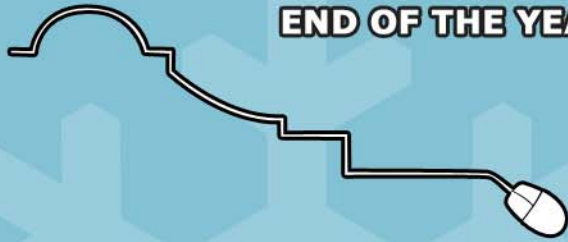


THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

# PC Alamode

END OF THE YEAR ISSUE

www.alamopc.org  
December 2007  
\$4.50



A laptop  
for the holidays?  
page 32

Buying a new Vista computer?  
Read this first!  
page 34

10 commandments for  
online shopping  
page 36

Moving old files  
to a new computer  
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# Alamo PC Organization

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



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

Registration number **210.736.0080**

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

membership@alamopc.org

**If you have questions about Alamo PC call:**

Learning Center number **210.736.0700**

**If you have comments about classes call**

Linda Bianchi **210.226.2460**

**If you have questions about advertising call**

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

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

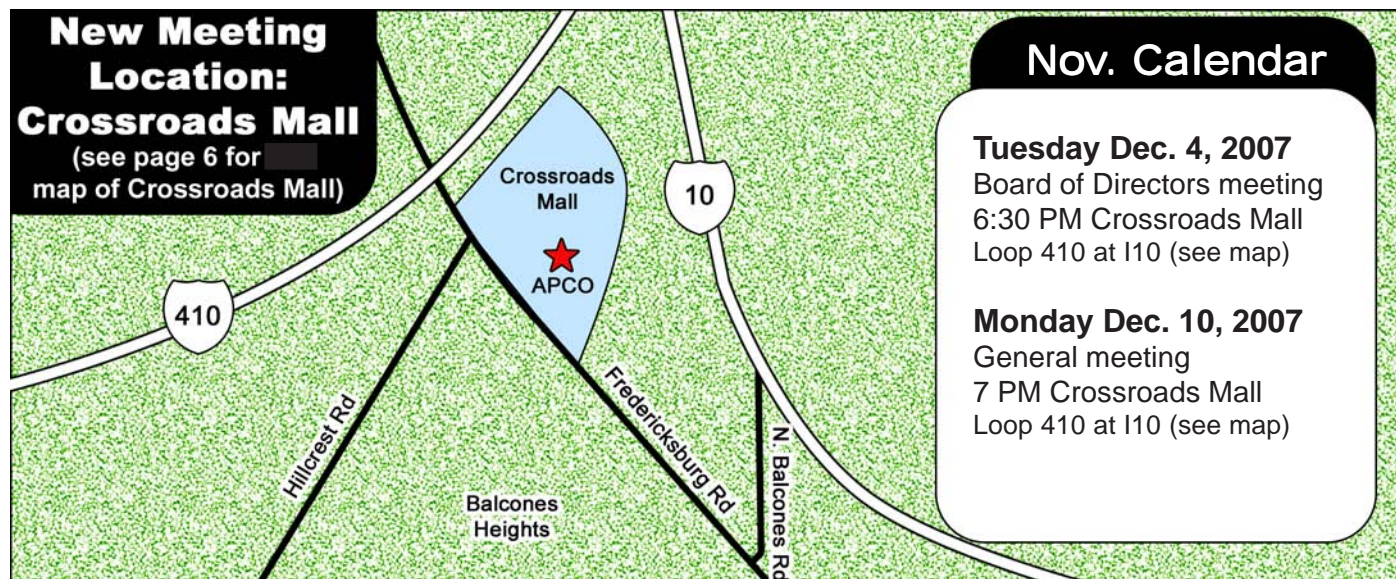
**Alamo PC Organization**  
**PO Box 65180**  
**San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

## Meetings

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

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

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



## Nov. Calendar

**Tuesday Dec. 4, 2007**  
Board of Directors meeting  
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

**Monday Dec. 10, 2007**  
General meeting  
7 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

# End of the year Issue

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# **PC Alamode**

## **(501 (C) (3))**

*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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David Steward

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**PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS:** Please check with the editor regarding submitting ads. **Deadline for submissions is the first of the month preceding publication.** e-mail to:

[editor@alamopc.org](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)

Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode  
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### **Ad rates effective January 2005**

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
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Bus. card (3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

\*Consecutive months

\*\*To be paid in advance

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Communications	TBD		communications@alamopc.org

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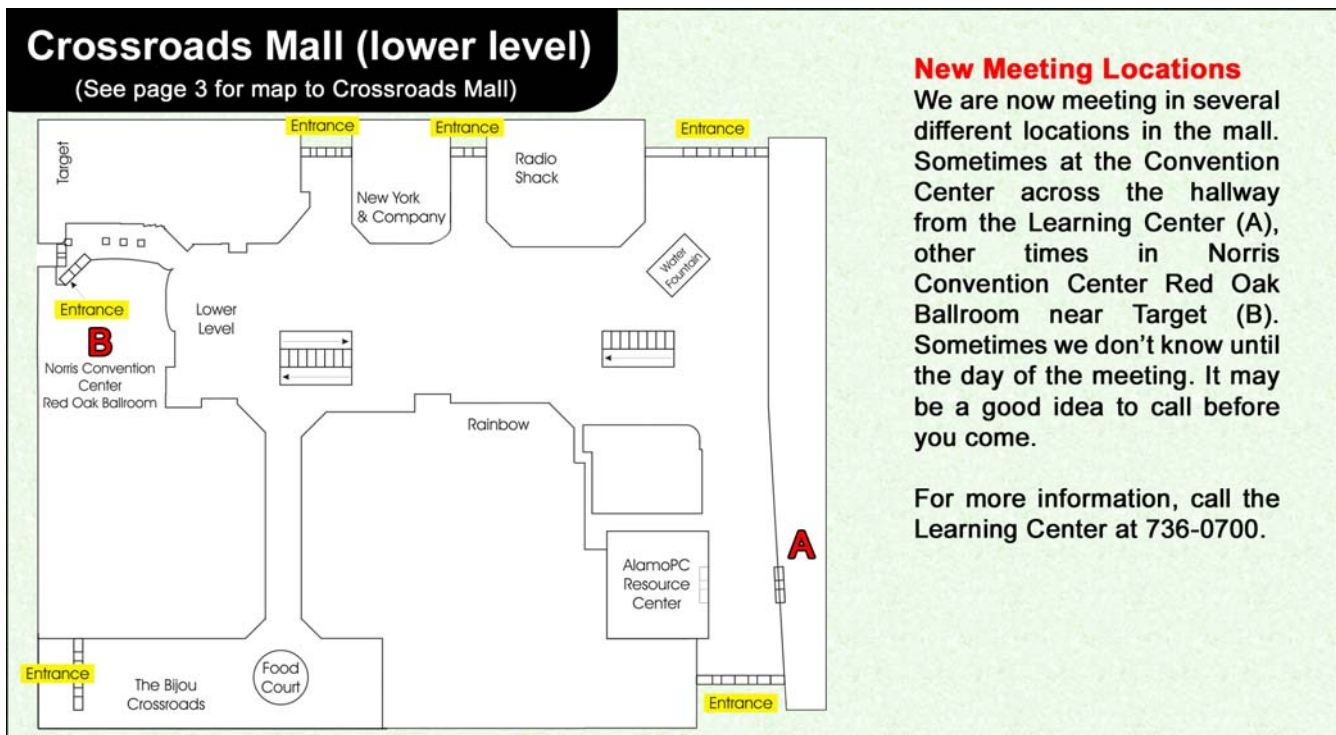
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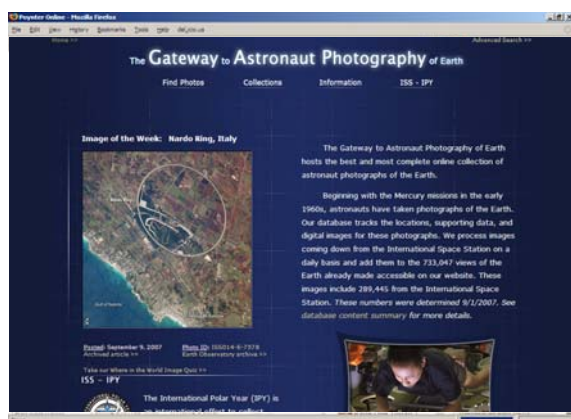
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



## 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 months, 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](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)>.

**Joseph de Leon, Editor**

<[editor@alamopc.org](mailto: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

## "December" - Hanukkah, Human Rights, Winter, Holidays

This month marks several things of interest to many: 5th - Hanukkah: Start of the eight-day Jewish festival of lights, commemorating the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem; 10th - Human Rights Day: A day celebrated annually across the world to help people become aware of the rights they have, and help create an awareness that there are many people in the world who do not have the same basic rights granted to them [e.g. the right to equality, democracy, etc.]; 22nd - First day of Winter: the arbitrary time established by man to initiate a change of season; 24th & 25th - The eve of and day of festivities and celebration focusing on Christ (usually accompanied by family gatherings and gift giving); 31st - New Years Eve - The end of the current year (2007) and at midnight, the beginning of the new or next year (2008).


The November Board of Directors (BOD) meeting and the General Meeting were marked as "non events" (although planned, they didn't happen). Only two Board members were present for the BOD meeting (minimum of three required for an official meeting), and the presenter for the General Meeting cancelled at the last minute. Apologies to all the people who made the trip to discover there was to be no presentation. Perhaps the information which follows will shed some light on the increasing difficulty in securing presenters from major computer related companies, and explain the need for increased help at the local level.

In the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), fourth Quarter 2007 issue of Reports, was an article from the Rancho Bernardo Community Computer Club (RBCCC), San Diego, CA, was the following: "In years past, marketing departments of software publishers and hardware manufacturers would send professional guest speakers with free samples to computer groups, hoping to reach potential customers. But when more competition caused a drop in prices for hardware and software, marketing budgets for free speakers and free samples also dropped. Now, education programs of local computer user groups need more help from volunteer speakers. Good volunteer speakers are in short supply so neighboring computer user groups share what they have." (The sharing referred to generally occurs in larger cities where more than one user group is present. But, with coordination it might work in smaller cities or in cities with only one user group.) Another thing we have tried, which seemed to work well, and may be something more groups may have to use, was an Internet presentation. Basically the presenter stayed at his/her office, user group members were at their location and the internet allowed the audio and PowerPoint presentation to be made, with Q & A through "chat" or phone. (Two way audio should be available if other presentations require this type of setup.)

Hopefully the December General Meeting, will not be a repeat of the last month's meeting. Currently, a representative from Microsoft is scheduled to be here to make a presentation and should have more than one item of interest to cover. Plus, he/she should provide a few "Pre-Holiday Gifts" for those lucky enough to be selected. Since we anticipate a good showing, we are hoping to hold the meeting in the Norris Conference facility directly across from our Learning Center. But, since things can change, check the website and/or call the Learning Center for the latest information on location and presenter. In either case, plan now to come and bring some friends.

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, presenter, 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.



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*Continued on page 9*



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.

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 wklutzjr@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 December General Meeting. I hope everyone has a good holiday period and can begin the New Year with rededicated efforts in all areas.

## December Program

Bill Klutz

Currently, our December General Meeting has a representative from Microsoft Corporation scheduled. We hope to have the meeting in the Norris Conference center, across from our Learning Center. However, since things can change (the presenter for the November meeting cancelled at the last minute), check the Alamo PC web site (www.alamopc.org) for the latest information on presenter and meeting location, and/or talk with one of the Learning Center desk personnel (210-736-0700/0080). Please plan to come and bring some friends, as we hope Microsoft will be generous with items to be given away.

### 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

## Forrest Melton



### Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



## Freeram XP Pro

**FREERAM XP PRO.** Your PC's memory is a little bit like a plate of cookies at a party: You turn your back and it's all been nibbled away.

FreeRAM XP Pro is a free utility that tries to keep your memory from being consumed by a system full of hungry programs.

[www.yourwaresolutions.com/](http://www.yourwaresolutions.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>

## The Doctor is In



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**Diagnose your software and hardware problems**

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**Run tests**

**Solve Operating System mysteries**

**For information call 736-0700**



**Owner must stay with computer during repairs**

### Volunteers Wanted

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

### STUDY GROUPS

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

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

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### Location:

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### Show Dates:

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





# Funny Bytes

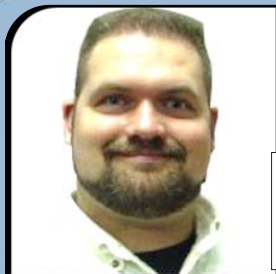
Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



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**"I get to the office around 8:45, pour myself a cup of coffee, turn on my computer, delete all the spam, and then it's time to go home."**



# Windows Server 2008 Certifications

**Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)**

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

I watched a Microsoft webinar on the new Server 2008 (formerly Longhorn) certifications and came away feeling a little underwhelmed. In case you didn't know already, the MCSE is "dead" for Server 2008 and they are moving on to a "job based" approach to their certifications. Read on for more details.

## Windows Server 2008 MCTS Certifications

To begin with, there will be several Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist (MCTS) exams that you can take to certify specific skills on the Server 2008 platform. These are roughly equivalent to becoming a MCP in Windows 2000/2003. You will earn MCTS certification for each different exam that you pass. Here are the initial MCTS exams that will be released:

70-640 MCTS: Configuring Windows Server 2008 Active Directory

70-642 MCTS: Configuring Windows Server 2008 Network Infrastructure

70-643 MCTS: Configuring Windows Server 2008 Application Platforms

Exams 70-640 and 70-642 are no surprise, but 70-643 is interesting. It will cover Internet Information Services (IIS 7) and Microsoft Virtual Server, among others. These exams are scheduled to be available 30 days after Server 2008 goes RTM.

## Windows Server 2008 MCITP Certifications

There are two different Server 2008 tracks, the Server Administrator and the Enterprise Server Administrator. Both of these are MCITP level certifications, requiring multiple exams. These are the highest level of certification (outside of the MCA program) that you can attain. Here are the requirements:

### Windows Server 2008 Administrator:

70-640 Active Directory

70-642 Network Infrastructure

### 70-646 Windows 2008 Server Administrator Exam

\*\*\*Only 3 exams required; the MCTS exams 70-640 and 70-642 and the main MCITP exam for this track, 70-646

### Windows Server 2008 Enterprise Administrator:

70-640 Active Directory

70-642 Network Infrastructure

70-643 Applications Platform

70-620 OR 70-624 Windows Vista Client

70-647 Windows Server 2008 Enterprise Administrator Exam

\*\*\*5 exams required; the MCTS exams 70-640, 70-642, 70-643, 70-620 (or 70-624) and the main MCITP exam for this track, 70-647

The exams are scheduled to be available 60 days after Server 2008 goes RTM.

## Do I lose my MCSE/MCSA?

No. You get to keep your MCSE or any credential earned under the Windows 2000/2003 certification track. You essentially have a "MCSE in Windows 2003?" (for example). However, you do not become a "MCSE in Windows 2008?", because the MCSE no

*Continued on page 14*

longer exists. You will have to upgrade to one of the MCITP certifications referenced above. Your Windows 2000/2003 certifications will not expire and will continue to be valuable as long as Windows 2000/2003 is used on company networks. If you are currently working on your MCSE/MCSA keep working on it—it is still valuable and will provide you with excellent base knowledge that will also apply to Windows 2008.

### Can you upgrade your MCSE/MCSA to Windows Server 2008?

Yes, there is an upgrade path but only for WINDOWS 2003 MCSEs and MCSAs. If you are certified in Windows 2000, you must upgrade to Windows 2003 first or just take the Windows 2008 exams individually.

### Here are the upgrade details:

Windows 2003 MCSE - Pass the 70-649 (upgrade) exam and you do not have to take 70-640, 70-642, or 70-643. You DO have to take the MCITP: Enterprise Server Administrator exam and the Vista client exam.

Windows 2003 MCSA - Pass the 70-648 (upgrade) exam and you do not have to take 70-640 or 70-642. You DO have to take the MCITP: Server Administrator exam.

### My Thoughts on the Windows 2008 Certifications

Like I said in the opening, I came away a little underwhelmed. It just seems like the main MCITP certifications do not have enough substance. I am all for simplicity (only 2 or 3 different professional tracks) but I would like to see a few more exams attached to the higher level certs to make them a little tougher to attain. I also think it will be a bit clunky to say (or put on a resume), "I am a MCITP: Enterprise Administrator, MCTS: ISA Server, MCTS: Exchange Server", etc. There should be one certification (probably the Enterprise Administrator certification) that requires Exchange Server, ISA Server and perhaps SQL Server knowledge, in addition to all of the core Windows Server 2008 requirements. This would be of value to companies and IT professionals alike.

### What do you think?

Looking for more information on Windows Server 2008 Certifications? Check out Trika's Microsoft site; it is loaded with Microsoft certification information and she is very helpful.

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

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☞ Basic Computer Skills  
☞ Microsoft Word

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# The Switcher



## ...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Still Dealing with SPAM?

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

As I sit in front of my e-mail client, I suddenly feel that I must be extremely popular these days. I can't tell you how many "e-cards" from friends, family, and mates that I've received. Hey, here's one from a worshiper!

Oh—wait! None of these are real.

The flood of SPAM into my Inbox is nearly constant, fight as I might to get rid of it. Since I last wrote about SPAM in 2004, it's become even more complicated.

Let's start at the beginning. The term SPAM comes from a 1970's Monty Python sketch where a customer in a café is told they can't order anything that doesn't contain spam (the meat product). While this is going on, a group of Vikings start chanting the word spam, drowning out all other conversation.

Flash forward to the 1980's: the term SPAM is used when a user(s) on a BBS or chat room posts a long string of text to keep others from being able to communicate in that space. Ironically enough, these text strings often contained material from the original Monty Python sketch.

In the 1990's, SPAM as we now know it was born. From MacWorld, in a report as recent as June of 2005, 30 billion pieces of SPAM are sent per day. One estimate has the present number at 90 billion (or roughly 85% of all e-mail sent).

There are five major types of SPAM in circulation today:

**Advertising SPAM:** This is the most common. This is the type that tries to get you to order on-line pharmaceuticals, buy ink cartridges, or browse porn sites.

**Advance-Fee Fraud:** So, this wealthy guy in Africa wants to launder some money through you—but only if you can provide your personal information (such as your social security number and banking information).

**Phishing:** Messages from reportedly trusted sites (like eBay, PayPal, or your bank). They look real and often have some sort of message stating that you need to update your information (and passwords) with them in order to maintain good standing with your account. The information you enter after following their links provides them with the information they need to steal your identity.

**Virus SPAM:** The messages come with a payload, an attachment with a Windows virus inside. Some of these attachments allow attackers to take over your system and to conduct attacks on other systems.

**Web Bugs:** Some SPAM messages are written in HTML. This allows the message sender to encode HTML tags that report when the message is read. This allows the SPAM sender to verify that you have a valid address. Spammers also include graphics in their messages. Graphics can't be scanned by a lot of anti-spam utilities—so these messages are passed through.

### How can you limit the number of SPAM messages you receive?

1. Never reply to an unsolicited advertisement e-mail message.
2. Don't click on links that take you to sites that request personal information.
3. Let your e-mail client use its built-in anti-spam utility.
4. Create a white-list of trusted senders.
5. Use your e-mail client filter (for bad addresses or suspect attachments).

Of course, these tips won't totally eradicate SPAM from your Inbox, but hopefully they'll help!

**I just wanted to give a quick "Thank You" to all those that supported my Mac column over the last few years. As of December, I'm retiring The Switcher. I initially felt some resistance when I first suggested adding a Mac column to a predominately PC-based magazine, but I think the support I received from the editor and from Alamo PC user group members far outweighed anything else. Besides, once Apple decided to start using Intel processors in all their machines, didn't Mac simply become a PC with a better candy coating?**



## Windows Vista Part I

### Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

If you're happy with your existing computer running WinXP, there may be no reason to upgrade it to Vista. It will still be some time before Windows Vista is on the majority of home computers. WinXP is capable and stable, and it will do well for several years. You can make your current system just as secure as it would be with Vista by using security software and the latest Web browser and by following safe online practices. The time and cost involved upgrading raises the possibility that some of your peripherals or software won't be compatible.

If you want to research Vista before upgrading to it, visit this trial Vista web site [www.windowsvistatestdrive.com](http://www.windowsvistatestdrive.com) for a guided tour on this new operating system. It will show you the new features and let you experience Vista. To run the test drive, you must use Internet Explorer (IE). You must also download and install an ActiveX control. Then, if you must upgrade as a personal Christmas present to yourself, first run Microsoft's online Vista Upgrade Advisor to see how compatible your system is for new equipment/software.

If you are then intent on upgrading any new Windows PC with Vista, make sure it has at least 1GB of memory because 512 MBs (megabyte) is too little for either Vista Home Basic or Premium to run optimally. Most new versions of Windows require a big boost in memory. Vista is certainly no exception. Microsoft says Vista can get by with 512 MBs of RAM. The comparable figure for XP was 64 MB. Neither figure is realistic. Microsoft actually recommends 1 GB (gigabyte) of RAM for Vista. If you do video or photo editing, you'll really appreciate the extra horsepower. Of course, you could start with 1 GB and add memory later. Vista is very heavy on graphics. That is its real advantage over WinXP. Microsoft recommends 128 MB of video RAM. In most cases, that would probably be fine. To be on the safe side, though, you should go for 256 MB of RAM and try to avoid integrated graphics. These systems are built into the motherboard. They use the system RAM. However, a separate video card is preferable. If you get integrated graphics, increase your system RAM. Two gigabytes should be fine. Vista takes about 15 GB of space on the hard drive. Most computers today come with a hard drive of 160 GB or more. That is more than enough memory, unless you're storing a lot of videos. The other major component is the microprocessor. Microsoft recommends a 1 gigahertz chip. Virtually everything sold today exceeds that capability. Therefore, you should look at chips a few steps down from the top. That option would be an AMD Athlon 64 X2 Dual-Core or Intel Core 2 Duo. If you're buying a laptop, an Intel Core 2 Duo or AMD Turion will be fine for your computer. You won't be happy with Microsoft's rock-bottom specifications.

Windows Vista may be safer than XP, but it is already proving to be vulnerable to problems. You should download all Windows Updates to obtain the patches for these vulnerabilities. Microsoft already is developing releases called Fiji and Vienna. Microsoft isn't talking much about them, but observers point to Fiji as an interim release, either a service pack for Vista slated for the end of this year, or a larger Vista revision set for 2008. Vista's true successor won't arrive until 2009 if then, when Microsoft tentatively plans to roll out Vienna. Vienna will be a 64-bit only and should have a new IE, an increased focus on virtualization, and the long-delayed file system update known as WinFS.

If you bought a computer with Windows Vista installed and now want to know the best way to transfer programs from your old WinXP machine to it and don't have all of your program disks, then this tip may be of use to you. Vista has built-in tools to help with the switch. First, there's Windows Easy Transfer. This program will move your data and settings to your new computer. You'll need to download a small program to your old XP machine. Then, you should connect the computers using an Easy Transfer cable. You can also use CDs for the transfer, but it's more trouble with this option. The Easy Transfer program will walk you through the steps of moving your data and settings. It won't move your programs, but the Windows Easy Transfer Companion will move them. It's free from Microsoft. Before you run the Easy Transfer Companion, check for compatibility.

### Calendar

Vista tosses in a new program not found in WinXP, Windows Calendar. Windows Calendar is a full-fledged scheduling program that replaces hastily scribbled sticky notes on the refrigerator. You can access the calendar by choosing Start, All Programs, Windows Calendar.

### Color Schemes

Vista ships with eight pre-built designer color schemes, with Aero being the scheme of choice. You can change to a different designer scheme or invent one all your own. To change color schemes, follow the steps at <http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/id-4696.html?cid=etipArticleLink?cid=articleFeature>.

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## Default Program

Microsoft lets computer vendors replace IE, Media Player, Outlook Express, and Windows Messenger with different programs from other companies. Your new computer may come with the Firefox Web browser, for example, instead of Microsoft's IE. Some personal computers may come with both browsers installed on them. When more than one program can handle a task, opening a Web link, for example, Vista needs to know which program it should summon. To choose your default programs, choose Control Panel from the Start button, choose Programs, select Default Programs, and choose Set Your Default Programs. The Set Your Default Programs window lists programs along the right edge. Click the program you use the most and then choose Set This Program As Default. Repeat for any other listed programs that you prefer over Vista's bundled programs and then click OK.

## Ease of Access Center

Vista has a new Ease of Access Center. Here, you can specify different options to make the computer more accessible. To find it, click Start, Control Panel, Ease of Access Center. In the Ease of Access Center, click "Use the computer without a display." Here you can turn on the Narrator and/or Audio Description. Narrator will read text on the screen. Audio Description will describe videos (When the feature is available.). Next click "Set up Text to Speech" to specify options. You can set the voice speed and audio output. You may also want to make more changes. In the Ease of Access Center, click "Make the computer easier to see." Select a high-contrast color scheme, and activate Narrator or Audio Description. However, you can't change Text to Speech options. You can also turn on the magnifier, close unnecessary animation, and remove background images.

## E-mail Attachments

If you purchased a new computer with Windows Vista and cannot open any e-mail attachments with the new computer, it's doubtful that Vista is the problem. E-mail programs generally do not open attachments. Instead, they pass the attachment along to whichever program is associated with the attachment's file type. For example, .doc files are typically opened by Microsoft Word. To check file associations in Vista, click Start, Control Panel, Programs, then click Default Programs. Next select "Associate a file type or protocol with a program." Now you'll see a list of file types. Each listing includes the program Windows uses to open the file type. Listings without an associated program are labeled "Unknown application." To create an association, select a listing and click the "Change program" button. Most programs do this work for you when you install them. Therefore, it's likely that you don't have the programs necessary for opening the attachments. If you're receiving Microsoft Office documents, you generally need Office programs to open and edit them. Office includes the popular Word, Excel and PowerPoint programs. According to Microsoft, Office 2000, XP 2003 through 2007 will work on Vista. Fortunately, there are other ways to open Office documents. Microsoft offers free viewers for documents from Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other Office programs. The viewers allow you to open and read documents only. They have no editing capabilities. For editing, consider OpenOffice.org. It's a free office suite that can work with Microsoft Office documents. In the meantime, you can save the attachments to your hard drive. Windows doesn't have to recognize the files to save them. But, you should make sure the files are from people you know and trust. Use antivirus software to catch any bad files that slip past you.

## Error Reports

WinXP Error Messages tell you the operating system halted a program that, had it been allowed to continue, might have crashed Windows. Microsoft insists it doesn't use the information to track you. They say the report could well help prevent such program failures in the future. However, there may be some security risks. Apparently tests by the U.S. Department of Energy Computer Incident Advisory Capability found that the "memory dump" sent to Microsoft sometimes contained information from the user's documents. Therefore a user might not want to forward a Windows Error Report Message to Microsoft with each major computer problem particularly if that one didn't crash your system. You can tell Windows ahead of time when it should and should not report such problems to Microsoft. In WinXAP, select Start, Run, type sysdm.cpt and press Enter. Click the Advanced tab in the System Properties dialog box, and then choose the Error Reporting button that appears down on the lower right. You can disable all error reporting, or have errors reported for the OS only, for programs only, or for both. If you enable reporting, click the Choose Programs button to select the applications whose failures you wish to have reported to Microsoft. When you're done, just click OK twice. Vista's error message doesn't ask about sending information. Instead, the Operating System (OS) just sends it, unless you instruct it not to do so beforehand. Select Start, and in the Start Searching box, type problem reports and solutions. Press Enter and click Change setting, Advanced settings. In the Advanced settings for problem reporting dialog box, you can turn reporting off, give other users permission to set this option for themselves, read Microsoft's privacy statement, and list programs whose errors should not be reported. Click OK twice and close the Problem Reports and Solutions applet once you've made your changes.

## Sleep

Sleep is one of the Vista features you would likely pay little attention to unless you're something of a computer expert, but it's a great feature. This feature is a new power state that quickly saves your session and restores it faster when you're ready to use the computer again later in the day/night. You just push the power button on your computer, and it enters Sleep within a few seconds. Push the power button again, and Vista resumes within just two or three seconds. All your applications and files are just as you left them, ready to go. Sleep works by saving your session to your computer's memory, allowing your computer to quickly start back up. But Sleep, in contrast to the Standby mode in WinXP, also saves your session to the hard disk to protect against data loss in the event power failure.





## 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/](http://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!

**B**LOG is a free and easy way to get timely information onto the Internet. It is a combination of software tools and web hosting that allows anyone to keep and maintain an online journal without having to learn complicated computer or Web design skills. It's a personal publishing system that gets your thoughts into cyberspace instantly. There's no way to count the number of blogs, but estimates start at a million and go up from there.

Seeing a blog is more enlightening than reading about them, so have a look at my newest blog. In fact, you can finish reading this column there.

The first thing that you will notice is that it is arranged chronologically, with the newest entry on top. This diary format is the defining characteristic of blogs. They are intended for instant and frequent communications.

I found that the service called Blogger, owned by Google, is the easiest to use, especially for beginners. Another good free service is Journal Space.

With all of the blog services the first thing to do is to set up a free account, which essentially means giving the service your name and e-mail, selecting a password and a name for your first blog.

The blog name will become part of the address - [yourblogname.blogspot.com](http://yourblogname.blogspot.com). In Blogger, you can have unlimited blogs. Journalspace gives you one, and your user name becomes your blog address, so pick it carefully.

So you don't get confused, Blogger is the name of the service and the address you visit to manage your blog. Blogspot is where the blog is actually hosted, and the address that your visitors use. They are the same service.

The other required action is to pick a blog template, or the look and feel of your blog. The service will give you a set of templates from which you may choose (and easily change if you change your mind.) More experienced users can download other templates from third-party sites, design their own templates or modify the ones provided (they are created in HTML and Javascript: you have access to the code.)

That done, start blogging! Each entry is called a post. You type in your post, then publish it (click a button) to make it go live onto the Internet. If you want, add a few hyperlinks and format the text, just as you would with a word processor. There's even a spell checker (hint, hint.) That's it. You can master the basics of blogging in about five minutes.

But why stop with the basics?

Most blog hosts allow you to post pictures onto your blog. Blogger doesn't have an innate photo capability so you have to use a third-party program or service to transfer photos to your blog.

Hello, from Picasa Software, is a free program that is installed on your computer. Hello is sort of an instant messenger optimized to facilitate sharing photos with friends, but an added feature is a "bloggerbot" (bot is shorthand for robot) that sends pictures to your blog. It's quite simple to use. Master this in about a half hour.

Another way to add photos to your blog is through another blog (are you confused yet?) BuzzNet is a photoblog, sometimes called a Moblog. The MO stands for mobile: many people use these to share photos taken on their mobile phones. You can send photos by e-mail over the wireless access protocol, or WAP, as well as using BuzzNet's easy Web-based interface.

After you set up your free account with BuzzNet you can upload up to 60 photos per month. If that's not enough, you can buy more photo storage (100 more images in a month for \$5; \$15 for 300 images, or go for it and get their premium service – no banner ads, custom templates, password protected galleries and 250 photos a month – for \$36 a year.)

BuzzNet is optimized for photos rather than text; it's set up more like a gallery, although there are ways to add comments to photos. One of the options is "Blog This!" which will send a photo and text to your Blogspot blog with the click of a button.

BuzzNet is especially handy if you are traveling and are using someone else's computer – at a cyber café, for example. Since the interface is Web-based, you don't have to worry about installing any software. Hint: if you do a photo blog while traveling with a digital camera, get a USB-based card reader (something like the SanDisk 12-in-1 Memory Card Reader, about \$35) so that you can read your memory card directly into the alien computer. If you are in the US and taking photos with your digital camera this is not necessary.

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I set up a BuzzNet account: you can see my moblog there.

If photos aren't enough, how about audio? Both Blogger and Journal Space allow audio blogs, which are sound files that you call in from any telephone and are automatically posted to your blog. These work through 3rd parties and are considered "add-ins" to the blog. You can listen to one. I used a service called audioblogger which is free and lets you post an unlimited number of 5-minute long messages by calling them in over your phone.

Some other audioblog services allow much longer posts – up to an hour! – and allow you to record them on your computer using a microphone. Some people are actually doing full-length "radio" shows using audioblogs. Sometimes this is referred to as "PodCasting," as people download the audio from the blog onto their MP3 players (an iPod, for example) so that they can listen to it away from their computer. Video blogs (Vblogs) are also starting to show up. Look at audioblog.com for more info: their service is \$50 a year.

This really just skims the surface of blogging. You can set up team or group blogs that multiple people can post to. You can enable a feature that allows others to add comments to your blog. There are blog communities that interact with each other.

Most blogs, including Blogger, will automatically set up an RSS (syndication) feed for you.

If you have your own Web space, Blogger allows you to integrate it with your web content so that it uses your URL.

Blogging can be serious business. Last summer, Express-News military reporter Sig Christenson maintained a daily blog from the battlefield in Iraq. They can also be silly and superficial. What you blog is up to you.

For personal use, a blog can be used for vacation photos – while the vacation is still happening! They can be used for family photos – a wedding? New baby? Or even just to post your musings. If you have the Google toolbar installed, there is a Blog button on it. If you click it, it will automatically post a link to the page you are currently viewing to your BlogSpot blog. Many people use this feature to share interesting sites with friends.

But blogs can be used for business, too. They are an excellent way to get current news up onto the Web fast; even someone with no technical skills can do it without waiting for the office Web guru to fit you into her busy schedule.

Here's a warning. Any free service, blogs included, can go out of business. Weblogs, a free service started by blog pioneer Dave Winer, suddenly shut down last summer, leaving thousands of bloggers homeless.

Give it a look. A blog might be all you need, or it could be a trendy and useful add-on to a full-blown Web site.

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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.

**W**e wanted a GPS device with a 4.3" screen (diagonally), and a unit with better features. We finally chose the Garmin nuvi 660 because it announces your next turn (street name) well before you will turn, and again just before you actually turn. It has a bright screen and includes traffic reporting capabilities without purchasing an FM traffic adaptor, which is in the DC cord you get with it. 90 days of traffic reporting is activated when you register it, but after that, you must subscribe for that service (\$60 per year).

The nuvi 660 includes Bluetooth technology for hands free use with your Bluetooth cell phone. MP3 file use is also included and it has an SD slot. It will also talk through your car radio. The 4.3" screen is easier to see and it was on sale for \$599 at BJ's Wholesale. Yes, I could have done much better on the Web, but I preferred to buy it locally for the ease of returning it if I so desired. A friend returned four before he settled on the Mio he kept. So far, we are satisfied in spite of two curious anomalies in the mapping that we encountered. MapQuest had given us worse in the same areas. I ordered a free CD to update the maps, but I'll have to pay for updates in the future.

Another new toy; a Kwikset Biometric Smart Lock, is for our house door. The last few years we used a Kwikset pushbutton lock that we could press the buttons for a preset code and it automatically unlocks. It's great if you can't find your key. You can also use your key. We were happy with the ease of use, but along came the Kwikset biometric lock. Simply slide your finger across the sensor for it to automatically unlock the deadbolt.

It looks like a conventional lock on the outside, but with a small fingerprint sensor sticking down from the key cylinder housing. It is powered by four AA batteries and the fingerprint data is stored in flash memory. It also works with a key. The interior lock housing is larger, containing the batteries, electronics and the Lock's programming screen. It can store over 50 different fingerprints and the lock administrator can limit the privileges of any fingerprint to a certain time of day, and even a day of the week; and can make another user also an administrator. Any stored fingerprint data can be deleted or neutralized. A great feature of any Kwikset Smart Key lock is that you can "re-key" the lock yourself in about 15 seconds, and without any disassembly. That worked great. It also resists criminal "bump key" methods known to defeat many locks. Many people aren't aware that a clever thief can quickly and easily defeat most door locks using the "bump key" technique. Check: <<http://www.toool.nl/bumping.pdf>> for info.

If the lock would work as advertised, we would love it for its simplicity, but that hasn't been the case. Often my finger works the first time, but not always and I must rescan several times. My wife has less success and "often" has to scan her finger several times, sometimes resorting to her key (and a few unkind words). Their telephone tech support was little help, although we couldn't get my wife's finger to unlock it at all until after they walked me through a setting change. Her finger now works, but not consistently. Their on-line tech support feels we aren't scanning correctly, but we have tried the video's approach and some other techniques with no improvement. We purchased it at Home Depot, but it appears they will get this very unreliable item back. Their Web site tech support was a joke and the English part didn't work for me. I asked them to send a new sensor, but they said that would take at least a month. This product really tries your patience. There is an installation and programming video on the Kwikset Web site <<http://www.kwikset.com>> that makes it seem easy, but we're giving up. The price at Home Depot is \$199.95.

### **\*And A Good Time Was Had By All!**

I attended the fall conference for FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) and it was nice to see everyone. Attendance was about average for their one-day fall event with 80 attendees from 29 user groups. Central Florida Computer Society (CFCS) was the host and the FACUG conference coincided with the CFCS 2nd annual Tech Fair, a two-day event featuring many great seminars and products with a host of local vendors selling their wares. The conference included breakfast and lunch and they kept you busy for the entire event, ending with a nice drawing for the FACUG event, and another drawing the next day at the Tech Fair. Unfortunately, the CFCS event was not well attended by their membership.

I also met APCUG president Jay Ferron and got some updated information from him. Nobody could be more positive about APCUG's future than Jay.

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### \*Help For Cut & Paste

Flashpaste Professional by Softvoile is a utility that lets you type a boilerplate text, save it to a mini-database, and paste it automatically into any document, e-mail, Word document, Web page, chat, etc. Just click "CTRL-U" to pop up a dialog box where you pick the auto text you need and paste it into a document. "Click the "New Item" button and type in the name of the item, and then set its type folder to RTF or simple text. Just type the

boilerplate text into Flashpaste and fill in all the fields without having to step out of the submission page several times. The record is then added to the tree of items in the Flashpaste main window."

The standard Windows clipboard keeps only the last copied text, but Flashpaste records all recently copied words, numbers and phrases allowing easy reuse and eliminating repeated copying and pasting. Flashpaste Professional helps perform a variety of tasks such as automatically inserting frequently used addresses, e-mail text blocks, HTML code snippets, words, phrases and paragraphs. Flashpaste can also create macros and strings that are either replaced or processed by an application. Using macros, you can paste current time and date, insert commands that emulate pressing the Tab or Enter keys, and more.

Download Flashpaste Professional using this link <<http://softvoile.com/download/flashpaste.exe?s=ng9>> (1.1Mb). Use the discount coupon (bcdcd) that gives a 25% discount from the \$29.95 list price. Offer valid till Feb. 01, 2008. A 30-day evaluation copy can also be downloaded. I'm not sure if it will be a fully-working version or if they will send you a key for the trial version. <<http://softvoile.com/>> Visit their Web site for more information about Flashpaste features <<http://softvoile.com/flashpaste/?s=ng9>>.

### \*An Interesting Freeware!

DVDVideoSoft Limited <<http://www.dvdvideosoft.com>> has updated its free software, Free YouTube to iPod Conversion and Free YouTube to iPhone Conversion. The free software enables users to download a video from YouTube and convert it to MP4 video and MP3 audio format for playing on an Apple iPod, iPhone, Sony PSP or cell phone. With just a few simple steps, users can enjoy their favorite online videos without having to sit in front of the computer.

Users enable Free YouTube to iPod Conversion and Free YouTube to iPhone Conversion by inserting a link into the program interface and clicking the 'download and convert' button. The software downloads a video in MP4 format or audio in MP3, which can then be uploaded to a portable player or mobile phone. The program also converts a Flash video file to MP4 video format.

DVDVideoSoft has already created a line of free tools: Free YouTube to iPod Converter, Free YouTube to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube to iPhone Converter, Free Video to iPod Converter, Free Video to iPhone Converter, Free Video to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube Uploader, Free Fast MPEG Cut, Free 3GP Video Converter and Free Video to Flash Converter. All their programs are absolutely free and run under Windows, including Vista. They say they respect the users' privacy and there is no spyware or adware. The programs are available in different languages, for example: English, German, French and Japanese.

Besides free downloads, the site provides many tutorials and guides. For more information and free downloads visit DVDVideoSoft at <<http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd-video-software.htm>>. In addition to its software site, DVDVideoSoft runs a free On-Line Video Conversion resource VIDOKY <<http://www.vidoky.com>>, a popular video download site.

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## Volunteers Wanted

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

## STUDY GROUPS

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



# Microsoft Works - Household Management

## Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC User Group

Ron is a member of Space Coast PC Users Group. Instructions in this column were created on a Windows 98 system. E-mail Ron at <ringram728@earthlink.net>

Last month we wrapped up the discussion of Research and Education. Now let's move on to the next task in the list, Household Management. As you can

Addresses
Appointment search
Calendar, set appointment
Caregiver instructions
Chores and errands lists
Grocery and household lists
Home improvement worksheets
Home inventory worksheets
Home Lists
Home loan finder on the Web
Homes for sale on the Web
Important household records
Instruction sheets
Journals
Lawn and garden worksheets
Measurement conversions
Medical records
Menus
Move into a New Home
Moving lists
Organize the Household
Recipe book

see, the list of possible tasks is extensive. We'll take a look at each in turn.

The **Address Book Converter** is only of use if you have one from Works 99 or earlier.

The next task, **Addresses**, will open **Address Book, Main Identity**. Here you may add to or edit individual listings which include phone numbers, mailing and e-mail addresses, birthdays, and more. Just select the appropriate tab and type in the desired information.

The alphabetical listing jumps to **Appointment Search**. However, until you go to **Calendar, set**

**appointment**, there will be nothing for which to search.

Before we go into the details, click on the Calendar to see what you're dealing with. You'll notice that it opens to the current day, with event listing spaces beginning at 7am. You can scroll down as far as 11pm

The Works Help area in the right hand pane gives assistance in various aspects of calendar management.

### Start using the Calendar

Use the Works Calendar to add appointments and events, such as birthdays, and to set reminders.

If you're new to the Calendar, click the topic that describes what you want to do. Or, type a question in the **Answer Wizard** box at the top of the **Help** pane, and then click **Search**.

[Add an appointment](#)

[Add an event](#)

[Set a reminder](#)

[Use Works Help](#)


[Quick Tour: Calendar](#)

Clicking **Add an appointment** will open the screen seen at the top of the next column. Following the directions will guide you thru the necessary steps in completing the entries in the **New Appointment** window. Notice the Tips regarding typing entries directly to the calendar, using the New Appointment icon on the toolbar, and the Copy feature using the CTRL key to copy or move an entry to the day and time you want. Copying would generally be most useful for recurring appointments, something you do on a weekly basis perhaps. Notice in the **Related topics** the item which tells you how to create a recurring appointment. The key here is that there is a check box in the New Appointment window under **When**. Clicking on Make this appointment repeat opens a dialog which spells out the details of the recurrence.

## Create an appointment

- 1 On the **File** menu, click **New Appointment**.
- 2 In the **Title** box, type or select a name for the appointment.
- 3 Under **When**, type or select the start time and end time for the appointment.
- 4 Type or select other information about the appointment.
- 5 Click **OK**.

### Tips

- You can type appointment information directly in a calendar.
- You can click **New Appointment**  on the **toolbar**, and then type the appointment information.
- If you want to copy an appointment, press and hold down the CTRL key, click the appointment, and then drag it to the day or time you want.

### Related topics

[Copy an appointment](#)  
[Delete an appointment](#)  
[Create a recurring appointment](#)

ahead or back any number of months, in what appears to be a perpetual calendar. This allows you to adjust an entry as needed, wherein you can see on what day of the week a particular date falls.



Using the **Recurrence Options** window below, I can for example set my calendar to reflect the appointments I have for the Resource Center every Saturday from 1-5PM. Actually, I can type in the ending time as 4:45PM, rather than

settling for the drop down option of either 4:30 or 5:00PM. The duration window will then reflect 3.75 hours, vs. 4 hours. You can carry the calendar out as far as you wish, by adjusting the End after: entry for as many occurrences as you wish.

There are couple more features in the calendar which can be very useful. One of these is Set a Reminder. You may request a reminder for any time from 15 minutes to a week. You may go one step further and add a sound to the reminder. You might want to consider a loud one in the case of a spouses birthday!

That pretty well covers the Calendar. Next month we'll move on to more of the task list. □

When

This is a recurring appointment

Starts: Thursday, December 29, 2005  
 Ends: Wednesday, March 29, 2006  
 Time: 7:00 AM - 7:30 AM  
 Recurs: Every Thursday of every week

☒ Make this appointment repeat

If you click on the Recurrence button, you'll be presented with a Recurrence Options window seen at right. I find it hard to imagine any additional opens one might want to address. Note that Start date and time relate to the currently open calendar page. I haven't mentioned it earlier, but clicking on the down arrow at the end of the Start and End by blocks will produce a drop down calendar as seen above right. Clicking on the right and left arrows adjacent to the title will move you

**Recurrence Options**

Recurring

☐ Daily Every 1 week(s) on:  
☐ Monday ☐ Friday  
☒ Weekly ☐ Tuesday ☐ Saturday  
☐ Monthly ☐ Wednesday ☐ Sunday  
☐ Yearly ☒ Thursday

Range of recurrence

Start: 12/29/2005 End by: 3/29/2006  
☐ End after: 10 occurrences

Appointment time

Start: 7:00 AM Duration: 30 minutes  
 End: 7:30 AM





# The Sentence

Computer Hysteria

## 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

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

The defendant's brief contains some material available from CAUCE, The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-mail which is an ad hoc, all volunteer organization, created by Netizens to advocate for a legislative solution to the problem of UCE (a/k/a "spam"). UCE is the leading complaint of Internet users.

But junk e-mail is more than just annoying, it costs Internet users and Internet based businesses billions per year. Junk e-mail is 'postage due' marketing; it is like a telemarketer calling you collect. The economics of junk e-mail encourages massive abuse and because junk e-mailers can get into business very cheaply. The volume of junk e-mail is increasing every day."

Vint Cerf, Senior Vice President, MCI and acknowledged "Father of the Internet" is quoted by permission "Spamming is the scourge of electronic mail and newsgroups on the Internet." It can seriously interfere with the operation of public services, to say nothing of the effect it may

have on any individual's e-mail mail system ... Spammers are in effect, taking resources away from users and service suppliers without compensation and without authorization."

In 2002, Paul Graham discussed in a paper, "a Plan for Spam" developing Bayesian spam filtering to distinguish between illegitimate spam e-mail from legitimate "ham" e-mail. Many modern mail programs such as Mozilla Thunderbird utilize Bayesian spam filtering. Server-side email filters

such as spamassassin and ASSP, make use of Bayesian spam filtering techniques, and the functionality is sometimes embedded within the mail server software itself.

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

One that is very common is the offer of free software. In my opinion, deletion is the "ounce of prevention that provides a pound of cure." However, we are losing the war on spam; you may want to join CAUCE's efforts to get legislation to stamp out spammers. If you want to join other Netziens to support the efforts of CAUCE, visit the website for more information at [www.cauce.org](http://www.cauce.org).

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

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



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# What happened next

**Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City**

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

**C**hristmas letters can be a wonderful thing. Admittedly, some are far too long, but then most of us have a lot to say when we need to cover a whole year's worth of news in one epistle. However, with the advent of computer generated letters, it is possible to do more than just recite a litany of events.

Yes folks, we can now include pictures, and easily I might add. Assuming most people who read columns like this one are already using word processing and simple graphic software, there are just a few tips that might be useful for creating better greetings of the season.

My preference is to make a small collage of headshot pictures of members of our family. Since there aren't that many of us (eleven), I can show each of the grandchildren individually and the adults in pairs. If there is enough room on the page, an additional picture or perhaps two which commemorate some event might be included. Doubtfully many people would find our vacation pictures interesting, so those are not an option. But if something really special has happened during the year, most of our friends and family might like to see a token snapshot.

When I referred to a collage, there is a good reason for making one instead of using each picture individually. If you are already familiar with the process, then it should be easy. If not, there are usually online tutorials for the better known photo image programs which can teach you how to combine several images into one picture.

Once you have done this, the file can be substantially smaller than the sum of the file sizes using separate pictures, thereby reducing the file size of your saved document. I do like to save the pictures I use with the document so that they are a permanent record of the letter for that year. It is possible to save letters without the pictures, but then if you remove the picture from your hard drive, or otherwise lose the link to it, you will no longer know for sure which picture you included with the letter.

Another formatting tip is to decide what kind of paper you are going to use, preprinted holiday paper or just plain typing paper. If using anything preprinted, adjust the margins of your letter to fit within the heading and any borders that might be on the stationery. You can always make your own holiday paper, but it is probably not cost effective to include colored borders, etc. with your letter when printing it at home.

My preference is to purchase colorful Christmas paper, available at many places during this time of the year, then print the body of my message with pictures on my home printer. I have in the past utilized the services of one of the fast print type businesses, but since my family pictures are in color, that can be costly. They do, however, look much better than those printed at home. The commercial copiers use a different technology to reproduce color than most of us have in our inkjet printers. Actually, once you see the difference, you might find it hard to revert to the homemade product.

Those places usually can accommodate preprinted holiday paper in their copiers, so all that is printed is the text and pictures you create for the letter itself. But do predetermine the price per copy if you plan to include color pictures along with your epistle. Reproducing color pictures on black/white copying machines is not a good idea. The pictures just never look quite right.

My experience has been that most of what people want to know about our activities for the year can easily fit on one sheet of paper. Stick to the highlights and then include handwritten notes for the personal touch on each letter.

Have good times with your loved ones, not only during the holidays but all year long. Then you will have material for next year's letter.

## STUDY GROUPS

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see page 59-63.



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## 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.

We use Excel to accumulate data and extract answers. This month I want to explore the goal seeking function. This is a part of the suite of commands called what-if analysis. I took a quick look in the spreadsheet help and searched for “goal”. This gave me a very abbreviated explanation of the command. I then clicked on help and Office on the web.

On the Microsoft site I search on “goal” and found 53 matches. From this page I chose “About Goal Seek”. I am sure each selection would have taken me to a fascinating explanation of more features that I would like to use. But, let’s look at the goal section.

This has explanation and a sample. Click on the Show All and get the full verbiage. This always gives insight and more explanation into the theory and workings of the system.

Let me give you the sample that Microsoft has. The goal is to determine (seek) what the interest rate would be on a \$ 100,000 loan for 180 months with payments of \$ 900. Input the following information. The PMT function gives us a payment of \$ 984.74. We can play with this or use the Goal seek function.

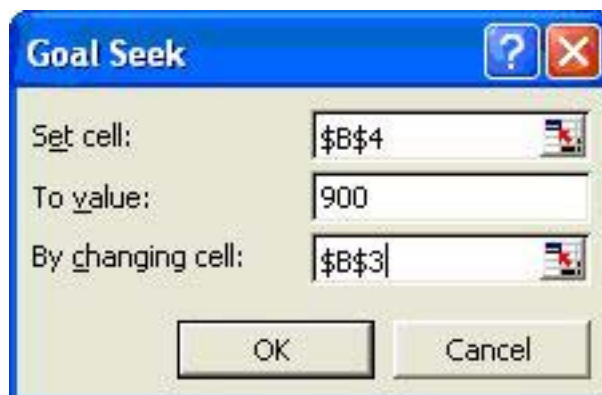
*Continued on page 27*

	A	B	C
1	Loan Amount	\$100,000.00	
2	Term in Months	180.00	
3	Interest Rate	8.50%	
4	Payment	(\$984.74)	
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			

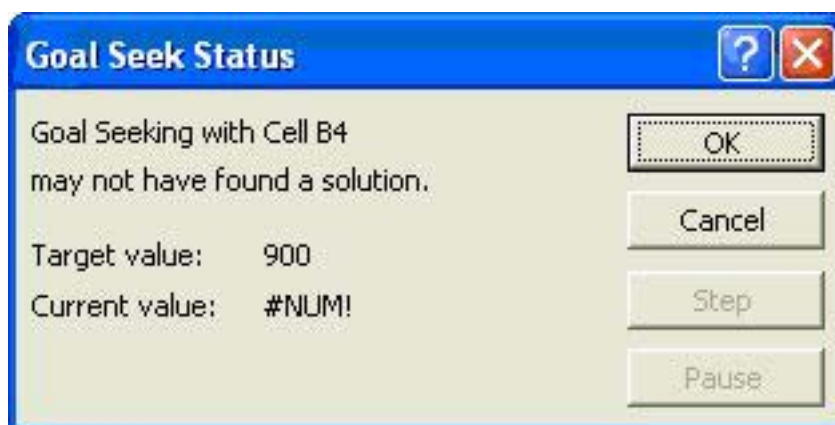


Only changes other than plain text are that B1 and B4 are formatted for currency. B3 is formatted for percentages. The formula “=PMT(B3/12, b2,b1)” is entered in B4.

Now let us do the magic part. Click on Tools, select “Goal Seek...” and you will get an input box to fill in. Let me show you what I did first time. I sure did not get what I wanted. I had to study what the PMT formula was asking for and what I had input. Here is my input. Made sense to me.



And the result was not correct. The Goal Seek Status window displays the following.



The spreadsheet interest field and payment field were filled with errors indicating data problems. When I clicked on cancel the original information comes back.. I tried the goal seeking again. What I had failed to understand was that the “PMT” formula wanted the payment in negative format. The “To Value” for cell B4 should be -900 not a +900. The payments are of descending values. Get help on the “PMT” function and it will show you that the payment value is to be negative. As my friend Boyd says, push it back to the top of the hill.



Now we have the payment of \$900 and the answer for an interest rate is 7.02%. Just way cool as they say.



# 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/>>

All your life, you have been told to "stand up straight. watch your posture." Hopefully, you have taken that advice. You will look better AND have more energy if you do.

Actually, there is much more to posture than most people realize. Your posture is the position of your ligaments, muscles, and spinal bones, and the condition they are in. Your spine is the most important factor affecting your posture. In order to have the best possible posture (and health), your spine has to be in the best possible condition.

That means that from a rear view your spine should be perfectly straight, with each of the 24 spinal bones stacked precisely on top of each other (see figure 1). Looking at the spine from the side, you should see three curves, each having a 60° arc (see figure 2). It's been observed in nature, engineering, physics and geometry that a 60° arc offers the strongest defense against the destructive forces of gravity and motion.

### Spinal Misalignment

Any spinal imbalance, where one or more bones have shifted out of position, will cause areas of the spinal column to work harder in order to compensate for the area that is out of balance. This leads to spinal degeneration.

Sitting at you computer for long hours can significantly contribute to spinal misalignment.

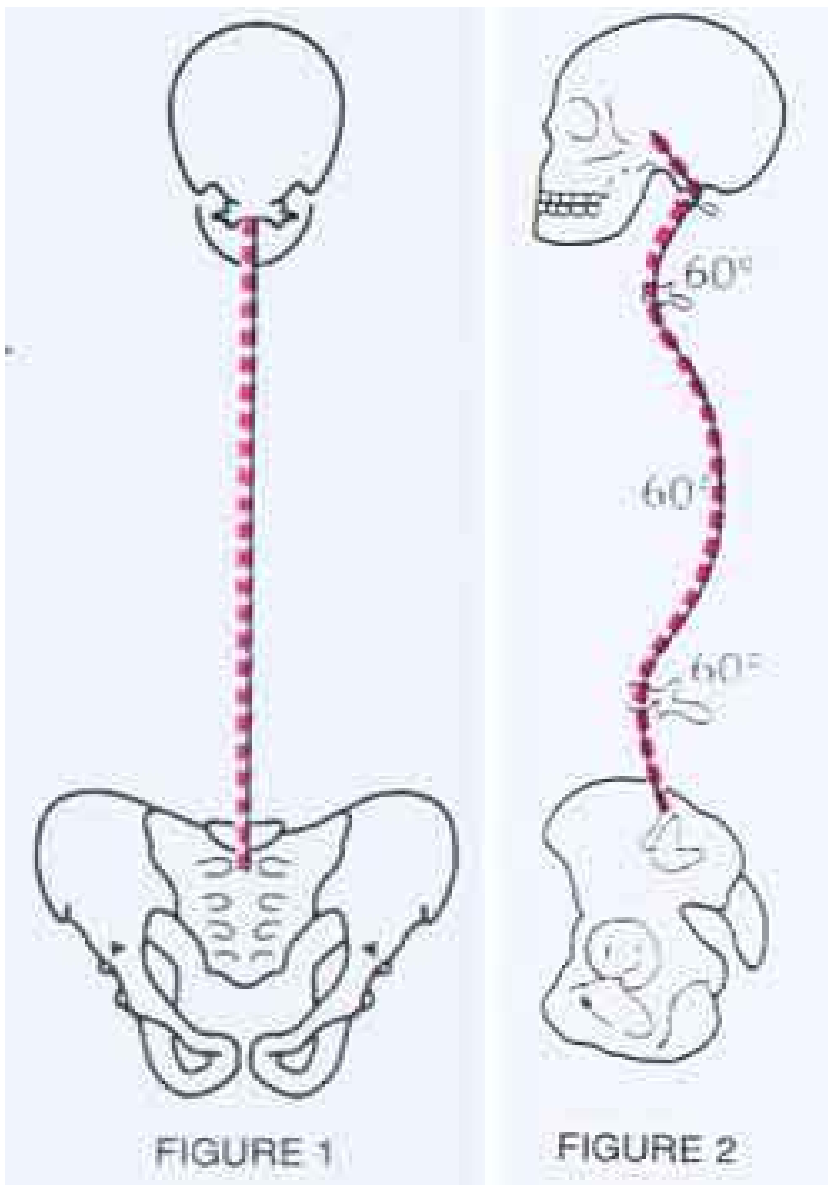
### The Three Phases of Spinal Degeneration

When your spinal column is misaligned it is only a matter of time before gravity and motion take their toll on your health. As time passes, your spinal column, if neglected, will progressively get worse and progress to a higher level of degeneration. Unfortunately, this can often go on for years without any outward physical symptoms.

*Continued on page 29*

### Volunteers Wanted

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



In PHASE 1, there is a loss of normal curve in one or more areas of your spinal column. This means your nerves are being restricted, choking off your vital life energy to your body. Soft tissue damage begins and affects your (joints, discs, nerves and posture).

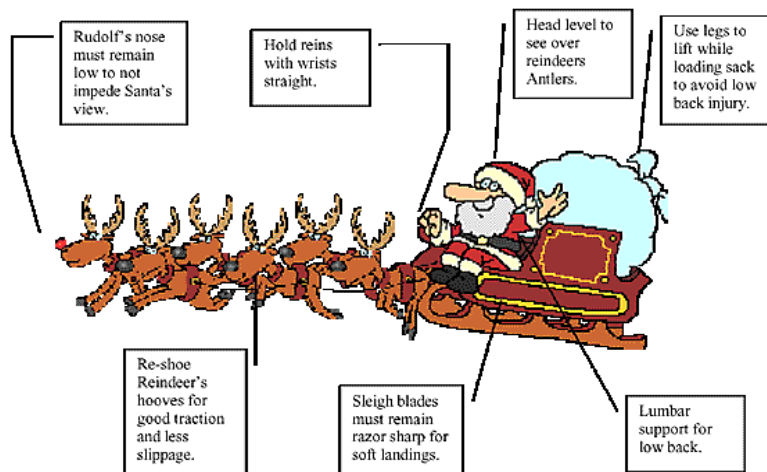
In PHASE 2, the damage noticed in the first phase is more advanced. There is a great deal of decay, disc narrowing, and bone spurs. Postural changes are much worse.

In PHASE 3, all of the damage noted in the previous two levels is again obvious. In addition, postural imbalance is severe and motion is limited because of joint immobilization caused by bone fusion, nerve atrophy, and permanent scar tissue. Chiropractic care works to realign the position of the spine to prevent the misalignment and imbalance that leads to spinal degeneration.



## The Ergonomic Santa

"Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house not a creature was stirring except Santa with his mouse"  
Even Santa has to follow the ergonomic rules:



### Volunteers Wanted

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

### STUDY GROUPS

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





# Windows XP Upgrade To Vista

## 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>

**P**revious versions of Windows always accepted an installation disk as proof you had a legitimate copy of Windows. This entitled you to install the upgrade version of the latest release of the operating system. Vista doesn't work the same way. The only thing it will recognize is a copy of Windows already installed on a hard drive. Why Microsoft did this remains a mystery, but perhaps there really are things that mere mortals are not meant to know.

Don't go out and splurge on a full version of Vista. Read on and save some money. There are four primary versions of Vista: Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Business, Vista Ultimate.

The difference between the full and upgrade versions of each variation of Vista ranges between \$72 and \$155. Even though Vista is a big improvement over XP, why spend the extra money for a full version if you don't have to?

If you're attempting to upgrade from a version of XP or Windows 2000 that's already installed on your hard drive, the upgrade version of Vista will install as soon as it recognizes the older version of Windows on your system. However, if you've formatted your hard drive, Vista refuses to accept an installation disk from a previous version of Windows as evidence that you do indeed own a legitimate copy of Microsoft's flagship product.

Fortunately, there is a legitimate method to work around this otherwise severe and unnecessary restriction. There is an undocumented procedure that allows you to do a full clean install of Vista to a physical hard drive without a previous version of the operating system installed.

The setup program in the Vista upgrade is the tool that lets you perform a full clean install of the product. In addition to XP and Windows 2000, Vista will recognize a copy of itself that has not yet been activated. What if we install Vista twice? We are going to install Vista, and then "upgrade" to Vista. Before you do ANYTHING, please read the entire 20 step procedure first. I'll wait while you do this. OK, let's get started.

1. Boot your PC from the Vista DVD.
2. In the dialog box that comes up select "Install Now." DO NOT enter the product key at this time. You'll do that later.
3. Turn off the option that that says Automatically activate Windows when I'm online.
4. Another dialog box comes up. Confirm the Vista installation without the product key.
5. Tell the installation program what version of Vista you're installing. Don't fib about this.
6. This step is important. Select the "Custom (Advanced)" install, NOT the "Upgrade" install.
7. Wait for the install program to copy files. Your system will probably reboot several times. Don't touch anything. Let the install complete.
8. Eject the installation DVD WITHOUT activating Vista.
9. Reboot to make sure everything is working OK.
10. Reinsert the Vista installation diskette and run setup again.
11. Click "Install Now".
12. Select Do not get the latest updates for installation. You can do that later.
13. Enter the product key.
14. Turn off the option to Automatically activate Windows when I'm online.
15. Now select "Upgrade," not "Custom (Advanced)." This is where you do the actual "upgrade" to Vista.
16. Pay attention! Don't do anything while the setup program copies files and does a reboot.

17. At some point the system will ask if you would like to boot from the DVD. Decline the invitation.
  18. No matter what happens on the screen, leave the keyboard and mouse alone. Resist the urge to do something. Vista setup is making all the right choices for you automatically.
  19. The Thank You dialog box will eventually appear. Click Start.
  20. Vista's login screen will come up shortly. Enter the user name and password you created during the first installation.
- Congratulations! You're finished upgrading to Vista, but you still have a housekeeping chore to perform. You have to activate Vista within 30 days of installation or it will cease working properly. To activate Vista:
1. Reboot your machine.
  2. The Welcome Center appears.
  3. Click Show more details.
  4. Click Activate Windows now.
  5. Activation will now take place automatically over the internet.

It is unknown why Microsoft programmed this procedure into the setup program. My conjecture is that the procedure was implemented for the convenience of programmers while testing the product and someone decided that it was too much trouble to remove. Another possibility is that when Microsoft management gave the order to stop development and concentrate on fixing bugs, there was no time to remove the feature before product release. Whatever the case may be, let's use Microsoft's perhaps unintentional gift to save a few bucks.

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# End of the year Issue

## A Laptop for the Holidays?



By **Vinny La Bash**, a regular columnist and member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida, [vlabash@comcast.net](mailto:vlabash@comcast.net), [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)

**I**n June of 2005, monthly laptop sales exceeded desktop sales for the first time. Since then, the popularity of laptops has continued to gain. Improved battery life, manufacturing quality, larger disk drives, and enhanced video have all contributed to make laptops more attractive. Laptops are replacing desktops in homes and corporate offices.

*Continued on page 33*



Competitive pressures have lowered consumer prices. Unfortunately, these pressures have not always seen a corresponding increase in quality. Low prices are all too often directly related to cost cutting, and that means you stand a good chance of ending up with a dud if you buy a laptop off-the-shelf. Laptops should be manufactured for real world usage and applications. Here's what to look for if and when you decide that a laptop is for you.

The chances are good that your new laptop will have some version of Vista installed. Unless you are a business professional with high security needs, Vista Home Premium will be your best choice. There are other operating systems such as Linux, but these generally require more expertise than Vista, and Vista handles more applications than all the others combined.

Some vendors proudly proclaim that their laptops come with one full gigabyte of RAM. That's about as desirable as a one bedroom apartment for a family of six. You can do it, but why bother when RAM is so cheap? Two gigabytes will suffice for most people who don't need video editing or other memory intense applications. If you think you need more memory, you probably do. Why not simply order their laptop with four gigabytes of RAM? You will never have to wonder if you have enough, and it won't bust your budget.

A low priced laptop won't come with a high powered CPU. Don't settle for a portable that takes ten minutes to boot up, and doesn't have the muscle for your applications. Look for Intel's Core 2 Duo CPU. Not only does it have excellent performance, it generates less heat, and uses less energy. You will have all the power you need to run multiple applications simultaneously, and you'll get longer battery life as a bonus.

Video has been a weak spot with laptops because most portables use video graphics integrated with the mother board. Integrated video robs main memory from the CPU, degrading performance. Insist on a laptop with at least 128 MB of onboard RAM. If your video requirements are high, 256 MB is even better.

If you use your portable for extensive travel, you may not want a 17" screen. Think about how you will cope with crowded and cramped airplanes. How often will you have to remove it from its protective case for baggage and customs inspectors? If you travel often, a 12" display may be best. If not, go for the big screen.

You want at least four USB 2.x ports. These are probably the most useful ports you can have on a machine, and you can't have too many of them. With them you can plug and unplug devices without having to turn your computer off and reboot. They reliably support "plug and play" which means that after you connect a new device to your system through a USB port, Vista automatically detects and installs the device making it instantly available.

Apple developed Firewire to be a broadband connection for streaming data devices like camcorders, DVD players, and digital audio equipment. It became especially popular after it was standardized as IEEE-1394. Lower priced laptops usually are missing this port.

With broadband everywhere, a standard RJ-45 NIC 8 pin female connector should be standard equipment. It is used to connect LAN (local area network), broadband cable modems, DSL modems or routers. Standard RJ-11 jacks are still available for dialup modems, but if you have broadband, there is no need for this obsolete option.

Get at least 1 PCMCIA card slot. Once there is a newer and faster wireless standard, you can upgrade easily if you need the additional speed.

An IrDA port can be very useful for transmitting data between your laptop and various devices such as PDA phones. They are fast, convenient, and wireless. Their only drawback is that they are line-of-sight devices. Infrared doesn't transmit around corners or through walls. The devices have to see each other to work.

If you plan to hook up your laptop to a wide screen digital monitor projector you need a DVI (Digital Video Interface) port. Digital monitors are far superior to their analog counterparts. The DVI port allows a pure digital signal to flow from the laptop to the monitor. A superior image is displayed because there is no signal degradation due to digital to analog conversion.

Some laptops may have parallel, serial or standard VGA ports. Before buying your laptop examine the technical specifications to ensure it has the ports you consider essential.

802.11g capability should be required in every laptop. Since there is no such requirement you need to consult the technical specifications.

Don't make battery life a deal killer. It is undoubtedly important, but if the laptop you're considering has everything else you want and need, consider buying a spare battery. Carrying multiple batteries can be a real hassle considering the extra weight involved. Ask if you can upgrade to a 12-cell battery. Most standard laptop batteries are either 6 cells or 9 cells. Larger batteries almost always last longer. If it makes sense, go for the big one.

Laptops are cheaper than ever, but that doesn't mean that the cheapest laptop is the one that's best for you. Examine the specifications, test drive it if you can, then make your choice.

# Buying a New Vista Computer? Read This First!

By Sandy Berger, Compukiss.com, [www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com), [sandy@compukiss.com](mailto:sandy@compukiss.com)

**W**indows Vista is finally ready for prime time. Over the last several months, the drivers for many devices like printers and scanners have been updated to accommodate Vista. Most software has also been updated to be Vista compatible. If you are ready for a new computer you may be ready for Vista. However, you might want to do a little homework before you make your purchase.

While many devices and much software has been made compatible, not every software program or every piece of hardware will work with Vista. So before you make the move you should check with the manufacturer of your peripheral devices like printers and scanners to make sure that they can be used with Vista. You should also check the compatibility of software programs that you use. Most hardware manufacturer's offer updated drivers which you can obtain at their website at no extra cost. Although some software manufacturers offer free updates, for some, you will have to purchase a new version that is compatible with Vista. For instance, the anti-virus program that you are using on your Windows XP computer will probably not work with Vista. While many of today's computers come with anti-virus software, they are usually only good for one or two months. So be sure to leave a little extra in your budget to purchase any necessary software updates. With careful investigation, you should be able to decide which of your programs will need to be updated and how much it will cost before you make your computer purchase.

Purchasing a Windows Vista computer is a bit more difficult for the average computer user because there are several very different versions of Vista. Windows XP came in two main versions, Home and Professional. The choice was fairly easy. Home suited most home users and Professional was better for businesses. With Vista, Microsoft has muddied the water by offering five versions: Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, Enterprise, and Ultimate.

Let me clarify your options. Whether you are a home user or a business, the Ultimate version will give you everything that Vista has to offer including remote access, scheduled backups, special encryption, Windows faxing, and all of the entertainment features in Vista. Although you will pay more for Ultimate, it does include everything you could possibly want.

While home users can certainly use the Ultimate version, for most the Home Premium version will suffice. This is an excellent version that includes the Media Center which gives you great features for working with photos and music. With a TV tuner in your computer, this version, like the Ultimate version, will let you watch TV on your computer and record television programming just as you would with a stand-alone digital recorder or TIVO, but with no monthly charges. It has a themed slide shows and DVD Maker software included. It also has several cool games like Chess, Titans, Mahjong Titans, and Inkball. In reality, Home Premium is the only fully featured home version.

*Continued on page 35*



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The Home Basic version of Vista is one you will want to avoid. It seems that Microsoft created this version for the sole purpose of getting people into Vista cheaply and having them pay more to upgrade to a better version later. The Home Basic version is stripped of many of the features that make Vista so good. It has none of the television, photo, or music features that are found in the Home Premium version. It doesn't even include the scheduled backup that is included in all of the other versions. So Basic is stripped of many of the features that make using the computer easier and more entertaining.

Home Basic doesn't have the Aero Glass interface that is standard in all other versions. This interface is what makes Vista so visually appealing when you are using it. It also gives you a smoother-performing desktop. In my opinion, it is also easier on the eyes. While some may say it is just cosmetic, I think it is a great loss not to have it.

If you purchase a computer with Home Basic, Microsoft makes it easy to upgrade to Home Premium online. Just pay them more money and download the upgrade. However, Home Basic only requires 512MB of ram, while all the other versions require 1GB (twice as much) of memory. Also Home Basic will run on a computer with lower graphics requirements. So you may find that the new computer you just purchased with Home Basic does not have the power to run the better versions of Vista like Home Premium or Ultimate without adding more memory and upgrading the video card. Also since Home Basic is so "basic" it does not even come close to meeting the requirements for most networked businesses.

The bottom line is.....Stay away from Vista Home Basic. If you purchase a new computer for home use, stick to Home Premium or Ultimate. If you purchase a new computer for your business, the choices in Vista are not always clear cut. Check with a knowledgeable consultant to determine which version of Vista best suits your needs.

If you do a little research before you purchase that Vista computer, you will be happier with your purchase.

## Bazooka Scanner

**Computer Buffet**  
With Dr. Herb Goldstein



**BAZOOKA ADWARE AND SPYWARE SCANNER** detects a multitude of spyware, adware, Trojan horses, keyloggers, and trackware components, sources of irritation that many antivirus products do not deal with. The scanning process only takes a fraction of a second and tells you how to uninstall the invasive spyware or puts you in contact with the spyware developer for the most up-to-date and safe uninstall instructions. Spyware and adware often is bundled with software such as Kazaa, Morpheus, Grokster, iMesh, Xolox, and Gnutella, and in many cases it's installed without your knowledge. Some send information about your surfing habits to ad companies, which target you with pop-up ads that fit your preferences. [www.kephyr.com](http://www.kephyr.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>](mailto:reviewseditor@spcug.org)



# 10 Commandments for Online Shopping

By Robert Spotswood, a Member of HAL-PC, Texas, [www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org), [robert@spotswood-computer.net](mailto:robert@spotswood-computer.net)

## Navigating the Minefield

Just as flies are attracted to a fresh pile of manure, so are criminals attracted to large amounts of money. With online shopping sales at an estimated \$132 billion in 2006, the number of online crooks trying to steal from you has grown, too.

Body text: But just because there are crooks out there doesn't mean you have to give up online shopping. While there is no such thing as perfect security, and anyone who tells you differently is either lying or deluded, there are things you can do to stack the odds in your favor. The following 10 online shopping commandments will help you enjoy the benefits while minimizing the risks of online shopping.

### I. Understand the Risks

If you get most of your information from the mass media, you will likely be sadly misinformed. While major data breaches make headlines, most identity theft sails under the media's radar. By definition, "news" means that it hardly ever happens. Despite the widespread belief that seems to be promoted by the mass media that identity theft occurs primary online, in truth, most occurs offline.

According to a 2004 study by Javelin Strategy & Research, 72% of the identity theft cases studied occurred offline, while only 12% started online, with the rest undetermined ([www.identitytheft911.org/articles/article.ext?sp=29](http://www.identitytheft911.org/articles/article.ext?sp=29)). Further, the study found that those who used the Internet to keep tabs on their bank accounts and credit cards lost only \$551 on average, while those that stuck to more traditional paper statements averaged losses of \$4,543.

As you can see, using the Internet to shop and for banking isn't automatically dangerous, and offline usage isn't automatically safe. While you should exercise care, don't let unfounded fears stop you from enjoying all the benefits of online shopping (and banking).

### II. Keep your computer clean

Viruses, spyware, and trojans, oh my! If the bad guys have their software planted on the computer you use to go shopping (or banking), you lose. No matter how careful you are with your financial and credit card info on the Internet, if the bad guys can see your every move, every keystroke, then the bad guys win.

Start protecting yourself by having and regularly updating a virus scanner. Grisoft ([free.grisoft.com/](http://free.grisoft.com/)) offers both free AVG anti-virus software and an AVG anti-spyware program. Supplement the AVG spyware program with both Spybot ([www.safer-networking.org/](http://www.safer-networking.org/)) and Ad-aware ([www.lavasoftusa.com/](http://www.lavasoftusa.com/)). No one anti-spyware program catches everything, so you need to use multiple products to be really sure.

*Continued on page 37*

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Don't use Internet Explorer, but use Firefox or Opera instead. Internet Explorer's bad track record plus being actively targeted make it an unsafe choice. While neither Firefox nor Opera are perfect, their track records are far better than Internet Explorer.

McAfee offers a neat, and free, plug-in for both Firefox and Internet Explorer called Siteadvisor ([www.siteadvisor.com](http://www.siteadvisor.com)). McAfee has tested a huge number of websites for bad stuff. This plug-in shows you the results of those tests in a little bar at the bottom of the browser window. A green site was safe when last tested, while a red site has serious problems (stay away!), and a yellow site has some issues, but not bad enough to warrant a red rating. A few sites are gray, which means they haven't been tested. As Siteadvisor integrates with your browser, it will even add a color-coded rating symbol next to your search results if you use Google, Yahoo, or MSN. This helps you avoid problems, and malware, in the first place.

Stay up-to-date with your patches, and consider some sort of firewall software, even if it's an external device. Finally, never use a computer you don't trust for online shopping or banking, especially a public computer. You never know how well it's taken care of, and, being public, even the best care won't catch everything.

### III. Shop around

Unless what you're looking for is obscure, there is going to be more than one store selling it. This is especially true with name brand, popular items. Remember that with online shopping, visiting multiple stores is quick and easy. The range of prices can vary considerably on the exact same item.

When comparing prices, don't forget to compare shipping costs and methods, too. Sometimes a company that charges a little more may offer free shipping, versus a company that charges less but has high shipping rates.

### IV. Don't trust that lock

Just because your web browser shows the SSL symbol, such as a closed lock or key, that doesn't mean everything is safe. First, what type of encryption is being used? 128 bit is considered the minimum standard today, with some sites using 256 bit AES encryption, but that doesn't stop sites from using older, poorer encryption, such as 40 bit. If the website can't get at least 128 bit, don't trust them to do anything else correctly either.

SSL depends on certificates in order to work. Is the certificate issued to the company you think you're dealing with? For instance, Amazon.com's certificate says it was issued to Amazon.com Inc. This is what is expected. However, suppose the web site, buyme.cxm, certificate reads ABC company. Is something fishy going on? If you just looked at the lock, you might think everything is OK. Since very few people bother to check the certificate, a bad guy can cause your browser to display a legitimate lock, while you're at a different site than you think you are.. Anti-phishing tools are making this harder to do, but by no means impossible.

In one case, I wrote to a company I was going to order from because the certificate didn't match the company name it should. According to the reply I got back, the certificate was legitimate, and I was the first person to write them about it in the two years it had been up. The certificate was soon fixed.

However, just because the certificate name does not match the website name doesn't automatically mean something is wrong. Certificates are expensive. Sometimes companies will use their parent companies certificates to save money. Some websites use their web host's certificate to save money or if they don't really need SSL and the web host sets this up automatically.

You can see the certificate's details for yourself in Firefox by left clicking on the lock in the address bar. This opens a window where you then click on details to see the certificate information. In the pictures below, the SSL lock is there, but the certificate does not match the site name (ignore any warning that comes up for this example). This is because the SSL certificate belongs to the web host, and not the website. This is an example of the website owner not needing SSL, so he went with the web host's certificate. The figures were collected using Firefox.



Figure 1: To view the certificate, click on the lock

*Continued on page 38*



Figure 2: Click on view to see the names. Notice this certificate uses 256 bit encryption.

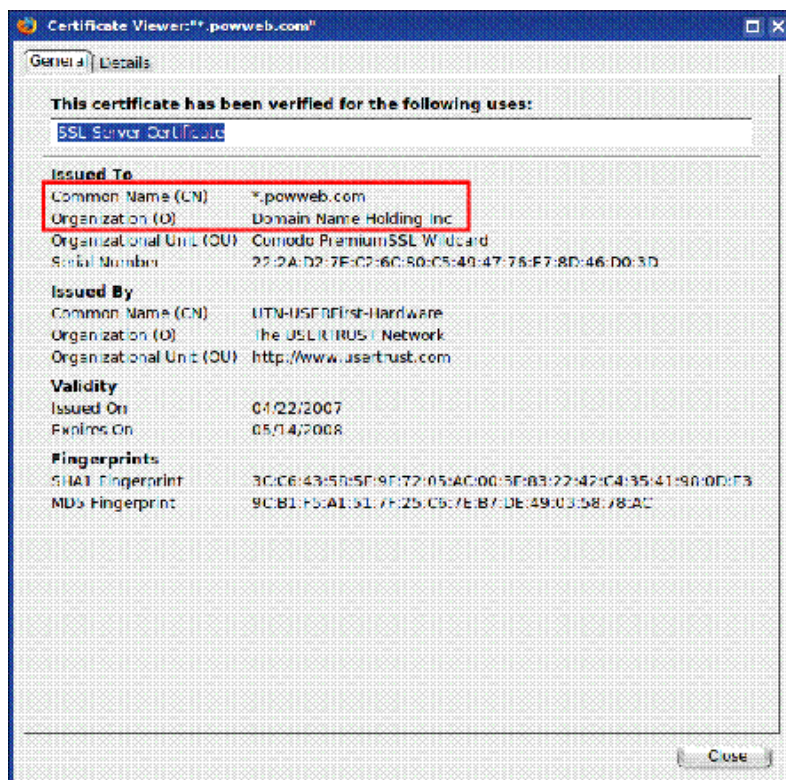


Figure 3: Do the names look correct for the website?

*Continued on page 39*



## V. Check out the company

Unlike brick and mortar stores, where the purchase is pretty much a simultaneous exchange of money and goods, online shops demand payment upfront. They then ship the items to you in good condition, you hope. Thankfully, you are not defenseless.

There are more than a few sites out on the web that allow users to post reviews of not just the items, but the stores. Six such sites that do this are: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [pricegrabber.com](http://pricegrabber.com), [bizrate.com](http://bizrate.com), [pricewatch.com](http://pricewatch.com), [www.google.com/products](http://www.google.com/products), and [shopping.yahoo.com](http://shopping.yahoo.com), where others who have bought from the company before you can post their experiences. However, you should never just look at the average rating to make your decision on whether or not to do business with this company. The ratings can be misleading.

The first thing to consider is how many ratings. The average of 1000 ratings is more telling of what to expect than the average of 2 ratings. But the number of ratings isn't the only thing to consider. How far back do the ratings go? A store that gets 1000 ratings but only goes back 2 months either does a huge amount of business, or is faking their own ratings, probably the latter.

Then you have to look at the ratings themselves. Scummy stores are not above posting positive ratings about themselves. One tell-tale sign of this is that many to most of the positive ratings all read the same, as if someone had copied and pasted. Detailed ratings have much more credibility. This is why it's important to scan the ratings, and sort from highest to low. If you see this sort of thing, stay away from the store! Any store that needs to post positive ratings about itself is a store you don't want to do business with.

The other thing to consider is the low ratings. Why were they given low ratings? Are the low ratings detailed, or do they look like they are copied and pasted? Rival stores (especially scummy rivals) are not above posting bad ratings about a good store to drive business away from the good store and hopefully to themselves.

Remember, just because the store is listed on one of the major shopping sites mentioned above doesn't mean it is a good store. Another way to check on a store is to use a major search engine like Google or Yahoo. If others have had bad experiences with the store, it's likely the search engines will find some mention of it.

## VI. Use credit cards, not debit cards

It is important to understand that despite the Visa or MasterCard logo sported by almost all debit cards, they are not the same as credit cards, especially online. There are important protections you have by law with credit cards that don't apply to debit cards.

If you buy something that's damaged or defective and you use a credit card, you can withhold payment under the Fair Credit Billing Act, both online and offline. You must make a good-faith effort to solve the problem with the merchant first. However, if you can't resolve it, contact your credit card company and they will investigate the problem. If the card company sides with you, which will probably happen if you have a reasonable case, the charge won't be added to your bill. However, purchases made with debit cards are not covered under the Fair Credit Billing Act. Good luck getting your money back!

Some credit cards offer extended warranties and other protections for large purchases made on the card. This does vary by card, so check with all your credit card companies, if you have more than one, before buying to see which will give you the best deal. No debit card doing this could be found while researching this article.

Credit cards have a maximum of \$50 liability if you report the problem promptly. While your maximum direct liability with a debit card is \$500 by law, this only applies if you notify the bank more than 48 hours after you learn of the problem. Some banks promise to limit the liability to \$50, but there are numerous reports that not all banks honor that promise.

But the real danger with debit cards is they are a direct line to your checking account. A thief can drain it all, including any overdraft line of credit. While you may get most of the

*Continued on page 40*

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money back, in the meantime, you don't have access to your money. It could take the bank 10 days or more to refund your money. In the meantime, you can have checks bouncing all over town, along with the bounced check fees, and possible embarrassment.

Blocking is also a bigger problem with debit cards than credit cards. Some places, such as hotels, gas stations, and rent-a-car agencies, among others, will contact the company that issued your card to give an estimated total of the bill, their estimated total. If the transaction is approved, your available credit (credit card) or the balance in your bank account (debit card) is reduced by this amount. That's a "block." Some companies also call this placing a "hold" on those amounts. Hotels and rental car companies often add anticipated charges for "incidentals" like food, beverages, or gasoline to the blocked amount. If you are close to your checking account limit, which is far more common than with credit limits of credit cards, you can bounce checks even with enough money in the bank, while waiting for the block to be released.

Credit cards offer you much better protection than debit cards, especially online. Never use a debit card for online shopping.

## VII. Zero liability sounds better than it is

Protecting your credit card accounts is more important than most people realize. Some people think just because your liability with credit cards is limited to a maximum of \$50, taking precautions isn't worth the effort. After all, that \$50 is only if the card itself is stolen rather than just the number, and most credit card companies tend to waive that for good customers, although you might have to call and ask. So you might believe the maximum loss with a stolen credit card is only \$50 as an extreme worst case scenario. Wrong!

Depending on how the card issuer handles things, they may close the current account and reopen a new, identical account for you, with a new card number (flipping the account). While to most people this is not a change in your credit status, it will affect your credit score. Your credit score is partially based on how long the various revolving accounts (like credit cards) have been open. Length of time accounts have been open makes up roughly 15% of your credit score. New accounts will actually cause your credit score to go down, especially if the previous account was open for years.

Your credit score touches more parts of your life than most people realize. Applying for a new car loan, home mortgage, or other loan? A flipped account means you could pay more or even not get the loan. Insurance companies are starting to base rates partially on credit scores. A flipped account means your rates can go up.

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Some employers check credit scores before hiring or promoting. Having a flipped account could make the difference between getting and not getting that position you want. Your credit score is also looked at when you connect utilities, try to rent an apartment, or even buy a cell phone. Lower scores mean higher prices or you have to buy a lesser model, if the sale happens at all.

As you can see, even if your direct liability is \$0, you still want to protect your account information. Having your number stolen can cost you indirectly in ways most people don't realize. Even if the new account isn't reported as new, you still have to wait for the new card to use it again. It is worth the effort to protect your card number.

### VIII. Protecting Your Credit Card Online

So how do you protect your credit card number online? After all, you have to give them your card number to make the purchase, right? Well, for some cards, no. Let me explain.

Some credit card issuers have special programs where you can get "temporary" card numbers. By using these, your real number never goes out on the web, and hence is much harder to steal. This means you don't need to worry much about how secure the store keeps its servers. These numbers can also be canceled if the shop tries to play games with your number. For example, according to Thomas Hawk, PriceRitePhoto threatened to bill his credit card \$100 if he posted a negative review ([thomashawk.com/2005/11/priceritephoto-abusive-bait-and-switch.html](http://thomashawk.com/2005/11/priceritephoto-abusive-bait-and-switch.html)). Using a "temporary" card number shuts these and other games down very quickly.

In addition, the "temporary" card numbers can be used for phone orders, or even mail orders, not just online orders. However, trying to use one at a brick and mortar store is not recommended. Cashiers really don't like it if you pull out a piece of paper with a credit card number written on it and try to pay with that.

Do not confuse the temporary card numbers with the "Verified by Visa" program. The Verified by Visa program does not work with all online stores, only those signed up for the program. It also doesn't help you with phone or mail in orders.

So how do you get a "temporary" card number? It depends on who issued your credit card. However, in every case, you must have a credit card with the bank, and must create an online account. Out of the 5 largest credit card issuers in the United States, neither Chase nor Capital One offer a temporary card numbers. Discover, Bank of America, and Citi all offer temporary numbers.

Discover Card ([www.discovercard.com](http://www.discovercard.com)) offers Secure Online Account Numbers, which are temporary numbers linked back to your real number. The credit limit and expiration date are the same as your real card. The temporary number even includes the CVV code for websites that think it provides any real security. (The CVV is not random, but generated by a formula based on your credit card number. Do not assume the criminals don't know the formula.) According to the Discover Card website, "A secure account number can only be used at the retailer where it was first used—it can't be used anywhere else. If the secure account number is stolen, you can deactivate it without canceling your actual Discover Card Account." Of course, since it can only be used at one place, its value is far less than that of a regular number. These numbers can be used for recurring charges and automatic bill pay, provided the merchant does not change.

Unfortunately, the Secure Online Account Numbers page is rather hidden. To find it, you have to go the Discover Card home page, scroll down, then click on "Security Center". Scroll down on the new page and near the bottom you will find a "Create a Secure Number" button. Click on that to get started. A new window opens and the username and password are the same as your online account. This works with both Internet Explorer, Firefox, and even with Firefox on Linux. You should be aware that based on an admittedly small sample size, the first time you use one of these numbers, you will trigger a fraud alert with Discover. Be prepared for the phone call.

Bank of America (BoA) credit card holders can use BoA's Shopsafe program. With this program you have to sign in to Online Banking at [www.bankofamerica.com](http://www.bankofamerica.com) or [fiacardservices.com](http://fiacardservices.com) which is a redirect to <https://www.ibsnetaccess.com> (both are BoA sites). From there you can create the temporary card number. You can set the credit limit and expiration date for each number. It is only good for one merchant, but can be used for recurring charges at that merchant. It is known to work with Windows and Macs, and to work with Netscape 8.1, which is based on Firefox, so Firefox should work as well.

Citi refused to respond to questions about whether or not they even had a temporary number program. However, a HAL-PC member who has a Citi card did offer the following: "...I wanted to mention (since they didn't bother to respond to your question) that Citi does indeed have virtual credit card numbers...The card numbers have one-month expirations and can be closed by the card-holder once the transaction has been posted. They can be monitored and managed on-line through the Citi card holder's account." As these temporary numbers have one-month expirations, they are not suitable for recurring charges. It is also known that the Citi website does not work correctly with Firefox, and therefore Linux users are out of luck.

### IX. Close the Browser

Due to the nature of the web protocol (AKA HTTP protocol), it is necessary to temporarily store your credit card information in a cookie. The cookie is encrypted, and almost never written to disk. When the session (think conversation) ends, the cookie is automatically purged and so is the key to decrypt it. So when you end your transaction, and leave the website, your credit card info is gone right? Not necessarily.

*Continued on page 42*



Welcome to the world of cross-selling. Cross-selling is where a legitimate merchant (or their shopping cart vendor, often without informing the merchant) cuts a deal with another company to add a link to the transaction complete page. But this is no ordinary link.

Welcome to the world of cross-selling. Cross-selling is where a legitimate merchant (or their shopping cart vendor, often without informing the merchant) cuts a deal with another company to add a link to the transaction complete page. But this is no ordinary link.

This link actually continues the session, so your credit card info is still available. The link may entice you with something like "Click here to claim your \$10 Cash Back Reward on your next purchase!". If you click the link, buried somewhere on the page, usually you will have to scroll down to see it, is a checked box saying something like "Sign me up".

As if that wasn't sneaky enough, there is some JavaScript on the page so if you then close the browser or navigate away from the page, the on-exit script kicks in and completes your "order" with the credit card info from the legitimate merchant's session. Any e-mail they send you (as required by law), if they send one at all, has a subject line designed to trip every spam filter out there so you will never see it.

Usually there is a 60-90 day free trial before the billing starts in order to hide the source of the billing. The billing is small to avoid scrutiny, and the description is often obfuscated. The billing is also recurring. One company that does this is Webloyalty.com and the charges currently appear as WLI\*RESERVATIONREWARDS.

There are two good defenses against this sort of scam. First, when the page comes up that says your transaction is complete, close the browser. Don't navigate to somewhere else, just close the browser and reopen it. Second, use temporary card numbers if possible. Since both Discover and BoA temporary card numbers are only good for one merchant, the billings will be automatically rejected. You can cancel that particular number for good measure if necessary.

#### X. Use common sense

Finally, consider the price. If one store is way below all the others selling the exact same item, there's a reason, and it is usually not a good one! Someone once told me the following about investing, "Lost opportunities almost always come round again, but lost money never does." It applies equally on online dealing. If it seems too good to be true, pass it by.

Robert Spotswood, a HAL-PC member, is active in the Linux SIG and a freelance computer professional. He can be reached at robert(at)spotswood-computer.net.

### Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



## TrueCrypt Foundation

Protect your sensitive data with this free open-source disk encryption software. Create a virtual encrypted disk within a file and mount it as a real disk. Encrypt an entire hard disk partition or a device, such as USB flash drive. Automatically and transparently encrypt in real time. TrueCrypt provides two levels of plausible deniability, in case an adversary forces you to reveal the password: a hidden volume (steganography- more information may be found here); no TrueCrypt volume can be identified (volumes cannot be distinguished from random data). TrueCrypt uses encryption algorithms AES-256, Blowfish (448-bit key), CAST5, Serpent, Triple DES, and Twofish. It is based on Encryption for the Masses (E4M) 2.02a, conceived in 1997. [www.truecrypt.org/](http://www.truecrypt.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. <reviewseditor@spcug.org>

# Old to New Computer Files Transfer: Careful!

By Charles W. Evans, Reviews Editor, Hal-PC, Texas, [www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org), [reviews@hal-pc.org](mailto:reviews@hal-pc.org)

It's that time of year when many of you will buy a new computer. And one of the biggest chores of getting a new computer is moving all of your stuff from one to the other. This review and the one in January '08 should be helpful in transferring or moving your "stuff". I have the advantage of visiting numerous SIGs each month and listening to individual problems. Moving files or "migrating" programs can be a real head ache, but it doesn't have to be.

A few comments first:

1. When you install a program under Windows, that program not only places most of its files in its own folder (subdirectory). It also places files in various Windows folders. You must move the files in the Windows folders as well.
2. To remove a program, you cannot simply delete the folder. That's only the first step, although not the best. You must uninstall the whole program. Most programs now include an "uninstall" feature. Please use it.
3. Transferring a file or folder from old to new computer just does that – it simply moves files from one place to another. If you have the original installation media, that may be all that you need. Install the program on the new computer then move data files from the old computer.
4. If you don't have the original install media, what then? In January, I'll review a program that will actually move the entire program, including files in the Windows folders, to your new computer.

**CAUTION:** The trick is know what to move. If you're moving from XP to Vista, keep in mind that some of your programs may no longer work with Vista. And you have to be careful when you're moving full versions of a program from XP on top of demo versions on your new Vista machine. So spend some time up front doing some housecleaning on both machines before you start the process. What won't move easily? Some programs with security features may need to have the user key put back in or the entire program reinstalled. Anti-Virus software won't move successfully because it is so coupled with the operating system.

PS: You can also use these two reviewed devices to copy files between your laptop and desktop computer. In addition, you don't have to deal with firewalls or Ethernet - some transfer programs use an internet type connection.

## Belkin USB Cable Transfer

For a basic utility and simplest way to transfer files from one place to another, use this Belkin Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista. Load the special drivers from the included CD. Plug in the USB2 cable into each computer and open Explore. You should see your old computer as another device or hard drive. Then move the files from the old to the new computer as you would move any other file. Suggestion: I would Copy rather than Move. That way you have a backup on your old computer...just in case.

The Windows Easy Transfer Wizard automatically appears and lets you select the files to copy. With a couple of clicks, your photos, music, settings, and more transfer, without requiring time-consuming CD burning or a network. Belkin includes free file-synchronization software. With "One-Click," PCsync software automatically synchronizes files, folders, music, photos, video, etc. between your PCs. It works on Win98SE through Vista. What can you expect in your box? An Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista, a brief Quick Start Guide (a more complete Guide is on the CD) and a CD with Windows Easy Transfer and PCsync® software. For more info and updates, go to [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com).

## LapLink Migration Kit

For a more comprehensive solution to move your stuff from your old computer to your new Vista computer, look at LapLink's version 11.5 or 12 which use an optional USB2 for transfers. This device uses a TCP/IP connection, which, for us non-guru's, means an internet connection procedure. This Kit is very efficient and effective, but it does require some time to set up AND you've got to read the few pages of instructions. They are non-technical, but you have to follow them explicitly. Newer versions include a Windows Vista transfer wizard that attempts to bring over some of your settings from one to the other (it helps if you buy a special cable). Simply select the files or programs you wish to transfer and press the button. To assist you in correctly moving files, LapLink has included a "sync" program – easy to use and oh, so handy.

I have used the Vista wizard on a handful of PCs and none were adequately transferred in my opinion. The data files were moved okay for the most part but the process was cumbersome and crashed on some computers when using the network options. There were timeouts and snags. Transfer security is very tight from lockout protection to folder level security. Warning: It is important to install the USB cable correctly. Do not attach the cable to the computer until directed. Incorrectly installing the cable can result in problems in the Device Manager, and can prevent Laplink from connecting properly. If it is currently attached, please unplug it before proceeding. For more info and software updates go to [www.laplink.com](http://www.laplink.com).

# Converting to a Portable Office

By **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**, a regular columnist and member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida, [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org), [bwsail@yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com)

**M**any times over the fifteen years that I have been writing for the Monitor I found myself approaching the deadline while I was on the road. Since I usually travel with a laptop I managed to get something written and sent off to the editor. Now, however, I am in the process of changing to a completely mobile lifestyle. That means that everything I need has to fit in a very small space on a travel trailer where there is no room for a desktop and a CRT. I also needed to add storage to the laptop so that all of my research files, genealogy files, photos, videos, etc would be able to go along. That's what this article is all about – fitting everything into as small a space as possible.

First, a disclaimer. Although I will be mentioning various brands, they just happen to be the ones I used. There may be better ones or equivalent items available. This is not to be considered a review or recommendation of any specific hardware or software components. I have included the brand names for those who might want to get more details on the components.

To start with my laptop has a 60 GB IDE hard drive partitioned into 35 GB and 25 GB. The 25 is the space I use for Linux (Ubuntu), while the 35 GB is my Windows XP. On my desktop I had a very fast 250 GB SATA drive and a Plextor DVD burner. The DVD burner in the laptop burns only DVD+ disks at a 1X speed. The Plextor burns DVD+ & - discs at a much faster speed than the laptop drive. I also have a 250 GB SATA drive that I use for backup of both the desktop and the laptop.

All of these were really what I needed for the expansion of my laptop. Or, I could have popped for a new laptop. The cheap way out was to keep my older drives and make them available to the laptop. Since the desktop hard drive has a SATA interface it has a much faster data transfer rate than the older IDE drives. To get a new laptop with a SATA drive would be more expensive than purchasing external cases. Also, my laptop has four USB 2.0 ports which allow a maximum 460 mbps transfer rate. They can certainly handle the SATA data transfer speeds. (If you are confused by the terms IDE and SATA, check out the TechTalk article for February 2003 on the SPCUG website.)

I already had one external case that I used with the backup drive. It is a Vantec NexStar 3 aluminum case which connects to either the laptop or the desktop via a USB 2.0 port. It also has a SATA connection which can be used with the external SATA port on the desktop. Although this case does not have a cooling fan, the aluminum case seems to be very successful in radiating the heat generated by the drive. It also doesn't add any noise to the workspace. This case cost \$30 plus shipping. Since it had worked so well with the backup drive I purchased another one for the drive I removed from the desktop unit.

Removing the drive from the desktop and installing it in the NexStar case was the easy part. Since this hard drive had been a bootable drive, it had many applications on it as well as a complete Windows XP setup. First, I deleted any applications that were duplicates of ones already installed on the laptop. Then, in order to prevent problems related to having two bootable Windows partitions, I deleted the complete Windows folder on the external drive. After doing this I defragged the main partition on the external drive. Finally, I checked some of the applications still installed on the external drive.

*Continued on page 45*



Amazingly several of them were still functional. However, most had to be reinstalled before they could be used. That is not surprising since most software has to be installed in the Windows registry which in this case was now on the laptop's hard drive, the bootable C partition.

So now I had a hard drive with more than adequate space available for any photo or video project I wished to work on. It could also be partitioned to for Linux data storage.

The next step was to transfer my Plextor DVD burner to an external case. In this case Vantec has a NexStar-2 drive enclosure designed for 5 1/4" CD/DVD drives with an IDE interface. This enclosure is a light weight plastic case with a cooling fan and a USB 2.0 connection. The price for this case was \$28.00 plus shipping. Installing the burner in the case was really quite easy. The instructions that were included were very complete. Once I had the installation completed I connected the USB cable to the laptop and turned on the unit. Windows very quickly identified the drive as a CD/DVD burner and assigned it a drive letter.

I did have some CDs that I needed to burn. My burner application (CDBurnerXP Pro) was not on the laptop. It was one that I had on the external hard drive that needed to be reinstalled on the laptop drive. That took only a few minutes. When I started the application it found both of my burner drives. I selected the Plextor and the files to be burned. The process was completely successful and was much faster than if I had to depend on the slower built-in drive.

So now I have a laptop with 300 GB of hard drive capacity and two CD/DVD burners. All of this can be stored in a very small space and can easily be packed in foam cushioning for travel.

Next I needed to consider what to do about scanning, copying and printing. I had a Canon photo printer and an Epson photo scanner. However, there just isn't enough room for both pieces of equipment. The Canon had fit in a cabinet, but there was no place to stow the scanner. So I spent some time doing some research on all-in-one units.

All though I preferred laser printers, I also needed color capability. The size of color laser printers just didn't fit with the space I had available. So that seemed to restrict me to inkjet units. I finally found a Brother all-in-one that actually takes up less space than did my Canon printer. It also has network capability if I should ever need it, and it will read my camera's memory cards. The scanner is only letter sized but that should be adequate for my needs while traveling. It is also a USB 2.0 unit so the data transfer speed is fast enough. Since the scanner uses a standard TWAIN driver it works perfectly with my GIMP graphics software. That also makes it usable if I am running UBUNTU instead of Windows. (The TWAIN standard is designed to link applications and image hardware and is compatible with Linux, MAC and Windows operating systems.)

The scanner also has a sheet feeder which is very useful. Especially since I can scan and convert documents for storage in a PDF format, not just as a JPG picture. This allows me to store important documents on the hard drive and shred the original. That reduces the need for storage of paper documents. Although most of my bills are electronic, there are always a few that arrive by snail mail. Not every business operates electronically, even in the twenty-first century.

So now I think I am ready for the next change in my life. Living a mobile life style without having to depend on having a fixed address. This is something that the Internet, VOIP telephones and cell phones have made possible. See you on the road!

*Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years developing software and assembling systems.*

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# Free Help for Creating Greeting Cards

By **Sandy Berger**, CompuKISS, [www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com), [sandy@compukiss.com](mailto:sandy@compukiss.com)

A recent trip to the greeting card store left me in sticker shock. While the text with the price of the card was smaller (or is it just my aging eyes?), the price tag was definitely larger than last time I looked. Who wants to pay \$3 to \$5 for a greeting card? Instead, put your ink jet printer to work with free clip art and pre-designed cards.

You don't even have to be terrible crafty. Just check out these websites where you can get free templates of holiday greeting cards and holiday clip art. They also have a great selection of greeting cards that can be used with your own photos. So that personalized master piece won't cost you an arm and a leg.

The Canon Creative Park (<http://cp.c-ij.com/english/index.html>) is one of my favorite websites for free templates to help you create greeting cards. They have cards for everything including Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, New Year's, Easter and Birthday, to name just a few. You don't have to own a Canon printer to use these greeting cards. You can use any type of color printer. The selection is excellent, and best of all, there are detailed instructions for printing and folding. If you are adventure-some, you can even customize your envelopes. While you are at this site, check out the 3D paper craft section, the scrapbooking area, and the wonderful calendar templates. All are good-looking and free.

Not to be undone by Canon, HP ([hp.com](http://hp.com) / click on Festive Greetings)) also has an Activity Center that allows you to create greeting cards and other crafty projects. They have some beautiful eclectic greeting cards as well as beautifully illustrated fantasy-inspired cards. Like the Canon site, the HP website gives full instructions. They also feature some unusual printer projects like party decorations, stickers, and puzzles.

If you use any Microsoft Office Products, especially Microsoft Word, you will find a wealth of free products in Microsoft's Celebrate Holidays with Office Clip Art and Media area (<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/clipart/default.aspx>). Just about every holiday is covered, but there are also many non-holiday-related themes like flags, food, technology, and business. You will find everything from clip art to borders to music. If you click on some of their outside providers like Animation Factory or iStockphoto, there is a charge for the images, but all of the clip art and templates on the Microsoft website are free. They can, however, only be used if you have the appropriate Microsoft program installed on your computer.

Presenting your friends and relatives with a homemade, customized greeting card really shows you care. On top of that creating your own greeting cards can save you money..... And you might have some fun as well.

If you don't want to make your own cards, there is another way to create a win-win situation for obtaining greeting cards. Check out CardsThatGive.org where you can make your greeting card money to do more than just supporting the greeting card company. It's a very well compiled list of Charities that provide greeting cards, complete with pictures of their cards. You get some great cards, and your favorite charities get support.

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# Tales from the Kingdom of the Ordinary User

## Of Avery, CDs, Squaring the Circle, Selected Greek Classics, and Tantalus C, Plus a Resolution

We have all heard of the name Avery, the global leader in assorted office supplies, self-adhesive labels (but probably not yet the US Postal stamps), dividers, markers, and such. You may not have heard of Paxar, whose Monarch Division seems to be the culprit behind those wonderful price and info tags attached to clothing and other goods and hanging by tough, tiny plastic strings you cannot break or pull loose but must cut and then seek the remaining portion which is often inserted out of sight, waiting to annoy you further by scratching your skin if not removed.

Well, Avery just acquired Paxar in a deal worth 1.3 billion bucks. Such is the price of the right annoyance. So Avery deserves respect, maybe even reverence if judged by revenue. It is after all the standard index referred to by more reasonably priced packs of blank labels for use in PC printers. But this user may have lost some respect for this global leader as if they care because of a wild, redundant search they placed in my path.

In an effort to avoid losing sight of most other users' progress, I tried to catch up to a common practice in this age of proliferating digital photos. I collected some pictures taken in Greece onto some CDs, learning how to do it by trial, error, and reading instructions when desperate. Results were impressive. Buoyed up by approaching the League of the Big Guys, I wondered why their handwritten CD content titles were so curt and scruffy when labels were available to display more readable and detailed information.

A single label might conceivably cause imbalance problems as a CD revved up its speed as the drive's internal laser moved to the outer tracks. But a pair of properly placed labels could offset each other for a smoother spin. OK, two labels could also display more information than one, fine. But Avery makes these disk-shaped labels with the core hole to cover the entire disk and display anything the user wants to fit in the still larger space, even graphics. Finer, better. Big league catchup.

Beset by pride and hope of grandeur, I bought a set of holey Avery disk labels. Swallowing my pride, I looked at the instructions. Those that came with the labels explained the technique for correctly applying the label to the disk, center holes exactly aligned. Neat. The package and online directions, showing an imprinted disk, said to use an indexed template, Avery's # 8931 or 5931, in Word or WordPerfect. Each had 2 variants, CD face and CD case. All I wanted at the time was the round disk face, maybe later for the almost square disk case label if I wanted to venture further. But, in actual use, all the templates allowed was an image without a central hole. Worse still, all the patterns for the circular disk were square.

OK, so maybe Avery wants users to use Avery's printing software. It is available online, for free. So they claimed. A slightly larger version with more graphics is also offered for sale. Both would do at least some graphics as well as a blank face for imprinting just text. So they claimed. I'll spare you the details of repeated and finally successful attempts to secure the software. Guess what. It was the same as what I found earlier online. I could print text all over a solid square to go onto a holey disk. A square on top of a circle. Not right. No help.

Now, squaring a circle is one of three classical problems in the early development of Greek geometry. (The other two were doubling the cube and trisecting an angle.) It was known to be difficult and proved impossible in precision in 1882 because it involved the imprecise term, pi, though a near approximation could get the job done for those who were interested. One of the sites referenced in Google for Squaring the circle delivers a 7-page article replete with a barrage of real and legendary ancient Greek names. [If you enjoy their rich pronunciation, you may be amused by the names pun near the end of this tale.]

So it would seem that Avery has squared the circle, at least to their own satisfaction. Now if they could only work it in the other direction, circling the square to the users' satisfaction and punching a hole in the center, it might increase my respect for this global leader. Indeed, in consideration of my pain and suffering, if Avery were to send some workable software for a minute share of 1.3 billion in this direction, that wavering respect just might become a bit reverential.

That upgrade in regard seems unlikely since it appears they think a square is the working equivalent to a circle with a center hole. There may be some hidden transformation formula there. If so I consider it well concealed. It does offer Options, which merely present other Avery patterns, none applicable to the problem at hand. For that matter, Avery's CD/DVD patterns weren't either so one could say the others were no worse.

*Continued on page 48*

But yet all their promotional illustrations show attractive disks with text and graphics plus a range of alternates, all just out of reach. This user is reminded of the mythical Greek god Tantalus, a son of Zeus, who must have messed up pretty badly since he was later doomed to the Underworld, up to his chin in water with delicious fruits just out of reach. That's the origin of "tantalize", which also applies to Avery's promo pictures of decorated, circular disks. Bin your dreams. However one thing becomes clearer, why I had seen the hand-written CD title inscriptions. We are not alone, as they say, just ignored.

[There is this two-word pun on classic Greek names which has a man showing his torn pants to a tailor who asks, "Euripides?" The customer nods and replies, "Eumenides?"]

As it usually happens in children's books and sometimes in real life there is a happy ending to this tale of corporate woe. It comes from Brøderbund (a band of brothers in a loose translation of mixed Swedish, Danish, and German). Now spelled more simply as Broderbund and part of Riverdeep, they have over 20 years developed and offered The Print Shop software, now in version 22. It is now substantially more than the basic graphic printing application it was originally but remains readily available and reasonably priced. In the last few years they began enabling printing your choice of graphics and text on CD and DVD labels. No hype, no fanfare, just competent performance, good to know, and a pleasure to use. So, you can buy your blank CD and DVD labels from Avery but print them with software from the brethren.

Dave Uffer is a member of some standing in the Chicago Computer Society. Originating in Colorado deep in the last century, he arrived in the Midwest and settled in the Chicago area where he has held a variety of honorable but not especially honored positions in computer-related fields. He and his wife are now retired, children grown and away; he sometimes writes about the often neglected concerns of real PC users.

### Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



## Advanced Disk Cleaner 4.7

All kinds of junk files accumulate on your hard drive over the years, but who has time to go fishing around to find and delete them? Advanced Disk Cleaner makes such pruning easy. Click a search button, which produces a list of garbage files. You then click the Clean button to delete them. The program also has an editing utility to get rid of unnecessary apps lingering in your Windows Registry. [www.innovative-sol.com](http://www.innovative-sol.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>](mailto:reviewseditor@spcug.org)

# The QWERTY Keyboard and Microsoft Office 2007

By **Bob Schneider, Editor**, The PC Keyboard, Spring Hill Teaching Computer Club, FL, [www.shtcc.net](http://www.shtcc.net), [drbob1012.new@hotmail.com](mailto:drbob1012.new@hotmail.com)

**B**ack in the mid 1800's, when the first practical typewriter was built, inventor C.L. Sholes arranged the keys in the QWERTY layout for a practical reason. He had to separate the most common letters to prevent the hammers from jamming. So many people knew that layout that although it was no longer necessary, it was maintained with the advent of electric typewriters.

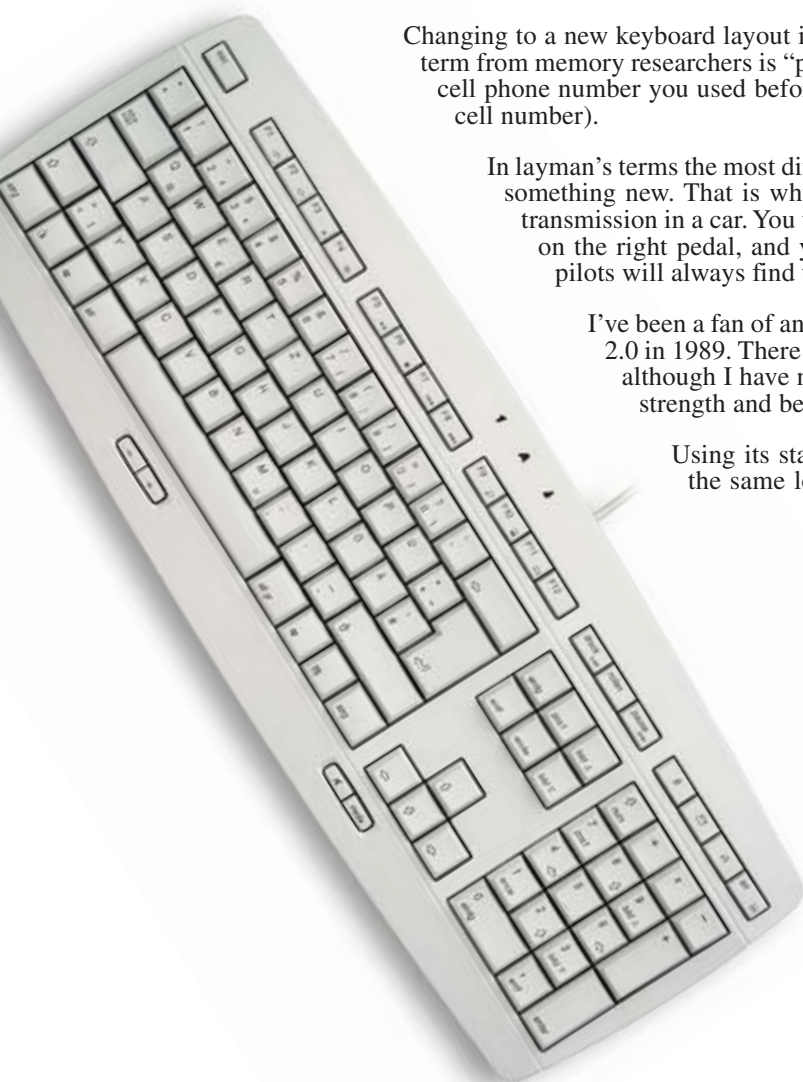
A much better (in terms of ease-of-learning and speed-of-typing) is the Dvorak keyboard layout developed in the 1920's. It puts the most commonly used keys under your eight "home" fingers. Once millions of people started with computers using the old QWERTY layout, better alternatives were doomed.

Changing to a new keyboard layout involves the most difficult of human learning tasks. The technical term from memory researchers is "proactive interference." That means an old memory (such as an old cell phone number you used before) interferes with your ability to learn a new memory (your new cell number).

In layman's terms the most difficult task is to unlearn something you know well in order to learn something new. That is why we standardize some procedures, such as operating a standard transmission in a car. You will never find a car with the brake on the left pedal and the clutch on the right pedal, and you already know the gear-shift sequence and location. Airplane pilots will always find the altimeter in the middle of their visual field.

I've been a fan of and using Microsoft Windows for some time, starting with Windows 2.0 in 1989. There are surely many people who have been using it longer than I have, although I have not yet met one. For most of those years, Microsoft advertised the strength and beauty of following the Windows format.

Using its standard Graphical User Interface (GUI), all programs would have the same look and feel. Learn one program and you could quickly learn to



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navigate around in any similar software. Microsoft required that look and feel, with common menu items, before it allowed a program to have the Windows logo. That was a giant advance from the haphazard layout and menu systems of early DOS programs. As a college professor and software teacher, the advantages for student learning and computer novices were quite obvious.

Now we have Office 2007. I suspect that if Corel (Word Perfect) had released that office suite, Microsoft would have denied them the right to use the Windows logo. The common Windows GUI was thrown out in Word and Excel. Traditional menu items were removed, unfamiliar icons and menus appeared, and familiar processes were moved to obscure places.

The better you were at using earlier versions, the more you will have to first unlearn to use Office 2007. The brake pedal is on the left, first gear is on the right, and the altimeter is hidden behind the co-pilot. I am a power user of Microsoft Office. Actually, I used to be a power user. Now I must constantly go to the help menu (sorry, it is not a menu any more) to find the location of even the most basic procedures.

I know how to do them; I just don't know where they are. It is time consuming and frustrating. There are some really nice features in Office 2007. One of them, unfortunately, is not "make it like the earlier versions."



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# After Retirement, Who Are You?

By Gabe Goldberg, Advisor, Region 2; Columnist, CompuKISS.com, Gabe@gabegold.com

Retirement -- even temporary job loss -- can trigger discomfort with one's changed identity. Especially for those who have been strongly career oriented, the simple question, "What do you do?" can lead to fumbling for an answer. And when socializing or doing business or volunteering, it can be awkward not having the usual trappings of the grown-up world such as business cards.

Though called "business cards", they're hardly restricted to that context. Stay-at-home spouses, volunteers, and other folks often need a quick way to provide identification and contact information such as email address or Web site URL. They can also list concise emergency information and instructions such as medical history, allergies, medications, and someone to contact.

But with modern proliferation of such data -- landline telephone number, cell phone number, instant messaging screen name, LinkedIn or other social networking Web site address, Skype number, etc. -- it's a challenge conveying one's whole story quickly.

Designing and purchasing cards the traditional way, using a real-world printer, can be a nuisance or daunting challenge, not to mention expensive. And personally printed cards -- whether laser or ink-jet -- never seem quite as polished. For an online alternative, visit

VistaPrint, <[www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com)>, a user-friendly and economical source of personalized cards and many other customizable products.

Among VistaPrint's many attractive bargains is the opportunity to order 250 cards for free, paying only shipping. The small "catch" is that there will be a small/tasteful VistaPrint ad on the cards' back. But for a small fee, the ad can be omitted. And larger quantities can be ordered for rates far below those of local print shops.

These bargain cards aren't limited to boring just-the-facts designs; more than 40 backgrounds cater to the most serious or the most fanciful among us. My cards are businesslike, while my wife's show a more flowery and artistic personality. Having browsed the site's design spectrum I occasionally recognize fellow VistaPrint customers from their cards! More elaborate designs are available at slightly higher prices and

custom designs can be uploaded to the site.

VistaPrint runs occasional sales and promotions, during which other products (sticky notes, T-shirts, desk calendars, invitations, announcements, notepads, letterhead, etc.) are offered for just the cost of shipping or at greatly reduced prices. I've gotten essentially free personalized rubber stamps and refrigerator magnets showing my business card design. And the site offers a small bonus for referring new customers.

A very convenient feature is the site remembering details of orders for reuse or modification. So when I've moved or changed contact information, I haven't needed to redesign my cards from scratch: I simply update the information and reorder.

Having cards handy in pocket or purse eliminates having to scribble contact information on scraps of paper, and avoids someone having to later puzzle what's written. One warning applies, though: Consider how much information to reveal. Telephone number and email address, perhaps with city and state, may suffice without compromising privacy.

# Need a sticky note? Put it on your computer!

by Linda Gonse, Editor & Webmaster, Orange County IBM PC  
Users' Group, CA, [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org), [editor@orcopug.org](mailto:editor@orcopug.org)

**S**ticky note programs for your pc, as you might imagine, are a utility that takes the place of paper Post-It notes that we all stick to our monitors! But, sticky note programs I've researched this year discouraged me from even trying them out. Sometimes they didn't have enough features, or if they did, they were expensive.

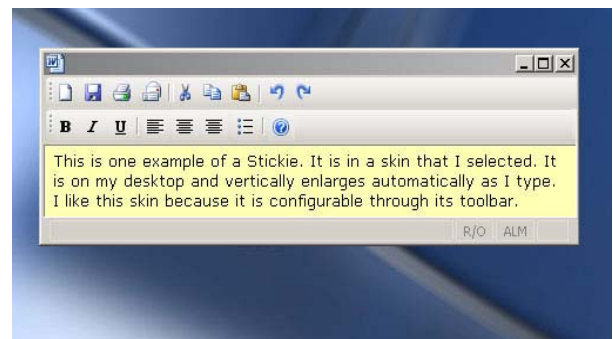
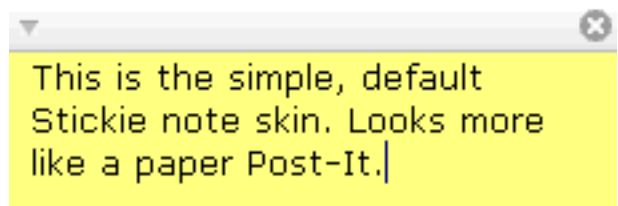
Then, someone recommended a program called Stickies, created by Tom Revell, at [www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/](http://www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/). So, I looked at Stickies on the web page, liked what I saw, and downloaded the program.

My first discovery about the program is that it is small, 953Kb, and doesn't interfere with system files and doesn't write to the registry. In fact, Stickies stores all its information in a single text-based ini file. When was the last time you had a program on your computer as well-mannered as this one?

An icon in your system tray will allow you quick access to Stickies' features and options. From this dropdown list you can manage your Stickies notes, configure them, get help, and download new skins.

When you do make a Sticky, it won't disappear unless you tell it to, and it stays where it is placed. You can edit, format, and print them. Make as many as you want, or as many as your screen space will permit. But, to save room and keep Stickies organized, they will snap to each other and to the sides of the screen where they can be neatly lined up. You can even "hide" them from view.

*Continued on page 53*



Besides viewing Stickies on your screen, you can attach them to a website, a document, or a folder, so they only appear when the objects they are attached to are on the screen.

Stickies are portable, too. You can transfer Stickies from one computer to another over your TCP/IP network connection, to your PDA and back again, or send to friends in email.

They can be set to “sleep” and appear on a specified date and time, as announcements or reminders. They can even play a sound alarm so they get your attention when they “awaken”!

What’s fun is being able to customize the notes with various fonts, colors and buttons. You can even download customized skins from a big selection to change the outward appearance of the notes — plain, borderless, simple border, etc. The notes can be resized, just like the sticky notes in Acrobat.

Stickies are located in five categories within the application so you can see and manage them. You can search for information in Stickies, wake sleeping Stickies, restore closed Stickies and detach Stickies.

What else? Oh, yes! Another attractive feature of Stickies is...the program is free!

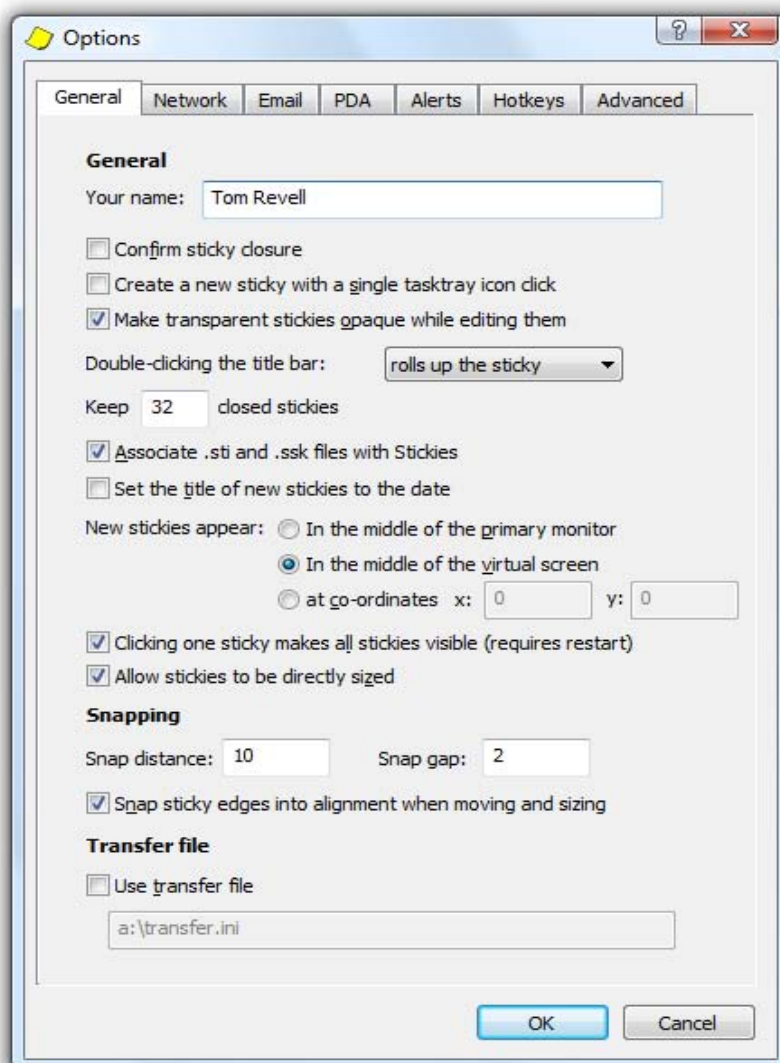
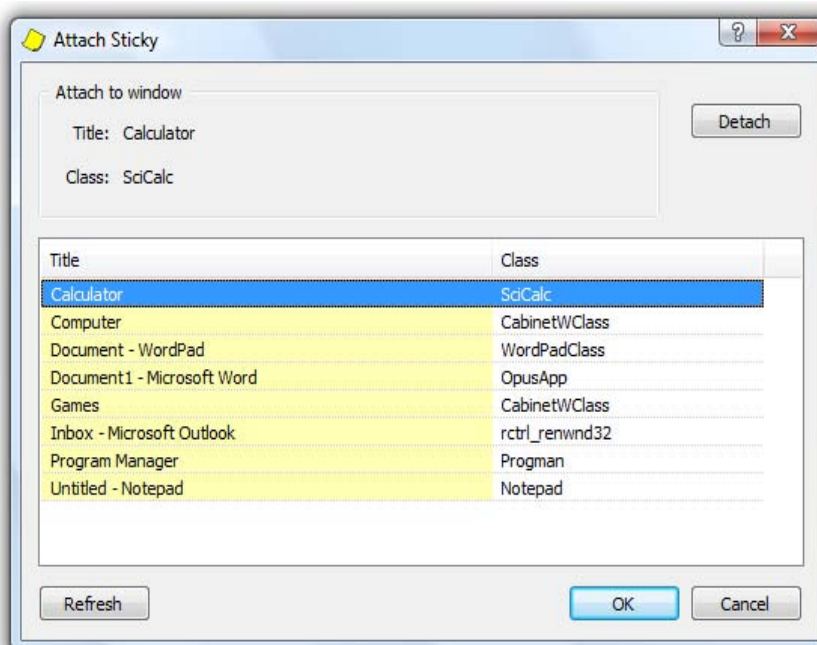
What are you waiting for? Try it out and see if you like this little program as much as I do!

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### STUDY GROUPS

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# Online Consumer Help from the Federal Government

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX;  
Radio & TV Show Host, [Iwilsker@apcug.net](mailto:Iwilsker@apcug.net)

President Bush has requested that all federal agencies make it easier for consumers (the general public) to locate and utilize information on federal websites. In some cases a variety of federal agencies have pooled their resources and information, and compiled the data in easy to use websites that represent several agencies in one place. Some of these integrated federal websites are [consumer.gov](http://consumer.gov), [recalls.gov](http://recalls.gov), and [usa.gov](http://usa.gov).

Consumer.gov is probably the premier federal website for comprehensive consumer information. The tabs across the top of the page lead directly to such consumer topics as food, product safety, health, home & community, money, transportation, children, careers & education, and technology. The perimeter of the page contains icons and links which directly connect to specific government services.

One of the icons links to "OnGuardOnline" which says, "OnGuardOnline.gov provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you be on guard against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information." There is another link for "Consumer Sentinel" which contains comprehensive information on fighting and preventing fraud and identity theft.

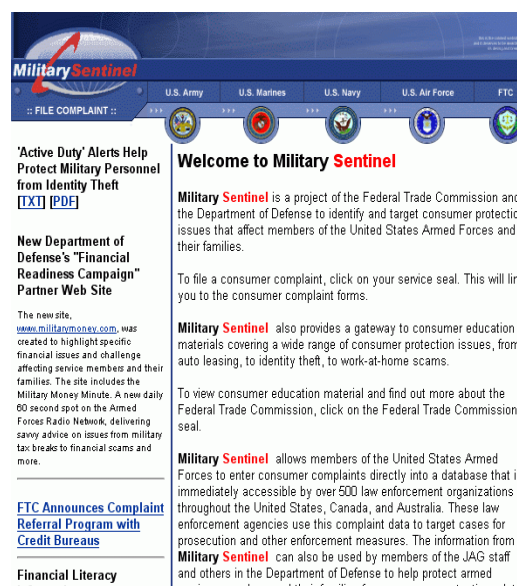
One link that I have personally used and strongly recommend leads to the "National Do Not Call Registry" ([donotcall.gov](http://donotcall.gov)) where you can enter your home and cell phone numbers, and prohibit most telemarketers from calling. After activation, if a telemarketer does call, there is a link to enter a complaint, which may lead to a substantial fine against the telemarketer.

You have probably seen a TV commercial hawking free credit reports, but the fine print and disclaimer advises that the credit report is only free with a paid subscription to a credit monitoring service. It just so happens that congress has required that all Americans are entitled to a genuinely free credit report once a year, without the strings or necessity of paying for a credit monitoring service. This free service is overseen by the Federal Trade Commission ([ftc.gov](http://ftc.gov)), and linked to the [consumer.gov](http://consumer.gov) website, or can be reached directly at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).

Many of us have had concerns about our children's safety while online, and [consumer.gov](http://consumer.gov) has a linked resource for that purpose as well. The FTC has created an online child safety website "Kidz Privacy" which is a childish looking website that will appeal to kids of all ages. On this site are resources for kids, adults, the media, and teachers.

We are all faced with higher prices at the gas pump, and we generally do not like it. There are scammers out there promoting a variety of miracle products to dramatically improve our gas mileage, but there are also several legitimate tasks we can undertake to save gas. Consumer.gov obliges with an icon linked to a FTC website "Saving Money at the Pump". This is a cute, interactive website with several tips that we may find useful and money saving.

There is a pandemic of identity theft taking place which is costing our society tens of billions of dollars per year, with millions of victims of identity theft annually. Consumer.gov has a link to the central repository of identity theft prevention and information services, which is administered by the FTC at [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft). On this site is a link to report identity theft, steps to follow if a victim, information on preventing theft, and other useful resources.



Continued on page 55

Many of us are inundated with prescreened credit card offers, and invitations to purchase insurance. For those who want to reduce or end this unsolicited and often unwanted mail, there is a link to "Prescreened Credit Offers". On this site is information on how these prescreened offers work, and how to stop them. For those who want to stop these prescreened offers, the FTC says, "Call toll-free 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688) or visit [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com) for details." That website and phone number are operated by the three major consumer credit reporting agencies, and they will ask for personal information, but promise that it will be treated confidentially.

Hardly a day goes by where we do not hear on the news about some consumer product or food item being recalled for a safety or health reason. Occasionally we also hear about massive automobile recalls to correct some safety deficiency. There is an icon and link on this site to a centralized database on recalls which is continuously updated. This connects to a site [recalls.gov](http://recalls.gov), which is a joint venture of several government agencies that are involved in consumer recalls.

Categories of recalled products include consumer products, motor vehicles, boats, food, medicines, cosmetics, and environmental products. What I find especially useful and informative on this website is the list of "Recent Recalls". There are six small windows on the recent recalls page that list the latest recalls from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Coast Guard. Personally, I check this site regularly, and sometimes find that I have a recalled product in my house.

Some of the other useful links on the Consumer.gov website are to specialized websites such as [ready.gov](http://ready.gov) and [usa.gov](http://usa.gov). Ready.gov is a website sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that has resources about home and personal safety in a variety of threatening scenarios. Also included on this DHS website is information for businesses continuity, and child safety during disasters.

USA.gov is the central clearing house for all federal agencies. It uses a simple menu hierarchy that eases the location of desired information. Topics are comprehensive, and include such helpful items as government benefits and grants, money and taxes, consumer guides, and many other topics. This site can be a good starting point for someone looking for something to do on the internet,

Military personnel and families may find the link to "Military Sentinel" a very useful resource. According to the website, [www.consumer.gov/military](http://www.consumer.gov/military), "Military Sentinel is a project of the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Defense to identify and target consumer protection issues that affect members of the United States Armed Forces and their families." Included on this website is information on specific identity theft problems faced by military families, financial scams against military personnel, and other military specific information.

Other links on Consumer.gov are to the "Consumer Action Handbook", [www.consumeraction.gov](http://www.consumeraction.gov), and information that the disabled may find helpful at [www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov). The website at Consumer.gov is a goldmine of consumer information that is free for the taking. I suggest that everyone should periodically visit this website and review any informational resources that may be of personal interest and benefit.

**www.Recalls.gov** Your Online Resource for Recalls

Consumer Products | Motor Vehicles | Boats | Food | Medicine | Cosmetics | Environmental Products

**Recent Recalls**

**Search for Recalls**

**Sign Up for E-Mail**

**Información en Español**

**USA.gov** Department of Homeland Security

**NHTSA** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**FDA** Food and Drug Administration

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture

Consumer Products | Motor Vehicles | Boats | Food | Medicine | Cosmetics | Environmental Products

"Americans demand top-quality service from the private sector. They should get the same top-quality service from their government." - President George W. Bush

President Bush has asked all federal agencies to streamline communications with the public and improve interagency information sharing in order to enhance public security.

Therefore, to provide better service in alerting the American people to unsafe, hazardous or defective products, six federal agencies with vastly different jurisdictions have joined together to create [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) - a "one stop shop" for U.S. Government recalls.

Follow the tabs to obtain the latest recall information, to report a dangerous product, or to learn important safety tips.



Home | Site Index | E-mail Us | Phone Us | Chat with Us | Our Blog

**USA.gov** Government

Government (FBI) | Images | News | USA.gov | Search

For Citizens | For Businesses and Organizations | For Government Employees | For Visitors to the U.S.

Get It Done Online!

Government Information by Topic

Benefits and Grants | Jobs and Education | Money and Taxes | Public Safety and Law | Reference and General Government

Consumer Guides | Unclaimed government money, credit, saving, retirement | Crime, prison, law enforcement, disasters, emergencies | Libraries, forms, government news, laws, photos, maps, research

News and Features

GovGub

Use the blog in

News and Features

Local Security: COA (Local Security Councils) will increase 2.3% in January

Full Directory for 2006

**dvnation.com**

The miniPC: The smallest Windows / Linux PC ever

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**BASE MODEL FEATURES:**

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- \* 512 GB RAM
- \* 40 GB hard drive
- \* DVD / CD-RW combo drive
- \* 10/100/1000 (GIGABIT) LAN
- \* 2 x USB, 1 X firewire (IEEE 1394) ports
- \* DVI video output - VGA adapter included
- \* TV output, S-video & component HDTV out!
- \* Sound: stereo out, mic input, internal speaker
- \* Software included: Nero CD burning, Drivers, Windows XP, full Office suite (Open Office)
- \* Unlimited expansion via USB and firewire



**UPGRADES**

CPU	up to 1.7 Ghz
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RAM	up to 1 GB
b / g wireless LAN	
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Install your own OS	subtract \$50

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AbsoluteShield Internet Eraser Lite contains a pop-up blocker and a privacy protector. It protects your privacy by cleaning all the tracks of your Internet and computer activities. The tool is integrated with Internet Explorer and can erase the browser history, cookies, typed URLs, recent documents, Recycle Bin, and temporary folders in one click, completely removing these files from your hard disk without the possibility of any practical software or hardware recovering them. [www.internet-track-eraser.com](http://www.internet-track-eraser.com)

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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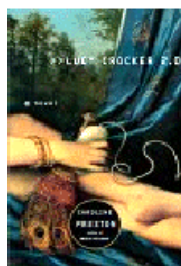


# Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

## Lucy Crocker 2.0: a Novel

Hard cover, Scribner, 2000, \$23.00, 352 pages.



Life is pretty good for Lucy Crocker, but after she suffers a string of miscarriages her husband distracts her by prodding her to design a computer game. Maiden's Quest becomes a bestseller and her life falls apart. The cosy software house that her husband founded becomes a heartless corporation, he starts sneaking off to hotel rooms for tantric massages with his PR director and her twin sons spend their days ogling Internet porn. Control of the Maiden's Quest sequel is wrested away from her and the dreamy heroine is transformed into a busty gun-toting bleached blonde. Enough! A dispirited Lucy escapes to a family cabin in the Wisconsin north woods to reinvent herself and her dysfunctional family.

I confess: this is neither mystery nor thriller, but the computer details are so rich that I couldn't pass it up. The marketing details were especially compelling. Even though Maiden's Quest I was the best-selling game ever, surveys indicate that most games are bought by teenaged boys who lust after sex and violence so let's pander to the lowest common denominator in the sequel. This type of thinking gets my dander up and the novel captures the tyranny of focus groups perfectly. Lucy Crocker was a book-of-the-month club selection and highly recommended for those who favor Oprah-type books with a high-tech twist.

f2f

Phillip Finch paperback, Bantam Books, 1996, \$6.50, 307 pages



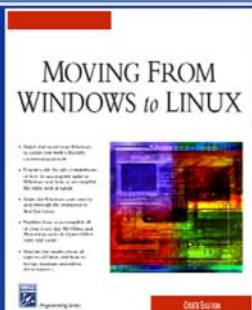
When a San Francisco online service receives a death threat the subscribers assume it is a tasteless prank. But there really is a serial

killer on the prowl. He lures his victims into his trap, then integrates video of his kills into a macabre virtual reality game called "try.me." It takes all the wits of a pre-teen hacker and the online service's brilliant systems operator to bring the killer to heel.

f2f is online jargon for a face to face meeting, and if this book doesn't make you feel vulnerable, it should. Nothing is sacred. Good and bad guys hack into your cell phone and steal your codes. They grab your credit card number. Worm into your computer and read your most personal documents. It's all possible and it's as scary as all get out. Touchstone has bought the movie rights to this most excellent cyber-thriller.

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

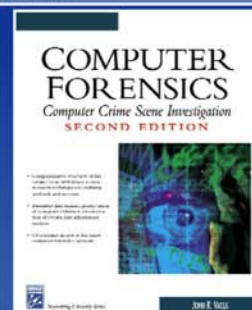
## COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



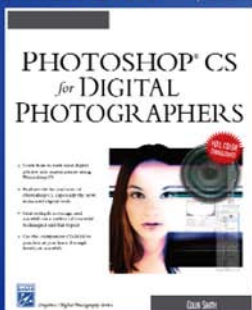
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



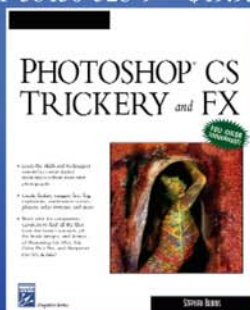
1-58450-328-9 \$49.95



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# DECEMBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						<b>1</b> C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	<b>4</b> BOD 6:30 P.M. Movie Maker (PRR) 9 A.M. - 11 A.M. Class 2 of 4	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (a/r) HGSI 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. .Net Web Development 7 - 9 P.M.	<b>7</b> *PRR* Small Business Server 2003 8 - 10 A.M. Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Download the PCAlamcode Magazine, burn to a CD, & using the PDF Reader 7 - 9 P.M.	<b>8</b> *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> General Meeting @ Crossroads Convention Center 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter: Microsoft is tentative	<b>11</b> Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M. Movie Maker (PRR) 9 A.M. - 11 A.M. Class 3 of 4	<b>12</b> Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Home Page Jumptart 6:30 - 7 P.M. (To Be Announced) Investors Business Daily (IBD) / Vector Vest. 8 - 8 P.M.	<b>13</b> Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	<b>14</b> Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Canceled for the rest of this month	<b>15</b> *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Moved this month only	<b>18</b> Movie Maker (PRR) 9 A.M. - 11 A.M. Class 4 of 4	<b>19</b> Investors Business Daily (IBD) / Vector Vest. 8 - 8 P.M. Rescheduled to Dec 12	<b>20</b> Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	<b>21</b> Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Canceled for the rest of this month	<b>22</b> *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Check with SIG leader Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 5 P.M.
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Resource Center is closed. Have a Merry Christmas!	<b>26</b> (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	<b>27</b> Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	<b>28</b> Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Canceled for the rest of this month	<b>29</b> *PRR* MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Check with SIG leader
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Please! don't drink and drive this news years eve! Or let a friend drive under the influence.					PRR = Pre-Registration Required

# ALAMOPO ORGANIZATION



# The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

## COMPUTER CLINIC

### The Doctor Is In

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

### What to bring with you:

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

**When:** Every Friday 9 am to noon

**Where:** Alamo PC Organization  
Computer Learning Center

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

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

**Technical Rating:** ★

## STUDY GROUPS

### Student Practice Lab

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

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

**Where:** Computer Learning Center

**Pre-registration:** No

**Technical Rating:** ★

### C/C ++ Study Group

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

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

**When:** First and Third Saturday, 2:30 pm

**Where:** Learning Center.

**Pre-registration:** No

**Technical Rating:** ★★ - ★★★

### Genealogy Study Group

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

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

**When:** First Monday, 7-9 pm

**Where:** Learning Center.

**Pre-registration:** No

**Technical Rating:** ★ - ★★

### HGSI Study Group

The premise of the HGS Investor SIG is, "Knowledge becomes stronger when passed on to others." We have created an environment for continuing education and open discussion between well informed members and guest speakers in matters of using Fundamental and Technical Analysis for the buying and selling of equities.

**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](http://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@absolute-powercomputing.com](mailto:shane@absolute-powercomputing.com)>

**When:** Anytime

**Where:** Cyberspace

**Pre-registration:** Must sign-up on  
<[APCORETRO@yahoogroups.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:education@alamopc.org) or [TodBruning@Hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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.

