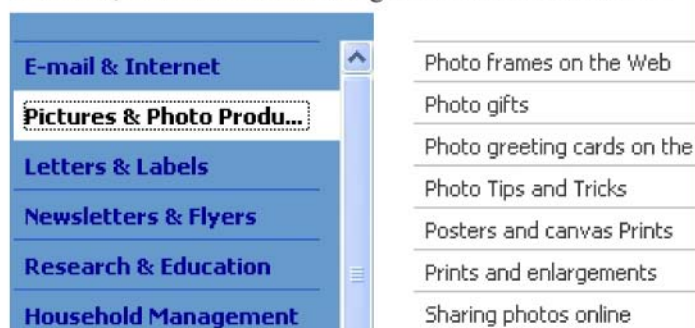
Microsoft Works - Word Processing Docs

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>

If you followed along last month, you most likely realized that the menu list for E-mail and Internet was considerably longer than what I covered. I rely on you to explore further, once I've gotten you started.

This month we'll move on to the next task on the Microsoft Works Task Launcher, Pictures and Photo Products, seen below. Clicking on Photo frames on the



Web opens the screen below. Clicking on Start this



Photo frames on the Web

Choose the perfect frames for your photos

[Start this task](#)

task will take you to a commercial site which offers you the opportunity to order prints online from FujiPhoto and its Get The Picture retailers. Click on Order Prints to select mail back service or in-store delivery of your print order. In-store orders can be completed and ready for pick up in as little as 2-4 hours, depending on the retailer.

I had a problem with this particular step because the page requested requires either MSN Explorer or Internet Explorer version 4 (or later). Since I'm using Firefox, I couldn't figure out any way to complete the process, even though I have Microsoft Internet Explorer installed - but not as the default browser. The same thing was true for Photo gifts and Greeting Cards online.

Photo Tips and Tricks takes you to MSN Tech and Gadgets which offers a wide variety of related subjects. It is a full site dedicated to Focus on Photos as



seen above. You can explore the extent of this site for the full spectrum of tips and How-To articles.

Poster and Canvas Prints, and Prints and enlargements both take you again to the Fuji Photo site. Sharing photos online returns you to the MSN site and Focus on Photos. It took me a while to find something specific to the subject in question. However, if you click on the How-To menu item, you'll be taken to msn.pcworld.com, where you can search for this subject in their How-to area in the right hand column. You'll get articles from PC World, such as Photo Sharing Gone Wild - share photos online -- via cell phone or chat. I'm sure there are many similar articles as well.

This is an area with which you should be familiar. Just browse through it to your heart's content.

Moving down the menu, we've already covered Letters and Labels as well as Newsletters and Flyers. Research and Education can be of great value - to you or to any children you may wish to help out. See the menu list at the top of the next page. Clicking on Do Well in School takes you to My Projects in Works. The first option is Work with To Dos. See this graphic in the next column. The To Do List as seen is just a



Do Well in School
 Encarta Online, search on
 Graphs and charts
 News on the Web
 Notes and outlines
 School reports
 School work planning tools
 Special papers

create notes regarding the project and note the due date on a drop down calendar.

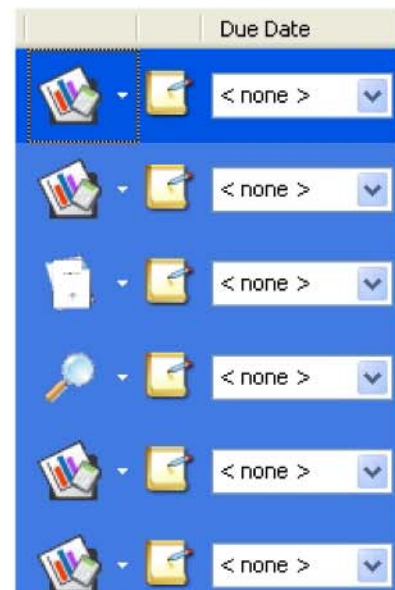
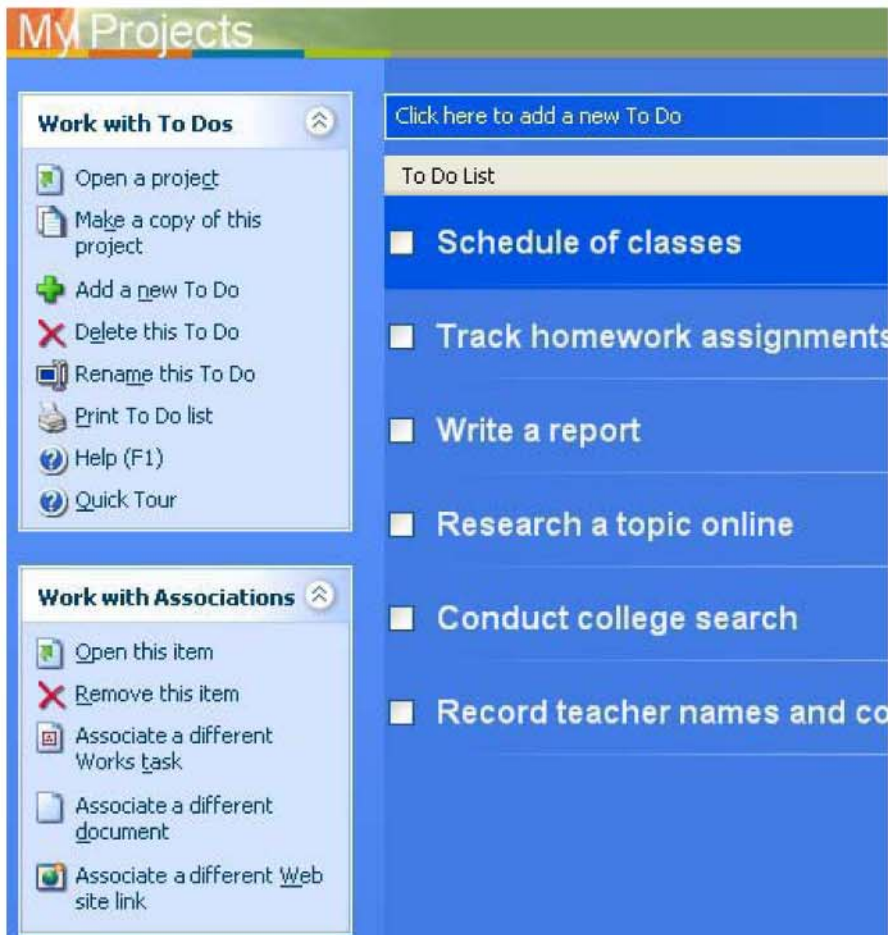


sample. It is possible to revise it to meet your personal requirements. To the right of the screen below you'll

Clicking on the icon in the left column below for the Schedule of Classes opens a Works Spreadsheet with a weekly schedule laid out. You may list schedules for 8 periods daily, with instructor, subject and room.

Clicking on the Notepad allows you enter any pertinent information regarding the schedule.

The remaining items in the To Do List offer similar associations with Works tasks, depending on the nature of the project. In Write a Report, you are presented with a Report Wizard that



find columns of options, allowing you to associate a particular project with a different Works task, a different document or Web site link. You may also

offers a choice of Bibliography, Book Report, Essay, and Term Paper - among others. Choosing Essay for example opens a Works Word Processor document, with headings

like your name, teacher's name, name of the course, and date. After the Title, there are three paragraphs of tips on how to organize and write the essay.

Next month we'll look at other To Do projects.



Ears for E.T.

Berry Phillips, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Barry is a member of the CCOKC and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor

When ET, the Extra-Terrestrial, (1982 motion picture) "phones home," we will be listening with two "new ears" to hear! When SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) lost their NASA funding about a decade ago, their private funding made them even stronger and more innovative. SETI's financiers represent founders of some of the world's top technology companies, Microsoft's Paul Allen, Intel's Gordon Moore, Cisco Systems' Sandy Lerner, and Sun Microsystems who donated state of the art equipment to SETI projects with Hewlett Packard contributing executive input.

The first "new ear" is ATA, the Allen Telescope Array, named after its generous donor, Paul Allen. ATA is currently under construction at the Hatfield Observatory in California and will be powered by the University of California at Berkeley for SETI. When fully operational there will be 350 or more small silver dishes that will be spread over 90 acres in a randomized pattern.

Once completed the ATA will eliminate the need for SETI to borrow time from the world's leading radio telescopes as well as improve their capability and range of listening for sound patterns from outer space that could confirm the presence of alien civilizations. SETI was a project by the late Carl Sagan popularized in the movie, *Contact*., based on his book. SETI is a joint project of thousands of computer users just like you who can download the free SETI screensaver to help process data in our quest to make contact with ET. Contact SETI@home for more information and a free screensaver download.

The second "new ear" to be developed loosely based on ATA is SKA, the Square Kilometer Array, which is in the design stage projected to have an array of 4400 twelve meter fully steerable paraboloid radio dishes. The project is being developed by a consortium of institutions headed up by Cornell University and funded by the National Science Foundation among others.

The 1.4 billion dollar SKA project will be approximately 10 times the sensitivity of the "largest ear" on Earth located at Arecibo in the jungles of Puerto Rico popularized in the James Bond Movie, "the Golden Eye." The SKA project should have a final design and location by 2007, with construction beginning by 2010, and it should be complete and operational by 2015 powered by Cornell University.



Universe Today writes, "it will probe the dark ages before the era of ionization and perhaps before the birth of the first stars. It will observe the formations of the first galaxies. It will map the web of neutral Hydrogen that is spread across our universe near and far."

Currently "ears," radio telescopes, in various locations on Earth are tuned to the heavens listening. Soon we will have "new ears" to probe even further in our ever unfolding voyage to learn the secrets of the universe. "Let us go where no man has gone before." However, the real quest is to answer the question, are we alone?

"Beam me up ET!."



Show and tell

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Elizabeth is a member of the CCOKC and a regular writer for the eMonitor

When you enjoy computer challenges, sooner or later someone is going to ask you to share your projects with a group. The Senior Study Group in the CCOKC has asked me to do a "how to" on creating a PowerPoint presentation. They would learn a lot more from my 17 year old granddaughter who has been proficient in the program since she was 14 years old. But, since she lives in Texas and is busy completing her senior year in high school, the group will have to make do with my work.

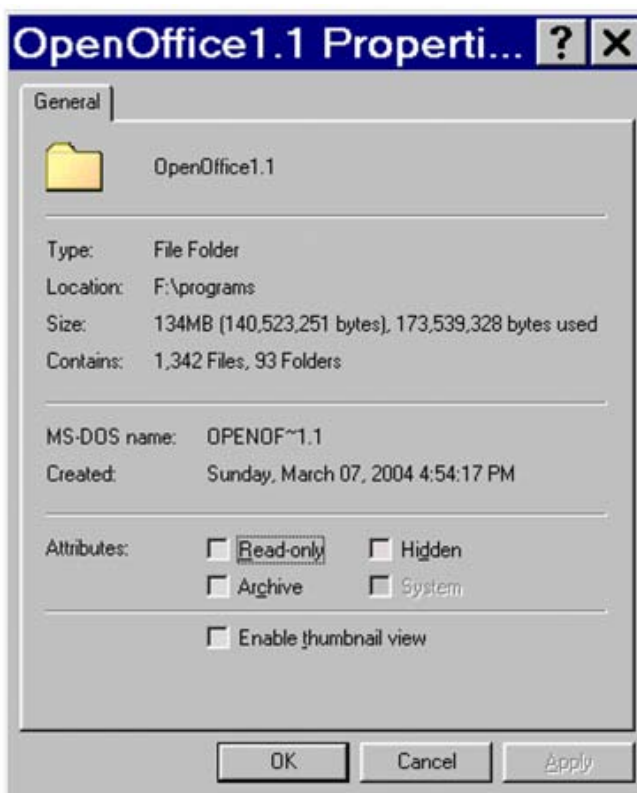
Here are some preliminary steps to follow to help smooth the way for your first PowerPoint show. This will not be a tutorial on PowerPoint, although a few of the basic steps will be covered.

1. Determine the needs of your audience. If you are going to share your project with a variety of age groups (e.g. ages 1 to 40, 40 to 60, over 60) you may want to prepare different versions of your show. I included the ages below 10 because very young children are so computer literate that it is a mistake to leave them out of consideration in our projects. Vision and hearing problems can occur in any age group, so keep in mind who will be watching and listening to your creation.

2. Decide the nature of the slideshow. Some examples are: business topics, personal projects such as a photo album to share with friends and family, or possibly a training session for a job of work or a computer technique. If you plan to include sound with your show, take time to understand the different types of audio files and which types can be used in PowerPoint. There are sound files, mostly for transitions, built into the program, but other music, video and speech files can also be included.

3. Make an outline of the ideas and objectives of your finished project. Any word processor can be used for this purpose. Print it for reference while working on you show. The "Outline" view in PowerPoint is not the same as your printed document. The PowerPoint outline is used by the program for a different purpose. Your preliminary outline can be used as a guideline,

Continued on page 25



Handy Tip: To find the total size of a directory (folder) including all of its subdirectories (folders) and files, go into your file manager program, usually Windows Explore, right click on the directory (folder) of interest. When the dialog box opens, choose "properties". The information box that comes up will show the size in three different numbers. The first number is probably the most useful for our purposes.

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STUDY GROUPS

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

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but obviously can be changed as your presentation takes shape. Having an outline helps smooth the way and can be altered as needed when fresh ideas occur while you are building your show.

4. It is necessary for this next step to understand the nature of image, audio, movie and document files. Create and assemble in one directory (folder) on your computer the necessary image files (photos or clipart), audio and movie files and any documents you will be needing for reference or inclusion in the final output. This eliminates the time consuming process of searching your file directory for that elusive element you plan to use. You can still use files that are not in this folder, but it saves time later to assemble your raw materials in one place before beginning the construction of the actual production.

To get you started for a simple practice project, open PowerPoint and choose a blank presentation. A dialog box will open showing choices for slide formats. In this case, click the blank page icon which is located in the lower right hand corner of the box. When the slide appears on the screen, it will be full screen. Left click on View on the menu bar and choose slide sorter. The slide will change to a smaller view with the number 1 beneath the lower right hand corner. The slide should have a dark border around it indicating it is "selected". Click on Insert on the menu bar and click on Duplicate Slide. Repeat this until you have a total of five slides showing on the screen. Double click on the number 1 slide to bring it back up full screen. At this point you can begin adding elements to the slide. Continue with the next four slides until you have created a short PowerPoint presentation. What you enter is up to you. For a simple show, type some text into the first slide, then insert pictures of your choice in the next four and run it as a slideshow. This is not the most efficient use of PowerPoint, but it is a quick way to get you familiar with the creation process. Using the preset templates for the slides can facilitate placement of elements, but for a beginner the templates can be somewhat daunting.

There are many books available which have instructions for adding items to your slides, including transitions and other exciting visual and sound designs which help keep your audience attentive. There are also caveats about making your presentations too "busy". An audience can be distracted by too much movement or sound, thereby missing the overall intent of your show. There should be a balance between KISS* and holding the attention of your audience.

Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



Wise Registry Cleaner

Wise Registry Cleaner is one of the safest registry cleaning tools available in the market today. Its scanning engine is thorough, safe, and fast. It is so easy to use that even the least experienced user can easily repair the registry with this tool. It scans the Windows registry and finds incorrect or obsolete information.

By eliminating obsolete information in Windows registry, your system will work better and more quickly. Version 2.1 build 57 adds Windows Vista support, "Files And Paths" type, and automatic update check feature. www.wisecleaner.com

Please also note: Most of the software mentioned here is freeware. It is gathered through researching usually reliable sources. I do not personally try most references, time being the obvious factor.

Dr. Herb Goldstein is SPCUG's Software Evaluation Chairman and Review Editor for the Sarasota PC Monitor. Herb is an avid researcher on all things computer and passes on his acquired knowledge each month.
<reviewseditor@spcug.org>



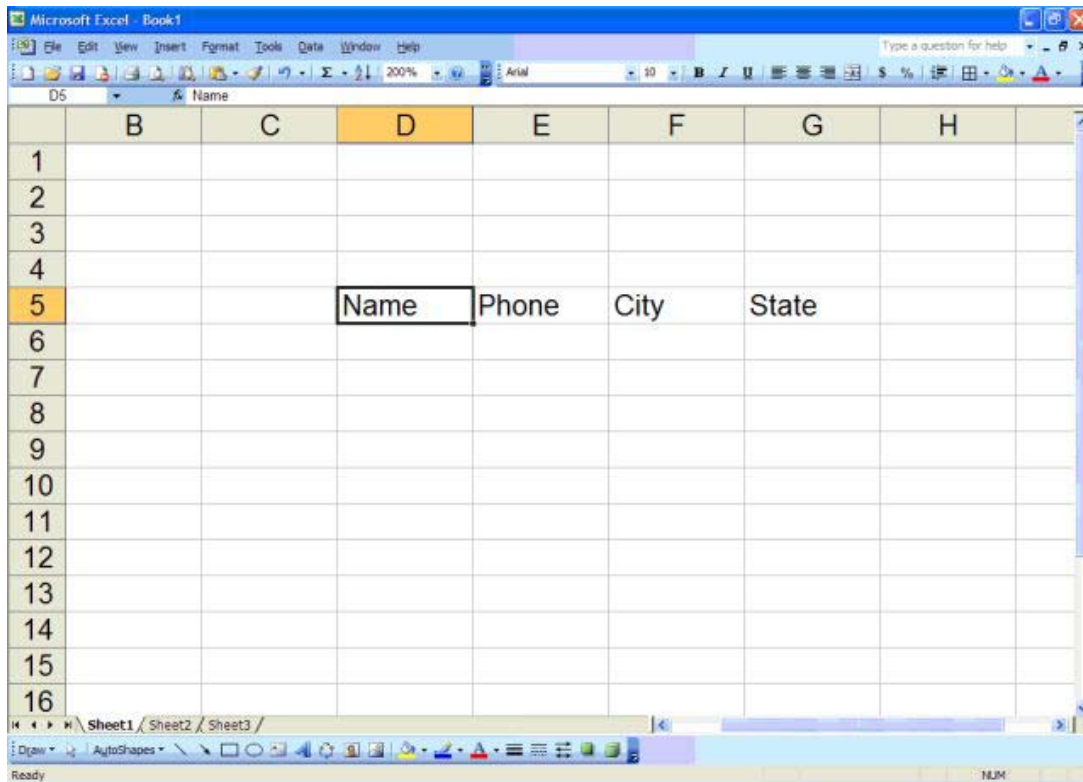
Excel-Fill in the Blank Forms-On Demand

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

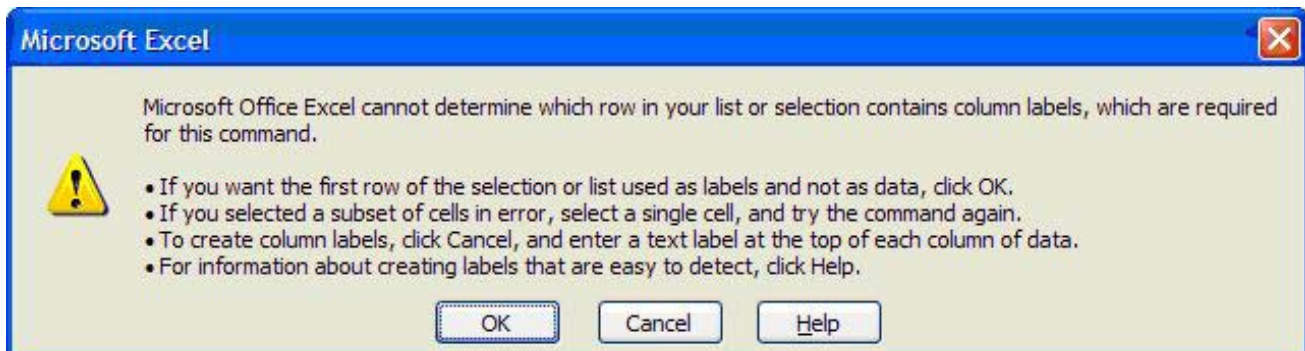
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

Want a real quick fill in the blank form that will put data in the columns you define? You do not need a macro or any VBA special code. This feature is built into Excel. I am using Excel 2003.

Enter the column heading you want to be used in the form. These can be placed anywhere on the form. This technique will work by making multiple forms for you all over the form. Here is a sample to start with.



Now select Data, Form... and I got the following message.



The message says you can create a label that will not give you this message but I did not get it to work so just clicked on the OK button. If anyone knows the trick please email me.

Continued on page 27

The next screen looks like this.

You can now enter the Name, press tab, Phone, press tab and so on until you get to New. Just press Enter and you move to the next row or record. Or any time you press Enter the form moves to a new record. Takes just a little practice to get used to not pressing the Enter key until you are finished with that row. You will see the information fill in on the sheet as you go. Press Close when you are finished.

You can go back and add to the list by clicking in the header line and selecting date and form again. After you have worked with the form a little you can try the Find Next, Find Prev and Criteria buttons. I found the Criteria will find names containing a “y” by clicking on Criteria, entering a “*y” in the name field and clicking on Find Next. Look in help for “data form”. Lot of information there about creating the form and what characters to use in criteria.

Nice built in tool to let Excel do the move up, move down and left and right for you.

Try it and see what you think. Excel has so many built in features that many things are possible if we only look around. I am always finding things that are already inside this product.

Pass your expertise forward. Help you friends with their projects. Share your time with an organization or two and you will expand your expertise. Build it, use it, share it and show everyone how to do it. You will surprise yourself and what you can do when you start a “little” help project.

Microsoft Excel - Book1

Type a question for help

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1							
2							
3							
4							
5			Name	Phone	City	State	
6			James	678-3456	OKC	OK	
7			Katy	123.4567	ABQ	NM	
8			Roger	654.5434	Moore	OK	
9			Gary	908.4567	Edmond	OK	
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							

Sheet1 / Sheet2 / Sheet3 /

Ready



Ergonomic chairs and adjustability options

Ergonomic Tips

John R. Chait D.C. , Sarasota PC User Group

Dr. Chait is a practicing chiropractor in Sarasota and is the SPCUG ergonomic consultant. As an avid computer enthusiast, Dr. Chait knows first hand how important proper interaction between the user and their PC can be. He stresses this in his ergonomic tips column and his lectures. <drchait@hotmail.com> For more ergonomic tips, visit <<http://chaitchiropractic.com/links/Ergonomics/>>

The features described here allow a chair to adjust to a given posture or body size, but it is important to remember the importance of posture change. Adjustability features should allow freedom of motion in the spine.

Seat height

The user is able to adjust the chair so that their feet are on the floor, or the work surface or keyboard is at an appropriate height, or preferably both.

Seat depth

Achieved either by backrest in-out adjustability or by a sliding seat pan, this changes the front-to-back depth of the seat. A shorter seat pan is necessary to allow smaller people to use the chair's backrest, while a deeper one feels more stable to taller individuals.

Backrest angle

This refers to changing the angle of the backrest relative to the angle of the seat. This can be achieved with an adjustment mechanism or through the use of bending materials or springs in the chair shell.

Recline angle

This allows the chair to support different degrees of recline, which in turn transfers some upper-body weight to the chair backrest and lightens the load on the lower back.

Lordosis angle

This also increases the angle between the torso and the thighs, which causes the lower back to curve inward. This inward curve, called "lordosis," results in less pressure on the discs than a flat spinal shape.

Chair recline, or tilt

This changes the angle of the entire seat relative to the floor. As with backrest angle adjustability, a reclined chair transfers some upper-body weight to the backrest of the chair.

Seat pan angle

This generally refers to changing the forward-back angle of the seat. It consists of a choice of fixed angle, rather than a free-floating recline. Often, this feature provides forward tilt, in which the thighs slope downward. The main purpose of forward tilt is to open the angle between the trunk and thighs, inducing a lordotic curve into the spine and reducing pressure on the discs.

Armrests

These support the arms, reducing the work of the shoulders and possibly the upper arms. Armrests can, however, be used inappropriately by inhibiting free motion of the arms during activities such as typing.

Height-adjustable armrests

These help avoid the problems of too-high armrests, which result in elevated shoulders and pressure on the undersides of the elbows and forearms, and too-low armrests, which require the worker to slump or lean to one side to use them.



Width-adjustable armrests

This kind of adjustability changes the distance between armrests. Armrests that are close to the body can help avoid splayed elbows, which in turn cause the wrists to bend to the side during activities such as keying.

Padded armrests

These potentially avoid uncomfortable pressure on the undersides of the forearms and elbows.

Lumbar support

This is intended to prevent, to the extent possible, the flattening of the lumbar spine that occurs in most people when seated. Lumbar support is usually done through gentle curves in the backrest shape. In this state the spine is much more resilient.

Backrest height adjustability

This refers to a change in height of the lumbar support area of the chair backrest, although this feature is often interpreted to mean a change in height of the entire backrest. This feature accommodates preferences by different workers regarding where and how the lumbar support curve contacts the back.

Lumbar depth adjustability

This affects the size and sometimes the firmness of the lumbar support curve in a chair's backrest. Like backrest height adjustability, it accommodates different preferences and body shapes.



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Vista power management

Vinny La Bash , Sarasota PC User Group

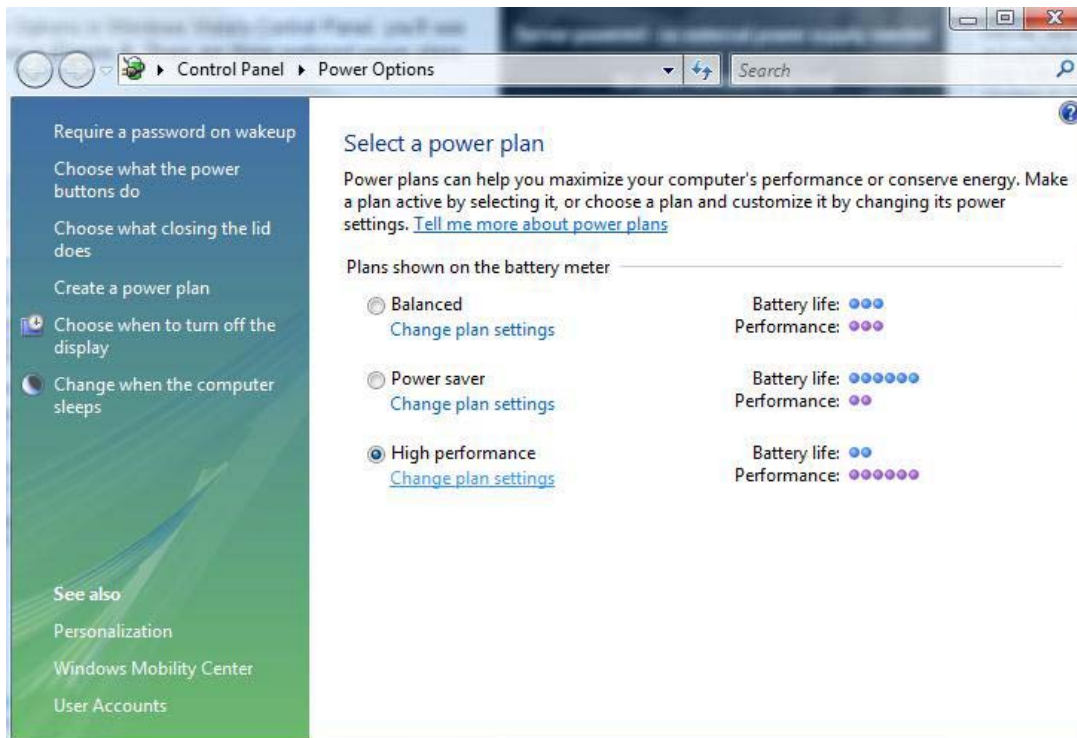
Vinny (SPCUG President in 1996-97-98) is a retired IBM'er and teaches computer part time at the Sarasota Vocational Technical Institute. <labash@spcug.org>

Those of us who drive laptops are usually more aware of power management than the desktop jockeys. When you're running on battery power only, you want to have your laptop running as efficiently as possible. In Vista, you can optimize settings to conserve energy, go for flat out performance or achieve some kind of sensible balance between the two.

Activating power management is simple, and you have two paths to take you there. If you like living in the past and have set Control Panel to Classic View, simply open the Control Panel and then open the Power Options icon. If you're more up-to-date, open Control Panel, then System and Maintenance, then select Power Options. Either way you're looking at very similar screens.

Vista gives you a web-like interface that's easier to use than the usual tabbed dialog boxes in XP. You have three power plans to work with, and if your PC is a desktop the right column will read "Energy Savings". You don't have any head scratching involved to determine what each selection controls.

The first selection, Balanced power provides total performance when you need it while saving power during idle periods. The Power saver option reduces system performance to give laptop users maximum battery life. High performance does exactly what it says, but don't expect to be able to watch the Lord of the Rings trilogy on your laptop on battery power.



Examine the dialog box and you will notice that each of the power plans has a Change plan settings link. Any of these will take you to another dialog box where you can change the default settings. The defaults are reasonable and make sense. Change them if you must, but not because you can.

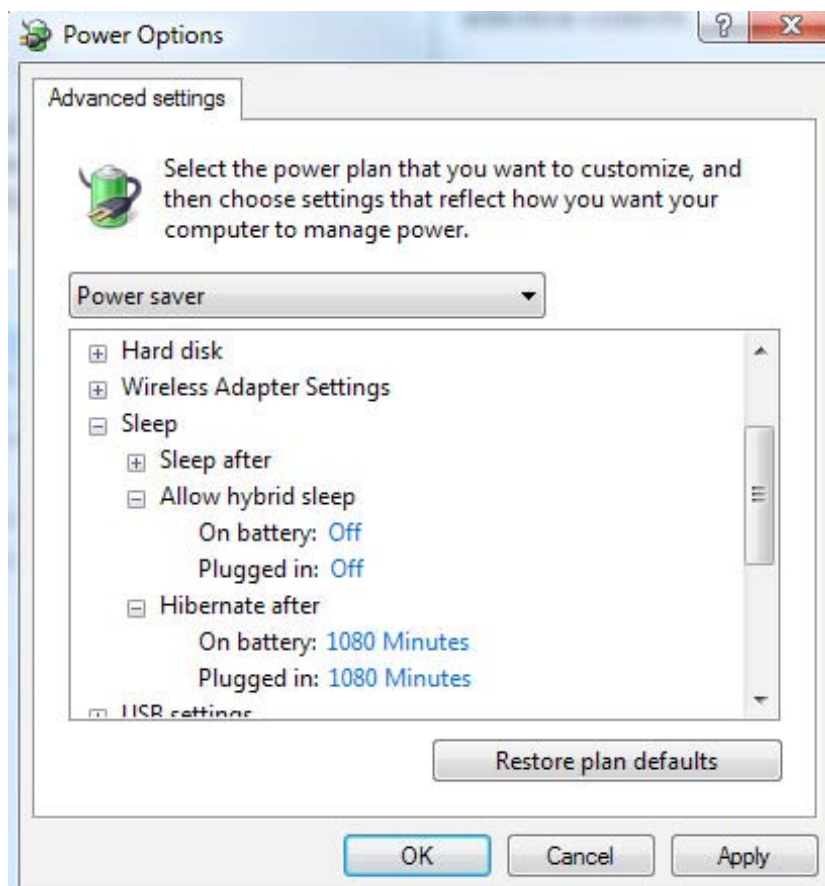
You can refine your setting further by selecting the Change Advanced Power Settings link. The number of power setting adjustments you can make to your computer in this dialog box is nothing short of mind boggling. You can regulate power consumption for USB devices, hard disks, displays, and even wireless devices. It's easy to get carried away.

Scroll down to the Sleep option, open it and you will see a new Vista option called Hybrid sleep mode. This mode combines the power savings of the Hibernate mode with the revive speed of the Standby mode. In practice you get a coma-like hibernation state combined with a jump start after pressing the spacebar.

The Sleep after and Hibernate after settings are nothing exciting and are very similar to the XP options that allow you to specify how much inactivity time you will allow before telling the system to take a nap.

At the bottom left corner of your screen is a new orb graphic that replaces the XP Start button. Left-click on the orb and inspect the bottom of the Start menu. By clicking on the rectangular orange shut-down button, you can quickly induce Hybrid Sleep mode. Keep in mind that Hybrid Sleep is not a true shut down. The best way to completely shut down the computer, aside from pulling the power cord, is to access the Shut Down from the fly out menu.

Vista provides an intelligently designed method of regulating power consumption by offering a balanced variety of methods with a web style interface to help you select and configure various power plans. Use them wisely.



MediaMonkey

Computer Buffet
With Dr. Herb Goldstein



Not happy with Windows Media Player or your current media player, or are you just looking for an alternative? Then give the free MediaMonkey a try. It's an excellent tool for playing media, organizing your media library, and ripping and burning music. It'll play pretty much every music file that's out there, will synchronize with your iPod and MP3 player, and includes a tag editor. It will also automatically find album art for the file you're currently playing as well. MediaMonkey organizes your music in multiple ways, including by artist, title, album, genre, year, rating and so on. Unlike Windows Media Player, it loads fast. Fans of Internet radio will like this program as well; it automatically connects you to the Shoutcast and Icecast online radio directories, and plays any stations you want <www.mediamonkey.com/>

Please also note: Most of the software mentioned here is freeware. It is gathered through researching usually reliable sources. I do not personally try most references, time being the obvious factor.

Dr. Herb Goldstein is SPCUG's Software Evaluation Chairman and Review Editor for the Sarasota PC Monitor. Herb is an avid researcher on all things computer and passes on his acquired knowledge each month. <reviewseeditor@spcug.org>

Help! My Vinyl is melting...really!

How to guide

By Lou Torraca, President M0AA Computer User Group, HI, www.the-tug.org, Af06hi@gmail.com

If you have the same problem as I do, read on, a solution is available. I have hundreds, yup, hundreds of vinyl records, 78s, 33s, and even a few 45s stashed in my garage which is a pretty hot spot (no, not a WI-FI hotspot) a really hot spot. I've thought about converting them to cassettes (yes, I know, that was a long time ago), then to CDs and now to DVDs. I just attended a techie conference and one of the many presentations was on this very subject, so I paid lots of attention and took notes. The presenter also talked about how to convert other media, e.g. VHS tapes, but I'll save that for another column.

OK, just to be sure we are all on the same page...this is a 78 Vinylrecord, a bunch of 45s, and some 33s which usually were what came in albums.



Now that we are on the same page, how do you convert all this to a CD or a DVD?

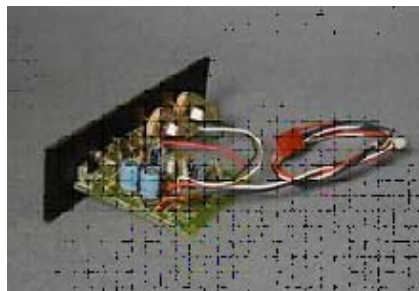
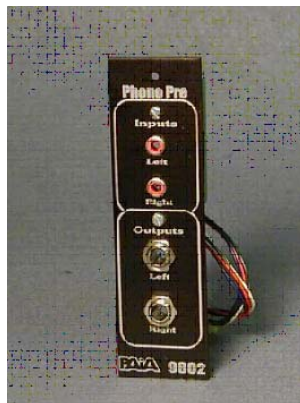
Here is a step-by-step tutorial with some examples of equipment and software, as well as some urls which you may want to take a look at.

This tutorial is designed to provide a few tips to help you get the music from your turntable to computer and ready for burning to CD. It doesn't cover the complex area of audio restoration in which software is used to clean up noisy records. Not to worry...I'll point you in the right direction at the end of the tutorial.

Equipment needed

The following equipment will be needed to produce a signal capable of driving a typical computer soundcard.

- Interconnecting cables
- Turntable Cartridge
- A turntable fitted with a good quality cartridge and stylus. This is one I found via Google for \$99
- A Pre-Amplifier with RIAA equalization as well as a front panel. Both of these cost only \$35



However, if you have lots of dough, you can get one for \$1800!

Does look nice, but I can't say whether it does that much better than the small 2 above.



The turntable must be positioned on a solid level surface. The cartridge should be adjusted near the maximum recommended playing weight and the anti-skating adjustment checked. For best results you should use a magnetic type cartridge. If you change cartridge type make sure the cartridge matches the arm type. Crystal/ceramic cartridges are not recommended.

Stylus Care

Carefully clean the stylus before playing each side of a record. Always clean from the back of the stylus to the front and use some alcohol if necessary. Your stylus should be regularly checked for wear as a worn stylus will permanently damage your records. A worn stylus should be replaced.

Record Cleaning

Vinyl records must be as clean as possible so that surface dust does not build up on the stylus. Always use a fine fiber brush to remove dust before each playing.

If playing the record reveals high levels of background noise, or if the stylus becomes repeatedly clogged with dirt after playing, you may need to take additional steps. You could use a mixture of alcohol and distilled water to remove dust and dirt which is deep in the record grooves.

Pre-Amplifier

A pre-amplifier must be used to amplify the low level signal from the pickup to a suitable level for your computer's soundcard. The pre-amplifier must provide RIAA equalization in order to ensure proper frequency response from the record.

Your system may integrate the pre- and power amplifiers into a single unit. In this case, it may be possible to utilize the tape output to send the signal to the soundcard. If your pre-amplifier has an adjustable output level, use it to ensure that the signal to the soundcard is not too high. If the output level is fixed, then use the gain control in the Windows mixer applet.

Interconnecting Equipment

Most soundcards come with a 3.5mm jack as the line input connector. However, most hi-fi equipment use either phono or DIN connectors. You will therefore need to fabricate or purchase a connecting lead which converts between the two connector types.

Make sure that all connectors are of good quality and that they all are seated correctly. Poorly fitting connectors can produce unwanted noise or hum.

Play The Record

Once you have all of the component equipment set-up, the next step is to play the record and save a digital copy on your computer. It is best to record one entire side of an album at a time. You will end up with two large digital files one for each side of the album. Your software should allow you to separate the music tracks prior to copying to CD.

Test Recordings

You should make a test recording to your hard disk, to verify that the sound card is not being driven too hard and causing distortion. Listen carefully for hum during silent passages between song cuts. It is a good idea to actually burn a CD in order to verify that all is well. For example, this will help ensure that your left and right channels are not reversed.

Setting the Recording Level

It is important that the analog signal is presented at appropriate amplitude if optimum results are to be achieved. You don't want too low or too high a recording volume.

Sound recording software will provide a recording level meter which monitors the signal at the A/D converter input.

The sound level should be adjusted so that the loudest sections peak in the -3 to 0 areas of the bar graphs. However, some soundcards will distort at levels somewhat below this. In such cases, it is best to record at a lower level and then to digitally adjust the level after recording. (normalizing).

If your pre-amplifier has an output level control, you should use this to adjust recording levels. In this case, set the applet control to maximum and adjust the recording level using the control on your pre-amplifier.

The Windows applet is located at Start/All Programs/Accessories/Entertainment/Volume Control. Select Options/Properties and then "Adjust Volume For - Recording". Make sure that the 'Line' check box is checked. This will enable a volume control for the soundcard Line Input. Now check the 'select' check box under the 'Line' volume slider. If necessary, you can use the slider to set the recording level.

Next, open your recording program and adjust the recording level using the program's level meters.

Vinyl Record Audio Restoration

Once you have successfully transferred recorded music from turntable to computer, you will probably want to use an audio restoration program to clean up the sound.

Most old vinyl records will have a certain amount of surface damage which will affect the sound. During playback, you may hear some surface noise and a number of click and pops. Particularly annoying are the repeating clicks which occur when the damage has spanned several adjacent record grooves and which consequently repeat once per revolution of the record.

Audio restoration software uses digital filters to help remove the unwanted noise. The one that all the "gurus" seem to like is Audacity and the good news is, it's free!

Here's where to get it: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>

Burning

Once you have recorded all the required tracks from an LP and removed any clicks, pops, scratches or whatever, it is a straightforward task to write the tracks onto a blank CD/DVD using your CD/DVD writing software. First decide if you want an audio CD/DVD or would rather make up an MP3 disc.

A normal CD should play in any domestic player, but an MP3 CD needs a player that can cope with this format. They are now more widely available than previously, most domestic DVD players - some in car CD players and some personal CD players will play MP3 discs. The big advantage with MP3 format is that of capacity. A normal audio disc can hold say 20 tracks of average length (80 minutes or thereabouts), while an MP3 format disc can hold between 10 and 20 albums !! This is done using data compression techniques which result in much reduced file sizes with very little lost sound quality.

Once you have decided between the two formats, you can use your CD/DVD writing software to assemble a collection of audio tracks to be burned to CD/DVD. Don't forget to separate the tracks before burning.

Now for a few other options for the technically challenged (me included) and for the fiscally unlimited (more dough than u know what to do with.)

For the first category, an all-in-one like TEAC makes may be for you.

For a bit more than \$400, depending on shipping, this little gem will do most of the work for you and of course, for those with no equipment such as a turntable, it provides one. Check it out at: <http://tinyurl.com/22x2jy>

For the second category, here's where you can go to have all the work done for you...at a price of course! <http://tinyurl.com/34w8oj>

By the way, I'd suggest you check the 'net for other possibilities as there are lots of places that feature both hardware and software for just this purpose. One of them is www.dak.com

That's it for now. Remember, be safe out there on the 'net, but have fun with all the consumer electronic goodies.



The Phenomenon of Facebook - Part III

Love and Dating in the 21st Century

By **Courtney Jewett**, a senior English major at Baylor University, who is pursuing a career in journalism.

Facebook is one of the most valuable tools in the dating world, and is today's version of the little black book.

Users of the social network can display their relationship status on their profile, along with the name of their significant other. This information is visible to their 'Facebook friends', and is simply a click away.

Continued on page 37

Like many single college students, I depend on Facebook to keep me informed in the social lives of those around me. It is useful, convenient, and makes survival in the dating world much easier.

Imagine that Bobby is interested in dating Susie. In the old days, poor Bobby would have to get to know all of Susie's friends just to determine if she is available. Or worse, Bobby would have to ask her out and risk the embarrassing possibility that she is actually going steady with Charlie.

Thanks to Facebook, Bobby can simply log on, and read on the News Feed section, next to a picture of a broken heart, that "Susie and Charlie have ended their relationship". And then, our Bobby can make his move with newfound optimism and self-confidence.

College students are using the site to learn more about potential dating partners, and to communicate with them in a low-stress environment. With Facebook, there is no need to endure

awkward phone conversations in order to get to know someone.

Facebook even offers several ways to flirt with your Facebook friends, like sending virtual kisses and hugs.

I often see groups of women gather around their laptop, discussing the profiles of a certain guy. Some users will visit the profile of their dream date repeatedly, in order to stay informed about what is happening in their life.

While this may seem slightly fanatical, it certainly provides an easier approach to dating. Social networking sites like Facebook are providing clarification and information that is making finding love a little easier.

My favorite aspect of the site is the fact that it seems to understand that some of our relationships are difficult to define. For these situations, it offers the "it's complicated" option to explain your relationship status.

Finally, Facebook is a great way to simply attract the attention of a certain someone. Displaying a more exciting facebook picture, or writing an interesting note is often enough to capture the interest of that individual.

Although dating will always bring with it much heartache and strife, Facebook is at least providing an advantage to its users. As it continues to expand the possibility for love, Facebook is bringing good news to single college students everywhere.



Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



RSS Bandit

Browsing the Web is so last century; these days, the Web should come to you. That's what RSS feeds can do for you. They're a way for you to keep up with your favorite blogs, news sites, political news, and much more. RSS Bandit makes it exceedingly easy to subscribe to and read RSS feeds, and organize them as well. Subscribe to any RSS feed and add it to a folder, and the program will automatically update the feed for you. Feeds you haven't read yet show up in bold, so you can see what's new. It displays full graphics, and even lets you play videos directly inside the program. www.rssbandit.org/

***Please also note:** Most of the software mentioned here is freeware. It is gathered through researching usually reliable sources. I do not personally try most references, time being the obvious factor.*

Dr. Herb Goldstein is SPCUG's Software Evaluation Chairman and Review Editor for the Sarasota PC Monitor. Herb is an avid researcher on all things computer and passes on his acquired knowledge each month. <revieweditor@spcug.org>

Tech Issue : OS, Vista and Security



Why Update your Computer?

By Kathy Jacobs, President, Phoenix PCUG, AZ,
president@phoenixpcug.org, www.phoenixpcug.org/

For Christmas this year, we gave my father a piece of software that requires Windows XP SP2. Imagine my surprise when he emailed back that he didn't have SP2. Besides getting him a copy of SP2, I found out that I would need to explain to him why he needed it. I thought some of you might benefit from the information as well.

Like many computer users, my father views his computer as something that he should just be able to use. He doesn't think he should have to put any time into maintenance of the computer. I hear this quite frequently, but don't understand it. Would you buy a car and never put gas in it or never change the oil in it? Computer maintenance is just like the maintenance of your car.

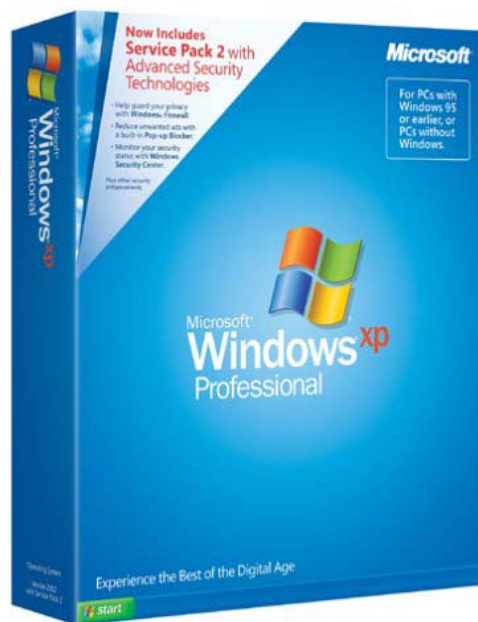
The first line of maintenance for your computer should be Microsoft Update or Windows Update. Security holes are being patched every month. Those patches are made available to you for free from Microsoft for your benefit and for mine. Mine? Yes mine. If you don't keep the security holes on your machine patched, then you make it easier for someone to use your machine to attack my computer - even if I am patched. Also when I send you an email the programs can harvest my email address and add it to lists so that I get more spam.

The second line of defense is a good anti-virus program. Again, you can't just buy it and expect it to run forever. You need to update it regularly, and run it regularly. If you don't have your anti-virus up to date, you will only be catching the viruses that were out when you bought the program. That means that any virus that has come out since you bought the package can still sit on your computer and attack from there.

The third line of defense is anti-spyware software. This software will prevent someone from coming in and "owning" your computer. What do I mean by owning? Spyware programs are frequently used to keep track of what you do on your computer. A common misconception is that anti-spyware is only needed when you are on the net. In reality, spyware can be installed in seconds while you are downloading your email and then it will run while you are off-line. When you get on-line again, the spyware will call home and send back everything it has learned about your machine.

The final line of defense is your firewall. If you have Windows XP SP2, you have a firewall installed. By installing and activating your firewall, you make yourself less visible to the bad guys out on the web. If they can't see you, they may not spend the time to come find you. Especially if your neighbor has an open, unpatched, unprotected system. Adding the protection of an outbound firewall to Windows can also help plug leaks and alert you to behavior by friendly programs that you may still want to control.

The way I look at these four lines of defense is the same way I would if a bear is after me. I can't outrun the bear. What I can do is make it less likely that the bear will come after me. That is the same attitude I want you to take: Make your computer less open to the bears coming after it.



Attack Of The Clone

References:

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

http://www.fonerbooks.com/laptop_1.htm

http://www.seagate.com/support/maxblast/mb_ug.en.pdf

by **Mick Topping**, a member of the ICON (Interactive Computer Owners Network), Missouri, www.iconusersgroup.org/, mickt@mtopping.us

I have been dragging my feet on Vista. I really don't see much in it that I think I need. However, it is getting time for a new laptop, the hard drive on the old one is getting a little crowded, and a little busy, and slow on startup. What I really needed was a way to distract myself from how much I wanted a new LT, and maybe delay getting a new one until Vista gets a little more debugged.

Here we go--a really good deal at a local store on a laptop hard drive, I never could resist a good deal. The staff guy had a hard time finding the special.

A bit of confusion on the sale circular. But finally found it. Then he says "you are not going to install that by yourself?!? We have a fine technical staff that can do that sort of thing for a small fee". I had done a similar install before, and did not remember much of a problem, so I politely declined.

The first surprise on opening the box was, right on top, a big yellow card, with bold print: READ THIS! Q. Can I install this drive myself? A. This kit is designed for professional installation ONLY! None of the temporary storage devices, hardware, software, specialized tools, or instructions that may be needed to install this drive is included in this kit.

All right, a challenge--the only thing I love more than a good deal, is a technical challenge. I then worked about 4 hours on studying, preparing and executing stuff like partitioning, formatting, managing, drive-imaging, copying, followed by several more hours of FIXMBR, FIXBOOT C:, copying NTLDR...and generally suffering extreme frustration. Things that worked in years past seemed to no longer work.

After I slept on it, I realized, there may be an easier way. This new drive is a Seagate Hard Drive, a product of the most advanced HD company on earth! (says so right on the box) They must know that they could sell more HDs if they make it easy to transfer stuff to the new HD! Off I go, to <http://www.seagate.com/www/en-us/support/downloads/> after a bit of poking around, I find MaxBlast 5, a Maxtor program. (Maxtor is now a Seagate subsidiary) However, MaxBlast looks really promising. It is a free download; it is a product of Acronis who makes several high quality disk cloning and data-backup products.

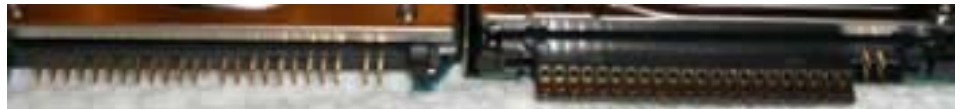
Now we are making progress. I download and install Maxblast 5, Maxblast has a 60 page manual on line, which I read thoroughly (OK, maybe 10 minutes) then run it. One of the choices is Bootable Media Builder. This allows the creation of a CD that is "bootable". Flash or other USB also supported--but your BIOS must support USB booting to use it. Note that Windows is ALWAYS using the disk it is booted from, making this disk hard to copy, but by using a bootable CD it is possible to start the computer while the existing hard drive is not in-use by Windows, so it can be more easily copied. Maxblast has two modes for Bootable Media Builder: The Full version, and the Safe version. The "full" version seems more appropriate for using USB devices, which I will need to use, (for externally attached USB drive) so that is what I choose. And since I wish to make a bootable CD, I choose the ISO image, which is the standard format for this capability.

About ready to make a clone of my hard drive. Since the laptop has no capability to add additional internal drives, the new drive is connected externally through a USB-IDE cable (under \$20 for a cable that will interface with 2.5 and 3.5 internal drives).

After the bootable CD is created, Power off the computer, then connect the cable to the computer, and the new drive. Put on your good glasses, and examine the large end of the cable closely. There is a set of holes that match the pins on the disk drive, and where is one pin missing on the drive, there is one hole that is plugged on the adapter. If you have an adapter for 3.5 as well as 2.5 drives, there will be one set of holes for either type of drive. Some (about 4) of the pins will remain exposed. (no holes)



In theory, this setup should work when plugged in after the power is on, but with a weak USB power, there have been reports of the drive not spinning-up fast enough and the drive logic indicating a bad drive. Turn on power, and quickly insert the CD. If the computer boots to Windows, you can shut down and retry. Note that you may have to change the BIOS set-up to boot from the CD before the HD. BIOS setup procedures are different on every machine, but are usually accessed by hitting F2 or Delete while booting, but before windows starts. (Check your user's manual)



The Clone Disk is the choice, and if you are happy with your existing disk setup (no partitions, or like the existing proportions) the default may be best. I was able to increase several of my partitions for some slack, and have room for a 20GB spare.

After you have finished the cloning process, it is time to swap the internal hard drive with the external drive. Remember that laptops have a battery—don't do ANY work on the inside of the laptop without first removing the battery. In fact don't do anything without reading the appropriate sections of your particular laptop's user manual. They are all a little different.

Laptop HDs are usually in a small slide-out tray, my tray was held in place by two screws. The drive is held in the tray by two more screws. If you try really hard, the removal and replace process can be extended to 10 minutes, but most folks will finish the task in about 5. Note that these screws are frequently tiny, so it is a good idea to do this work on a light-colored surface, in a well lit work area.

In addition to the screws holding the drive in place, there will likely be a small adapter that fits over the pins on the IDE drive and makes it compatible with the connector inside the laptop's tray holder. This figure shows the HD naked connector pins, on the left, and the pins with the adapter installed on the right. This adapter has the same hole pattern as the USB-IDE cable adapter. Note that there are two groups of pins, the 4 pins (on the right) separated from the larger group (on the left), and the 4-pin group is not used in this application, either for the internal drive adapter, or the USB-IDE connection.

Be careful when handling the drive to avoid static discharge. Hardwood floors and leather soled shoes are preferred over carpets and sneakers in the work area. Also, the drives should never be squeezed on their flat surface—when inserting the pins in either the USB-IDE connector, or the internal adapter, grasp the drive by the edges to avoid placing too much pressure on the flat surfaces of the drives.

The ability to easily replace a a HD is very valuable. This gives you a way to do risky experiments, such as using questionable or incompatible software, or perhaps editing the registry while minimizing the risk of having to do a total system reinstall.

The MaxBlast program, system requirements states: At least one Seagate Technology or Maxtor disc drive, as well as several other pretty easy-to-meet requirements. I did not try to see if it would work on other drive brands, and I don't know if it checks. It is a pretty nice feature though, particularly for laptops, where there is no space to add a HD, only to replace a HD.

I would personally not recommend this as a primary data backup, as it is a little tedious, and backups should be as easy as possible. So, HD replacement could be thought of as a way to upgrade the system, as well as a sort of super system-restore. If your laptop is seriously important, such as work related, for a business, get it set-up well, functioning smoothly, and then (after making a separate back-up of your data) create a clone of your hard drive, and swap it to make sure it is a good copy. Then, if the worst happens, your hard drive dies, just swap in the the original. Maybe even take the spare with you on trips, along with a little screw driver...

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**Windows
Vista**



Building a PC for Vista

By **Dan Hanson**, the Great Lakes Geek, cap@magnuminc.com

The Great Lakes Geek needed to build a new PC for the Computers Assisting People (CAP Inc.) Resource Center. It will be used for CAP operations but also so that the volunteers and others can become familiar with Windows Vista and learn about it the CAP way - hands on.

Windows Vista is the first version of Windows that provides different user experiences depending on the hardware it is running on. We wanted to have the “ultimate” Vista experience so I built a hot machine and loaded Windows Vista Ultimate on it. Ultimate is just as described - the ultimate version. It includes all the features of the Home, Premium, Media Center, Mobile and Business versions.

As the ad says, Windows Vista Ultimate is “The most complete edition of Windows Vista—with the power, security, and mobility features that you need for work, and all of the entertainment features that you want for fun.”

We unveiled the new system at the Hardware SIG and everyone took a look at the guts of the PC. The crew wanted to know the specs of the PC and why some of the components were chosen. So I created a webpage at <http://www.greatlakesgeek.com/other/cap-pc.htm> that explains what's in the PC, why those components were selected and what it all means. It also has lots of links to Windows Vista resources and info and reviews of the components.

Since Vista provides different experiences for different hardware, you need to have some kind of metric to let you know what can and cannot run. This metric is a built-in feature called the WEI - the Windows Experience Index.

The WEI is designed to help consumers understand how well Windows Vista and the software running on it will perform on a specific PC. So if you check your WEI score (from Control Panel - Performance Information and Tools) and it turns out to be 3.2 and the new game you want to play requires a 4.1, you know that you need to upgrade your hardware (and hence your WEI score) or you won't be able to play the game as intended.

The WEI score comes from the assessment of 5 different areas of your system:

1. Processor - Calculations per second
2. Memory - Operations per second
3. Graphics - Desktop performance for Windows Aero graphics
4. Gaming graphics - 3D graphics performance. Useful for gaming and 3D business applications
5. Primary hard disk - The data transfer rate of the primary hard disk

Higher scores indicate a better Vista experience on your PC. The hot new CAP PC almost maxed out the WEI with a smoking 5.8 score! You can see the exact components at the afore-mentioned webpage but basically the system has 2GB of fast DDR2-667 RAM, an Intel motherboard with Intel 975X Express Chipset and Intel Core 2 Duo E6600 2.4GHZ CPU.

The graphics are great – an NVIDIA GeForce PCI Express card with 512MB so we can run the cool Aero interface and everything else. It has a fast 300GB SATA drive (lots of SATA ports on the motherboard for other drives which we may set up in a RAID array) and what was described as “The Worlds fastest DVD rewriter.”

I figured the power consumed would be around 300W so went with a power supply of 460W to handle growth.

Good thing because the CAP guys immediately installed a floppy drive (I don't build them into systems anymore except by special request) and a 2nd hard drive.

Be sure to visit <http://www.greatlakesgeek.com/other/cap-pc.htm> for more details on the components of this PC and why they were chosen as well as plenty of useful links about Windows Vista and hardware.

**Windows
Vista**



Hasta la Vista - Gadgets and the Windows Sidebar

by **Lee Reynolds**, Member BPCA (Broward Personal Computer Association, Inc.),
Florida, leetutor@earthlink.net, www.bPCA.com

I'm told the literal meaning of "hasta la vista" in Spanish is "until the seeing." Or maybe a more adequate translation is "see you later." But in this column, I'm using that phrase to invite you to take a look at Microsoft's latest version of Windows: Vista.

Devotees of the Apple Mac have for some time had available, in their OS X Tiger operating system, something called Dashboard, which allows them to have what are called Widgets (mini-applications that provide a very simple, tightly focused interface for common tasks) available for instant use.

Now Windows Vista introduces something similar in its Windows Sidebar. This is a narrow strip of "Gadgets" that can be parked along either the right or the left side of your Desktop. You can also drag the Gadgets off the Sidebar and place them somewhere on the Desktop. You can configure the Sidebar to start either every time when Windows starts, or only when you want it to appear. It is available on the Start Menu under All Programs -> Accessories -> Windows Sidebar.

There are a number of ways you can configure the Sidebar after you right click it and select Properties from the context menu. For example, you can set it so that Sidebar is always on top of other windows; you can hide or unhide it from view (unhide it by right clicking the small Sidebar icon in the Notification Area of the Taskbar and select Open); if you have multiple monitors connected to your pc, then you can configure which one the Sidebar is displayed on.

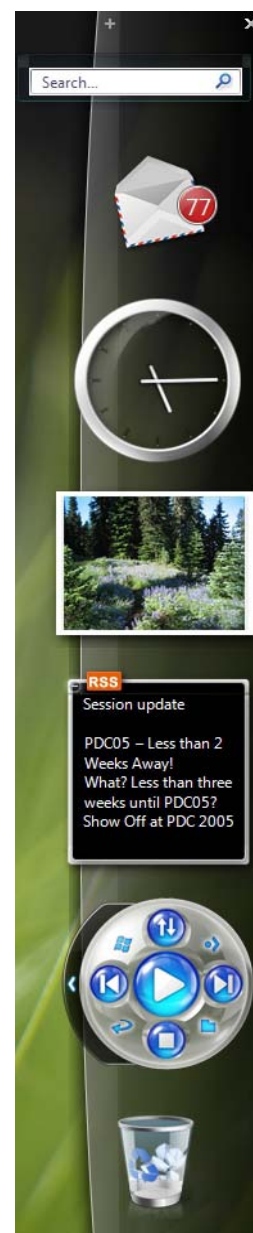
You can add and remove Gadgets from the Sidebar (perhaps the easiest way is to right click the small plus (+) sign above the Gadgets and select Add Gadgets from the context menu), and detach them from or reattach them to the Sidebar. You can have multiple copies of the same Gadget open in the Sidebar if you want (which might be convenient for clocks or weather gadgets, for example), and you can drag them to different positions up and down in the Sidebar.

The built-in Gadgets for Windows Vista include: an onscreen Calendar, a clock that can show the time in any time zone or city, a Gadget-based version of your email Windows Contacts, a CPU meter which consists of two gauges that show the load on your computer's microprocessor and RAM, a simple currency converter, a notepad for jotting down reminders, a photo slideshow, a weather Gadget, and others. In addition, there are dozens of other Gadgets you can choose from if you aim your web browser at: <http://microsoftgadgets.com/>

You can even design your own Gadgets and submit them to Microsoft at one of the links on the above page.

With each Gadget, you can choose from a right click menu which allows you to close the Gadget or adjust the opacity of the display, among other options. When you move your mouse over a Gadget, you will see a little "X" icon and one that looks like the head of a wrench.

The X icon can be used to close the Gadget, while the wrench icon accesses that Gadget's property page. With the right click menu of the Windows Sidebar icon in the Notification Area, you can choose to Open the Sidebar if it has been closed, Move Gadgets to the Front, access the Property page for the Sidebar, Add Gadgets, get Help, or Exit the entire Sidebar application.



**Windows
Vista**



Update to Vista? Maybe!

By Jim Sanders, Vice President, North Orange County Computer Club, CA,
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The old adage never buy version one of any piece of software, is beginning to look like it should be applied to Windows Vista as well. I have read a number of articles from different sources talking about the problems that people have had trying to implement Vista. I have run into a few myself. The latest involved helping a customer move his documents from his existing Windows XP machine to a new HP computer with Vista Home Premium preinstalled.

He was using the Windows Office 97 version of Outlook and wanted to transfer his e-mail, address book, and contacts to the new machine. The problem is Office 97 is not compatible with Vista. So the first thought was to go to the store and buy the Student-Teacher Edition of Microsoft Office 2003, which includes Outlook 2003, while I worked on the machine.

So he drives to his local friendly OfficeMax store to find that they no longer have stock on the old 2003 Student-Teacher Edition of Microsoft Office. However, they do have the new Home Office and Student 2007 version. At the same \$150.00 price as the old 2003 version, that seems like a good deal and is still reasonably affordable. Except, the Home Office and Student 2007 suite does not include Outlook and the next version up that does, costs another \$100.00.

A little research found another problem, the 2007 version of Outlook does not know how to import from the 97 version. Seems you can only accomplish that goal by first exporting to Outlook Express. The new computer came bundled with Microsoft Works. Works is not as full featured as Office, but good enough. So in effect, he would be spending \$250 dollars for Outlook. So we looked at the Vista replacement for Outlook Express – Windows Mail. Same problem, it does not know how to import from the Outlook 97 version.

As Eudora knows how to do that import function, and is of course free, I down loaded it to the new machine. It seemed to install OK, and opened when I clicked on the icon. I needed to learn how to do the import, so I clicked on help. A small error window popped up that said “Cannot open file.”

To keep a long story relatively short, I eventually Googled the fact Vista has deleted support for the .hlp files. I do not know how many thousands of programs use those files, but unless they are a current program that the author is willing to update, you have a problem if you are using one of those programs. After a bit more research, I found a reference that said Microsoft has condescended to allow the proletariat to download a crippled version of those support files.

In a related scenario, if you are a user of Adobe’s software, but not the latest version, you will probably have a compatibility problem with Vista and your program. Adobe has a PDF file on their web site that gives the details of this issue. The location of that file is: www.adobe.com/support/products/pdfs/adobe_products_and_windows_vista.pdf.

The way I read that file, new and very current releases of Adobe’s software will work or be updated for free. Somewhat older versions of Adobe’s software will have Vista updates that you can purchase. Even older versions of Adobe’s software will not have updates available at all. As one looks at the up front cost of the Vista OS, the cost of updating one’s hardware to meet the decent performance requirements of Vista, and the cost of updating (if you can) your existing software, sticking with XP for a while is looking better and better.



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Computer Security



10 Steps to Safe Computing

by **Sandy Berger**, compukiss.com, sberger@compukiss.com, www.compukiss.com

Unfortunately you must be proactive to protect yourself from today's bad guys. Here is my down and dirty list for PC users.

1. Install a good anti-virus program and make sure that it is updated regularly. While most of today's programs update automatically, you should check occasionally to make sure they are working properly.
2. Don't open email attachments even if they are from someone you know. Open only if you are expecting them, you know the person sending them, and you know what the attachments contain.
3. Don't fall for phishing schemes or other email where they try to get you to confirm or retype your personal information.
4. Update your operating system regularly. In Windows and Mac OS X you can turn on automatic updates, but you also need to download and install the updates as soon as possible. Often the bad guys take advantage of new operating system holes as soon as they are discovered. Companies like Microsoft, Apple, and others find a way to plug the whole and issue an update. If you wait a week or two to install the updates, you are giving the hackers and spammers time to attack your computer.
5. Be careful about the websites you visit. Don't visit porn sites or other suspicious websites. Don't download software from any website unless you are sure it is safe.
6. Use a firewall. As I stated in a previous column, a hardware router is a very good unobtrusive firewall. If you don't have a router, turn on the firewall that comes with Windows. The Vista firewall is pretty good, and the XP firewall is better than nothing. If you are an expert user, you can use a software firewall like Zone Alarm, but for the uninitiated user, these complex software firewalls can be difficult to use.
7. If you are using Vista or Mac OSX, or even Linux you should create an account for daily use that does not have administrative rights. That way, if a piece of malware gets into your system during an average computing session, it will have restricted rights. Using an account with administrative rights, gives the malware administrative rights as well. While this is also a good practice with Windows XP, most users, including myself, find that because of the way XP is engineered, it is almost impossible to perform average tasks unless you are logged on as an administrator. Fortunately, with the Vista operating system, you can easily perform day-to-day operations when logged in as a non-Administrator.
8. Even with good habits, it can be useful to occasionally run a good anti-spyware program to scan and remove spyware from your computer.
9. Shop at Secure Sites. If you shop on the Internet, enter your personal information and credit card number only on a secure Web page. If you use Internet Explorer, a secure site will show a yellow padlock in a closed position on the toolbar at the bottom left-hand side of the screen. Netscape will show a closed darker colored padlock somewhere on the bottom toolbar. In both browsers, a secure site will have https: rather than http: in the Web site address at the top of the page.
10. Don't give your Social Security number out on the Internet. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes because computers and the Internet make stealing an identity from an unsuspecting victim easy. So don't be an unsuspecting victim! Your social security number is the golden key to your identity. Never keep your social security number anywhere in your computer. Never give it out over the Internet, even in a secure site. Some sites, like online banking, may require you to use your social security number as a password. Take a pass on any such site or service that makes you send your social security number over the Internet. Keep your identity secure by keeping your social security number as private as possible.

One more thing— don't buy anything from spam or unsolicited email. While this won't keep your computer any safer, it might help to lessen or eliminate spam. If no one bought anything from spam, it would take away the financial incentive to send spam and it would probably disappear.



Computer Security



McAfee SiteAdvisor

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS, www.compukiss.com, Sandy@compukiss.com

Anyone who has been on the Internet for a while realizes that even websites that look benign can generate viruses, adware, spyware, spam, and scams. Until now, it was difficult to determine which websites to avoid. Now, however, safe surfing just got easier. Now there is a wonderful free program that warns you about dangerous websites.

The McAfee SiteAdvisor is a small piece of software that works with your Internet Browser (either Internet Explorer or Firefox). It tells you in an easy graphical format which websites are safe and which harbor spyware, viruses, excessive pop-ups, or online scams.

McAfee has a system of automated spiders that patrol the Web constantly checking out websites. They assess the safety of each website including how much spam is generated from signing up for information at that site and how much spyware, adware, and other nasties might be attached to downloads from that site. The SiteAdvisor will also alert you to sites with excessive pop-ups and those that are possible phishing sites. Besides the automated testing, McAfee has a team of individuals who assess the sites. They use a detailed analysis as well as feedback from individual users.

To use the SiteAdvisor, you simply download the free program. The program is very small, so it downloads and installs quickly and it doesn't slow down your Web surfing.

After installation, a small SiteAdvisor rectangle will appear either on the top (Internet Explorer) or the bottom (Firefox) of the screen. When you visit a site that SiteAdvisor considers safe the rectangle turns green. Sites that have serious security problems will turn the rectangle red. A yellow rectangle means that the website may have some problems or issues. You can click on the SiteAdvisor symbol to get more information about the website that you are visiting and why it is considered safe or unsafe.

This information is invaluable when surfing the Web. With SiteAdvisor installed you don't have to be fearful that signing up for more information or a newsletter will set you up for spam. You don't have to worry that downloading software will install spyware. In fact, SiteAdvisor takes much of the fear out of investigating and trying new things on the Internet.

Another great feature of the SiteAdvisor program is that when you do a search on Google, Yahoo! or MSN, SiteAdvisor's safety ratings appear as a red, green, or yellow circle next to the search results. You can easily see if a website is safe before you visit!! What a pleasant and useful service. If you want more information before you click on the search engine listing, just hover your mouse over the SiteAdvisor icon and a window will pop-up giving your details on the site's ratings.

Everything that I just described about the SiteAdvisor is available in the free version. McAfee also offers a Plus version that is available for \$19.99 per single user or as a 3-user family pack for \$39.99. The Plus version offers even more peace of mind by alerting you to dangerous links in email and instant messaging programs. The Plus version also has a password protected mode that can actively protect your computer against dangerous websites. This version is perfect for anyone who wants a little extra protection. It is also great for shared computers and computers that children or grandchildren use. Click here to download the SiteAdvisor.

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Computer Security



The Inside Security Recovery Toolkit (INSERT)

By **Dick Maybach**, a Member of the Brookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey, <http://www.bcug.com/>, N2nd@att.net

Most of us use an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) version of Windows supplied by the vendor who built our PC. Although we often receive a Windows CD-ROM, it is not the same as the disk included with the retail version of Windows. In particular, we must go to our PC hardware vendor for Windows support, rather than to Microsoft, and we can't use the OEM CD-ROM to install Windows on a new computer or to repair an existing installation. Instead, we can only restore the software to the state it was in the first time we turned on the PC.

This will delete all our data, as well as any applications we've installed. While XP is usually quite stable, problems such as virus infections, operator errors, and hardware and software failures can cripple a PC to the extent that it won't even run. This means that without a good recent backup or good recovery software, all of our data will be lost.

A particularly powerful recovery tool is INSERT, a version of Linux designed to correct problems in Windows, Linux, and the latest Macintosh PCs. INSERT is a "live CD", which means it does not use the hard disk at all, but runs directly from the CD-ROM drive; as a result, it can run even on a PC with an inoperable hard disk. It has a graphical user interface and many useful maintenance applications, including those for file-system repair, data recovery, virus scanning, network analysis, and Internet browsing. In this short article I'll just introduce INSERT; you can download a tutorial on it from What's New section of the BCUG Web site, www.bcug.com, and this includes instructions on how to obtain the software for free.

After any serious problem, your first action should be to copy all your data to an external (usually a USB) drive. Especially if the problem is a failing hard disk, you have no time for experimenting; just copy everything in My Documents. INSERT has file managers that let you do this graphically, much as you would with Windows Explorer. However, Linux is not Windows, and you should get some experience with INSERT before the next PC disaster. In particular, Linux uses different designations for hard disks than does Windows. The first ATA hard disk is hda and its first partition is hda1. (On most PCs, hda1 is c: in Windows.) If this disk has a second partition, it is hda2 (usually d: in Windows). If you have a second ATA drive, it is hdb in Linux. SATA, SCSI, and USB drives are designated sda, sdb, sdc, etc. Before you can access the information on a storage device, you must mount it. Fortunately, INSERT has a graphical mounting tool that lets you mount a device with a mouse click; see the tutorial for more information.

When INSERT is running, neither Windows nor any of its programs are running. This means that any viruses are dead and hence are easier to deal with, since they cannot hide themselves. INSERT has the clam virus scanner – a Linux program that looks for Windows viruses. With this you can clean up any infections before you restart Windows.

INSERT has tools to manipulate entire partitions. These allow you to change partition sizes and create new ones. You can also move your entire file system to a new disk – handy if you are replacing your c: drive with a new and larger one. If you are selling an old PC, there are tools to wipe your hard disk completely clean, which avoids giving the new owner your passwords, check-book files, tax returns, etc. It also has tools to recover damaged files. Finally, it is possible to damage a hard disk's master boot record (mbr) or a partition boot record, which prevents Windows from booting, even though none of its files are damaged. The retail version of Windows has the tools fixmbr and fixboot to repair such problems, but these aren't present in the OEM version. INSERT allows you to repair damaged mbrs and boot sectors.

With INSERT you can also reset Windows passwords and edit its registry (if you are sufficiently courageous or desperate). You can edit boot.ini; this is a text file, which if corrupted, will prevent Windows from booting. There are also programs to explore the hardware, view files, and look at any connected networks. All in all, INSERT is an especially valuable maintenance tool, especially if you are responsible for maintaining several PCs. Other maintenance programs are available, in particular the Ultimate Boot CD and the System Rescue CD, but I've found that INSERT is the easiest to use and has the most complete set of tools.

Note from Editor: The article refers to a tutorial on INSERT, which is far too large for a newsletter article. Please contact the author if you would like the tutorial.

Computer Security



Finding Ghosts In Your Computer

by Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, <http://www.frpcug.org>, twriterext@gmail.com

You think I am kidding? The Microsoft Knowledgebase article on this subject refers to "...ghosted" devices..." and "Phantom devices..." Before we get started with an explanation, four facts need to be identified:

1. I owe a thank you to fellow Front Range PC Users Group member Howard Norlin for suggesting this article.
2. This article is based on the Microsoft Knowledgebase Article ID 315539 for Windows XP Home and Professional. Connect to <http://support.microsoft.com/search/> to locate the article. Enter the article number, 315539, into the search field and GO. The article has the long title of: "Device Manager does not display devices that are not connected to the Windows XP-based computer."
3. Under the "STATUS" heading of this article, you will find this statement: "This behavior is by design." [Ed. Note: that means that "(t)his behavior..." is a feature, not a bug].



4. Yes, I am aware of the famous movie about finding and destroying ghosts. Even I am aware of that movie and I haven't been to a movie in a theater in decades. I decided not to use the movie title in this article in order to avoid any potential copyright conflict.

The Device Manager feature in Windows can be used for several purposes. Perhaps one of the best known uses is troubleshooting. Here is one method of obtaining access to Device Manager, using a series of mouse clicks:

Click on Start/Click on Control Panel/Double click on Administrative Tools/Double click on Computer Management. Then, under System Tools, click on Device Manager. A list of device categories is displayed:

It may not be obvious at first glance, but not everything is displayed that you might expect. On the Computer Management Menu Bar, click on View, then on "Show hidden devices." Examine the result:

Look carefully, and you will see the "Printers" category has been added.

One may speculate—and debate—why the printer category is classified as a "hidden" device. The point is, selecting the "Show hidden devices" option still does NOT provide a complete list of hardware or software items that are—or have been—connected to the computer. That result is the origin of the phrase "ghosted devices."

Why should you care?

Perhaps for the majority of users, knowledge of this issue is not critical. However, as mentioned earlier, Device Manager can be used as a troubleshooting aid. For example, if I click on the + sign to the left of Disk Drives listed in the right panel of Device Manager, and then double click on the device displayed, a device-specific window is displayed.

The window offers several options for troubleshooting a malfunctioning device. If the malfunctioning device is not listed when the "Show hidden devices" option is selected, it is time to use the procedure described in the article 315539. Note that the article makes reference to USB devices and docking stations for laptop computers.

There is another type of "ghost" revealed when using the procedure described in the Microsoft article. If you have been using your computer for any reasonable length of time, the probability is high that you have installed/uninstalled hardware and software since the original purchase. Using the "show_non_present_devices" command will reveal leftover drivers that were not (but should have been) removed during the uninstall process—"ghosts" hiding in your computer.

It is time to answer the two questions I am certain everybody has:

- Q: Did I try the procedure?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Did I find any "ghosts"?
- A: Yes. I found a driver from a virus protection software package I uninstalled a long time ago. It was listed under the "Non-Plug and Play Drivers" category.

I wonder if I can now join the ranks of "Ghost B _____." There—I (almost) said it.

Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



Microsoft Fiddler

Microsoft Fiddler is an HTTP Debugging Proxy that logs all HTTP traffic between your computer and the Internet.

Fiddler allows you to inspect all HTTP traffic, set breakpoints, and fiddle with incoming or outgoing data. Fiddler is designed to be much simpler than using NetMon or Achilles, and includes a simple but powerful JScript.NET event-based scripting subsystem.

Version 1.2 adds an auto responder tab. www.bayden.com

***Please also note:** Most of the software mentioned here is freeware. It is gathered through researching usually reliable sources. I do not personally try most references, time being the obvious factor.*

Dr. Herb Goldstein is SPCUG's Software Evaluation Chairman and Review Editor for the Sarasota PC Monitor. Herb is an avid researcher on all things computer and passes on his acquired knowledge each month. <reviewseditor@spcug.org>

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Computer Security



Why You Need A Firewall

By **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**, Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida,
www.spcug.org, bwsail@yahoo.com

When you connect your computer to the Internet, you have opened a door which invites any other computer in the world to come in. Actually, you have more than 65,000 doors into your computer, any one of which may be open. That is, unless you have taken steps to keep these doors closed. That is the purpose of a firewall. The firewall filters the information packets that show up at your “door” or computer port as we usually refer to it, and can either prevent them from entering or pass them through.

When your computer connects to the Internet, it is assigned a numeric address or IP (internet protocol) address. These addresses are a 32 bit number. They usually written out in four groups with periods between each group as follows: 111.11.11.111. Traveling over the Internet are many programs that simply look for unprotected IP addresses. The IP address of any unprotected computer is sent back to the originator who can then upload a trojan or spyware package to that address. The originator can then take control of the computer or the application will record keystrokes and send all recorded information back to the program originator.

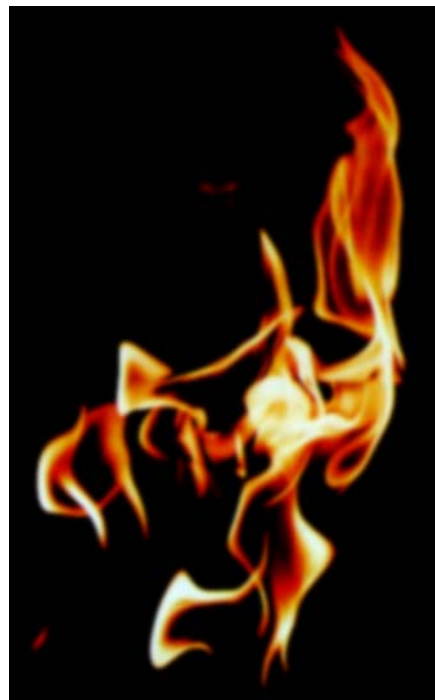
Although your computer has one IP address there are many different ports on your address. There are different ports for different purposes on your computer. Your connection to the Internet is usually through port 80. This is referred to as the HTTP (hypertext transfer protocol) port. It is used when you connect to a web page. The web page data is downloaded to your computer through this port. Another commonly used port is 25. This is used for the SMTP (standard mail transfer protocol) or e-mail transfer. Another port is used for incoming mail or POP3 transfer is port 110.

These are all part of the port series from 0 to 1024 that are the most common ports. Many applications use ports in this region including PC Anywhere, Internet telephones, MSN messenger, Net Meeting, and all AOL operations. Ports 1024 to 49451 are referred to as registered ports. There are many Internet games that use ports in this region. There are also other specific functions assigned to these ports and some may duplicate functions in the common port region. The final group of ports are dynamic and have no specific functions registered. However, the point is that all of these ports can be accessed by remote computers somewhere out on the Internet and use them to connect to your computer if you have not protected them.

Automated port scanning software is available free on the Internet from many “hacker sites”. Its use is very common on the Internet. There are various types of scans. Some scanners will look for any of the 65,535 possible ports. Another type looks for open UDP (user data protocol) ports or may use an FTP (file transfer protocol) bounce to hide the origin of the scan. If an open port is located, software can be downloaded that will open a “backdoor” on your computer. This allows remote input and output. Such access can be used to record and transmit out information from your computer. It can also be used to attack other computers to produce a “zombie” network. Such networks have been used to attack large computer servers in attempts to bring them down or to produce a “denial of service” attack.

Many users believe that a router with a firewall is adequate protection. Most routers use either network address translation (NAT) or a packet filter. Information on the Internet is transmitted in packets which contain the IP address of the sender and the address of the receiver in addition to the data. The routers firewall uses filters that look at the sending and receiving addresses of incoming packets on port 80 (HTTP). Only those packets that are a response to an outgoing request are allowed through. If your router uses a packet filter it can be penetrated by a fragmented scan.

This type of scan breaks up packets into fragments which can easily get through the simple packet filter found in most router firewalls. Routers using NAT either alone or



Computer Security



in combination with a packet filter can also be easily thwarted. NAT is not successful when the packet is an FTP packet or is sent by Microsoft's Netmeeting or similar audio/video applications that bury the address in the body of the packet. Only when the address is in the header of the packet can the router use address substitution. So packet filtering and NAT, although useful, do not provide complete firewall protection for all Internet connections.

Another method for preventing intrusions is "stateful" packet inspection. This is the method used by most software firewalls and is found in some of the newer routers. When your web browser opens a connection to the Internet, the firewall software records that connection and keeps a record of its status. Whenever a packet arrives at your computer, the data in the packet can be compared to the information in the firewall state table. The firewall software can also make decisions based on the data content of the packet, not just the sender's address. Because this examination does require some time there may be a slight slowdown of your system. However, in most cases, there will not be a long enough delay for most users to notice.

So inbound packets can be filtered and examined for dangerous content. However, when the user connects to a web server, the page requested is downloaded to the user's computer. It is possible for that web page to contain a small program or a link to a dangerous site in a one pixel unit on the page. When this is downloaded the program is run or the link activated. This results in an outgoing packet to some Internet address through a non-standard port so the user is not aware of the activity. This type of activity would not be stopped by a hardware firewall in a router.


It can only be blocked by a software firewall which recognizes that this activity is coming from a new application that has not previously made an Internet connection. In this case the software will query the computer user to determine if this new application should be allowed to connect. Hopefully, the user would recognize that this was not an application that the user was running and the outbound packet would then be blocked. It is absolutely necessary for the firewall to process both incoming and outgoing packets. Only a software firewall can establish the necessary tables for comparing the incoming/outgoing packets to allowed activity and request user interaction when necessary.

This leads us to the Windows firewall. This firewall, as used with Windows XP, does not have any control of outbound packets. Any application is allowed to connect to the Internet without any filtering or other checking of source or content. Windows Vista was supposed to come with both inbound and outbound filtering. However, as it is delivered it provides only inbound protection just as did XP. The outbound protection is turned off by default.


So, if it is there, how do you turn on the outbound protection. To change this you have to use the Microsoft Management Console. Then you have to write a rule to block each "malware" application you anticipate might get on your computer. You can not create a general rule for all malware. Creating rules that would cover all possible malware applications is an impossible task. Microsoft has been quoted as saying "outbound filtering isn't really needed, and the key is making sure that malware doesn't infect the PC in the first place." Also they have stated that large enterprises had requested that it be turned off by default. Microsoft does say that "core Windows Services have specific behaviors which are monitored by the firewall". Instead of using outbound filtering Microsoft recommends that you buy "Windows Live OneCare", a product and subscription service. My recommendation is that you obtain a free two-way firewall like ZoneAlarm and ignore the Windows firewall completely.

Whatever you do, don't connect your computer to the Internet without using a firewall and an antivirus application. I have come across too many computers recently that are attached to constant on Internet connections and had no protection. The cost of removing the malware from these systems was more than the cost of premium protection. So don't get caught short!

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

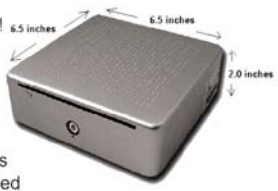


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Acronis announces True Image 11 Home

By Gene Barlow, User Group Relations

Acronis just announced a significant new release of their top rated backup utility, Acronis True Image 11 Home. It is hard to understand how they could possibly improve on this excellent product, but they did it with dozens of important new features. The product may be ordered now on our secure web site at www.ugr.com for just \$29 as a download or \$33 plus shipping on a CD. The CD includes lots of extra tutorials and guides to help you quickly install and start to use this product on your computer. Order it now and we will ship your copy in the next couple of days.

New Try&Decide Feature: Certain operations on your computer are risky to do, such as opening attachments to your email or installing a software product that you have just downloaded from the internet. Bad things can happen to your computer's hard drive when you do these tasks. The new Try&Decide feature in True Image sets up a safe area in the Acronis SecureZone, where you can try out these functions without risking damage to your computer. Actions taken in Try&Decide will run in a virtual mode on your computer so that you can test out the actions to see if they are safe and what you want to keep. If you determine that they are safe for your computer, you can have True Image apply these changes to your hard drive. If you do not want these changes on your hard drive, you can tell True Image to throw them away and not apply them to your computer. Now you can try out things on your computer and decide if you want to keep them before letting them change your hard drive permanently.

New Disk Clean-up Feature: This set of hard drive wiping and disk cleanup features has been added to Acronis True Image 11 Home product. Included is a Disk Cleaner feature that lets you totally wipe all traces of your files from a computer hard drive before you sell or donate this old computer to someone else. Simply deleting everything off the old hard drive does not get rid of your personal and private information. File Shredder is another feature now available to let you delete and totally wipe a file from your hard drive. This keeps private information from being found on your hard drive. Finally, a complete set of Disk Clean-up tools are included to keep your hard drive running cleanly and smoothly. A clean hard drive gives you better performance and is less of a security risk to you.

Other New Enhancements: There are many other important new features that have been added to Acronis True Image 11 Home. The following are some of these new features you will find in True Image:

- * **New Scheduler Features** – Many new options have been added to the automatic scheduling of your backups. These make scheduling automatic backups much easier to do and more flexible.
- * **Silent Mode Backups** – Now, you can run automatic backups in silent mode. Any errors detected during the backup will be logged for you to read later, but the backup will not stop, waiting for a reply from you.
- * **Archive Encryption** – You can now have your backups not only protected with a password, but now the backups can also be encrypted to make them much more secure.
- * **Sector-by-Sector backups** – In certain situations, you may want to backup both your used sectors on a hard drive as well as sectors that may contain deleted or hidden information. This is now possible with True Image.
- * **Ignore Bad Sectors** – When your hard drive is starting to fail, sectors on the drive may fail. Now you can backup the good sectors on your hard drive even if bad sectors are detected.
- * **Search for File in Backup Images** – If you want to find a particular file in one of your many backups, but are not sure which backup contains the file, you can now search one or many backups to find the file you are looking for.
- * **New User Friendly Interface** – The look and feel of True Image has been cleaned up to make the product easier to use and look more user friendly. The new True Image is a delight to use.
- * **System State Backup** – You can now backup just key system files from your computer's hard drive without backing up all your personal files and folders. This lets you restore your operating system to a clean state without having to restore your entire computer.
- * **Message Level Outlook Restore** – True Image now lets you restore individual messages from your Outlook backup folders without having to restore all of your messages.

Acronis True Image 11 Home edition is available from us for only \$29 (as a download) or \$33 plus shipping (on a CD) at our user group discount price. This is slightly less than the upgrade price through Acronis and you get a full new license of the product and not an upgrade license. If you order the product on a CD, you also get our Perfect Backup Approach tutorial to help you understand the best way to do backups. There is also a step by step starter's guide for installing and using the product for the first few times. The full Acronis manual is also on the CD for your use. In addition, I try to help my customers when they have questions about True Image, in addition to the normal technical support through Acronis. You can order your copy of Acronis True Image 11 Home from us at www.ugr.com. Make sure you use the order code of UGTIH11 when placing your order.

If you are a current user of Acronis True Image, then you will want to get this new release and put all of the new features to work for you. If you have not started a backup plan for your computer, then this is the best product to accomplish this important task on your computer. In either case, place your order today so that you can enjoy this new product soon. If you have any questions about this article or Acronis True Image 11 Home, please send them to gene@ugr.com. I look forward to helping you if I can.

MC2-Microïds releases **Dracula 3**



Inspired by the world of Bram Stoker, Dracula 3 continues the adventure running through the Dracula series, which has sold over one million copies worldwide (Dracula: The Resurrection was launched in 1999, followed by Dracula 2: The Last Sanctuary in 2000).

Mgr Arno Moriani, the “devil's advocate,” is carrying out a canonization process, investigating in the interwar years a potential candidate for beatification in Transylvania. His investigation is quickly wrapped up. The strange stigmata on the corpse are not the hallmark of some divine power. In fact, the villagers see it as the “mark” of Count Dracula. The bishop decides to carry out his own investigation to determine once and for all whether the vampire truly exists. But the reality is deceiving. Fiction is powerful. Doubts arise. And doubt begets fear.

The game has an anticipated ESRB rating of “T” for Teens.

About MC2-Microïds

Born from the fusion of Microïds' and Wanadoo Edition's activities, MC2-Microïds develops, publishes and distributes video games. A true new talents scout, MC2-Microïds leads the adventure segment of the video games industry and enjoys international praise for hits such as Still Life, Syberia and Amerzone. For more information, visit www.microïds.com.

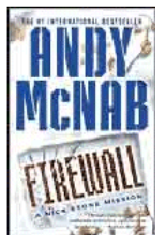


Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Firewall

By: Andy McNab,
Reviewed by Susan Ives
Paperback, Seal Books, 2002,
528 pages, \$6.99



After a badly botched mission, former British SAS soldier Nick Stone is in the doghouse with the Firm. He takes a freelance job with a Russian organized crime boss to infiltrate a chipmunk-cheeked computer nerd into a guarded compound in Estonia to download the contents of their computers onto an IBM Thinkpad. Nick thinks he's engaging in a bit of harmless industrial espionage, but when the target turns out to be military secrets, he finds himself double-crossed and stranded in the bleak, arctic Estonian countryside pursued by skilled and ruthless enemies.

Despite the title, computers take a distant second place to action and adven-

ture. The firewall the Nick must breach is computer security surrounding a program called "echelon," which intercepts satellite transmissions and searches for significant key words. Helsinki, where much of the action takes place, is the most wired city in the world and there are amusing references to infants with cell phones. Although not as thoughtful as LeCarré, McNab is on par with Alistair McClain and far, far better than the best of Clancey. The authenticity is perfect and the suspense exquisite. Recommended.

Pattern Recognition

By: William Gibson, Reviewed by Susan Ives
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

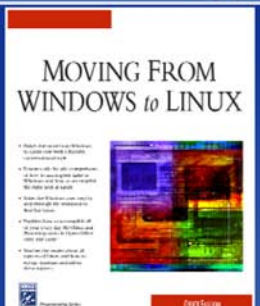
footage," video snippets that appear on the Internet a disjointed clip at a time, attracting a cult following. Her search takes her to London, Tokyo and Moscow, following a trail of marketing, globalization and terror.

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.

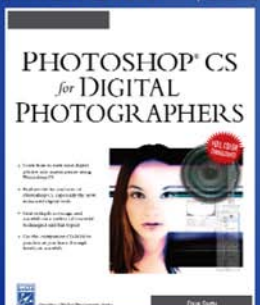
Highly recommended.

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

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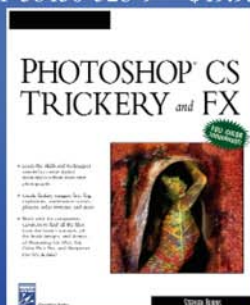
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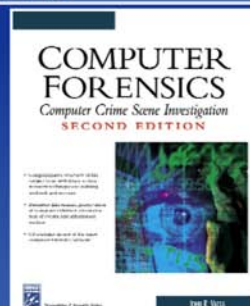
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Book Review

Network Warrior

By Gary A. Donahue

\$44.99

Published by O'Reilly Media, Inc.

Reviewed by David Boyes, Dboyas@sinenomine.net



This book is a collection of notes and process recipes to solve common problems found in commercial networks. The approach builds on a basic conceptual education about networking (roughly targeted at someone who has just completed a CCNA certification or is in the process of completing a CCNA-certification) and explains the “why” things are done, rather than the “how” covered by the product manuals. Written by an experienced network consultant, the book explores routing and switching topics, a short introduction to telecom terms and common connectivity scenarios, short tutorials on the basics of network design and documentation, with useful commentary on implementing converged voice and data networks. The end of the book comments on the personal side of building networks and generating change and credibility in a commercial organization -- almost more valuable than the rest of the book in terms of generating successful implementations.

General Approach and Presentation

The author presents the material in a very conversational style; early in the book, you feel you're chatting over a beverage with a buddy who's been there and is trying to give you the map of the territory. The presentation is organized into major topic parts which cover general areas such as layer 3 routing technology, layer 2 switching, multi-layer switching, telecom, security, load balancing, etc. The parts then provide individual sections that discuss topics related to the major topic in more detail. Each section generally explains a problem situation, lays out issues in the problem, and works through a sample solution step-by-step. It's sort of a back-of-the-napkin school of network engineering; learn by doing, with someone handy to explain your mistakes. At more than 500 pages, the book covers a lot of different areas, but sacrifices some detail coverage to gain breadth. This isn't really a problem, though, given the initial premise of an “inherited notebook” from a more experienced buddy – if nothing else, it exposes you to the bones of the problem, and helps you look for the right set of supplementary documentation to find the answer you're really looking for.

Book Content and Discussion

The book is divided into eight major parts, dealing with layer 2 switching, layer 3 routing and routing design, multi-layer switching as implemented for Cisco equipment, telecom topics, security and firewalls, server load balancing, QoS, and overall network design principles. Each section has five to eight sub-topics within the overall rubric of the section.

The layer 2 section deals with configuration and management of topology in layer 2 networks and general VLAN theory-and-practice when dealing with multiple switches and the task of controlling how ports and VLANs are propagated between devices. One of the most positive areas in this part of the book revolves around carefully comparing risks of each feature described and how to mitigate those risks by relating them to careful planning. This is a pet peeve of mine (when people don't do it and wonder why things get fouled in the bitstreams), and it's good advice and review regardless of the skill level of the practitioner.

The layer 3 routing section deals primarily with controlling routing propagation, routing protocol setup for the most common interior routing protocols (RIP, OSPF, and EIGRP) and some discussion on general routing encapsulation (GRE) tunneling and HSRP implementation. The coverage is well written and contains good solid advice on designing and implementing a routing architecture in a small to medium size network. As network size and complexity increases, I'd contest some decisions discussed, but in general, what's here works reliably, and infinite are the arguments of mages.

The multi-layer switching section focuses almost exclusively on medium to high-end Cisco devices (the 6500 and 3750 line). This section is less helpful than some others in that it concentrates completely on tricks to simplify configuration, but doesn't really discuss much about what's actually happening in the device, and why multilayer switches are so effective in network design. If you've inherited the care and feeding of one of these boxes, it's a good set of directions for keeping it happy and keeping the work down, but there's not a lot of deeper learning here.

The telecom section covers a discussion of T1 and DS3 circuits, a short glossary of telecom terms, and a discussion of frame relay and its implementation details. This section is both appealing in its simplicity and straightforward presentation, but it's hard to relate some of the discussion to how it fits into the book's overall structure. It is a good thumbnail glossary for common terms, and if you're interacting with the phone company during an outage or helping them perform diagnostics on a broken circuit, it's good enough to get to a basic understanding of what they're trying to do.

The security and firewall section and server load balancing section cover neat application optimization tricks for the integrated firewall, ACL capability in IOS, and the Content Switch Modules in turn. The discussion on optimizing ACL sequence to get the best performance (and how to see how often each ACL has fired) is well worth the time to read, as is the discussion on basic PIX configuration that gives one enough information to make simple changes without the full PIX training course. The load balancing discussion does a good job of illustrating the process of configuration, but it's a bit light on examples.

The QoS chapters are one of the book's best features. This topic is seldom explained well in CCNA materials (even Cisco-approved ones), and the description is both lucid and comprehensive. The material on handling converged networks is very good, and tips on troubleshooting converged networks (especially the discussion on voice traffic prioritization) are both reasoned and comprehensive.

Part 8, the general network design component seems somewhat a catch-all. There's discussion of addressing schemes, and numbering plans for IP addresses, but also a chapter on NTP design and implementation that doesn't really fit here. On the other hand, the last three chapters ("Failures", "GAD's Maxims", and "Avoiding Frustration"), are probably the best chapters in the book – they really deserve a section of their own entitled "How To Act Like A Professional" and are a wonderful capsule lesson in how to work with a client, not just for one. These chapters aren't as comprehensive as Tom Limoncelli's "Time Management for System Administrators" (also available from O'Reilly), but anything that includes a section titled "How Not to Be a Computer Jerk" has something to say to new and old hands alike. The section on "Why Change Control Is Your Friend" should be required reading for every network administrator – it's an honest and complete argument for why documentation and change processes are necessary in a reliable and stable network.

Conclusion and Comments

Overall, the book provides a large number of useful bits, and as noted above, the last three chapters on how to work the system ought to be required reading for just about anyone in the IT world who actually has to deal directly with customers or other technicians (i.e., everyone). The book would benefit from a few small organizational changes to group related topics in a more systematic way (for example, presenting material on telecom as basic communications technology, building on that with routing/switching materials, then moving on to application-layer technology like load balancing and firewalls), but it works as it stands for a reference work companion to CCNA study materials. The idea of a book on "why" -- or why not -- to do something is particularly valuable and it adds a good shake of experience to let you know where the land mines are. It won't always save you from mistakes, but at least you'll know what exploded ... and why.

David Boyes is CTO of Sine Nomine Associates, a design and R&D engineering firm near Washington, DC, and frequent speaker at CPCUG and other user groups worldwide.

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Software Review

WildForm WildPresenter Pro

\$299

Published by WildForm

Reviewed Gregory West, Editor, SCUG Report, Sarnia CUG, Canada,
prospector16@gmail.com



Flash is one of the most widely utilized and viewed multimedia format on the Internet today. There are a lot of video copying and video presentation programs boasting to be the best, however the question one must ask is “Do they do what they claim to, and do they actually accomplish these processes with ease and professionalism?”

The answer to this I will leave alone for you to decide, however I personally can speak for WildPresenter Pro, version 3.204.

The WildPresenter program creates “Flash and video presentations, it converts PowerPoint to Flash and also adds video”. As well, this program “Generate[s] E-learning quizzes and courses (Quiz Creator included), produces multimedia websites, slide shows, and ads, within a user-friendly program”. It accomplishes this with a relative of ease and simplicity requiring little computer knowledge to create professional Flash media.

WildPresenter allows for you to develop and produce your own multimedia presentations without the need for expensive training. In fact, their online tutorials and training videos are exactly what all programs should offer: With just one viewing of a particular training video you can easily produce your own professional presentation.

Whether as claimed, “product demos, online tutorials, websites, and e-learning courses”, you can quickly design and create your ideas to show on the Web, intranets, and CD-ROMs / DVDs and other mobile technology formats. As well, these presentations will play on any operating system (it has improved VISTA support) and browser, without the need for special programs.

For instance, one of my favourite programs to work with is PowerPoint. Now I can easily convert a PowerPoint presentation to Flash. You do not need to be an expert with PowerPoint and you do not need to buy the PowerPoint program. WildPresenter allows you to easily edit a PowerPoint creation within the WildPresenter program and upload it to the Internet, save it to a CD, or any other platform for Flash presentations.

WildPresenter allows you to work on a PowerPoint presentation, imported from a template, without the actual software for PowerPoint. All the PowerPoint tools are readily available in WildPresenter, including free PowerPoint templates that you can easily utilize in making your own presentation.

WildPresenter offers a great HELP with these programs and training videos. For instance, if you want to make training video presentations from scratch there are “Wizards” that guide you every step of the process. As well, WildPresenter offers, free of charge: templates, videos, sound clips, and digital pictures that you can use for in your own presentations.

To further this assistance, WildPresenter offers an: “extensive resource site with tutorials, articles, links and a royalty-free video library, as well as our excellent technical support”. You can also get free online training at: www.wildform.com/support/tutorials/online_training/.

This training was developed using WildPresenter software, so you can see the finished product. WildPresenter also offers a Blog wherein you get all kinds of help and tips to enable you to utilize this program to its fullest.

Test drive this program for free at: www.wildform.com/demos. WildPresenter backs up their program with a money-back guarantee. They offer 100% satisfaction guarantee within 15 days or your money refunded.

In my opinion, this is a “must have” program for anyone wanting to create projects into Flash with ease and professionalism.

Requirements

128 MB ram

40 MB disc space

Pentium III 500 MHz

WIN 2000 / XP / VISTA

Internet Explorer 4.0 +

Internet Connection

Software Review

Safari Browser for Windows

Free

Published by Apple

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



Apple recently released a free version of its Safari 3 browser for Windows. While this is the first public release of an Apple produced browser for Windows, many of us already have some Apple software on our computers. Many of us have viewed QuickTime videos on our computers, and QuickTime is a long standing Apple product.

One may ask why Apple would produce a browser for Windows, when there are other, well established Windows browsers available. Microsoft's Internet Explorer still has the vast majority of Windows browser market, followed in distant second by Firefox, and then Opera and Netscape. According to published reports, Apple sees Safari 3 for Windows as a marketing tool to better acquaint Windows users with Apple products, in the hopes that they would buy more Apple offerings, such as the new iPhone. The default startup page for Safari, which is easy to change, is an Apple marketing and support website.

I already have four browsers installed on my main computer, with Firefox being my primary browser, followed by Internet Explorer with occasional use, and Opera and Netscape which I only rarely use. There is no conflict or problem having more than one browser installed, as they do not interfere with each other. Despite what I already have installed, curiosity dictated that I download and install Safari 3. Clicking on the download link at www.apple.com/safari offered the choice of two Windows downloads, a 28 meg download of Safari with QuickTime for XP or Vista, or a smaller 8 meg download of just the Safari for XP and Vista. As may be already obvious, Safari for Windows will only run on computers with XP or Vista.

Apple has done a good job trying to create demand for Safari for Windows, by proximately posting relative performance information on the main Safari website. According to Apple, Safari can load web pages about twice as fast as Internet Explorer version 7, and 1.6 times faster than Firefox. Java scripts execute 2.8 times faster in Safari 3 than they do in Internet Explorer 7, and 1.6 times faster than Firefox. Application load time of Safari 3 is also faster than Internet Explorer or Firefox, while the much smaller Opera loads in about the same time as Safari 3. If Apple's claimed performance advantage survives scrutiny of the trade media, then it may indeed have an edge in the highly competitive market.

I downloaded the full version of Safari 3 with QuickTime. And it installed smoothly with minimal effort. Upon loading Safari 3 the first time, it was immediately apparent that the look and feel of Safari is definitely Apple-esque. While the interface was clean and intuitive, it lacked some of the flair and color of Internet Explorer and Firefox, with a flat gray toolbar and border, which Apple calls "elegant". The commands and structure of the toolbar are similar to other browsers, and required a "zero" learning curve. As is now universal in other recent browser releases, Safari 3 offers tabbed browsing, where multiple browser windows can be sequentially opened in a single application. Safari 3 is a full featured browser, with easy to use bookmarks, an integral pop-up blocker, integrated search function, auto-completion of forms, a built in RSS reader, and other features. One somewhat unique feature is "SnapBack", which allows the user to quickly return to previously viewed web pages more efficiently than using the "back" button. An interesting privacy feature is the "Private Browsing" feature (found in the "Edit" menu), which turns off any saving or record of websites visited (history), searches made, cookies received, forms filled, and other current information. In terms of security, Safari 3 supports all of the major internet encryption standards, and proxy configurations. One feature I liked is that Safari 3 automatically imported the bookmarks from my other browsers, allowing me immediate access to the websites I typically visit using those other browsers.

Safari 3 allows the use of plug-ins, much like Firefox. Unlike the well established Firefox, with thousands of open source plug-ins available, the recently released Safari 3 only lists six plug-ins at its site at www.apple.com/safari/download/

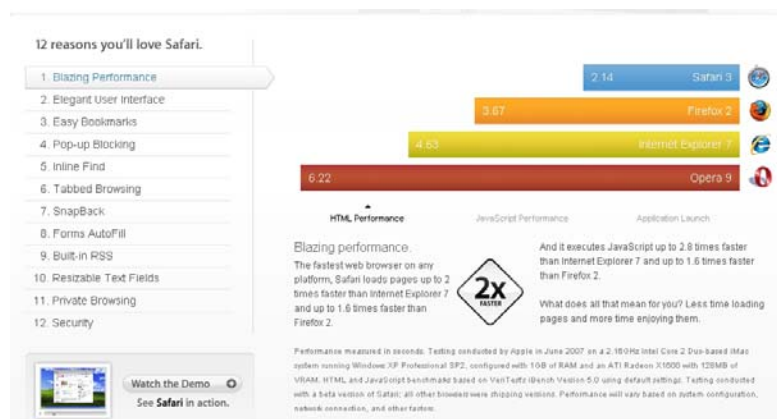


plugins.html. These six plug-ins offer features that may already be integrated into other browsers, such as an Acrobat PDF viewer, Java, Flash viewer, Real Player, QuickTime, and Windows Media Player. As Safari 3 gains popularity among Windows users, it is conceivable that more plug-ins may appear.

There is a potentially interesting feature built into Safari 3 that I personally do not yet feel comfortable with, but others may find very useful; this feature is "Bonjour for Windows". Bonjour (www.apple.com/bonjour) allows the user to network computers, printers, and other smart devices through the Safari 3 browser. Bonjour uses the open standard IP protocol, and can connect items hard wired through an Ethernet cable, or wirelessly through an 802.11 system. One example that Apple lists is using Bonjour to automatically configure a printer by going to an appropriate Bonjour compatible website which provides the information to configure the printer. Apple lists printers from Brother, Canon, Epson, HP, Lexmark, and Xerox that are compatible with the Bonjour feature.

In using Safari 3 for Windows for a few days, I noticed some interesting usability features. One I especially liked was the feature that allows the size of the screen fonts to be instantly changed, which may improve readability of a web page. The feature in Safari 3 is identical to the same feature in Firefox, and uses the same command (CTRL +) to make the fonts larger, and "CTRL -" to make them smaller. This feature in Safari 3 is superior and more flexible than the method used in Internet Explorer to change font sizes. In terms of readability, most web sites were easier to read in Safari 3 than in Internet Explorer 7. I did notice some minor negative difference between Safari and the others, and that was in terms of page formatting. One minor annoyance was displayed when viewing my weather page (www.beaumontweather.com) which is written in fairly pure HTML, the basic web page language. On Safari 3 some items that used the HTML "center" command did not appear centered, while the same items looked fine in Firefox or Internet Explorer. On some other pages, such as the starting page for a local TV station, some graphics do not appear to load at first, but this is usually rectified by reloading the page. Except for these anomalies, almost all other web pages I visited appeared correctly, and were very readable.

I found Safari 3 to be an attractive alternative to Internet Explorer, and may be of interest to those who might want to try something different in terms of a browser. It is clean and full featured, as is typical for Apple products. As another free browser, users may want to download it and try it.



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October 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon. class 1 of 6 *PRR* Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	2 Board of Directors 6:30 - 9:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	3 Internet & E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. class 4 of 6 *PRR*	4 Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (a/r) High Growth Stock Investing, 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Excel 7 - 9 P.M. class 1 of 4 *PRR*	5 Small Business Server Rescheduled for Oct 12 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Holiday Lessons 1 - 4:30 P.M. class 1 of 5 *PRR* PC Alamo Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	6 MCSE (Adv) Cancelled Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR* Programming C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M. HTML & Beyond 4 - 8 P.M. class 5 of 6 *PRR*
7	8 Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon, class 2 of 6 *PRR* General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter: AT&T will discuss and demo their newest mobile-communications: i-phone and computer connectivity	9 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. class 1 of 6 *PRR* Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	10 Power Internet, 10 A.M. - Noon Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 1 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. class 1 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. class 5 of 6 *PRR* Home Page Jumptart TBA *PRR*	11 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Excel 7 - 9 P.M. class 2 of 4 *PRR*	12 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR* Desperate Computers Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Holiday Lessons 1 - 4:30 P.M. class 2 of 5 *PRR*	13 MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M. class 5 of 6 *PRR* HTML & Beyond 4 - 8 P.M. class 6 of 6 *PRR*
14	15 Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon class 3 of 6 *PRR*	16 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. class 2 of 6 *PRR*	17 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 2 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 1 - 3 P.M., class 2 of 6 *PRR* Internet & E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M., class 6 of 6 *PRR* IBD / Vector Vest, 6 - 8 P.M.	18 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Excel 7 - 9 P.M. class 3 of 4 *PRR*	19 Desperate Computers Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Holiday Lessons 1 - 4:30 P.M. class 3 of 5 *PRR* For class 4 of 5 - see Oct 26	20 MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M. class 6 of 6 *PRR* Programming C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
21	22 Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon class 4 of 6 *PRR* CorelDraw X3 6 - 8 P.M.	23 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. class 3 of 6 *PRR*	24 Introduction to Windows 1 - 3 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 1 - 3 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR* (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	25 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Holiday Lessons 1 - 4:30 P.M. class 4 of 5 *PRR* Excel 7 - 9 P.M., class 4 of 4 *PRR*	26 Desperate Computers Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Holiday Lessons 1 - 4:30 P.M. class 5 of 5 *PRR*	27 MCSE (Adv) 9 - 11:30 A.M. *PRR* Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M.
28	29 Windows XP 10 A.M. - Noon class 5 of 6 *PRR*	30 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. class 4 of 6 *PRR*	31  Introduction to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. class 1 of 6 *PRR* Introduction to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. class 4 of 6 *PRR*			

AlamoPC Organization

PRR = Pre-Registration Required



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.

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

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

Where: Contact Maynard for location

Pre-registration: Call Maynard

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

San Antonio IBD / Vector Vest Study Group

The group determines current market direction and applies Investors Business Daily and Vector Vest methodologies to make a profit.

Contact: Kim Murphy

When: 3rd Wed., 6-8pm

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,

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.)

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

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.

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: ★ - ★★★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

This basic class discusses basic tools and effects, concentrating on fills, blends, envelopes and other special effects for the next few months.

Contact: Steve Tech
<stephentechnjr@yahoo.com>
210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★★

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: An instructor is needed, contact Linda Bianchi at education@alamopc.org or TodBruning@Hotmail.com

When: To be announced

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

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.

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: 1 - 5 p.m. Fridays Jan. - Feb. 2008

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: 2008 dates to be announced

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: 2008 dates to be announced

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 Holiday Class

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

When: Fridays October 5, 12, 19, 26 and Tuesday Oct 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 A 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. Class does not meet each month, please check the calendar or call the Learning Center to confirm meeting dates and time. 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: ★★

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-

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.

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: ★

Alamo Coders Class

This is a class on using the DotNetNuke portal software for hosting your website and for those interested in developing Windows and Web applications using Microsoft's .NET. The class will focus on hands-on configuration and use of the DNN 3.x portal. This portal is a service available to Alamo PC members. The class will discuss the portal framework and configuration of a DNN site. We will also setup web pages, insert modules on the pages, modify and edit the look of the pages as well as the data in the pages. Modules will include Calendar, Announcements, Forums, Blogs, Contacts, Links, Surveys and HTML. We will use development modules and applications for the DNN Portal using VB.NET and C# as a basis for demonstrating .Net development. Guest speakers occasionally present new technology and development tools available for .Net Developers. Door prizes (books, software, shirts, etc.) are distributed at most meetings.

Contact: Joe Brazell 345-2207

When: 2nd Tuesday, 7 - 9 pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: no

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: No class in July. Two sessions, 2nd and 3rd Wed. 7-9 pm of Odd numbered months

Instructor: Wade Forrester

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Movie Maker

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

Contact: Joe Davis

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

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

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

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Microsoft Word

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

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

When: 4 sessions per class

MS Word Basics: to be announced

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: ★ - ★★

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

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

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

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

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

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★

Student Practice Lab

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

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Content Ratings

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

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** Windows XP Professional disk. New and unopened. Discount. Contact Carl Marmion at 494-6797
- 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.



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.

