

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TECH ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

January 2008

\$5.00

Hard drives and
partitions

page 32

Backup approaches
compared

page 37

Understanding your
computer's BIOS

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Make Vista
work better

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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 **210-561-2278**

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:

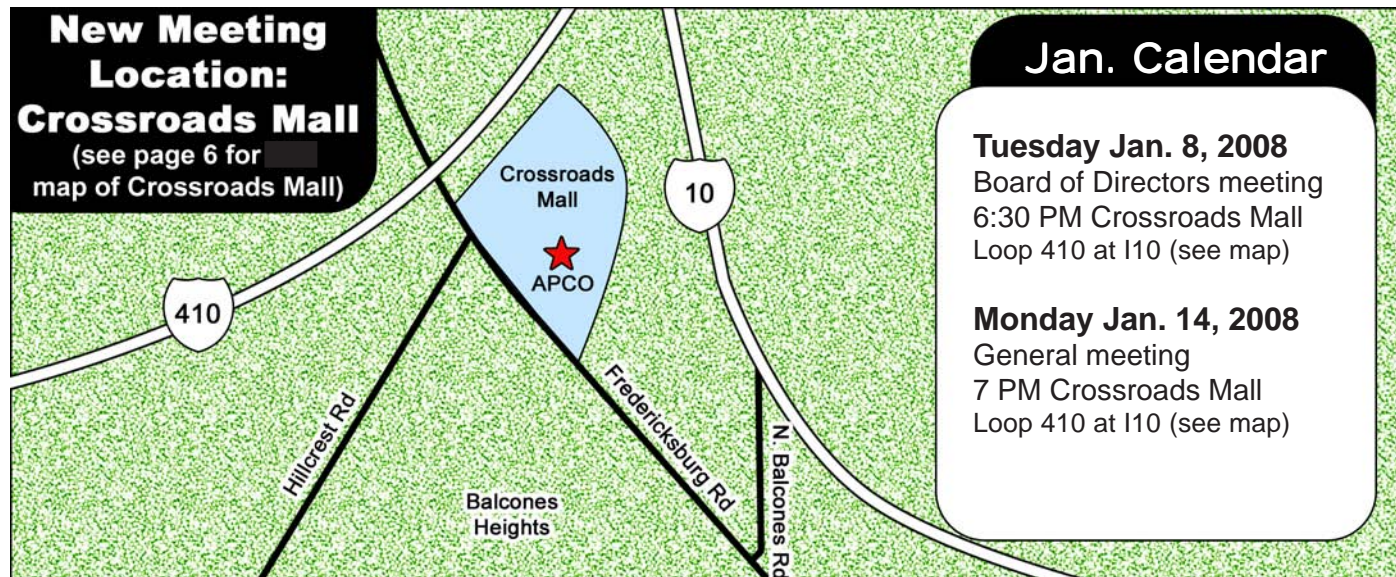
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



Jan. Calendar

Tuesday Jan. 8, 2008
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Jan. 14, 2008
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Tech issues

Hard drives and Operating Systems

departments

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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 © 2008 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of *PC Alamode* may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and *PC Alamode*. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

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

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Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

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**To be paid in advance

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Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

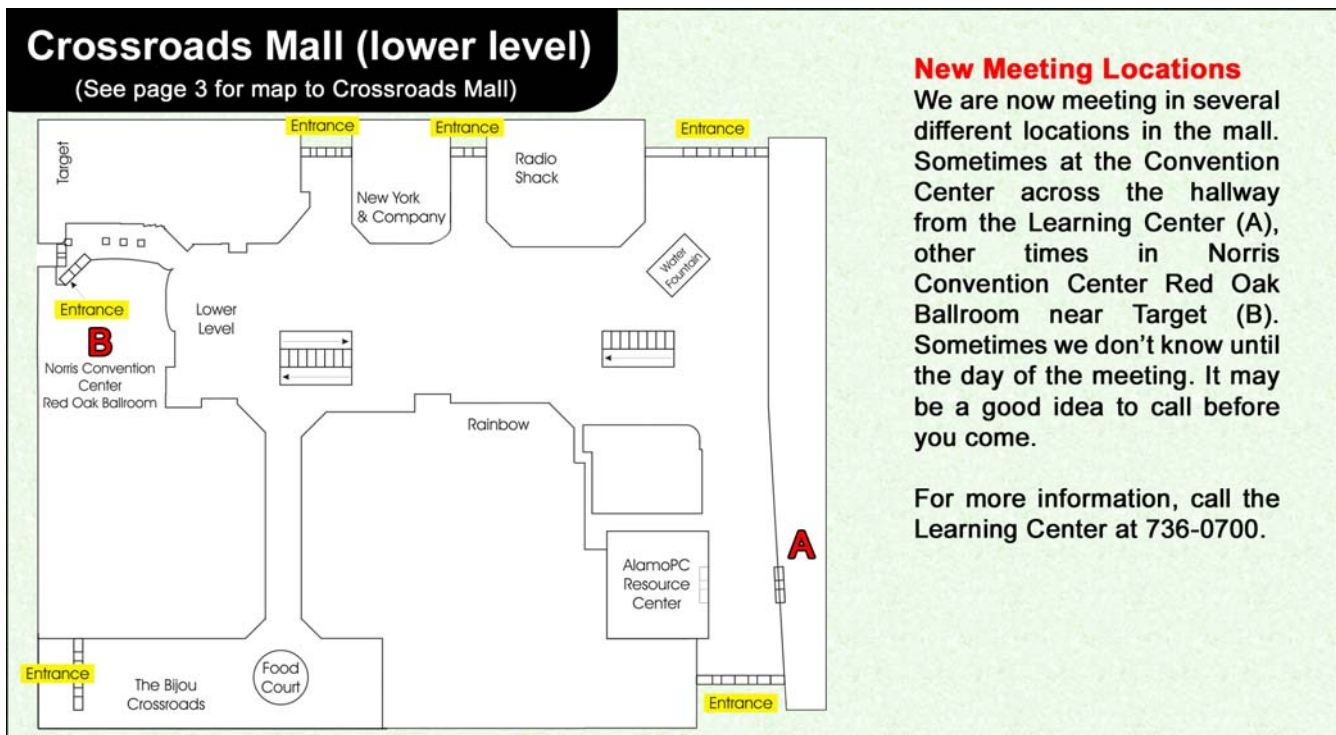
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

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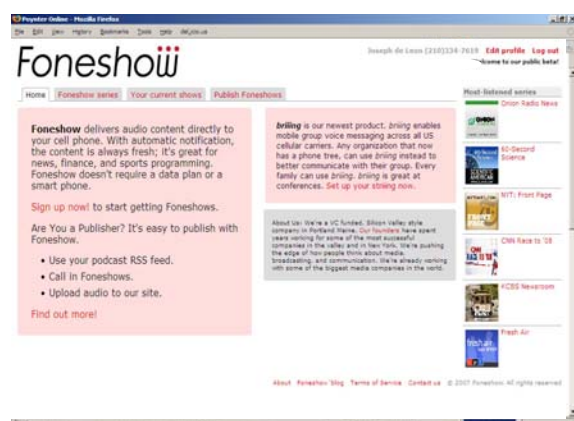
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



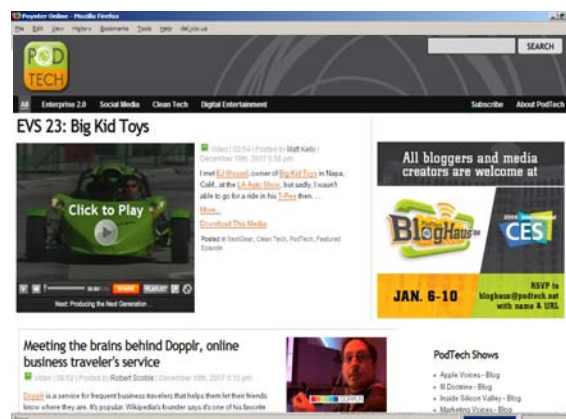
PC Alamode Links List



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<<http://foneshow.com/>>

Foneshow delivers audio content directly to your cell phone. With automatic notification, the content is always fresh; it's great for news, finance, and sports programming. Foneshow doesn't require a data plan or a smart phone.



PodTech

<<http://www.podtech.net/>>

PodTech is the leading online video network that features proprietary technology and original digital entertainment programming for everyone.



Joe Davis has been teaching the Digital Camera and Photo Editing class, Movie Maker class and Microsoft Digital Image 2006 class for quite some time. Joe Davis has had to cancel all of his classes in 2008 for personal/family reasons.

Linda Bianchi, Education Director, had this to say:

"The Alamo PC Organization will deeply miss having this delightful instructor in our classrooms. We will miss him terribly and sure could use some suggestions of anyone who could take over teaching one or more of those classes.

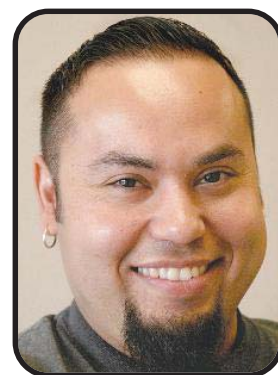
The classes need not be held at the same time or days Joe taught, we will try to work out a schedule for anyone willing to take over. Joe is also willing to share all of his instructor's materials with anyone taking over the class."

Joe's classes were always full and his students will remember his excitement and superior teaching style. If you can help teach one or more of the following classes, please call Linda Bianchi at home 561-2278 or e-mail her at education@alamopc.org. You can also call the Learning Center at 736-0700.

- Digital Camera
- Photo Editing
- Movie Maker
- Microsoft Digital Image 2006

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

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

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"January" - New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day

This month marks a few things of interest to many: 1st - End of the Old Year (2007) and First day of the New Year (2008), for those who use the same calendar as the US. It should also mark the end of the Holidays, the end of Parties, the end of left over food, the end of sales, the end of decorations, the end of feeling like you have been awake since just before Thanksgiving, the end of slow work weeks, and the end of all the other things that come with the last 35-40 days of any year; 10th - Islamic New Year begins; 21st - Martin Luther King, Jr Day.

The November & the December Board of Directors (BOD) meetings, plus the November & December General Meetings (GM) were marked as Anon events@ (although planned, they didn't happen). Only two Board members were present for each of the BOD meetings (minimum of three required for an official meeting), and the presenter for each of the General Meetings cancelled at the last minute. Apologies to all the people who made the trip to discover the scheduled presentations had been scrubbed. (A local presentation was available through David Steward's efforts and a prepackaged PowerPoint presentation he obtained from the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) website. For those who missed it last month, 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.


The APCUG, fourth Quarter 2007 issue of Reports, included an article from the Rancho Bernardo Community Computer Club (RBCCC), San Diego, CA. In the article was the following: AIn 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 stays at his/her office, user group members are at their location and the internet allows the audio and PowerPoint presentation to be made, with Q & A through Achat@ or phone. (Two way audio could be available if other presentations require this type of setup.)

Hopefully the January General Meeting, will not be a repeat of each of the last month's meetings. Currently (late December), we are working on securing a presenter, and hope to have one soon. With the end-of-year period upon us, not many folks are at their respective office. That should change after the end of the year. Since things can change, check the website. On the day of the meeting, call the Learning Center for the latest information on location and presenter. We are hopeful you will plan now to support more of the General Meetings in 2008. But please plan now to come to the January meeting, and bring some friends. We would like to see more support in all areas in 2008 and hope the January meeting will be the place to get it started.

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.

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.



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Continued on page 9

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

We are still trying to improve member retention, although new members have almost been sufficient to offset non-renewing members. (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 wkklutzjr@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 January General Meeting. I hope everyone had a good holiday period and can begin the New Year with rededicated efforts in all areas.

January Program

Bill Klutz

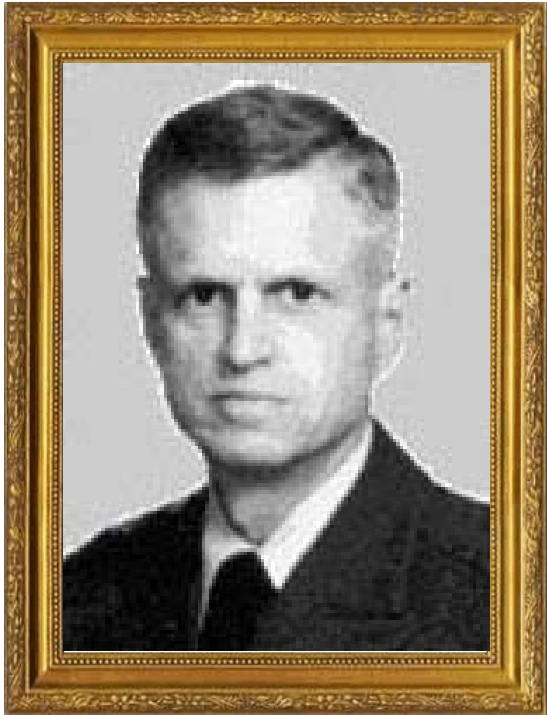
Currently, our January General Meeting does not have a Corporation representative scheduled. All major hardware and software companies send their representatives and field personnel to the Consumer Electronic Show (CES), held in Las Vegas, NV, each January. (It overlaps our general meeting on Jan 14th.)

We hope to secure someone from a local company or have someone from the Alamo PC Organization speak at the General meeting. Where the meeting is held (Norris Conference center, across from our Learning Center, or in our Learning Center) will be determined by the speaker we hope to secure and the anticipated attendance.

Since things can change at the last minute (the presenter for the November and December meeting cancelled at the last minute), check the Alamo PC web site (www.alamopc.org) for information on presenter and meeting location, but on the meeting day please talk with one of the Learning Center desk personnel (210-736-0700 or 210-736-0080). Make plans now to come and bring some friends, as we hope to have an interesting speaker.

Volunteer of the Month

Bill Beverley



Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



REGSCANNER

Mucking around in your PC's Registry is not for the faint of heart, but if you have the fortitude to handle the risks, RegScanner can serve as a valuable assistant. It lets you search for more values than RegEdit does, then lets you move to RegEdit for tweaking by just double-clicking on the values. The newest version allows you to perform scans on remote PCs. www.nirsoft.net/utills/regscanner.html

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



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

Diagnose your software and hardware problems

Trouble shoot major applications

Run tests

Solve Operating System mysteries

For information call 736-0700



**Owner must
stay with
computer dur-
ing 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.

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Location:

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Show Dates:

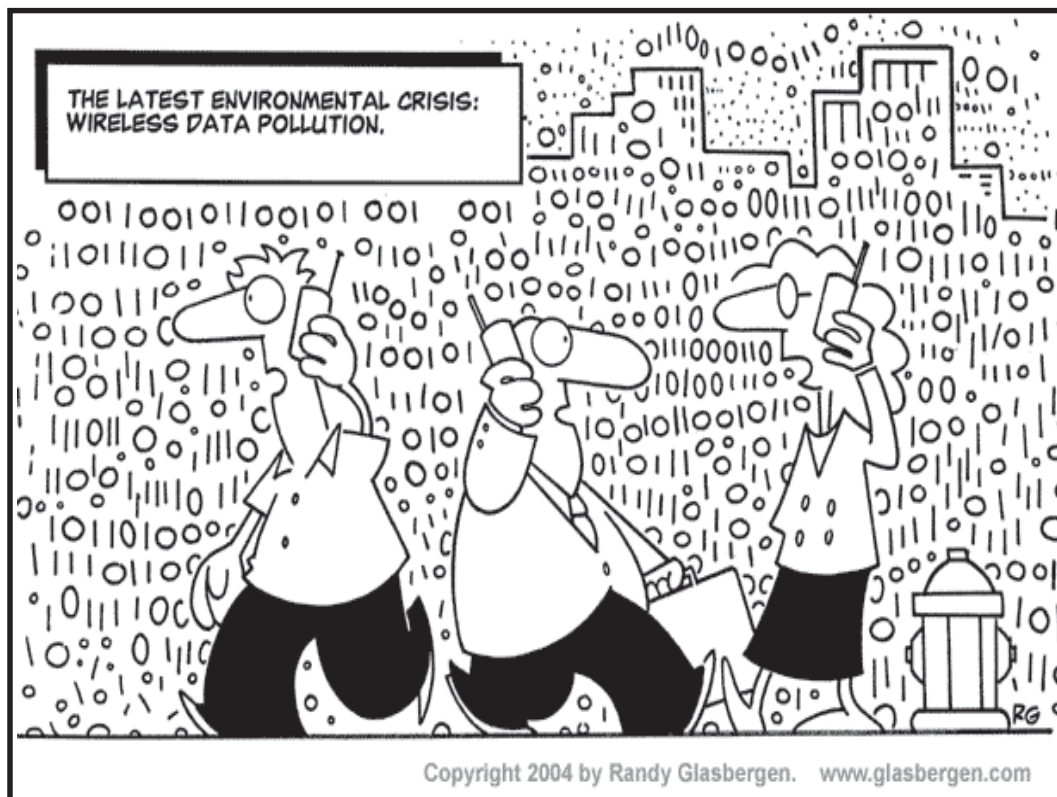
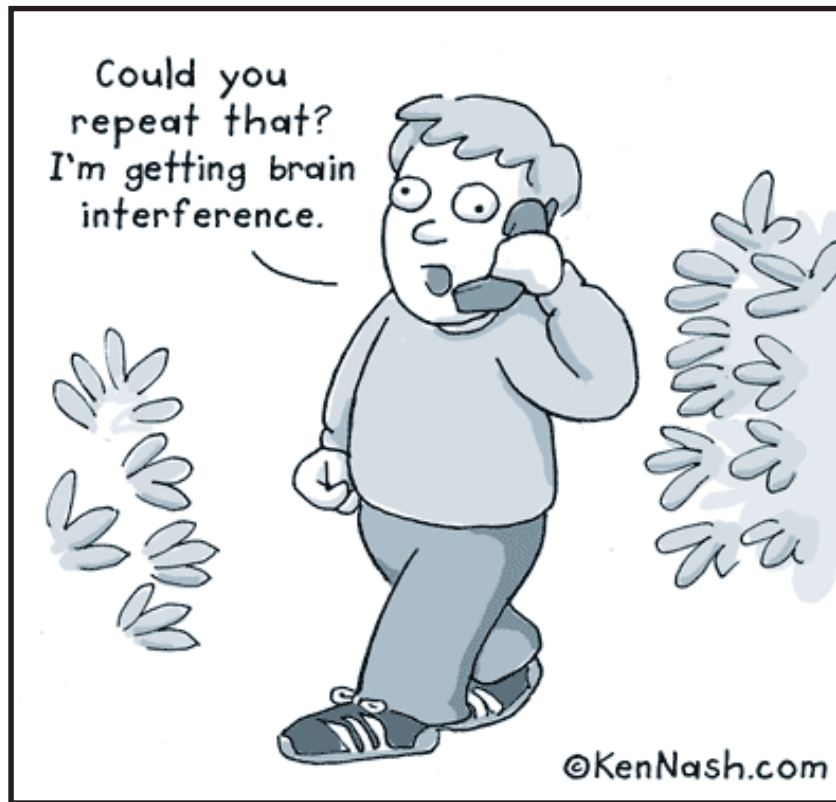
Jan. 19, 2008

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



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Get out of your Cell Phone contract without paying huge fees

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

How many of you have entered into a long term contract with a Cell Phone provider in order to get a good deal on a phone—only to find that it wasn't such a good deal due to a poor phone plan and even worse customer service? Unfortunately, if you want to get out of such a plan, you're often hit with exorbitant fees. You have options!

One option is to use one of a few web sites that have popped up to solve just these problems. For a minimal fee (usually \$15 to \$20), these sites let you get out of your current contract or swap it with someone else for another provider. Current sites that offer such services are CelltradeUSA.com, Resellular.com, and Cellswapper.com. They allow users to buy, sell, or trade cellular plans. To transfer your account, you must contact your carrier and make the request to transfer your plan to another individual. Carriers will go along with this because, while they are losing a customer, they are gaining another.

The cofounder of Cellswapper.com, Adam Korbl, told PC World that there are around 260 wireless contracts for sale on the average, with around 100 contracts purchased each week. Users who want to make a quick sale often through in their old phones or even offer cash incentives to assist in the purchase of a new phone compatible with the exchange carrier.

BitLocker

If you're using either the Enterprise or Ultimate versions of Windows Vista, you've got access to Microsoft's new hard drive encryption technology known as BitLocker. This technology uses industry-standard 256-bit AES technology to encrypt your entire hard drive. The fact that BitLocker encrypts the entire drive, rather than simply encrypting certain files and folders as some schemes have done in the past, brings up a question regarding system performance. Does BitLocker encryption/decryption cause a major performance hit?

Maximum PC ran a series of tests to determine the impact of BitLocker on the performance of an average system. They found that, in applications (such as games) that don't require a lot of hard drive access, there wasn't much of a performance difference between encrypted and unencrypted drives. Unfortunately, when tasks required heavy use of the hard drive, Maximum PC noted as much as a 20% performance drop on the encrypted system.

Things to watch to avoid unexpected hardware failure

1. Monitor SMART Warnings

This is the drive monitoring technology that is supposed to warn you of imminent hard drive failure. The technology itself is built-in to the hard drive, but you need certain software to access the data and give you a report. The most popular utility for getting this report is A. Julian Mayer's free SMARTReporter (<http://homepage.mac.com/julianmayer/smartreporter/index.html>). It continually checks your drives and sends an immediate warning if a problem is detected.

Unfortunately, this software is only good for PATA and SATA (internal) drives. It won't allow you to monitor external USB or Firewire drives.

2. Check Your Memory

Memory problems can be hard to identify. Everything may seem fine until you get an unexpected crash or some type of data loss. Kelley Computing's free utility Remember (<http://www.kelleycomputing.net:16080/rember>) is based upon the popular PC Memtest tool by Tony Scaminaci (<http://www.memtest.com>).

Continued on page 14

The Doctor is In



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Trouble shoot major applications

Run tests

Solve Operating System mysteries

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

www.memtestosx.org). Remember has the better user interface, but Memtest can operate in the Mac's single-user startup mode, like Window's safe mode, which allows more thorough testing of the memory. The test will take several hours to complete.

3. Check Other Hardware

Apple includes the Apple Hardware Test program on your installation discs. You can access this program by holding down the D key during boot (with the disc in the drive). It performs a set of diagnostic checks. This program won't fix any problems that it finds, but it can help determine the culprit of your problems.

4. Read Messages

You can always launch OS X's Console utility and read the error logs that your system creates. The two most important logs are the console.log (which opens by default when Console is launched) and system.log (which you can open by selecting Open System Log from the File menu).

Much of the log might not make sense, but look for recent entries that mention a certain hardware device or related item (like USB or Firewire). These messages can mean that your problems are related to that particular device. If the device happens to be external, you can confirm your suspicion simply by unplugging the device and determining if your original problem goes away.

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

- 🖱️ Keyboarding/Typing
- 🖱️ Basic Computer Skills
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Win9x/Me/XP Computer tips & tricks

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.

Perhaps the best, easiest, and most secure way of keeping your e-mail out of the unwanted view of others, who share your computer your computer, is with Web-based e-mail, such as Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail, and others. They have the benefit of not being tied to just one computer, so if you want to access your e-mail from elsewhere, all you need is a Web browser.

Attachments

If you have difficulty sending attachments, one of the most common reasons someone can't send attachments with his/her email message is that their ISP (Internet Service Provider) has set a limit on the size of outgoing messages or attachments. The answer is as simple as compressing files before attaching them to emails. When you compress a file, reduce size, make it consume less bandwidth when sending it. The recipient can then save the attachment, decompress the file, and view it. There are many tools for compressing files. One of the most common is WinZip @ \$29.95, <www.winzip.com>. WinXP even includes built-in tools for compressing and decompressing files. To compress a large file in WinXP, right-click the file, click Sent To, and click Compressed (Zipped) Folder. WinXP will create a compressed version of the file in the same location as the original. Both will have the same file name; but, the compressed file will have a .zip extension. You can send this new zipped file as the email attachment.

You should be aware that there are some types of files that should not be compressed. JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) files are already in a compressed format, and attempts to further compress a JPEG file usually won't make it any smaller. In some cases, it can actually make the file larger. However, if you are working with an uncompressed, loss less format, such as TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) file, compressing the file can save space. If the file you want to send is a graphics file that can't compress further, there's another option for your consideration. You can open the picture in an image-editing application, Adobe's Photoshop Element 5.0, @ \$89.99, <www.adobe.com>, to change the dimensions of the photo. For example, most digital cameras take fairly large photos, but most images as small as 640x480 pixels look good when viewed on a computer monitor. You can use your image-editing software's resizing function to reduce the size of the image. Save a copy of the smaller-sized photo and then send it as the email attachment.

Cell Phone Photos

If you want to download photos from your cell phone, there are many ways to get your pictures off a cell phone. But your options will vary, depending on your phone and service provider. If your phone accepts a memory card, you can use it. There should be an option to move photos to the memory card. Then, insert the card into a reader and connect it to your computer. Moving the photos will be as simple as dragging and dropping. Bluetooth may also do the trick. Your computer will need a Bluetooth adapter, if it doesn't have Bluetooth. Then, pair your phone with the computer. Select a photo and look for a Bluetooth option. You'll also find cables to connect your phone to your computer. Check with your electronics store for one compatible with your phone model.

Special software will help you move the photos off the phone. You can also use the cable and software to back up your phone. E-mail is another option for transferring photos. Attach a photo to the e-mail and send it to your account. When you open the e-mail, copy the picture to your hard drive. You can also upload the photos to a Web site like Photobucket. But this generally adds a few more steps to the process. The site will give you an e-mail address where you can send your photos. Once there, download the photos to your computer. These sites are really designed for sharing your photos with other people. Unfortunately, some providers block Bluetooth transfers. Others don't let you send pictures via text messaging. They want you to sign up for another service, instead.

E-mail Folders

Most, if not all, e-mail clients allow you to use folders to organize your e-mail. In fact, folders are a great boon to keeping your incoming e-mail uncluttered and under control. Don't confuse e-mail folders with file folders on your disk drive. Conceptually, they're similar to each other only in that each allows you to organize information. While some e-mail clients may use file folders to store your e-mail, many do not.

The folders are maintained within the client as a logical structure, with no relation to file folders on the hard drive. Rather than leaving all your e-mail in your inbox, give some thought to how you can organize it using folders. For instance, you could have a folder for your work-related e-mail or a folder for each project you're working on. You could also create folders for family e-mail, hobbies, and other categories.

You can configure most (if not all) e-mail clients to display available folders onscreen. The folders in Outlook are part of the Navigation pane. When displayed, the pane is at the left side of the program window. The Navigation pane (or its equivalent) is helpful when working with folders. You can easily drag messages from one folder and drop them in another or move entire folders. To create an e-mail folder, you simply right-click an existing folder and choose New Folder. Name the folder and start using it to store messages.

Continued on page 16

Email Message Removal

Microsoft Outlook 2003 offers a powerful search tool that can help you locate message from particular senders or that contain important keywords. Launch Outlook and click Find in the main Toolbar. When a new search Toolbar appears, enter the sender's email address or other keywords that you want to search for, select the folder(s) to include in the search, and then click Find Now. It may take several minutes to search all of your email folders, but any relevant message entries should appear on your screen. Highlight every item you want to delete, right-click one of the highlighted entries, and click Delete. Once you're finished, click Clear to return to your inbox. Remember to empty the Deleted Items folder to permanently remove any unwanted email.

Email Message w/Photo

This tip may help you put a photograph in an email message rather than as an attachment to it. When an image appears within the body of an email message, it is called an embedded image. In order to embed an image in a message, you will need to alter the settings of your email program so that the messages you compose are in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) format. In Microsoft Outlook Express, click the Tools menu and select Options. In the resulting Options dialog box, click the Send tab. Under Mail Sending Format, make sure the HTML radio button is selected. Click the HTML Settings button and then click OK twice. To ensure that your graphics files are embedded rather than attached, when you compose your message, click the Format menu and make sure that the Rich Text (HTML) option is selected. If it is not selected, click to activate the Rich Text (HTML) setting. Finally, to embed the file in your document, make sure your cursor is in the position where you want the picture to appear. Click the Insert menu and then Picture. Navigate to the image file's location on your hard drive and double-click it. Click OK to embed the image in your email message.

L-Mail

If you want to send a letter to someone without typing and sending it via email, write an email using an online Web form and the Web site prints the letter (up to three pages), stuffs it in an envelope, stamps it and mails same for you for some under \$1.50. L Mail, <www.l-mail.com> is the answer for emailing someone who's not online.

Spam

If you have been receiving e-mail messages with your address in the "From" field, forward them to spam@uce.gov. The FTC owns spam@uce.gov. You can forward fraudulent spam to this address. You might get messages promoting weight-loss, credit repair and pyramid schemes. If they make misleading or false claims, the FTC wants them. The FTC uses the spam to find and stop fraudulent spammers. You should forward these messages to the FTC for action. When you forward the spam, send the full headers. The headers contain information about the message. The FTC is especially interested in the headers' Internet Protocol addresses. The messages will contain the IP addresses of the machines where they originated. They also contain IP addresses for the servers that relayed the messages. The FTC knows spammers use deceptive techniques. It is seeking deceptive messages in particular. The FTC won't take information in the "From" field at face value. It isn't uncommon for spammers to spoof e-mail addresses. In fact, return e-mail addresses are usually fraudulent. You should never, ever respond to spam.

Unblock Incoming Files

Outlook Express 6 Service Pack 2 blocks any file attached to an inbound e-mail message with a name that ends with certain "dangerous" filename extensions. [<http://support.Microsoft.com/?kbid=291369>] has the specifics. If you can exercise a tiny amount of caution when handling files attached to e-mail messages, and if you have an antivirus program that's worth its salt, there's no reason to have Outlook Express

block your inbound files. Here's how to override the tab. Now uncheck the box named Do Not Allow Attachments to Be Saved or Opened That Could Potentially Be a Virus and click OK. Of course, you should never open or run a file attached to an e-mail message unless you know the person who sent it to you, and you know that they actually did send it to you. If you have any doubt, send them a message and confirm that they sent you the file before you open it. If you get confirmation, save the file, and run your favorite antivirus package on it before you open it.

Web Mail Box Hacker Alarm

Your web mail account probably contains valuable information which can be accessed by thieves. You can create an electronic trip wire that will trigger whenever someone reads a rigged email message. To set up this alarm go to www.OneStatFree.com for a free Web counter account. You can list anything for the site URL and use a disposable email address to complete the registration process. Next look for an email from OneStat sent to the address you used after registering on its site. It will come with an attached file named OneStatScript.txt. Save that file and note your account number. Then delete the email, which has your account details and send the file as an email attachment to the Web mail account that you want to monitor. Use a similarly baited subject line. Now you can sit back and wait for someone to open your attachment. The hit counter will reflect that fact and will record information about them, including the IP address of the accessing computer. To check the counter stats, you just log back in to your account at OneStatFree.com. The best defense is to avoid keeping sensitive financial data in your Web mail.



Add content to your site

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

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

Content is the drab name for the exciting stuff that you find on a Web site. Some content you can and will create yourself. Lazy Webmasters have no scruples about using free content provided by others. The free content I am touting here is, for the most part, data-driven. Lurking behind each of these stickers is a sophisticated database that feeds information onto your site. Even if you had the programming skills to create the database and interface, you wouldn't have access to the data feeds. Let's look at some options:

Add a weather sticker:

You can include a forecast on your Web page. The free weather sticker is at Weather Underground First, type in the zip code or city name of the place you want to provide the forecast for. Then, look for the link that says "Add this sticker to your home page." Follow the on-screen instructions.

Poll your visitors:

Create A Poll offers free polling software. Put an opinion poll on your Website with immediate feedback to your users. Polls can either be radio buttons (as pictured) or a dropdown box. This poll doesn't screen out multiple voting.

Add a link to Congress:

Congress.Org offers a free sticker that lets people track down and write to their Federal elected officials just by typing in a zip code. An expanded sticker, also free, includes media and issue links. Go to congress.org to download.

Gas Buddy:

Looking for low gas prices? Gas Buddy will add sticker to your page that lists the high and low prices for any area in the US and Canada. In Texas, prices are listed for Austin, Houston, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth and San Antonio. Clicking on the sticker takes you to the Gas Buddy site to get a list of the stations.

Computer virus warnings:

Trend MicroVirus has several customizable stickers. You can list top viruses, virus advisories and alerts.

News Ticker:

newsindex.com and 7am.com are both news tickers. The first one lets you select a topic, and feeds in news headlines just on that topic. 7am.com feeds generic news headlines. The most sophisticated is New York Times headlines. You can select the categories — arts, books, technology, front page, international, sports, etc. — the number of headlines and the color and fonts. All you do is cut and paste the code.

Looking for more free content?

Sticky Web lists hundreds of sites that offer free content, from games to lottery number pickers. Stickiness is a Web marketing term that means people "stick" to your Web site - stay on it for a long time, or keep coming back to it, day after day or week after week.

So what's the catch?

First, you're going to get advertising from the supplier. All of these stickers have a link back to the sponsor. If people click on a sticker and go to the sponsor's page they may never return to your site.

Second, the sticker might not fit aesthetically with your site. Some are downright ugly. A red, white and blue sticker will stand out like a sore thumb on your purple and orange site. It might be too big, dominating your other, more important content. Some sponsors let you customize the look and feel of their stickers, some don't.

Third, as with any data that you are sucking in from another site, you lose control. If the sponsor's site is down, you're the one that has a void, and probably a broken graphics link, smack dab in the middle of your home page. Finally, some Webmasters get a bad case of sticker-mania. Stickers pop up all over the site, like measles. Practice restraint.

On the plus side, you are getting high quality content. All you ever have to do is paste in a few lines of HTML, and then never worry about it again. There are enough choices that you can be prudent in matching the data feed to your site.



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.

Last month I asked the editors for their experiences with dizziness and I heard from more than I thought I would. Almost all of their dizziness experiences were a bit different, as well as the cures, but a few people said they ended up not needing the cure because their problem eventually went away. Mine has improved some, but no thanks to any medication; it made things much worse. I read an article that I'll share with you and it's about an often-misdiagnosed type of dizziness. You may find it interesting. <<http://www.ericksontribune.com/Home/HealthSecrets/tabid/71/newsid410/5386/Spinning-out-of-control/Default.aspx>>

While I'm at it, here are a few more articles I found interesting.

*New Take On Returns

I saw this interesting article about Lowe's new system to handle customer returns. Even if you can't find your receipt, they can help you, but this new system also discovered 8,665 fraudulent return attempts in a six-month period <<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=GRKIQWOE4P0V2QSNLPSKH0CJUNN2JVN?articleID=201806189>>.

*This One Concerns The Rapid Development of Linux

<<http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=202404635>> It had an accompanying article about seven features coming soon, but I couldn't find it on the Information Week Web site.

*From Spinning Platters to No Moving Parts

Are you tired of having a cup of coffee while your computer boots up? Read this article about the future development of computer hard drives that will speed things up. Just switch on the computer and start using it. <<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=202404347>>.

*What a Fraud!

In November I included an announcement for Advanced WindowsCare Personal that was supposedly freeware. A reader informed me that after it scans your hard drive, it does not remove the errors it found unless you purchase the paid edition. Sorry about that one.

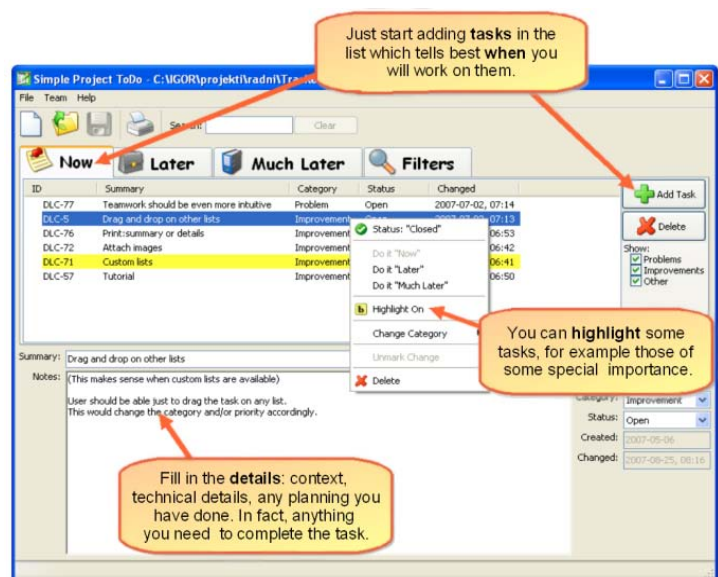
Below are more announcements that I received, but I have not tried them. Do your homework if you are interested in any of them.

*Are All Your Simple Projects Organized? They Will Be Now!

SimpleProjectToDo.com announces the availability of SimpleProjectToDo 1.26, the newest version of its tool for keeping track of a small project. The software is aimed at individuals and small project teams.

When you launch SimpleProjectToDo you see a tabbed window listing the tasks to do along with the summary and notes for the currently chosen task. Clicking on any of the tabs opens the window that displays its tasks. Clicking on the Now tab lets you see the tasks that you need to take action on now and clicking on the Later tab shows those that can be done soon. Finally, the Much Later tab tells you about the tasks that can be completed much later.

To add a new task, click on the Add Task button, set its priority (Now, Later, Much Later), category



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(Problem, Improvement, Other), (Problem, Improvement, Other), and choose the status that can be Open or Closed. If you have ideas or technical details relevant to the task, you can add them too. Important tasks can be highlighted to look more prominent. Now the task is displayed in its assigned tab. Type in the keyword and the program quickly returns the results. Narrow your search for the tasks by enabling only those filters you are interested in. If you need to view or show the tasks list to someone else, you can print the tasks on paper.

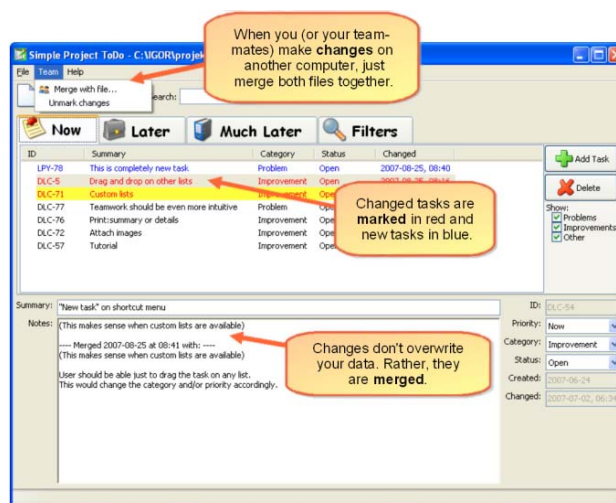
It offers multi-user support, making it easy to collaborate within a team. When teammates make changes to the tasks on another computer, those files can be merged together. Changed tasks are marked in red and the new tasks in blue.

SimpleProjectToDo 1.26 runs under Windows Vista, XP and 2000. It is available for \$49.95 (US) through the SimpleProjectToDo store. User group members get a 30% discount by using the coupon code "XW-7812-DEALS" when you download the product. The coupon is valid for single user licenses until January 31, 2008. Licensed customers get free upgrades and e-mail technical support for 12 months from the date of purchase. More information and its free trial copy, are available at <<http://SimpleProjectToDo.com>>

Direct download link: <<http://simpleprojecttodo.com/uploads/file/SimpleProjectSetup.exe>>

*Do You Keep Track Of Your Own Finances? Try This, And Its Portable

Alzex announces the release of Personal Finances Portable 2.1. When you get a pay raise, you might start considering a major purchase, or perhaps saving money for your child's education, based on the fact that you will have some spare money. But the month with a pay increase comes to an end and you realize that, actually, you've ended up with no extra money because, somehow, you spent it all. In that case, Personal Finances may come to your rescue. It'll record all expenses and help you see where your money goes. It shows the total sum and percentage structure for categories, overall balance and balance on accounts.



Continued on page 20

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

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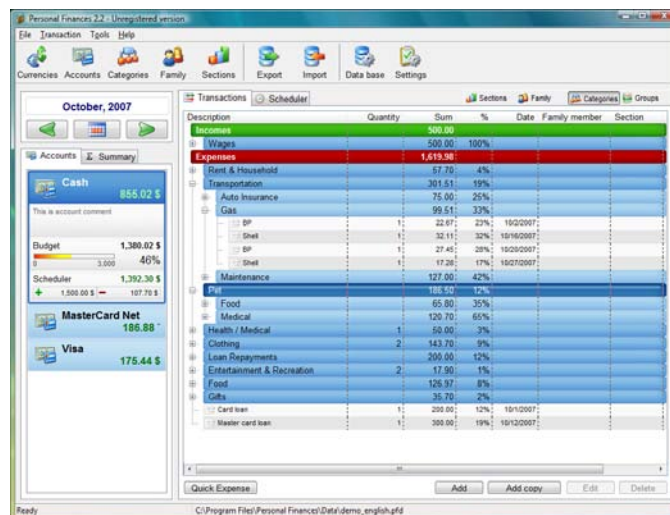
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<http://www.davidsessentialdomains.com>

Personal Finances has a user-friendly multilingual interface, scheduler, password protection and a very useful expense addition ability with one click. It can import/export data from/to .txt or .csv files. The application has a multiple database support and allows you to create an unlimited number of databases. Detailed information on all transactions is available for any time period. There is also an unlimited number of sections, subsections, categories, etc. Besides the basic ones, the application allows users to add more currencies upon inserting the exchange rate. Personal Finances allows you to sort by fields and group names, or by transaction. The program has the capability of logging regular transactions automatically.

If you are an active and mobile businessman, or just a globetrotter, why keep a record of expenses in an ordinary notebook and copy those notes into your home PCs after returning home. The features making Personal Finances Portable unique in its category is that you can install and run the application from a USB flash drive; consequently, your "personal accountant" will be portable and always at hand.



Personal Finances Portable 2.1 runs under Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/2003/Vista and costs \$24.95 (USD) for a single-user license. User group members get a 20% discount on the purchase of Personal Finances Portable by using the coupon code "pf43M5G," valid from now until March 2008. Licensed customers are entitled to priority technical support and a year of free upgrades. Your purchase is secured by a 30-day money-back guarantee. Additional information on Personal Finances Portable 2.1, as well as its evaluation copy with a 30-day trial period, is available at <<http://www.financesoftware.com>>.

Download link: <www.financesoftware.com/downloads/PersonalFinances_v2.1.exe> (2,73 Mb)

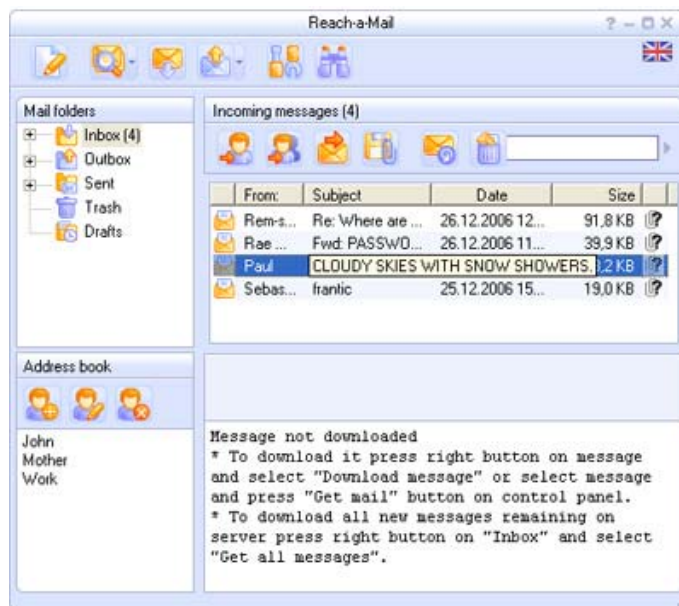
*Another Portable Application For Road Warriors

Smart PC Solutions, Inc. announced Reach-a-Mail 3.0, a portable flash drive e-mail client which lets you use another computer to send and receive e-mails without leaving any traces behind. There is no need to install any additional software, or fear that someone may steal your login and password if you send an e-mail through the online mailing service at an Internet café. This utility supports 10 languages and includes a collection of artistic smiley faces. Reach-a-Mail is a small program that you download to your desktop computer and install onto almost any kind of portable memory device, such as a USB flash drive. The program comes with its own default configuration. All you need to get started is to set up your e-mail accounts and import your contact lists.

This program has a straightforward import feature that lets you import, not only accounts from your desktop Outlook Express, but also e-mail messages and contacts so you don't have to tediously copy-and-paste the data or perform extensive typing. You can also import account settings from another Reach-a-Mail installation. Reach-a-Mail allows you to export e-mail messages and contacts, as well as save attachments. Importing takes only a short time depending on the volume of information you are loading.

Once you have everything in the flash drive, you're free to travel around the world! Simply go to an Internet café or some other place where you can find a computer with access to the Internet, plug the flash drive into the USB port to run Reach-a-Mail and go about sending and receiving messages as you normally would. When you're finished, remove the drive and that's it. No traces are left on the computer and your e-mail correspondence is safe.

Reach-a-Mail 3.0 runs under Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003/Vista. It is freeware and is available immediately from <www.smartpctools.com>. A commercial professional version of Reach-a-Mail with RSS reader functionality, no ad attachments in messages and better speed is also available for \$29.95 USD at <<http://www.smartpctools.com/order.html>>.



Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



MediaMonkey

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

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

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

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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 finished a discussion of the Calendar. If you'll refer to page 24 in the February issue the left column contains the list of Household Management tasks. If at all possible, I'd recommend that you bring the program up on your computer, to enable you to follow these discussions and perform the various tasks as you read about them.

Following Calendar you'll see Caregiver instructions. These can be instructions for something as simple as directions to a house sitter for care of houseplants, a baby sitter for the obvious, a pet sitter for special needs of a pet, or a major task such as caring for an infirm person. Basically all it entails is selecting from a wizard which offers templates for the various types mentioned above. Each of the templates has an outline of suggested information to be included, as well as a space for additional information.

As with all of the wizards there is a Help pane on the right side. In this case the default is Create a document

with the Word Processor Wizard. Take a look at the window on the left, noting the references to making changes to the document on which you're working. If you're following on the computer, note the Related Topics at the bottom of the window. These are available in most of the wizards and contain a wealth of information relative to the job at hand.

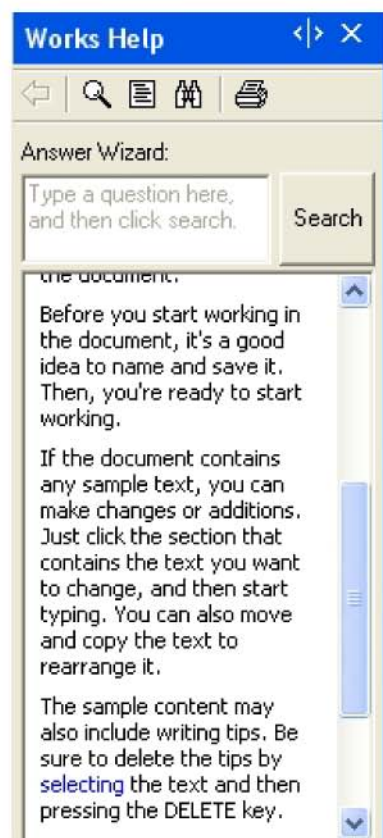
I really want to stress the value of the use of these wizards and the various Help offerings. If you can read, these will guide

even the newest user in the use of the program. It has always been my contention that if you can read, you can do anything you set your mind to.

Next on the task list is Chores and Errands Lists. We all have chores and errands of various kinds to perform. We may or may not take the time to make lists appropriate to these tasks. I won't print the opening window, but it shows a variety of lists from which to choose. For instance, Boat Maintenance, Child's Job Chart, Daily Chore Schedule, Daily Household Chores, Emergency Preparation, Housecleaning Chore List, Weekly Errands, and a Weekly Planner.

Once again, when you select a list, an appropriate Works function opens, with the attendant Help pane. I selected Emergency Preparations (2006 Hurricane season will be upon us before you know it!). In this case the list is in the form of a spreadsheet. The

accompanying Help window is seen at the left. Others in this area may use a Calendar format rather than a spreadsheet. Whichever list you select, there will be pertinent instructions to accompany each one. Working on down the task lists, you'll see



Create a Spreadsheet with the Spreadsheet Wizard

The Spreadsheet Wizard has created a spreadsheet with the choices you made.

You can now perform the same tasks that you would in any spreadsheet. You can type text or numbers to create a list, use the information to create a chart, and perform calculations.

Before you start working, it's a good idea to name and save the spreadsheet. Then, you're ready to start working.

If the spreadsheet contains any sample text or numbers, you can make changes or additions. Just click the cell that contains the information you want to change, and then start typing.

Home Improvement Worksheets, and one I believe could be most useful, a Home Inventory Worksheet. If you haven't done something in this area, you really should consider it. It can be invaluable when dealing with your insurance company regarding a loss.

This Wizard offers a basic inventory document in the form of a database. There is a complete listing for the description of each item, to include Category, Location, manufacturer, Model, serial number, purchased

Continued on page 23

from, and so on. Armed with this information, placing a loss claim should be a snap. In general, the Database

Create a Database with the Database Wizard

The Database Wizard has created a database with the choices you made.

You can perform the same tasks that you would in any database. You can type information in **records**, see the information in different views, add and modify **fields**, perform calculations, and print reports.

Before you start working in the database, it's a good idea to name and save the document. Then, you're ready to start working.

If the database contains any sample text, you can make changes or additions. Just click the field that contains the text you want to change, and then start typing.

format provides an excellent guide for collecting the desired information and storing it in a useful form. As you can see from the accompanying wizard at the left, the database is not set in concrete and may be modified to fit your specific needs.

The Task Lists include a number of areas such as Home Lists, Home loan finder on the Internet, and Homes for sale on the Web, which I won't go into here. If they interest you, you can access them directly from the Task List.

Another interesting and potentially very useful section is Important Household Documents. Once again you're offered a menu of various types of records, from Contacts, to Credit Card Log, Family Genealogy, Food and Drink Planner, Insurance Policy Log, Long Distance Call Log, Party Budget, Party Planner, Potluck Food List, Spouse Family History, Thank You Card List, and Wedding Organizer Pages. They certainly seem intent on getting you super organized! Again, each of these items comes in the appropriate format, be it Calendar, Spreadsheet, Word Document or Database. A couple of other interesting



Instruction sheets

Use these templates to create simple reminders about how to use household items like the phone or the remote.

 [Start this task](#)



Journals

Capture your personal reflections and experiences on a variety of topics with these helpful and attractive journal pages.

 [Start this task](#)

items extracted from the lists appear above. Both of these could be very helpful if they fit your needs.

Moving on down the lists, a very useful one is measurement conversions. How often have you been presented a measurement of some sort in a totally unfamiliar form? Here you are given the option for a variety of measurements for conversion; Area, circular, Linear, Liquid and Dry Measure, Metric, Nautical, Temperature and Troy weight.

Selecting Liquid and Dry Measure Conversion opens a spreadsheet in which you enter a measurement in a field offered in a selection measurements and the equivalents are provided in a separate list.

Type a measurement

in one of these fields:

<input type="text" value="32"/>	Fluid ounces
<input type="text"/>	Pints
<input type="text"/>	Quarts
<input type="text"/>	Gallons
<input type="text"/>	Gills
<input type="text"/>	Cubic inches
<input type="text"/>	Liters

Equivalents:

32.00
2.00
1.00
0.25
8.00
57.76
0.95

Type a measurement

in one of these fields:

<input type="text"/>	Pints
<input type="text"/>	Quarts
<input type="text"/>	Pecks
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Bushels
<input type="text"/>	Cubic inches
<input type="text"/>	Liters

Equivalents:

64.0
32.0
4.0
1.0
2150.4
35.2

The Tasks List goes on to include a few more to include Medical Records, Menus, Move into a New Home, Moving Lists, Organize the Household, and a Recipe Book. I haven't looked at all of these, but am quite confident that Works treats them all in a manner similar to those that we've looked at here. I feel any further space devoted to this area would be redundant and non-productive. By this time you should be able to make your own way thru whichever tasks you wish to include.

In this vein, I wonder how useful you are finding these articles? Are they helping you to make use of this suite of programs? Do you find them too basic, or perhaps redundant in returning to the trough too often.

I would appreciate your comments in order to plan how to continue this series,



eTherapy

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

The Computer Hysteria Column was named with difficulty, because in a word it was weird, by the editor of the Monitor, an award winning 2,000 copy monthly printed publication distributed free to the public in our metroplex at numerous venues by the Computer Club of Oklahoma City.

Several years later, a woman saw me at an open house at the club. She said, "I have wanted to meet you to ask you a question." Do you write those strange articles on nights of the full moon at the witching hour of midnight and drunk?" I laughed and thanked her for the "complement" and explained that an insult would have been to call my column normal!

The printed Monitor eventually was transformed into the eMonitor, an electronic clone. I then became interested in eTherapy, a new concept, possibly because of the previous reaction to my column by one of my readers.

Online counseling - eTherapy - is when a professional counselor or psychotherapist talks with you over the Internet, to give you emotional support, mental health advice or some other professional service. It could be one question, or an ongoing conversation, it could be by e-mail, chat, video or even Internet phone.

eTherapy may be a viable alternative source of help when traditional psychotherapy is not accessible. It seems to be effective and private, when conducted by skilled, qualified, ethical professionals. For some people, it may well be the only way they can get help from a professional therapist. eTherapy addresses a major problem uncovered by the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health (1999) which stated that while one American in five has a diagnosable psychological problem, nearly two-thirds of them never seek treatment.

Sometimes managed care and the mental health industry make it difficult for people to get the care they need. When traditional systems fail them, many people are turning to the Internet.

It is important to point out that eTherapy is not a substitute for traditional psychotherapy. If you can visit a therapist in person, you should. If you can't visit a therapist's office, online counseling can be a helpful and an effective alternative.

There is general agreement that eTherapy is not appropriate for everyone. You should consider several issues before trying eTherapy. However, ethical, competent, and responsible mental health professionals are helping and healing people everyday on the Internet.

Jim Byrne is a member of the International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO) which is a nonprofit organization formed in 1997 to promote the understanding, use and development of online communication, information and technology for the international mental health community. Mr. Byrne lists several advantages and disadvantages of eTherapy which is not comprehensive but should provide you with a general understanding of the pros and cons of using eTherapy.

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Welcome to the New Year

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

When it's time for New Year's resolutions, computer users need all the backbone they can get to cope with what needs to be done digitalwise. Here are maybe some things to think about. Get the new internal hardware installed and running -- not so easy some times. Hook up the peripherals and see if they actually will work as advertised.

Unpack the upgraded programs that you received and actually install them. Then try to get your old documents to run in the new upgraded version. Get busy and input the genealogical information you have been collecting into your favorite program. Then output it to some media (even paper) in order to share it with the rest of your family. In my case, that means sharing my Mother's family line with the other female members of my family. There are not very many of us, so it shouldn't be a big chore.

These are just a few rather obvious things to do. And while they may have lasting results, they really don't take that much time to accomplish. Not like losing the extra pounds so many of us need to lose.

One very reasonably priced program I have recently bought is Print Workshop 2006. Its pedigree is: 2005 Imagen Corp., published and distributed by ValuSoft, a division of THQ Inc. Digital image content © 1997 - 2005 Hemera Technologies. That's quite a mouthful. It is a greeting card type program that has come out on DVD, something I have been watching and waiting for a long, long time. Most of the clip art programs come with so many CDs that it soon becomes tiresome trying to use them.

I would rather have somewhat fewer images, but have all of them available on one disk. So far this DVD version has worked fine. One much older CD version of this software contained a simplified but useful Desktop Publishing module that was adequate for most novice users, but still difficult enough to take some time to learn.

Later versions of the program dropped the DTP function and went solely to simple publishing tasks similar to The Print Shop, etc. Designing and printing greeting cards doesn't have to be rocket science, so the simpler the program, the better I like it. The price for the 2006 version of Print Workshop was \$19.95, and I don't think you can beat that.

I designed my Christmas letter this year in WordPerfect with dimensions to fit on some commercially printed Christmas paper. Because each year we include pictures of our family, it can become cumbersome, time consuming and ultimately expensive to print them at home using my HP Photosmart printer.

I have opted for two years now to take my master document and holiday paper to Kinkos to be reproduced. The price this year caused a little bit of a gulp, but I decided to do it anyway. In the past, the Kinkos machines were the ordinary color Xerox copy machines. This year the machine was a Xerox color laser. I was really pleased with the quality of the laser reproduction of my master copy. The pictures look much better in the Kinkos equipment product than they ever could have looked from my home printer. So, biting the bullet, I paid my bill and left with enough copies to send to those on my card list who might be interested in seeing pictures of our family and reading a brief (and I do mean BRIEF) summary of our activities for the year. We naturally include a personal note with each card and included letter that we send.

With the exception of the genealogy project, my computer jobs for the coming year are not well defined yet. That will probably change in the near future. Since Windows XP is rumored to be on the way out, I need to learn to use it more effectively before it becomes obsolete. Then the fun and expense of yet another Microsoft operating system upgrade will keep all of us busy for the foreseeable future.

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Excel-Fill in the Blank Forms-On Demand

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

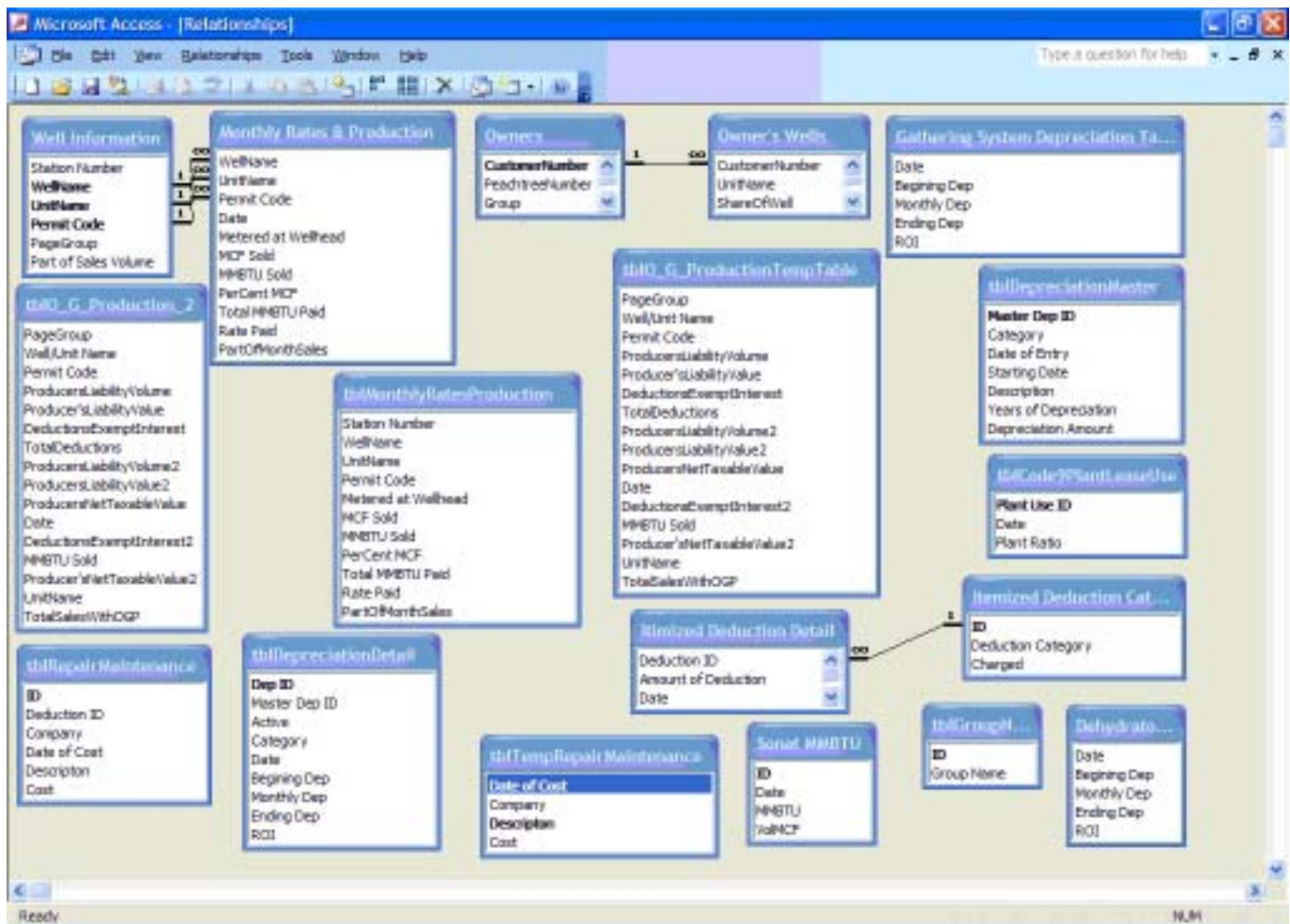
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

Sometimes you are asked to fix or improve a system that you are not familiar with. I thought I would give you two tools to speed up this process. One is just how to print the file relationships, which is very straight forward and the other is how to create a query and report to print files specifications. As usual, neither is hard once you see them the first time.

Printing the file relationships is very easy. Assuming the person has defined relationships and you have something to print. Of course that is another whole chapter on file design.

To print the file relationships click on Tools and then Relationships. You will see what has been setup for this system. Listed below is the relationships window. I can see that I have a few issues (read that as looks like not much has been set up!) because only three files have relationships defined. Table field names are not standardized; depreciation table is missing information (type, other tax information). This is why we want to print this out. I can then get my box of crayons out and start marking.

Continued on page 27



To print this all we have to do is click on File and then click on Print Relationships. Guess what, print is built in to this. You may be finished or you may need to adjust this to print landscape, widen the margins and/or move the tables around on the screen to make it print so you can handle it. Or you can use a plotter to print out relationships 32 inches wide by 60 feet long. That does get a little extreme but makes a really neat wall hanging or conversation for the next planning meeting. And you can redesign this to show department dependencies, data flow, and all other sorts of data relationships. This of course is a discipline all its own. Take the course on Visio and you will disappear into diagram theory.

The other thing I want to have in my hands is the file specifications printed out. Technical term is data dictionary. I can look at them on the screen but I like to get something I can write on with my portable word processor (pencil). The spell checker has long sense failed on this and the upgrade seems to be stuck on the version in 1975. ha ha

All we want to do is print out file specifications. The process is to copy the temporary file, TableDefReport, query TblDefReport, and Module tabledefs from your tools diskette (old media like my portable word processor) into the mdb you are working on. Do this by File, Get External Data and Import. I am not going to put all the code here. You can e-mail me or search Google for “Building a data dictionary” if you want to do this. This has been written up many times. I am just telling you this capability exists.

After you have the module, query, report and table copied, save the mdb. Open the module and run the subroutine “gettabledefs()”. It will not display anything. You can add debug.print variable name at the appropriate place is you want to see things happening. Hard work is done. Now run the report TblDefReport and you have listing of table definitions. If there are some extra long fields you will have to tidy up the report some.

You may want the formatting different or lines or boxes. Go into the design mode on the report and just fix anything you want. Getting the table of data build is the hard part. Now you can format the output anyway you want.

Creating a database from scratch and inheriting one are two very different things. When you create one, you know your thought process. When you are deemed the resident Access guru and can handle just a “little” change to someone else’s thought process is totally different process from your own. I should not have to say this but I will. Never, never assume you understand the system or process. Trust me, you do not understand! And you can prove that to yourself if necessary. Just change something without proofing it!

Take some time to help some one else. Volunteer your time and efforts. If you volunteer, my congratulations go to you. The world is a much better place because of volunteers and helpers. I just love the program “Extreme Home Make Over”. A Tulsa builder will be in an upcoming program. Thousands of volunteers that never get to be on screen or recognized by name. Tremendous hours of work are done by these people. I say “wow, what a job you did” to these people. This is what makes America great.

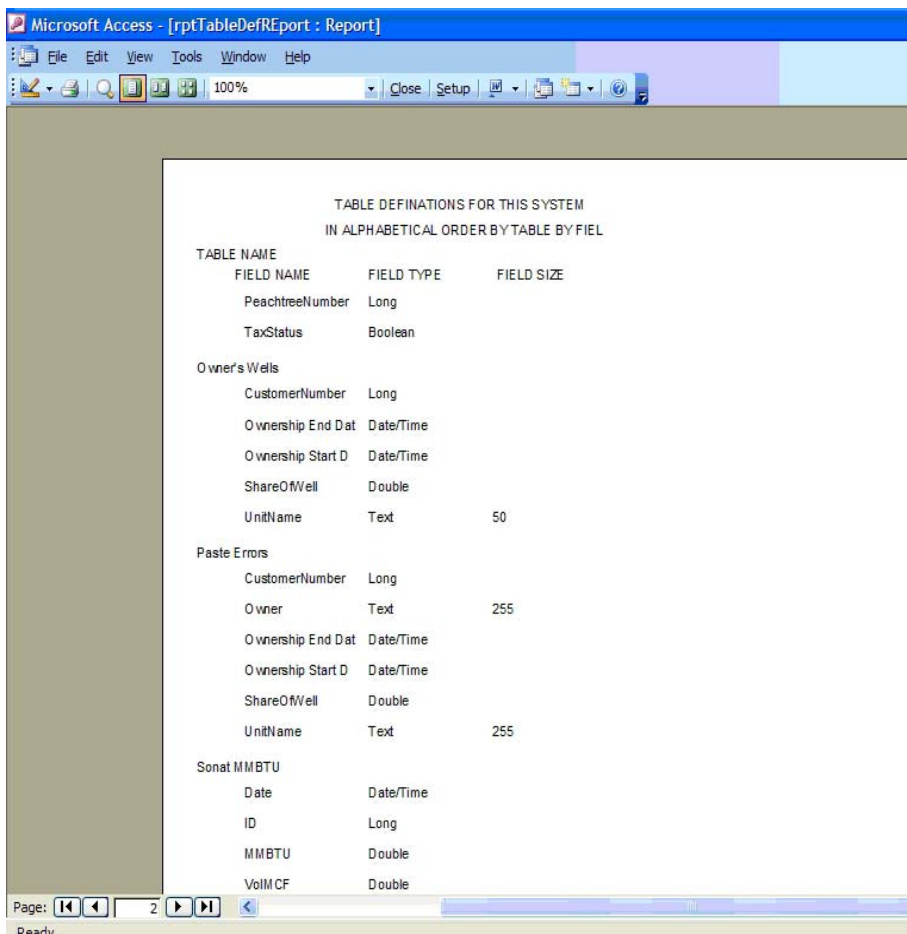


TABLE DEFINITIONS FOR THIS SYSTEM IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY TABLE BY FIEL			
TABLE NAME	FIELD NAME	FIELD TYPE	FIELD SIZE
	PeachtreeNumber	Long	
	TaxStatus	Boolean	
Owner's Wells	CustomerNumber	Long	
	Ownership End Dat	Date/Time	
	Ownership Start D	Date/Time	
	ShareOfWell	Double	
	UnitName	Text	50
Paste Errors	CustomerNumber	Long	
	Owner	Text	255
	Ownership End Dat	Date/Time	
	Ownership Start D	Date/Time	
	UnitName	Text	255
Sonat MMBTU	Date	Date/Time	
	ID	Long	
	MMBTU	Double	
	VolMCF	Double	



How do you use your laptop?

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/>>

Are you an occasional user who works on your laptop for short periods of time, or are you a full-time user with the laptop as your main computer? Occasional users will have less ergonomic risk of problems developing than full-time users.

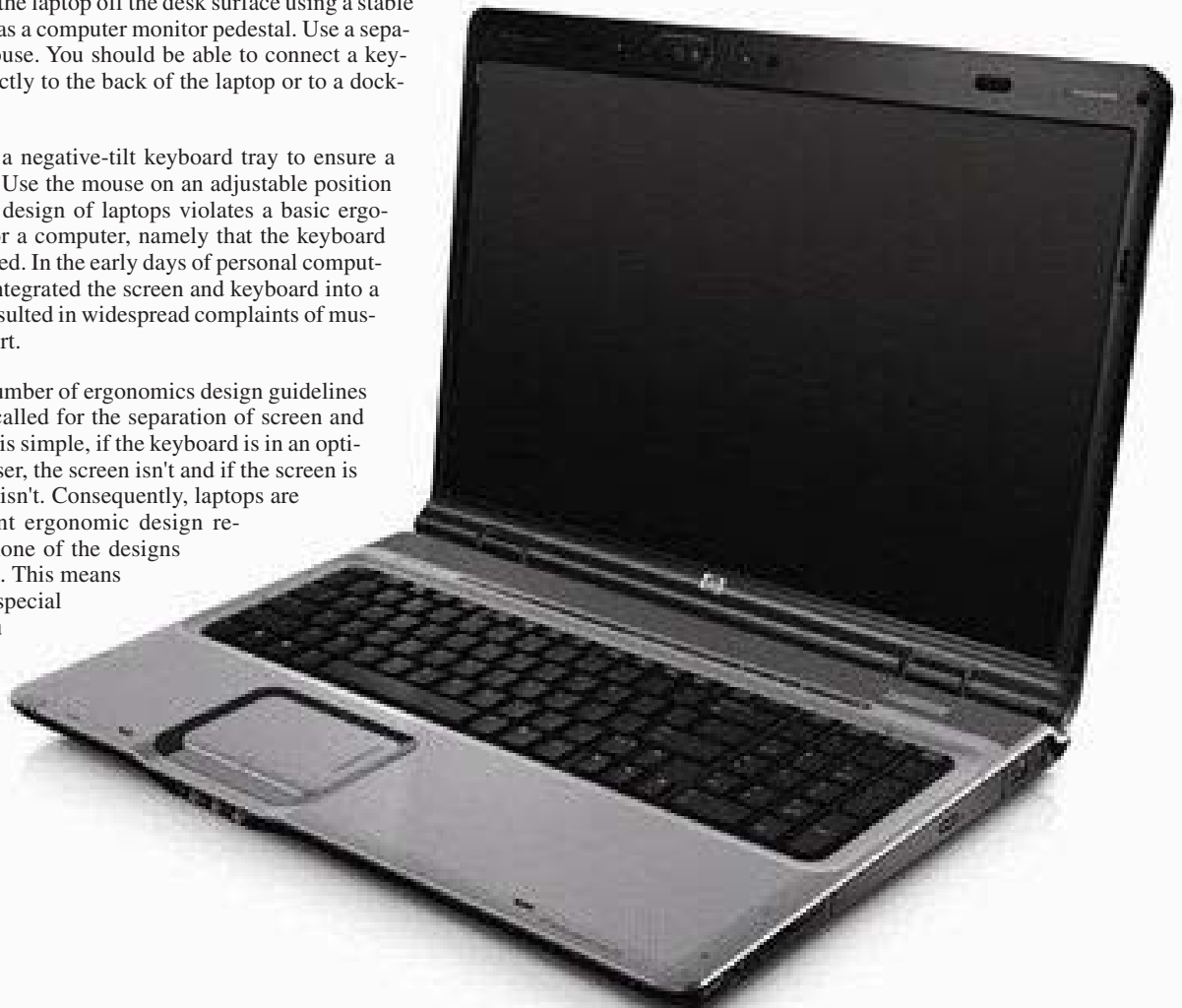
Laptop Posture - laptops violate basic ergonomic design requirements, so using a laptop is a tradeoff between poor neck/head posture and poor hand/wrist posture.

Occasional Users - Find a chair that is comfortable and that you can sit back in. Position your laptop in your lap for the most neutral wrist posture that you can achieve. Angle the laptop screen so that you can see it with the least amount of neck deviation.

Full-time Users - Position this on your desk in front of you so that you can see the screen without bending your neck. This may require that you elevate the laptop off the desk surface using a stable support surface, such as a computer monitor pedestal. Use a separate keyboard and mouse. You should be able to connect a keyboard and mouse directly to the back of the laptop or to a docking station.

Use the keyboard on a negative-tilt keyboard tray to ensure a wrist neutral posture. Use the mouse on an adjustable position mouse platform. The design of laptops violates a basic ergonomic requirement for a computer, namely that the keyboard and screen are separated. In the early days of personal computing desktop devices integrated the screen and keyboard into a single unit, and this resulted in widespread complaints of musculoskeletal discomfort.

By the late 1970's a number of ergonomics design guidelines were written and all called for the separation of screen and keyboard. The reason is simple, if the keyboard is in an optimal position for the user, the screen isn't and if the screen is optimal the keyboard isn't. Consequently, laptops are excluded from current ergonomic design requirements because none of the designs satisfy this basic need. This means that you need to pay special attention to how you use your laptop because it can cause you problems.



How the arm and hand work

The arm and hand are designed to perform a range of tasks in many different positions. They are capable of exerting great force as well as fine manual dexterity. Structurally, the arm is best considered in terms of its three major components: shoulder, elbow and hand. Each component has its own characteristics. The shoulder is controlled by muscles in the neck and upper back. The elbow is the least complicated of the components. Together the hand and the wrist have 27 bones. Most of the muscles controlling them are in the forearm.

Ligaments connect the bones to each other and tendons connect muscles to the bones. When a muscle contracts, it pulls the tendon which moves the bone to which it is attached. Portions of these tendons are enclosed in sheaths-shiny and very slippery coverings that protect and lubricate the tendons and permit them to slide back and forth freely. Joints contain bursa, fluid-filled sacks that reduce friction and provide cushioning during motion.

Arm and hand injuries

Excessive back and forth movement of a tendon under excess load can cause inflammation (pain, swelling or tenderness) of the tendon or its sheath. Other causes of inflammation in these structures include direct physical trauma, excessive external pressure and various diseases. When the inflammation involves the tendon primarily, the disorder is known as tendonitis, and when it involves the tendon sheath, it is known as tenosynovitis. When tenosynovitis is associated with the narrowing of the tendon sheath, it can produce trigger finger or de Quervain's disease.

At joints where tendons are unsheathed, such as at the shoulder and elbow, other injuries can occur such as epicondylitis and bursitis with symptoms of pain, tenderness and reduced range of motion. Names you may be familiar with include "pitcher," "golfer" or "tennis" elbow. Pressure on the nerve can produce symptoms of pain, numbness and tingling. These can include problems at the shoulder and carpal tunnel disease, which is compression of the median nerve on the palm side of the wrist.

Regional musculoskeletal illness, cumulative trauma disorder (CTD), and repetitive stress injury (RSI) are terms that have been used to describe repetitive motion problems. Pain can occur from sprains, strains and acute overuse along with personal medical conditions. Hobbies, participation in sports, activities at home and work tasks can lead to these conditions.

It is important for individuals experiencing persistent pain to have an examination by a qualified chiropractor to determine the cause of the discomfort, to provide corrective treatment and to help identify activities that may aggravate the condition.

Techniques for reducing musculoskeletal disorders or discomfort

Musculoskeletal disorders or discomfort associated with prolonged static or awkward posture, or forceful repetitive motions can often be ameliorated by good work practices, training procedures, and workstation setup or tool design.

Work practices

To reduce the time spent performing one specific motion and to allow time for recovery, several employees on a periodic or rotation basis could perform different tasks. In some instances, it may be possible to design a task so that it can be performed with either hand and the person trained to alternate hands. All tasks should be designed to minimize stress and strain on the arm from the shoulder to the hand.

by John R. Chait D.C., drchait@home.com

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

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Essential Processes, How You Can Tell

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>

Every other computer article these days seems to be about Windows Vista, a long promised operating system that won't make its appearance for almost another year. Why all the fuss about something that doesn't even exist yet? It's as far advanced over Windows XP as Windows 95 was over 3.1, that's why.

That's nice, but we don't have Vista to take us to Nirvana today. We common folk have XP. That's not bad, but we don't have Vista as promised. Maybe this time next year I'll be writing about a Vista tip to make life easier while we're all anticipating the release of Vienna, the follow on to Vista. While we're waiting, here's something to make the wait easier.

If you press Ctrl+Alt+Delete to bring up the Windows Task Manager and then activate the Processes tab, you see a long list of computer services that run in the background while you're working with your system. You've undoubtedly received recommendations that you should shut down or disable the unessential processes to improve system performance.

This is sound advice, but how can you tell what's essential from what could be shut down without clobbering your operation? Try the following to get a fighting start in that direction.

Restart your system and when it begins to reboot press F8 repeatedly until the Start Up menu appears. Select the Safe Mode option from the menu. If you get another screen asking you to select the operating system, choose the one which applies to you. In most cases, you will see one choice and it will be Windows XP Home Edition, Windows XP Professional Edition or Windows XP Media Center Edition. A bunch of programming gibberish may fill up your screen next and your system may appear to be 'frozen' for a minute or two. Relax, but don't touch anything, especially the keyboard or the mouse.

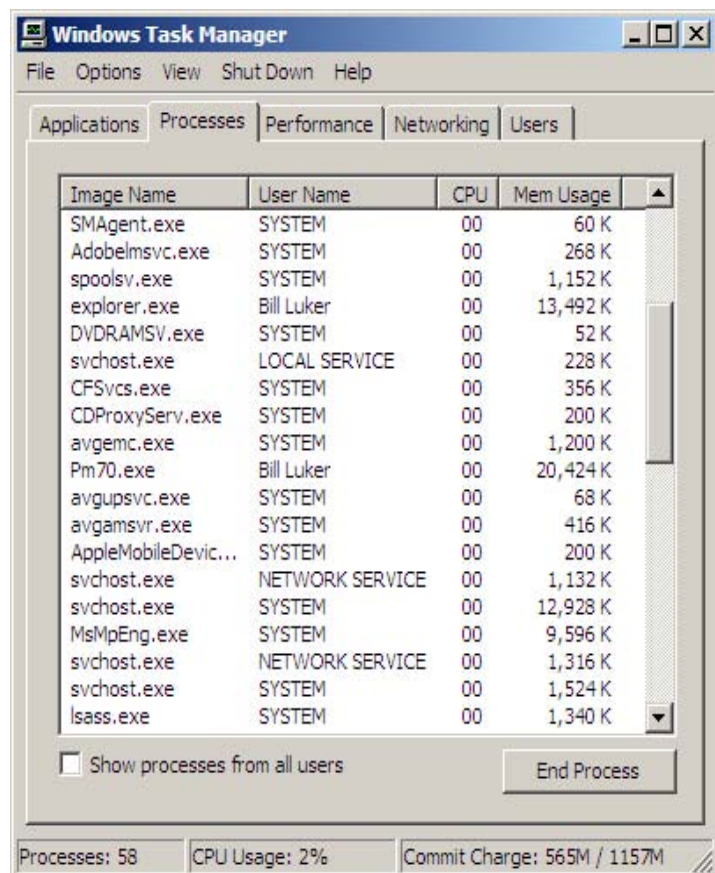
Eventually something like the normal Windows Welcome Screen will appear and you will be asked to sign in. If you are the only one using your system and your user profile has full Administrator privileges, you can safely log on to Windows Safe Mode. If you're not certain, use the Administrator Profile.

You will now be confronted with a formidable looking dialog box containing an ambiguous explanation of Safe Mode. Click the Yes button. When the desktop appears, don't panic. The icons may look very different, but nothing is wrong. One of the characteristics of Safe Mode is to load only the minimum number of video drivers that will support the lowest resolution your monitor can handle. This guarantees you will have a visible screen in Safe Mode. Everything will be back to normal when you restart, but you will probably have to rearrange your icons.

Press Ctrl+Alt+Delete. This time the Windows Task Manager displays a considerably shorter list in the Processes section. This list represents what's really essential to keep Windows running. Don't shut down or disable anything in this short list when you are running in Windows normal mode. You run the risk of not only crashing your system, but you may not be able to boot up again without doing a repair reinstall of your operating system. The idea here is to improve the performance of your system, not put yourself out of business.

You can make a handwritten list of the processes that are running in Safe Mode and use that as a reference, but here is another method.

1. Click on a blank area of the Windows Task Manager to make sure it is active. Click the Processes tab.



Continued on page 31

2. Press Alt+PrtScrn to capture the image of the dialog box and store it in the clipboard area.
3. Close the Windows Task Manager Dialog box.
4. Click on the Start button.
5. From the Start Menu, open the All Programs section.
6. Open the Accessories Menu.
7. Start the Paint program.
8. From the Edit menu select Paste to put the stored image in the canvas area.
9. Save the image on the Desktop, the My Documents folder or in any folder where you can retrieve it easily.
10. Close Paint.
11. Restart Windows.
12. Rearrange your icons if necessary when the desktop appears in normal mode.
13. Open Paint as you did in Safe Mode.
14. Retrieve and print the Task Manager Dialog box image.

You can copy and paste the image in your word processor or another application if you prefer. When you shut down or disable any process not on your short list, you can be confident that you won't inadvertently clobber your system while trying to improve its performance. What about all those other programs running in the background? That's a subject for another article.

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Tech issues

Hard drives and Operating Systems

Hard Drives and Partitions

by **Gene Barlow**, User Group Relations , www.ugr.com, gene@ugr.com

Lots has happened in hard drives in the past 8-10 years that I have been giving presentations on partitioning and backing them up. Ten years ago, the largest hard drives were only a few hundred MB. We had not yet seen the 300GB hard drives that are common today. Also, the price of hard drives was much higher then than it is today. So, conserving hard drive space was a bigger issue then.

Today, most of us have more hard drive space that we know what to do with and we see new 250GB drives selling for under \$50. Things have really changed.

In light of this new environment of cheap and plentiful hard drive space, I no longer push keeping FAT32 partitions down under 16GB in order not to waste more than 10% of the drive space. Most users are now using NTFS which also has cluster problems, but these are not nearly as big as the FAT and FAT32 cluster problems.

Continued on page 33

The cluster problem was that each file needed to be stored on an even number of clusters. So, the wasted space was equal to half the size of a cluster times the number of files stored. The worst case, was when you had lots of little files stored in large partitions with large cluster sizes. So, a 256kb Shortcut in Windows would take up 32MB of space when stored on the hard drive. Hence the large wasted space. But a few very large files stored in one large partition would not waste much space as lots of little files stored in that same partition. Backup image files are about the biggest files you will find in Windows. Some of these are 30-40GB each. So, you may only have a few dozen image files stored on your external hard drive before you fill it up. So, even a large cluster space with very few large image files will waste very little hard drive space. Hence, even if we were still worried about wasted space on hard drives, backup image files would be an exception and having large partitions would be much easier to manage than many partitions that may waste more space because you could not fit large files in a partially full partition. Hence the recommendation to just use folders to store image files on one very large partition. Most users do not have a partitioning utility to adjust the size of the partitions as the drive gets full of large image files. Folders work better in this case and do not require a partitioning utility.

Another change in my recommendations over what they were 10 years ago is that I now no longer recommend a separate Application partition from the Operating System partition and the Data partition. Today, I recommend that you store your application programs in the same partition as your operating system. I do this for several reasons. First, applications want to install in the operating system partition by default. You have to direct them to a separate application partition if you want to keep them separate. This makes installing applications slightly more complicated than letting them install where they want to install naturally.

Hard drive space and wasted space is no longer a big issue, so a larger c: drive is not a problem. In running multiple operating systems, you could share the same applications between two operating systems if you did it correctly. That required a separate APPS partition and then you would install the same application twice into that partition. Once from one operating system and the other time from the other operating system. You had to do this to keep the registry entries on both operating systems correct. Keeping two operating systems in synch with one application partition was a challenge for even the more advanced user, so today, I recommend keeping the application with each operating system, even if it means having that operating system installed twice on your computer.

So, today, I recommend three partitions should be used. One for the operating system and application programs. One for all of the data files. And one on an external hard drive for backing up the other two partitions. This is the best way to go today with our large inexpensive hard drives on our PCs.

I hope this helps you understand why I have changed my recommendations.



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Backing Up Your Hard Drive

by Gene Barlow, User Group Relations , www.ugr.com, gene@ugr.com

Your computer hard drive is very important: Your hard drive is the heart of your computer system. It contains your Windows operating system, which is the master control program of your computer. It also contains all of your application programs that help you do productive things with your computer. But, most importantly, it contains all the data files that you create using your application programs. These data files are the most valuable part of your computer and the hardest to replace if something should happen to your hard drive.

Yes, your hard drive will fail on you someday: Your hard drive is a mechanical device that spins constantly and is certain to wear out. The life of a hard drive is only 2-3 years. If you are lucky, your drive may last you 4 or 5 years, but it could go out in just 6 months. It is not a question of if your hard drive will fail, but it's a question of when it will fail. All you can do is to be ready when it does fail by having a copy of all of the files on your hard drive saved away from your computer. Then you can replace the failed drive with an empty new drive and put all of the files on the new hard drive. This lets you be back up and running in a matter of minutes instead of days or weeks rebuilding your drive. This process is called backing up and restoring your hard drive and is the topic of this article.

What files should you backup: One of the first decisions you must make is what files need to be backed up to adequately protect you. I consider your data files as the most important ones to backup. Your data files are those files that you create using your application programs. If you use Quicken, then the data file that needs to be backed up contains all of your financial records entered into Quicken. If you research your genealogy, then the database of your ancestors that you've collected for years is the important data file that must be backed up. If you correspond extensively using E-mail, then the folders of your E-mail correspondence needs to be backed up. You should plan on backing up your data files at least weekly.

The second most important thing to backup is your entire hard drive and all of the files on it. This includes your Windows operating system as well as all of your application programs. By backing up the entire hard drive, you will not have to rebuild your system from scratch, but will be able to quickly get your system back up and running again. Some would suggest that you really don't need to backup your operating system and application programs because you can always reload them from the CDs they came on. While this is mostly true, you need to consider how much time this will take you to reinstall the operating system and all of the applications you own. Then, how long will it take you to download all of the software patches and add-ons that you have added to your system. Finally, how long will it take you to enter all of the special settings that you must do to have your system work exactly as you like it to. To this lengthy time, consider how you can recover the many programs and files for which you do not have a CD. I think when you consider all of these factors, you'll agree that having a backup of your entire hard drive is a wise investment of your time. You should plan on backing up your entire hard drive on a monthly basis.

What media is best for backup: The next question you need to consider is what is the best media to backup your files from your hard drive. A few years ago, tape backup systems were the most popular backup media. The only problem with these tape systems was that they were very slow. Backing up a 1-2GB hard drive in a couple of hours was reasonable, but backing up today's 120GB hard drives to tape would take too long. You would not do it often enough to be usable. The next popular backup media to come along were the removable disk cartridge drives. These were much faster than tape, but the cartridges tended to be expensive. For example, a 40GB hard drive would need 10-20 Jazz (2GB) cartridges to backup the entire drive. At \$100 each, you would need to invest over \$2,000 in cartridges to backup your entire drive. Writing to blank CDs promises to be one of the best backup media today, but even the fastest drives are slow and it takes many blank CDs to backup a large hard drive.

So, what is the best media to backup a 40GB hard drive today? Another 40GB hard drive! Hard drives are much faster than tape and are even faster than the disk cartridge systems. You can backup an entire 40GB hard drive in less than an hour or so. Since it is fast, you'll tend to backup your system more often and this means better protection for you. Hard drives are also very inexpensive to purchase. If you watch prices carefully, you can get a 120GB hard drive for \$99 or less. I would plan on having an extra hard drive for backup purposes for each hard drive that you save data on.

What type of backup software is available: There are two very different backup utilities on the market today -- File backup utilities and Partition backup utilities. File backup utilities are by far the most common. These utilities backup individual files one at a time. They can also be used to restore individual files to your hard drive. A good feature of File backup utilities is that they can select individual files from all parts of your hard drive. This is great for picking and choosing your important data files to backup. On the other hand, File backup utilities tend to be quite slow in backing up your entire hard drive and you would need to make many extra steps in

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rebuilding your hard drive partitions in case of a total failure. That is where Partition backup utilities have the advantage. Partition backup utilities backup entire partitions and all the files contained in them. Some of these Partition backup utilities work at the lowest hardware level and are very fast. Restoring a partition to an empty hard drive using a partition backup utility will create and format partitions as it restores the partition file.

Acronis Corporation has an excellent backup software package that will easily backup your entire hard drive. This product is called True Image and has a list price of \$50. Let's take a look at how this utility can be used to backup your entire system.

Backing up your entire hard drive: The most important part of your backup plan is to backup your entire hard drive at least once a month. Having this backup in place will protect you from a major failure of your entire hard drive. Using Acronis True Image to backup your entire hard drive you have two approaches to select from. Let's look at each of these approaches separately.

The first full-drive backup approach is to use True Image to copy all of the partitions from your main hard drive to a backup hard drive. Both hard drives must be installed on the same computer system to do this approach. Using True Image's Disk Clone facility, you copy the partitions from your main drive to the backup drive, one at a time. When True Image copies a partition, it creates a new partition on the backup drive, so the drive can be empty of partitions before you start the process. Also, copying a partition copies not only the partition, but also all of the hidden files, system files, and other files contained in the partition to the backup hard drive. So, when you finish copying all of the partitions from your main drive to the backup drive, you have an exact duplicate of your main drive that could be used if your main drive failed.

After copying all of the partitions to your backup hard drive, you need to disconnect the backup drive and remove it from your computer system. You should store the drive away from your computer, so that if anything happens to your computer, your backup drive will not be affected, too. Once a month, you'll need to retrieve this backup hard drive and insert and connect it back into your computer and repeat the backing up of all of your partitions, then remove it again from your computer. If something should happen to your main hard drive, simply get your backup hard drive and replace your main hard drive with the backup drive, setting it as a master drive, and you should be able to immediately start your computer and have it run. To simplify the frequent removal and replacement of your backup hard drive, you can purchase a hard drive rack mounting system from your computer store for about \$25 that will let you remove and insert the drive without removing the covers of your computer.

The second full-drive backup approach is to use True Image to cross backup one hard drive to another. With this approach, you install and leave both hard drives in your computer all the time. For this approach to work, you'll need to setup a large backup partition at the end of each of the two hard drives. Acronis Disk Director Suite utility is the best way to create these backup partitions on your hard drives. Once the two drives are in place with a large backup partition on each of them, you can use True Image to create condensed image files of entire partitions and store them on the backup partition of the other hard drive.

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To make this a little easier to understand, let's look at a simple example. You have two hard drives and the following partitions on each of the two hard drives:

Drive 1:

C: partition (Contains your Operating System)

D: partition (A backup partition)

Drive 2:

E: partition (Contains your Application Programs)

F: partition (Contains your Data Files)

G: partition (A backup partition)

Using True Image, create an image file of your entire C: partition and all of its contents on your G: backup partition. Then, using True Image, create an image file of your E: and F: partitions on your D: backup partition. These image files represent the entire partition and all of their active content. These image files can be condensed by 40-50% to save room on your backup partition. Notice that we save the images from one hard drive to the other hard drive's backup partition and visa-versa. Hence, we call this the cross backup approach.

Once a month, you'd repeat this cross backup approach from one drive to the other until you fill up the backup partition. Then you'd delete the oldest image file to make room for the new image file to be stored in your backup partition. If either of your hard drives should fail on you, all you have to do is to remove the failed drive and place an empty new drive in its place. Then using True Image, you find the latest condensed image of the partitions on the failed drive on the other drive's backup partition and restore that image to recreate the partitions and all of their content on the empty drive. This lets you be back up and running your computer in a matter of minutes instead of days or weeks rebuilding your system. If the drive that failed was your first drive containing your operating system, that is no problem. You can boot True Image from a rescue CD or diskette that True Image will create for you and quickly rebuild your operating system partitions from the second drive's backup partition.

What if both hard drives fail together: While it is rare, it is possible for both of your hard drives to fail at the same time, thus leaving you without either of your backup partitions to use to rebuild the other hard drive. For example, your computer could be burned in a fire or taken by a thief. In these cases, you'd lose not only your main drive, but your backup images as well. So, you need to make some special provisions to guard against these situations. I'd recommend that every 3 months, after you have backed up your partitions using the cross backup approach, you copy your image files to an external hard drive or CDs. While this may take a while to do, it will give you an inexpensive removable backup of your entire hard drive that you can store away from your computer. I would repeat this process of creating backup CDs of your entire hard drive every 3 months or so.

Summary: If you follow the suggestions in this article, then you will have a comprehensive backup plan that will protect both your important data files as well as your entire hard drive. You must make sure that you follow the time intervals suggested so that your backups are current enough to be usable. Acronis True Image product, a second hard drive, and a CD-R/RW drive are all the software and hardware you need to run this backup plan. A second hard drive and a CD-R/RW drive can both be purchased for about \$100 each. Faster models are available for only a few dollars more. User group members can purchase True Image at the user group price of \$33 on a CD (\$29 as a download) by accessing a secure web order form at www.usergroupstore.com. Click on the yellow "Buy Now" button next to the products you wish to purchase. You will need to enter the name of your user group and the special code UGNL0102. I wish you success in setting up your backup plan.

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Backup Approaches Compared

by Gene Barlow, User Group Relations , www.ugr.com, gene@ugr.com

For the past few years, I have recommended the Perfect Backup Approach as the best way to backup your computer's hard drive (see www.ugr.com/newsletters.html). I have lectured on this topic, published a tutorial on it (see www.ugr.com/tutorials.html), and have personally advised many of my friends to use this approach. From my research, this is clearly the best way for end-users to backup their hard drives today.

I am always surprised when some users prefer a different backup approach to use. My concern is that they may not have given the various approaches a thorough comparison. I hope this article will help users compare the various backup approaches and learn why the Perfect Backup Approach is the best one to use.

Another factor to consider is what needs to be backed up on your computer. Your data files are important items that need to be backed up regularly. But that is not enough. Our computers are very complex and contain tens of thousands of files that are changing constantly. The effort to rebuild our computer software may take days or weeks to complete. Today, we must backup our entire hard drives and not just a few data files.

This article will compare the four most popular backup approaches in use today. I hope it will help you understand why the Perfect Backup Approach is the best of the bunch.

Four Backup Approaches

There are four backup approaches that are commonly used on personal computers today. These are the following:

- File Backup Approach
- Clone Backup Approach
- Full Backup Image Approach
- Full & Incremental Backup Image Approach (aka Perfect Backup Approach)

I will briefly describe each of these four approaches and then try to describe the comparisons between these four approaches that concern most end users. Acronis True Image 10.0 Home edition is the only backup product on the market that can do all four of these approaches, so no matter which approach you choose, True Image is the best backup utility to use.

File Backup Approach: The File Backup Approach is the oldest and most common backup method used on personal computers. I would estimate that of the dozens of backup utilities available, 90% of them are file backup utilities. With this approach, you select which of the many files stored on your main hard drive to backup and the utility will copy each of these files individually to your backup device. It is possible to select all of the files on your main hard drive to backup, but this approach is not very good as we will see later.

Clone Backup Approach: This approach became popular a few years ago to let you adequately backup your entire hard drive. With the Clone (or Copy) Backup Approach, you make an exact copy of your main hard drive to another hard drive inside your computer. Then if anything happens to your main hard drive, you simply replace it with the cloned hard drive and you are up and running again. While this approach seems simple and straight forward, it is not a very efficient way to do backups today.



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Full Backup Image Approach: The imaging approach copies the physical sectors of your main hard drive to the backup device instead of copying each file separately. So, the backups were much faster than individual file by file backups. Images could also be quickly restored to a new hard drive on your computer and let your computer be used again in a few minutes. The backup images could also be compressed to save room on your backup device. While much better than the first two backup approaches, this is not the most efficient way to store your backup images.

Full & Incremental Backup Image Approach: The next step in improving the backup technology came when Acronis introduced True Image that could make not only full backup images of your main hard drive, but could also make incremental backup images of just the changes to your hard drive since the last backup was made. This permitted frequent backups to be taken for maximum protection, but still conserves your backup storage space. Combined with an external hard drive to save your backup images on, this was the basis of the Perfect Backup Approach and is the best way to do backups today.

Backup Approaches Compared

	File Backup	Clone Backup	Full Image Backup	Full/Incremental Image Backup
Basic Approach	Individual files copied and condensed to backup device one at a time.	Entire hard drive copied to another hard drive.	Entire hard drive sectors are copied and condensed on backup device.	Entire hard drive or just changes to hard drive are copied to backup device.
Backup Device Types	Hard drive (external, internal, or network) drives, or CD/DVD.	Internal or external hard drives.	Hard drive (external, internal, or network) drives, or CD/DVD.	Hard drive (external, internal, or network) drives, or CD/DVD.
Individual File Backups	Yes	No	No	No
Full System Backups	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Backup Space	Used File Space	Entire Hard Drive	Used File Space	Only Changed File Space.
Backup Speed	Slow	Medium	Medium	Fast
Restore approach	Create & Format partitions. Install OS, restore individual files.	Place Cloned hard drive inside computer.	Restore image to new hard drive.	Restore full & incremental images to new hard drive.
Restored Items	Individual Files	Entire Hard Drive	Individual Files or Entire Hard Drive.	Individual Files or Entire Hard Drive.
Restore Speed	Very Slow & Complex.	Medium	Medium	Medium
Worst Feature	Slow Backups. Poor backups of full system. Complex Restores of full system.	Requires new hard drive for each new backup. Need 3 as minimum.	Restore Image step required. Storage Space.	Restore Image step required.
Best Feature	Backup just a few files. Not really adequate today.	Simple physical replacement.	Quickly restore full hard drive.	Quickly restore full hard drive. Minimal backup drive space.

The following table compares the four backup approaches commonly used today to let you see how one approach stacks up against the other approaches. The comparisons are kept small in size to let you quickly compare the various approaches. I think that the Perfect Backup Approach will stand out as clearly the best of the bunch as you read this comparison.

Summary of Backup Approaches

The following is a brief summary of the various advantages and disadvantages of the four backup approaches.

File Backup Approach: This approach is generally the slowest method of doing a backup. You need to find and specify all of your files to be backed up by this approach, which can be time consuming and difficult to do. Its ability to backup your full hard drive and get it working again after a hard drive crash is poor and complex. I would only recommend this approach for backing up a few important data files. That leaves you exposed when your entire hard drive crashes. It's an old approach and complicated to use. Avoid the File Backup Approach.

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Clone Backup Approach: This approach is sometimes used to protect you from a hard drive crash. It is not a very efficient way to backup your entire hard drive since it requires an entire backup hard drive for each backup you do. A minimum of three physical backup hard drives would be required to do this approach decently. You also need to continually swap hard drives inside and out of your computer box with this approach. This requires you to be a computer mechanic or pay for extra hardware to help remove the internal hard drive without opening your computer box. This approach is costly and requires a lot of physical drive swapping for an inefficient way to do backups. Another approach to avoid.

Full Backup Image Approach: This backup approach uses modern technology to do its job. Backups are fast and cover your entire hard drive and not just a few selected files. While a restore is required to put your main hard drive back in operation, this is usually very fast. With condensed images, you can also store several full backup images on your backup device, so it is fairly efficient in the backup storage space. This is a good second approach to consider.

Full & Incremental Backup Image Approach: This is the Perfect Backup Approach that I have recommended for years. It is an excellent way to backup your entire hard drive and you can rebuild a working hard drive in a few minutes. It is also an excellent way to backup your individual files that have recently changed. The incremental backup system makes this automatic and easy to do. Using the incremental images, you can save many backup images on one external hard drive. It is the fastest and most space efficient way to do your backups.

Acronis True Image 10.0 Home

The Acronis True Image 10.0 Home edition backup utility is the top rated backup utility on the market today. As I said earlier, it can do all backup approaches covered in this article. So, you can try them all without having to learn a new backup utility for each approach.

To get you started to backup your computer, we offer Acronis True Image 10.0 Home edition at an excellent discount price of just \$33 on a CD (\$29 as a download). This product normally sells for \$50. To make it easy for you to start to use this excellent product, you can order the CD for \$33 plus shipping. The CD contains the Acronis True Image 10.0 Home edition software, a 45 minute tutorial on the Perfect Backup Approach, a step by step guide to installing and using the product on your computer, and the entire True Image users guide from Acronis. So, order the CD and get all of these items ready to go on the CD.

To order the product, go to www.usergroupstore.com and in the backup section of the web site you will find a description of Acronis True Image 10.0 Home. Click one of the Buy Now buttons under the description of True Image to purchase either the download or the CD. The special order code for this item is UGNL0607.

I hope this article helps you to choose what backup approach you want to use on your computer. If you have not started to backup your computer on a regular basis, now is the time to get started. If you have been using an older version of True Image, you should really get the latest Acronis True Image 10.0 Home edition with all of the new support for Windows Vista and for automatic backups. If you have any questions about True Image or this article, please send me an email to gene@ugr.com and I will be happy to assist you.

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When it comes to MP3 management, there are a lot of programs out there that will do a lot of things. It is often hard to find a good power tool that will let you organize and rename your files, and going through each one - one by one - is torture. If you find yourself in this boat, it is about time you paddled up and asked for your favor from the GodFather. GodFather is a freeware application that delivers when it comes to customizing your MP3 experience. It has more features than you can shake a stick at as well. Here is what the developer of the program has to say about it. "The GodFather is an intelligent MP3 renamer and organizer, that helps you get rid of all those strange MP3 file names and convert them into a consistent name scheme, based on the artist, song, album information etc. contained in the MP3 tag. The program will scan your MP3 folders and automatically suggest candidates for new names, showing you the old and suggested name in the result window." There is a good guide to help you reorganize your music using GodFather to help you get started.

Some people's music collections are the most important thing they own. They will trim it, they will keep it organized and they will not let anybody mess it up. To make sure your collection of tunes stays intact and easily manageable, I'd suggest you use GodFather for all of your audio management issues. <http://users.forthnet.gr/the/jtclipper/>

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)



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Additional Backup Approach Comparisons

Let me start with a fairly new approach to backups that you may have heard about. Using this approach, you backup a few of your key data files to a storage location on the Internet. If something should happen to any of these data files, you can retrieve them from their Internet location. At first glance, this approach seems attractive and some have tried it. However, there are problems with this approach that you should be aware of.

Internet Backup Approach

First, it is by no means a full backup solution for your computer. You will only be able to backup a few of your data files using this approach and not your entire hard drive. So, if your hard drive should crash on you, your internet backup of a few data files will not help you to get your system back up and running. You will need to do a total rebuild of your hard drive including the operating system, all of your application programs, your setting files, and any of your data files that you did not store on the Internet. This rebuilding process could take you days or weeks to complete and you may never get your computer working again the way it was before.

That places the Internet Backup approach close to the File Backup approach in the comparisons, but with more restrictions on it than the File Backup approach. Transferring files to the Internet is a very slow process. Also, you will be limited to saving fewer files on the Internet than on an external hard drive. A minimal amount of Internet space may be provided for free, but additional space will cost you each month to use it. Files stored on the Internet will not be quickly and readily accessible like the files you store on an external hard drive. Finally, the Internet has too many security issues for my important files to be placed there.

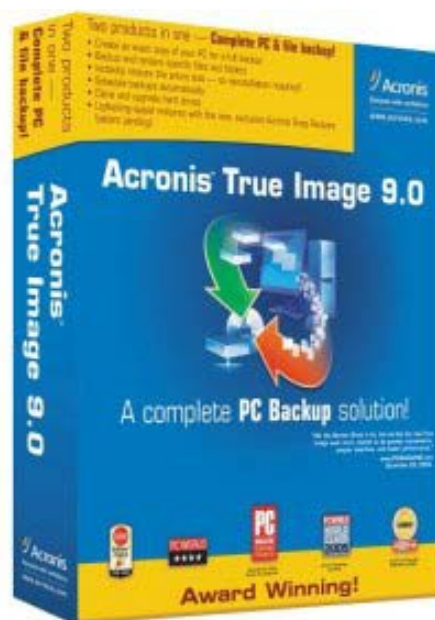
In summary, I would put the Internet Backup approach at the bottom of my lists of valid backup approaches. It is a partial backup solution at best and the number and size of the files that can use this approach is limited. If you are still interested in this approach, Acronis True Image 10 Home has the ability to do backups to FTP (Internet) sites, but pick another approach and you will be better off.

Differential Backup Approach

Another backup approach I forgot to include was the Differential Image backup approach added to Acronis True Image 9.0 a couple of years ago. This approach is quite similar to the Incremental Image backup approach I recommend in the Perfect Backup Approach. So, let me explain what this approach is and how it is different from the Incremental Image backup approach.

With the Incremental Image backup approach you use True Image to create a full backup image file of your entire hard drive at the beginning of each month. Then at the end of each week during the month, you create an incremental backup image file of just the changes that have occurred to your hard drive since the last time you backed it up (a week ago). At the beginning of the next month, you create a new full backup image file and follow it with incremental backup image files each week. For each month, the full backup image file combined with the 3-4 incremental backup images files make up what is called an image set. The image set can be used by True Image to put the hard drive back together as it was at the last backup or at any week during the month (or at any week in prior months). True Image also gives you the ability to retrieve individual files or folders from any of these backup points. This is the power and flexibility that you get with the recommended Incremental Image backup approach.

The Differential Image backup approach is very similar to the incremental approach. At the beginning of the month, you create a full backup image of your entire hard drive. Then at each following week, you create a differential backup image file that includes the contents of the last differential image file plus any changes that have occurred to your hard drive in the past week. The prior differential image file is left on your hard drive for you to delete after True Image creates a new differential image file. An image set using the differential approach includes just two files, the full backup image file and the latest differential image file. You will notice that the differential image file is a growing file that collects all of the changes to the hard drive after the full backup image is made at the beginning of the month. To make this differential backup image approach work best, you must delete the prior differential image file as soon as True Image creates the new differential image file for you.



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How does the differential backup image approach compare to the incremental backup image approach? The advantage most cited for differential backup images is that the file space to store the one differential image is less than storing several incremental images. As a practical matter, the difference in size is relatively small and so this is not a big savings.

Another advantage cited for differential image files is that they are faster to restore since the changes are already merged together into one image file. In reality, True Image can merge 3-4 incremental images in just a few seconds, so the time savings on the restore would be just a second or two. Not enough to worry about. The big disadvantage with the differential image approach is that you lose the flexibility to restore to a weekly backup point like you can do with incremental images. With differential images, you can either restore to the one differential image file timeframe or back to the full image taken at the beginning of the month. This is a critical weakness of the differential image approach and is the main reason I recommend doing incremental images instead.

To overcome the flexibility limitation of the differential backup image approach, some users will not delete the old differential image files, but will let them collect on their external hard drive, much like you collect the incremental image files. With many differential image files to select from, you can pick the exact backup point to restore your files from like you can do with incremental image files.

So, how does this modified differential backup image approach now compare to the incremental backup image approach? It costs you space on your backup hard drive. The first differential image file contains the changes for week 1. The second differential image file contains the changes for week 1 and 2. The third differential image file contains the changes for week 1 and 2 and 3. I think you get the picture. The result is that the space on your backup external hard drive is being wasted and hence you cannot save as many backup images as the incremental backup image approach. Although the differential backup approach is pretty good, the incremental backup approach is better in all cases.

Backup Approaches Compared

So, let's summarize the backup approaches listed in this article and in the prior article. I will list them along with a ranking from 1 to 10 of the effectiveness of the backup approach. That should show why the Perfect Backup Approach (Incremental backup images) is the best approach to select for your backup plan.

Partial Backup Approaches

Internet Backup Approach (effectiveness: 1) A partial backup solution that is slow and costly.

File Backup Approach (effectiveness: 2) A partial backup solution that is a bit faster and less expensive.

Full Backup Approaches

Clone Backup Approach (effectiveness: 3) A full backup solution that takes up one hard drive for each backup. Very inefficient hard drive space usage.

Full Backup Image Approach (effectiveness: 6) A full backup solution that can save a few backups on one backup drive.

Differential Backup Image Approach (effectiveness: 8) A full backup solution that is fairly efficient on backup hard drive space. Lacks restore flexibility.

Incremental Backup Image Approach (effectiveness: 9) A full backup solution that is very efficient on backup hard drive space. The Perfect Backup Approach.

Acronis True Image 10 Home

Acronis True Image 10 Home is the one backup utility on the market that can do all of the backup approaches mentioned in these two articles. That lets you use one product and try the various approaches to find the one that best fits your needs. For this and many other reasons, this backup utility has become the highest rated backup product on the market by PC Magazine, PC World, and many other industry experts. You can't go wrong with this outstanding product on your system.

To order this excellent backup utility, go to www.usergroupstore.com and click on Acronis True Image 10.0 Home. You can purchase this product at our user group discount price of only \$29 as a download or \$33 on a CD. If you order the CD, you also get our Perfect Backup Approach tutorial and some technical papers on how to install and use the product. The order code to use when placing your order is UGNL0707.

I hope this information helps you to understand the various ways that you can backup your computer. Using Acronis True Image 10.0 Home edition and an external hard drive is the best way to go. If you have questions about this article or the use of your True Image software, please send a note to gene@ugr.com and I will try to assist you.

Using a Restore Point

by **Larry Bothe**, an honorary member of the Fox Valley PC Association, IL and an associate member of CAEUG, IL, www.fvpca.org, www.caeug.net, deanholste@sbcglobal.net

Recently, while in a big hurry to get a lot of work done before leaving on vacation, my computer started up with a blank screen. No mouse, no images, no text, no error message, no nothing. I had no choice but to just shut it down using the on/off switch. I then tried to start it again, this time watching very carefully to see what happened (I was getting coffee the first time). It went through the BIOS start (black & white screens with text) OK; then gave a brief color flash of the Windows XP logo, then nothing. The hard drive activity light was flashing so I knew the machine was trying. I was encouraged by the Windows startup sounds, but never got an image.

I recalled that the evening before I had received a warning from my computer security software that some program was trying to make a change to something it thought was a danger. I was in a hurry and I OK'd it without reading it thoroughly. Thinking back I decided that perhaps I had OK'd a bad thing that resulted in changing some setting in the operating system (Windows XP Home). I then crossed my fingers and tried starting the machine in Safe Mode. You do that by turning on the machine and then repeatedly pushing the F8 key until you get the black & white screen that lets you select the startup mode. Using the arrow keys I selected Safe Mode and pressed Enter. I lucked out and it started in Safe Mode.

Once in Safe Mode I decided to restore the system settings to an earlier point in time when everything worked correctly. In Windows XP every time you shut down your computer it takes a snapshot of your operating system settings and saves them into what is called a restore point. If you later install a program or get attacked by a virus that alters your system settings such that the machine no longer runs right you can in theory go back to some prior point in time when the machine ran correctly and restore the settings to what they were then. That's called a restore point.

Note that you have to uninstall the offending program or get rid of the virus before you attempt a restore. Otherwise the program or virus will just alter your settings once again. Also note that going back to some prior restore point will not delete any files you created and saved after the restore point you select. You won't lose any data. However, I had never tried this before so didn't quite know what to expect.

In order to get into the routine you do Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore. After clicking System Restore you select Restore my computer to an earlier time, and then follow the prompts. The routine lets you choose a date you want to restore to. I had to think about that. It ran well the previous day, but that was the day the settings were changed. I chose to go back 2 days to be sure I was well before the bad thing occurred. I finished the restore procedure and the machine restarted perfectly. It turned out to be a really good use of the restore point feature in XP.

I mentioned above that you must first get rid of whatever changed your settings in the first place before you do the restore. If you don't then you risk that it will simply alter your settings once again and you'll be right back where you were with a sick machine. In my haste to fix my computer I didn't take that corrective action, so when it restarted the malware once again tried to alter my settings. And once again my security software caught it and presented a warning. Being a bit smarter this time I clicked on Deny instead of Allow (OK). After the machine came up running properly I used my security

software (Zone Alarm Security Suite) to do a full system scan for any malicious software. It did indeed find one bad thing (in addition to several spyware items), which I told it to remove. I guess that was it because I have had no more trouble. No, I can't tell you exactly what the offending malicious software was because I didn't write it down, and I have slept since then.

I learned several lessons from this little episode. A good suite of computer security programs is worth every penny you pay for it. Even cautious computer users like me can get caught up in a virus problem. When your security software presents a warning you need to pay attention; I won't be so quick to click on Allow in the future. Finally, the System Restore feature in Windows XP is worth its weight in owl feathers. It is easy to use and very effective under the right circumstances.

Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an honorary member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a time back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. Larry presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from the plastics industry and currently teaches people to fly airplanes. He also performs pilot examinations for the FAA.

Understanding Your Computer's BIOS

by **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**, a Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida, www.spcug.org , bwsail@yahoo.com

The computer's basic input/output system (BIOS) is really a major key to its proper operation. The BIOS differs from one computer to another depending on the make of the motherboard and the make of the computer itself. So let's look at what it does and why it is so important for the operation of your computer.

When you wake up your computer by turning on the power, the first component to be activated is the computer processor. The CPU is preprogrammed to look for a location in the RAM memory, usually near the end of system memory. This location contains a jump instruction to the location in memory of the BIOS program. On activation the BIOS starts executing a series of diagnostic instructions to verify that the computer is functioning properly. One of the first tests is the power-on self test (POST). If there are any fatal errors the computer will shut down and not proceed further. Some computers have a series of "beep" codes that can help a technician in determining the cause of the failure.

On some computers one of the first indications that the boot process is proceeding normally is the graphics card display on the video screen. This is because the BIOS has found and loaded the video BIOS. Then you will see either a manufacturer's splash screen or the sequence of messages from the BIOS. The BIOS also looks for any other connected devices, such as SCSI or SATA drives, that have a BIOS Read only Memory (ROM) and those instructions will be loaded into memory. If the manufacturer's splash screen isn't hiding the start-up info, you will see the memory count, the floppy, hard drive and CD/DVD drive identification lines appearing on the screen.

The BIOS carries out a system inventory that includes determining the memory timing information, connection of the keyboard, hard drive parameters, plug & play settings, etc. Further it loads the interrupt handlers, initializes the registers and resets the power management. The BIOS also displays a text-based summary screen. This summary includes the CPU and its clock speed, the drives that have been identified, their size and type, system memory size and configuration, video, com ports and parallel ports. Finally the BIOS looks for a boot drive.

Most modern BIOSes can boot from a wide array of devices, not just hard drives. They can boot from CD/DVD, flash drives, or external drives. In every case the BIOS uses the boot sequence information that is stored in the CMOS ROM. This is information that can be changed by the user. The term CMOS stands for Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor. Now you see why the name is abbreviated. Once the BIOS identifies the boot drive it searches for the master boot record and starts the operating system boot process on the drive. At that point control of the boot process is taken over by the operating system. Many functions relating to device drivers and plug & play devices handled by the BIOS are now handled directly by Windows.

All of the processes carried out by the BIOS are required to allow the hardware to interface with the operating system. Since the basic hardware in a computer can vary widely depending on the make and model, there must be a common interface for it to communicate with the operating system (OS). The OS cannot incorporate all the necessary low level routines for all the possible combinations of computer hardware. The BIOS provides this common interface.



Continued on page 45

The BIOS programming is usually contained in a chip on the motherboard referred to as an EEPROM chip. This is a programmable chip that can be altered by using software from the motherboard manufacturer. However, anytime you try to change the programming in this chip you can change it in such a way as to prevent your computer from booting. So great care should be taken anytime you need to upgrade your BIOS. It is always advisable to make a copy of the original BIOS on a removable disk so you can restore it if necessary. So when should you need to upgrade your BIOS? In some cases manufacturers will make BIOS upgrades available which will allow you to upgrade your CPU with a newer version. Or they make a change to allow the BIOS to recognize faster system memory or more memory. You must always ensure that the BIOS upgrade you plan on installing is specific for your motherboard. So you need to know the manufacturer and the motherboard model. Just remember, a mistake may make your computer unusable, requiring a major repair such as replacing the motherboard. Unless, of course, you made a backup of the original BIOS.

The CMOS portion of the BIOS is also very important to the proper function of your computer. The settings in the CMOS are retained by use of a low-voltage battery on the motherboard. In some few modern motherboards you can no longer find the battery. That's because it is integrated into another chip and is non-replaceable. Although the battery may have a long life span (more than five years), some computers are still going strong after ten years. Some motherboards may use nonvolatile RAM that doesn't require a battery to keep the information safe. In this case the battery, if one is present, is used only for the real-time clock. So when the battery fails, the computer can still boot.

In order to change any of the CMOS settings you have to use a key stroke, or series of key strokes, during the early part of the boot-up process. The most common keystroke is that of the AMI BIOS that uses just the DEL key to access the setup program. However, some manufacturers use other specific keystrokes and may even vary the combination from one model to another. So it is advisable that you check your owner's manual for specific instructions on how to access the setup program in your computer. This setup may be called the BIOS setup, the CMOS setup or some combination of these terms.

The setup program allows you to change some parameters related to the operation of your computer. Generally you can set the system time and date in the CMOS. As mentioned earlier, you can change the boot sequence in the CMOS to select the order in which the BIOS will look for a bootable drive. The CMOS setup allows you to specify how fast your computer reads from memory, whether or not your CPU's cache is enabled or disabled and how fast your PCI bus communicates with its adapter cards. In the advanced settings, you can modify other parameters such as power management, USB settings, and enable or disable I/O ports. You may also be able to set the computer to turn on in response to an incoming call on a modem or a request via a local network. In some motherboards the CMOS settings allow you to "overclock" your system. This means that you can set your CPU and/or system memory to operate at a frequency higher than the standard manufacturers' values. Unless used with great care, changing these values can destabilize the computer operation. The settings in the CMOS will vary depending on the computer manufacturer and the make of the BIOS. Some manufacturers make their own BIOS chips while others purchase them from companies such as AMI, Phoenix or WinBond. Reading your user manual or motherboard manual will give you a better idea of just what is included in your setup program.

The setup program uses a "CMOS checksum" as an error-detecting code. Each time you change the BIOS settings, the checksum is generated by adding all the bytes in the CMOS memory and then storing the lowest byte of the sum. Then, each time the system is booted, the system recomputes the checksum and compares it with the stored value. If they are different, then the system knows that the CMOS has been corrupted somehow and will warn you with an error, typically something like "CMOS Checksum Error". Then you need to enter the setup program and check the settings. Usually, once you save the settings and exit setup, the computer will boot normally.

Most of the preceding information applies when you first start the computer after it has been off for a time. This is called a "cold boot". If you restart your computer from Windows using the "restart" selection, or the "three-finger salute" (CTRL-ALT-Del), or the "reset" button, then this is a "warm boot". Then most of the POST is omitted and the BIOS reloads interrupts, device drivers, checks the CMOS and loads the peripheral BIOSes. Then the memory, drives and summary are displayed on the video screen.

As I hope you now realize, the BIOS and its associated CMOS are essential for the operation of your computer. Always be cautious in making changes in the setup or in updating your BIOS. That way you can ensure continued operation of your system.

There is another thing I should mention. Use of the BIOS originated with the IBM AT some twenty-five years ago. As computer technology has changed radically in this time span, there is a move afoot to replace the BIOS with what is referred to as "UEFI" or Unified Extensible Firmware Interface. The specifications for this interface were first published in October 2006 and revised in January 2007. The statement of purpose from the UEFI organization is as follows: "The Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI) specification defines a new model for the interface between operating systems and platform firmware. The interface consists of data tables that contain platform-related information, plus boot and runtime service calls that are available to the operating system and its loader. Together, these provide a standard environment for booting an operating system and running pre-boot applications."

Currently the companies involved are working on producing motherboards using the UEFI firmware in place of the BIOS. However, there is also some consideration that some users may need to have both a BIOS and the UEFI firmware. Since this process is still in flux, keep tuned for future developments.

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



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Portable Data

By **Corinne Goeke**, a member of the Computer Club of Green Valley, Arizona, Cmgoeke@yahoo.com, <http://gvcc.apcug.org/>

Which of the following is an item for storing computer data?

- A) Thumb Drive
- B) Jump Drive
- C) Flash Drive
- D) Key Drive
- D) Memory Stick
- E) USB Stick
- F) UFD
- G) All of the above



If you guessed “G,” good for you. All of the above names refer to UFDs or “USB Flash Drives.” USB, of course, refers to those little rectangular ports you can find (although there never seems to be enough of them) on the back and front of most computers.

So what is a UFD? You see them connected to people's key chains, hanging around necks on a cord and stuck in pockets and purses! Simply put, a UFD is a really convenient data storage device. Think of a one-gigabyte UFD as being 694 floppy disks all packed into a two-inch long by 1/2-inch wide package.

UFDs are data storage devices that have replaced CDs, floppies and other methods of carrying data from computer to computer. Plug one into a USB port on any computer, and you can read and write files on it. It is now the method of choice for transporting data that you need often.

In fact, there is a special class of UFDs called U3 that can also store applications. Plug one of these UFDs into a computer, and you can run Mozilla Firefox, Open Office, or even utilize an operating system such Linux.

The cost of a UFD depends upon the number of bytes it can hold. A 64 megabyte UFD used to be considered more than enough storage. But as the size of data files has increased, so has the size of UFDs. Fortunately, the prices for large storage has dropped considerably. You can pick up a 1 Gigabyte UFD for around \$15. A large UFD currently available is a 16 Gigabyte that sells for \$133 at www.newegg.com.

Finally, your choice of UFD can reflect your individuality. You don't have to settle for the standard gray plastic housing. You can buy UFDs that look like twigs <http://inhabitat.com/2006/02/08/ooms-twigg-usb-drive/> or even animal characters <http://lab.mimoco.com/>.

So, if you find you need to transport data files from computer to computer, a UFD is an easy solution. They are available anywhere you can buy electronics.

A word of caution. To avoid losing data, be sure to eject a UFD before removing it from the USB port. You can go to MyComputer, right click on the UFD device and select eject. Or you can use the Safely Remove Icon on the lower right corner of your desktop.

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Moving on to Vista – Part 1

by **Neil Stahfest**, Shareware Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA, www.tapcug.org, ncstahfest@msn.com

I tested a pre-release version of Windows Vista last year. I thought that the eye candy was nice but there really wasn't a lot about the program to make it worth upgrading my PC to use it. Since then I've heard stories about problems with Vista that made me even reluctant to upgrade to it. But, things happen. I "needed" a new laptop to demonstrate programs for the Flight Simulator S.I.G. <wink><wink> Many of you will be buying new computers in the next year or so, so I'll share some of my experiences and impressions with you.

I took the plunge in August 2007 and bought a new HP laptop. And of course it only comes pre-loaded with Windows Vista. (Note - If you buy a new PC, make sure you get at least the Vista Home Premium Version. The Home Basic Version is crippled, you won't like it, and the manufacture may even provide the Premium version as a "free" upgrade.)

I opened the box, plugged in the battery charger, turned the PC on (per the instructions) and the computer worked. HP pre-activates Windows Vista saving you from going through the exercise of activating it. I had to answer a few questions of course; name, password, my preference for my desktop, etc. Nothing too difficult. So now I have Windows Vista and it works.

Connection to my wireless home LAN was important to me; fortunately Vista made that very easy. Just follow the Internet Wizard, a click here, a click there and you are connected. The first thing I used the Internet connection for was to check for Windows Vista updates. There were about 18. I'm not sure what they were all supposed to do, but for now, I decided to trust Microsoft and installed all of them.

The next few days were spent playing with the computer, learning what things did. I sure miss the days when you got a "real" manual with a PC. It took me five days to discover a pressure sensitive strip at the top of the keyboard that lets you increase and decrease speaker volume by sliding your finger over it. Searching the Hewlett Packard web site I located a manual for my computer (in .pdf format) and downloaded it for future reference.

I never have cared for the touch pads that they put on laptop PCs to provide a mouse function but this one works pretty good. Still, I prefer a real mouse. Unfortunately, this laptop doesn't have the standard mouse connector like my old laptop. HP only provides USB connections so none of the mice I have will work on it. A check at the web site of my favorite PC supply store indicated that they were out of stock. As luck would have it, later the same day, I was walking past the writing supplies area in my local Safeway when I spotted a laptop mouse manufactured by Targus. For \$19 and change I bought a cute little two button USB optical mini-mouse (no mouse pad required) with a little thing on the connecting wire that lets me pull out as much or as little wire as I need. Problem solved! (Update – I lost my original mouse after about three weeks. I discovered that Office Max sells a variety of mini-mice made by different manufacturers. I bought another Targus mini-mouse.)

Personal computers are very personal. I spent most of the first week that I owned this computer, customizing it. I added utility and application programs that do what I need to do the way I like to do it. Vista may offer "better" ways to organize and present information. If so I'll probably discover them. In the meantime my desktop looks similar to my old Windows XP computer, littered with desktop icons that are shortcuts to various programs.



Moving on to Vista – Part 2

by **Neil Stahfest**, Shareware Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA, www.tapcug.org, ncstahfest@msn.com

One of the most irritating things about Windows Vista is the repetitious messages that appear whenever you attempt to install a new program. First you see a box with that asks, “Are you sure you want to run this program?” Once you get past this point, you see another box which says, “Unidentified program wants access to your computer”, “Allow” or “Cancel”. In some cases, once the program is installed, every time you attempt to run it you see a warning, “A program needs your permission to continue”.

I suppose this is part of Microsoft's attempt to improve security and protect users from “malware”. For a long-time, “experienced”, Windows User, these warnings seem like overkill. One of the first things I did was to search the Internet for a way to turn them off. Microsoft will tell you not to do this (it weakens their security system) but, for the knowledgeable user, here is the solution. Click Start --> Control Panel. In the left panel, make sure that you are in the Classic View. Double-click User Accounts. Click “Turn User Account Control on or off”. Clear the check box and click OK. Reboot the computer.

I'm not sure if I like the new Vista Start menu. You open it by left-clicking on the Start button or pressing the Windows key. The colors are more brilliant in the new menu and the order of some things has been changed to place things that are used more frequently near the top. For those who prefer something closer to what you see with Windows XP, Microsoft has provided an alternative. Put your mouse pointer on the Task Bar at the bottom of the screen and left-click. In the window that appears click on “Properties”. Click on the Start Menu tab; then click on the button for a “Classic Start Menu” and click OK. Notice that at the bottom of this page is a hyper-link (blue text) “How do I change the way the Start Menu looks”. Click on it to see the many options.

For those who want to change the right half of the NEW Start menu, place your mouse pointer on the Task Bar at the bottom of the screen again and right-click. In the window that appears click on “Properties” and then Start Menu tab and click on the “Customize” button. The top half of the screen shows all of the items that are available and the manner that they are available (you'll probably have to scroll down to see everything). Point and click to turn items on and off. Experiment a little. Turn things on and off. You can reverse the selections that you made if you don't like them or click on the “Use Default Settings” button to restore everything to the original condition. Note that you can do the same thing if you select the “Classic Start Menu” instead of “Start Menu”.

There was one “last” convenience item that I wanted to add to my desktop. I like to go directly to “Computer” (it used to be called “My Computer” in Windows XP) for fast access to hard drives and file folders without going through the Start Menu. This is easy to set up in Vista - just right-click on an empty area of the desktop and click on “Personalize”. On the left side of the window, under “Tasks”, click on “Change Desktop Icons”. Under “Desktop Icons”, click on “Computer” so a check mark appears in the box next to it.

Before you leave this window, notice that you can also change the icons that are used for each of the selected items. You can also pick one of the default icons, click on the “Change Icon” button and select an alternate from a library of icons. If you change your mind about the icon you picked you can click the “Restore Default” button. When you are finished with changes click OK.



Make Vista Work Better

by **Vinny La Bash**, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL,
www.spcug.org, vlabash@comcast.net

No matter how good an operating system may be, someone will complain that it could have been better. Vista is a very good operating system that some people find wanting. Some people are never satisfied, but that is not the issue here. Of course Vista should have been better, but Microsoft has only so much time and resources to develop a system, and Vista was late to market in addition to being less than perfect.

In this article we'll show how to make Vista work better for you, and that's all we can reasonably ask of any operating system. Let's take care of the power users first. Power users are too impatient for menus. They think menus are for wimps. After encountering Vista User Account Control they may have a point.

Left-click the orb at the bottom left side of the screen.

In the Search box type `cmd.exe`.

Right-click on `cmd.exe` and choose Properties from the popup menu.

Select Pin to the Start Menu.

The Command Prompt is now always available from the Start menu. If you would like to make additional tweaks to the prompt, right-click the shortcut from the Start menu and choose Properties.

The blinking cursor, otherwise known as the insertion point, tells you where you can type or insert text. The cursor can be difficult to locate because it's so thin, but Vista has a way to fatten it up.

Open Control Panel.

A dialog box appears. In the upper right corner, type "Optimize visual display."

The Ease of Access Center icon will appear. Select the link below the icon.

Locate the Make the focus rectangle thicker box and put a checkmark in it.

Set the thickness to whatever you like. Don't get carried away with some ridiculous number. Bumping up the thickness by one or two points should be sufficient.

When you install a large high resolution monitor, you quickly become aware of the relationship between high resolution and eyestrain. Vista provides a way to make text easier to read without having to sacrifice resolution.

From the Start Menu open Control Panel.

In the Search box at the upper right corner of the dialog box, type adjust font size.

The resulting list will probably consist of one item, Adjust font size.

Select it and you can choose to accept the larger text option or click on the Custom DPL button and experiment.

Vista comes equipped with an excellent Snipping Tool that was originally designed for a different version of Windows. In its generosity, Microsoft chose to include the tool in every version of Vista except Vista Home Basic, which is fine because nobody should buy Vista Home Basic. Snippy lets you capture any portion of a screen, either rectangular or free form. You can

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then paste it into a document, email or save it as a graphic. Don't use it to copy and paste text for editing because a graphic image can't be edited like text. Here's how to get it:

From the Start Menu type snip in the search box.

The Snipping Tool should be at the top of the list. Right-click on it and select Pin to the Start Menu. You can also add it to the Quick Launch Bar if you like.

Vista has added several new wrinkles to the Quick Launch bar. It's been around since Windows 95, but it's never been more useful. If you hold the shift key down while right-clicking on a shortcut, you will see an expanded popup window with additional options. One option is to put the shortcut icon on the Quick Launch bar. You can still use the traditional drag and drop method, but having another alternative when the desktop isn't visible is always helpful.

When the Quick Launch bar is active, that means you can see it on the Task bar. If you need to activate Quick Launch right-click on a clean area of the Task bar. Drag your mouse to the Toolbars option, and select Quick Launch.

Each of the first ten shortcuts on the Quick Launch bar has its own custom keyboard shortcut. If the Calculator is the third icon from the left, press the Windows key and the number 3 and you activate the calculator. Limiting the number of built-in keyboard shortcuts may be Microsoft's way of telling you that more than ten items on the Quick Launch bar is too many.

Vista keyboard shortcuts are a great way of performing little tasks more easily. Instead of having to reach for your mouse, you can press two or three keystrokes. There are those keyboard shortcuts that are common to all versions of Windows and now there are some new ones. Among the new features introduced in Windows Vista, is a new set of shortcut keys that are used to launch various programs or perform different tasks. These new keyboard shortcuts are listed at right.

Windows Key + G
cycles through the Gadgets

Windows Key + L
locks the computer

Windows Key + U
activates the Ease Of Use Center

Windows Key + X
cycles through the Mobility Center

Windows Key + Spacebar
moves the focus to the Sidebar

Windows Key + Pause
opens the System Properties
portion of Control Panel

CTRL + Tab
opens persistent Flip 3D



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Vista Backup and Shadow Copy

by Lynn Page, Editor, Crystal River Users Group, Florida,
www.crug.com, newsletter@crug.com

Windows Vista helps easily back up computer settings, files, and applications. The new Windows Backup feature provides more choices for storing backed information. You can choose to back up to CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, external hard disk, another internal hard disk, or to another computer or server connected to your network. Automated scheduling allows for backup when and where you choose. Just use a wizard to schedule when and where you want to backup. If a disaster strikes and you need to recover a wizard helps select the files or folders to restore and prompts you for restore media. Then it restores the selected files.

Accidental file deletion or modification is a common cause of data loss. Windows Vista includes Volume Shadow Copy to help protect data. Shadow Copy automatically creates point in time copies of files as you work, so you can quickly retrieve versions of a document you accidentally deleted.

Shadow Copy

Shadow Copy is one of Vista's new features. It is available with Vista Ultimate, Business and Enterprise editions. Windows uses Shadow Copy to store copies of files and folders. With Shadow Copy, you can go back to an earlier version of a document or restore entire folders.

If you ever accidentally deleted or saved over a file you know how easy it is to lose data. Accidental file deletion or modification is a common cause of data loss. Windows Vista includes a useful innovation to help you protect your data: Shadow Copy. It automatically creates point in time copies of files as you work, so you can quickly retrieve versions you may have accidentally deleted. Shadow copy is turned on by default in Windows Vista and creates copies of files that have changed on a scheduled basis. Only incremental changes are saved, so little disk space is used.

To access shadow copy, right click a file or folder and select "Restore previous versions." Preview each file in a read-only version to determine which file to restore. To restore it drag the file to a folder, or select it and click "Restore" to restore it to its original location.

Shadow Copy archives the current version of your files when a restore point is created. So if you delete your restore points, you lose the saved copies of a file. All the copies are stored on the computer's hard drive. So think of Shadow Copy as a version restorer for emergency use not a backup utility.

Windows Backup and Restore Center

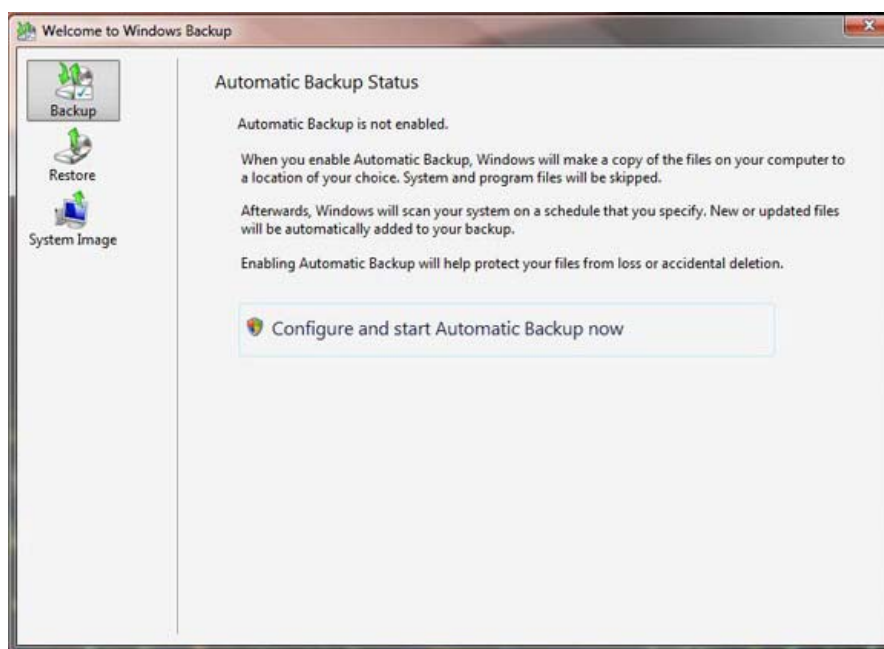
The file backup and restore features in Windows Vista make it easy to keep data safe from user error, hardware failure, and other problems. The Windows Backup and Restore Center provides a single place to manage backup and restore features.

Automatic Backup

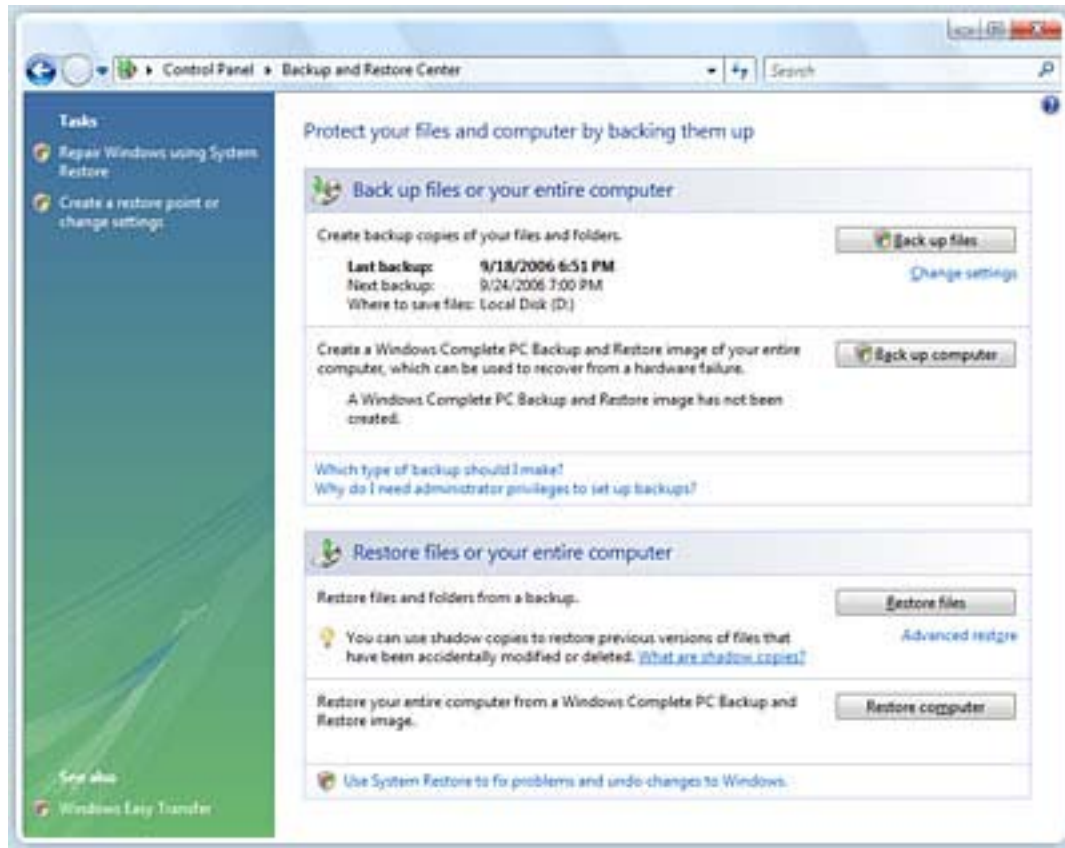
Automatic File Backup is available in most editions of Windows Vista (not included in Starter and has only basic functionality in Home Basic edition). It aids in keeping data files safe by backing them up. Windows Complete PC Backup is available in the Business, Ultimate, and Enterprise editions. It performs a complete, image-based backup of the entire computer.

Scheduled and Network Backup

Two features in Automatic Backup are the ability to do a scheduled backup and the ability to



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back up files to a network location. (Available in all editions of Windows Vista except for Home Basic.)

With Automatic Backup, you can back up files to an external hard drive, secondary hard drive, writable CD or DVD, or to a network location. File Backup Scheduling Wizard lets you schedule when to backup. Then Windows Vista will automatically make backups on the schedule you set.

Backups are incremental so they require only a small amount of disk space. If only a small part of a file changes (one slide in a presentation), only that portion gets tracked and saved.

Recovery

Windows Vista makes the recovery process a snap. A recovery wizard helps select the files or folders to restore and prompts you for the backup storage medium used. Then it restores the files or folders.

Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore

Available in Windows Vista Business, Ultimate, and Enterprise editions, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore is a comprehensive, image-based backup tool in case you need to recover your entire system.

While file restore is useful for file loss and data corruption, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore is useful for disaster recovery when your computer malfunctions. It helps create complete computer backups. Then in the event of a serious system issue or data loss, Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore can restore your entire computer environment, including the operating system, installed programs, user settings, and data files.

Restore your computer back to its original state or onto another computer. Windows Complete PC Backup and Restore can be initiated from Windows Vista or from the Windows Vista installation CD. So even if the computer can't start up normally from the hard disk it can be restored.

System Restore

System Restore allows a computer to be restored to an earlier state without losing data. This is ideal if the computer is not operating well because of a configuration change, a problem with an application, or the introduction of viruses or unwanted software. Restoring to an earlier point, before the computer began displaying problems, may resolve the problems. System Restore automatically creates identifiable restore points. Or you can manually create restore points at any time.

Weird Windows Behavior

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

Have you ever been completely dismayed by your computer? Does it seem to do unusual things that you can't trace back to any of your actions? Well, you are not alone. This happens to all computer users. In the computer world, unusual things sometimes happen. Here is a list of some weird computer behavior and how to combat it.

Icons disappear

Right-click on any open area of the computer desktop, then chose Arrange Icons By. If your icons have accidentally become hidden there will be no checkmark in front of Show Desktop Icons. Just click that option and your icons will reappear.

Unusual windows appear

Windows has a lot of keyboard shortcuts that can be accidentally accessed. For instance, when I started this column, I wanted to hit the Shift key and the letter "h" for the word Have. However, my finger slipped and I hit the Ctrl key and the letter "h" instead. A window popped up asking what I wanted to Find and Replace, which is not at all what I intended. If this ever happens you to you can usually just close the pop up window, but occasionally you have to look a little further into what happened. For instance, when working in Microsoft Word, if you accidentally hit Ctrl+N, a new window will appear making it look like you just lost your entire document. If you look closely you will be able to figure out that all you have to do is close the new window and the document you were working on will reappear.

If you can't figure out what happened or you get caught in a loop, restarting your computer will usually bring you back to normal.

Lost toolbars

As noted before, an errant key press can cause a problem. This time the culprit is one of the F keys. Accidentally pressing the F11 key can make the toolbars disappear. This is often used as a feature when you want to show something in what they call "full screen mode". If this happens to you, just press F11 again to make the toolbars return.

The toolbar moves

Have you ever had the toolbar that usually appears on the bottom of the screen show up on the side or top of the screen? There is an easy way to get it back where it belongs. Just place your cursor right next to, but not on, the Start button. Then hold the mouse button down and drag the toolbar back where it belongs.

Dramatic slowdown

A dramatic slowdown can mean that your hard disk is filling up. The computer uses the hard disk as sort of a scratch pad when it computes, so when your hard drive starts to fill up, it can slow the computer down significantly. Click on My Computer and highlight the drive called Local Disk (C:). Look at the Details area to see how much space is free. You should have at least 10% of your hard drive free. If you don't, a hard drive cleanup is in order. Delete unnecessary programs and backup old files and photos to an external drive or CD so you can delete them from the hard disk. You can use the Disk Cleanup utility to empty the recycle bin and delete unnecessary temporary files. To access it, click on Start, choose All Programs, then click on System Tools where you will find Disk Cleanup listed. It will walk you through the cleanup. Once your hard disk has more free space, your computer will perk up considerably. You might also consider defragging your computer to speed it up. The Disk Defragmenter utility is in the System Tools area. Remember there are other things like viruses and spyware that can also slow down your computer.

No sound

Sometimes the sound gets muted by mistake. Look at the taskbar at bottom of the screen. In the right hand side you will see a small icon that looks like a speaker. If it has a red X on it, the sound has been muted. Click on the icon, then click to remove the checkmark in front of the word Mute. If you don't see this icon, go to the Control Panel and choose Sounds or Sounds and Audio Devices where you will find a place to uncheck the Mute option. Many laptops and some desktops also have a volume button on the keyboard which you can use to mute and unmute the speaker.

Mouse shutters

If your mouse is hard to control or acting erratic, it may need a cleaning. An optical mouse with a flat bottom just needs a cleaning with a damp cloth. If your mouse has a roller ball on the bottom, remove the ball and clean the rollers inside the mouse with a Q-tip soaked with isopropyl alcohol.

Hope this gets you through some of those weird Windows moments in your life.

FBI Asks "How Aware Are You of the Dangers of the 'Net?'"

By **Ira Wilsker**, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Radio and TV Show Host, Iwilsker@apcug.net

WEBSITES:

<http://www.fbi.gov/page2/nov07/cyberspeech110607.html>

<http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/speeches/mueller110607.htm>

<http://www.debka.com/headline.php?hid=4723>

<http://housecall.antivirus.com>

<http://safety.live.com>

http://www.gcn.com/online/vol1_no1/45386-1.html

As regular readers may know, I frequently lecture on computer security topics, and have written numerous columns on security topics over the years. While many of us surf the net oblivious to the online threats that face us, many others are aware of the threats, and sadly, many have learned of the threats the hard way. The online threats that we face on a regular basis have not been lost on our federal government leadership.

FBI Director Mueller recently gave a speech at Penn State University where he warned about the cyber threats that we all face. He started his speech talking about the recent World Series, where the tickets for the Rockies' home games were initially unavailable online because some hacker had made the website inaccessible. He referenced the cyber attack against the country of Estonia last spring, where a coordinated attack from computers around the world, "... shut down banks and emergency phone lines, gas stations and grocery stores, newspapers and television stations, even the prime minister's office." Director Mueller went on to explain the effect of a similar attack here in the United States, "If we lose the Internet, we do not simply lose the ability to e-mail or to surf the web. We lose access to our data. We lose our connectivity. We lose our intellectual property. We lose our security. What happens when the so-called 'Invisible Man' locks us out of our own homes, our offices, and our information?" This brings up the question, "...given the growing presence of the web in our personal and professional lives, how aware are you of the risks of attack via the Internet?"

In his speech, Director Mueller was poignant in describing the situation that is facing us online. There were several key points in his speech that require some additional discussion. One point he made was, "The growing intersection of terror and the web." He described the case of Younis Tsouli, who went by the screen name "Terrorist 007", who was an al Qaeda webmaster.

Taking advantage of most of the contemporary online threats that we all face, Tsouli broke into servers to get the data bandwidth he needed to carry out his nefarious schemes, and used "phishing" (authentic appearing but counterfeit websites to steal personal information), to steal credit card and personal information. With these purloined credit card numbers and personal information, he managed to purchase over \$3 million worth of deadly supplies and equipment for terrorists. Tsouli also cre-

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Continued on page 55

ated a website "You bomb it" patterned after the popular "YouTube", which he hoped would become a centralized website for terrorists to exchange information. Director Mueller explained that local internet service providers could unknowingly run a server that is helping terrorists, and that we, as the innocent victims of identity theft, could end up financing terrorist activities.

Another threat facing us, according to Director Mueller, is "The rise of bots", where networks of computers are unknowingly taken over for nefarious purposes. One of the most common ways of taking over a computer is to plant a type of Trojan on the computer referred to as a "zombie", which effectively makes the infected computer a zombie under the control of persons unknown. According to recent security statements, some "bots" consist of over a million infected computers. It is well known in cyber security circles that the many variants of the Storm Worm, which is still spreading to infect countless computers, mostly through email attachments, has created millions of zombies. While many of these bots are currently being used to spread spam email, generating riches for the "bot masters" or "bot herders" who sell their purloined capacity, there are more dangerous uses of bots. It is important to note that owners of zombie infected computers are unaware that their computers are infected, and are a component of an illicit bot spreading spam and chaos to other computers. Director Mueller stated, "Once under their thumbs, these networks can wreak all kinds of havoc, from shutting down a power grid to flooding an emergency call center with millions of spam messages."

"Hackers are using sophisticated techniques to steal sensitive intelligence, scientific research, and communications data." This is what the Director is calling "the invisible man" where an unknown cyber intruder oversees everything on a network, including what people are typing, and reading any files stored on a computer or on a network. Since most cyber intruders will never leave any indication that they have viewed your files, stolen your passwords, and copied your critical and confidential data, you will never even know that you have been victimized and your data has been compromised. Once victimized in this manner, you will never know how much damage has been done, maybe until it is too late.

The federal government is actively fighting international cyber terrorists, and contemporary news accounts are rife with stories about criminal and espionage cyber attacks from China, Russia, Iran, Iraq, and other unfriendly countries. Despite governmental attempts to secure our computer infrastructure, much of the responsibility falls upon us individually. We must accept responsibility for the safety and security of our own computers. As has been appealed many times in this column before, we absolutely must have updated defenses in play on our personal computers. Antivirus, anti-spyware, and firewall software are imperative on our computers; after all, it is the personal computer that is the target of the zombie Trojan, and it is millions of personal computers like your and mine that make up these huge bots that can wreak such havoc.

For those who would be interested in seeing what a cyber attack warning might look like, an unofficial Israeli website that disseminates anti-terrorism information, the "DEBKAFfile", has recently posted such a warning about a massive upcoming cyber attack on the US (www.debka.com/headline.php?hid=4723). I am typing this prior to the date of this next alleged "cyber jihad" attack on the United States (November 11, Veterans' Day) and you will certainly be reading this column after that date.

I hope that this warning, as have many other such warnings, turned out to be false. In fact, several security authorities such as McAfee, and Computerworld magazine, have argued that the DEBKAFfile warning is a hoax, and that the information presented is unreliable. Another publication, Government Computer News, also belittled the warning, but the column that said that had the subtitle, "Don't cancel your day off yet" (www.gcn.com/online/vol1_no1/45386-1.html). This cyber attack warning is but one example of what Director Mueller is warning about.

Since the antivirus and anti-spyware on our computers can be compromised or neutralized by a zombie that slips through our defenses, it is a good idea to perform a free online security scan from one of the many available. My two personal favorites are Trend Micro's Housecall (housecall.antivirus.com), and Microsoft's online OneCare at safety.live.com (click on the shield in the middle of the window).

A successful scan by either or both of these services will likely indicate that your computer is clean of viruses, worms, Trojans, spyware, and zombies. Make sure your firewall is installed and updated. As I complete most of my security presentations, I close with the expression, "Practice safe HEX."



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Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



PARAGON ENCRYPTED DISK SE 3

If file security is critical to you, Paragon Encrypted Disk SE 3 can provide industrial-strength encryption at the low, low price of nothing. The utility offers three types of encryption algorithm-AES, Blowfish, and Triple DES-to choose among when creating a virtual disk image. You can write the encrypted image file to a CD, DVD, or flash drive, and store password information for encrypted disks on a flash drive or memory card. Protect private and sensitive data from potential unauthorized access.

You can encrypt a virtual disk image with a modern and reliable encryption algorithm, including AES (a 256-bit key), Blowfish (a 448-bit key), and Triple DES (a 192-bit key). The encrypted disk can be mounted with any spare drive letter in the system; then every application and system process will have transparent access to the contents of the encrypted virtual disk. When you unmount the encrypted disk, access to its contents is no longer possible; it is a container file, or a so-called image file. You can write a container file to any compact media (CD/DVD, USB flash memory drive) and always carry the encrypted disk with you.

You can use a password or have key files on a flash Memory Stick or card, disk, or other removable media to access encrypted disks. www.paragon-software.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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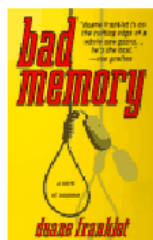
Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Bad Memory

Duane Franklet paperback, Pocket Books, 1997, \$6.99, 408 pages



A hacker breaks through the network security at Houston's fictitious Simtek Corporation, the world's leading computer manufacturer. His first move is to garble thousands of orders for mail order computers. When his demand for a million dollars is rejected, he escalates his terrorism against the company, from introducing an insidious virus that zaps the hard drives in the accounting department to (my favorite) inserting a tiny glitch in the operating systems of almost a half million computers that . . . but that would be giving too much away.

Anyone with network experience will go gaga over this book. It's a terrifying roadmap of the devastating penalty

a corporation can pay if it cuts corners in network security. The real beauty of this book, however, is that Franklet, a Houston-based computer trouble shooter, makes the high-tech hijinks comprehensible to someone who can't tell the difference between software and tupperware. The characters are believable, and the twisty plot had me guessing until the very last page.

Perfect Harmony

Barbara Wood paperback, Warner Books, 1998, 470 pages, \$6.99



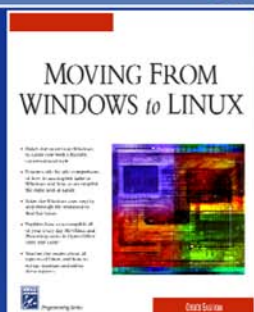
No sooner does Charlotte Lee inherit her grandmother's Chinese herbal business than customers start dying in what appears to be an oblique attack on the company. An old boyfriend turned computer security consultant reappears and searches for the culprit by examining the computerized manufacturing records before a hostile Food and Drug

investigator shuts them down. There is a nicely integrated parallel plot that traces the company's history from its origins in turn-of-the-century Singapore.

Perfect Harmony is of the romantic mystery genre and it's a popular cultural turning point when strong computer themes are integrated into the traditional "women's book" market. The depictions of Chinese-American culture, herbal medicine and feng shui are fascinating. Among the computer issues discussed are network security, reconstructing deleted records, illegal computer hacking and the increasing reliance on computer audits for solving crimes. Couldn't put it down.

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.

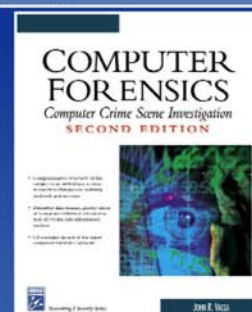
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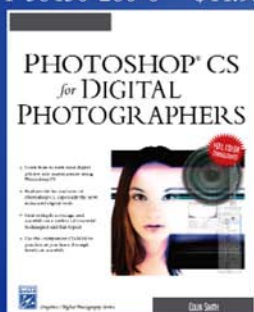
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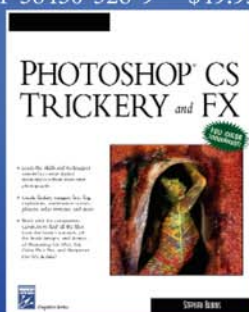
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 We are closed. No classes today!  Happy New Year!	2 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon High Growth Stock Investing (air) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	3 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon High Growth Stock Investing (air) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	4 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR* Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 1 of 9 *PRR* C++ Study Group 2:30 - 4:30 P.M. PC Alamode Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	5 MCSE Study Group (Adv) *PRR* 8:30 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 1 of 9 *PRR* C++ Study Group 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
6	7 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	8 Digital Camera & Photography Short notice: we need an instructor. Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 1 of 6 *PRR* BOD 6:30 P.M.	9 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 1 of 6 *PRR* Home Page Jumpstart 5:30 - 7 P.M. (To Be Announced)	10 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	11 Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 9 *PRR*	12 MCSE Study Group (Adv) *PRR* 8:30 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 9 *PRR*
13	14 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	15 Digital Camera & Photography Short notice: we need an instructor. Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 2 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 2 of 6 *PRR*	16 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 2 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 2 of 6 *PRR* Investors Business Daily (IBD) / Vector Vest, 6 - 8 P.M.	17 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	18 Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 9 *PRR*	19 MCSE Study Group (Adv) *PRR* 8:30 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 9 *PRR* C++ Study Group 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
20	21 Martin Luther King Day	22 Digital Camera & Photography Short notice: we need an instructor. Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 3 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR*	23 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 3 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR* WordPerfect Study Group (air) 7 - 9 P.M.	24 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	25 Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 4 of 9 *PRR*	26 MCSE Study Group (Adv) *PRR* 8:30 A.M. - Noon Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M. Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 4 of 9 *PRR*
27	28 CorelDRAW X3 6 - 8 P.M.	29 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 4 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR*	30 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 4 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR*	31		

PRR = Pre-Registration Required

AlamoPC Organization

The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

COMPUTER CLINIC

The Doctor Is In

Each Friday morning, volunteer "Computer Doctors" share their time at the Computer Learning Center to handle technical hardware and software questions and solve problems. They attempt to fix 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. We do the work at the 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

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> 680-0231
Murry Adams
<mnadams@texas.net> 696-0047
Carl Deneke
<cdeneke@Texas.net> 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> 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: ★ - ★★★

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, Larry Lentz There are only 15 MVPs for CRM in the world. More information on the Microsoft MVP program can be found at www.Microsoft.com/MVP. The group has recently completed its study for the CRM 3.0 Applications exam and are now starting study for the CRM 3.0 Customization exam. The group meets every Saturday morning from 8:30 until noon. Space is limited and the subject matter is very advanced. Therefore membership is restricted. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

Contact: Larry Lentz, MCSE on NT & W2K, MCDBA, MCSA:Messaging
<Larry@LentzComputer.Net>

When: Every Saturday, 8:30-noon

Where: Contact Larry

Pre-registration: Yes - contact Larry

Technical Rating: ★★★★★

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.

Volunteers Wanted

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

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

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, 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. 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) Jan 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb 6, 13

Set 2) Mar 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9

Set 3) May 14, 21, 28, Jun 4, 11, 18

Set 4) Aug 13, 20, 27, Sept 3, 10, 17

Set 5) Oct 8, 15, 22, 29, Nov 5, 12

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) Jan 8, 15, 22, 29, Feb 5, 12

Set 2) Mar 18, 25, Apr 1, 8, 15, 22

Set 3) May 13, 20, 27, Jun 3, 10, 17

Set 4) Oct 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov 4, 11

OR

Instructor: Don Robinson

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

Set 1) Jan 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb 6, 13

Set 2) Mar 19, 26, Apr 2, 9, 16, 23

Set 3) July 9, 16, 23, 30, Aug 6, 13

Set 4) Oct 8, 15, 22, 29, Nov 5, 12

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: ★

Introducing Vista

This course is an overview of the Vista operating system that is the replacement of Windows XP. Students will be able to see what Vista looks like but is NOT hands on. The training will be more of a visual demonstration and discussion of the major differences between the two operating systems from a user's point of view. The course includes what Vista is, the various versions available, hardware requirements, pros's and con's of converting and new functionality. The main focus will be demonstrating how to accomplish the user basics (navigating, menus, control panel, files and folders) in Vista versus Windows XP.

Instructors: Don Robinson

Choose one set

When: 2 weeks, Wed., 1 pm to 3 pm

Set 1) May 21, 28

Set 2) Sept 17, 24

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

Adobe Acrobat - PDF Class

How to download, install, and use Adobe Acrobat Reader. How to view the PC Alamode magazine online or download it to your computer or a CD. Students who want to download the magazine to a CD in class should bring a blank CD-RW (a read / writeable or recordable CD)

Instructor: Steve Tech
stephentechnr@yahoo.com

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

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

We're initially only going to meet on-line, through the mailing list I've established using Yahoo! Groups. Membership is limited to Alamo PC members, but anyone can join the list by sending a message to <apcoretro-subscribe@yahooogroups.com>." Or, if you're reading the electronic version of the PC Alamode where this text appears, you can join APCO Retro simply by going to <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/apcoretro/join>>

Contact: Shane Hicks
<shane@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

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

Technical Rating:★ - ★★★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

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

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating:★★

Digital Camera & Photography Class

Digital Cameras have become an integral part of our computerized lifestyle. They come in all shapes and sizes; some are simple, some not. Yet many of us look at this wonderful tool and think, "Now what is that doohicky for?" Sometimes learning to use our digital cameras can be a confusing and frustrating experience and the manual may even make it worse. Then when you do figure out how to use the camera, the photo never seems to come out quite right. Learn how to use your digital camera, plus all the tips and tricks to get better pictures when you take them. This class will include field trips to interesting local spots to learn photography techniques. Topics of discussion may include understanding your camera manual, camera optics, composition, tips, choosing the right camera, lighting, how to take night shots, silhouettes, portraits, action shots, and close ups.

Instructor: need instructor

When: to be announced

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: needs instructor

When: to be announced

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: needs instructor

When: to be announced

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: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

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.

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Can you help teach?

We're looking for someone to teach one or more of the following classes:

Digital Camera; Photo Editing; Movie Maker; Microsoft Digital Image 2006

Please call (210) 736-0700

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

When: 9 sessions, choose Fri. or Sat.
Photoshop Beginners Class Jan - Feb 2008;
Fridays Jan 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb 1, 8, 15, 22, 29;
1 pm to 5 pm

Photoshop Beginners Class Jan - Feb 2008
Saturdays Jan 5, 12, 19, 26, Feb 2, 9, 16, 1
pm to 5 pm

And two sessions on Feb 23; 9 am to 12 pm
and 1 pm to 5 pm

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

Intermediate Photoshop CS2:

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

When: 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

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

When: dates to be announced

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: to be announced

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: to be announced

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: to be announced

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: ★★

Technical Content Ratings

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

Internet And E-Mail - \$

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

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

When: 6 weeks, Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to noon
Set 1) Jan 8, 15, 22, 29, Feb 5, 12
Set 2) Mar 18, 25, Apr 1, 8, 15, 22
Set 3) July 8, 15, 22, 29, Aug 5, 12
Set 4) Oct 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov 4, 11

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: need instructor

When: to be announced

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
Dates To be announced

Instructor: An Instructor is needed

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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Holiday Ink	34
Inksell	IFC
Laura B. Grover, E.A.	40
New Life Toner	IFC
SA PC Help	51
United Service Association for Health Care	24
Water Ware	48


Classified Ads

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

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

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

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



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color **Alamo PC logo**
Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at **736-0700**

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

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

Monthly Meetings

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

Award-Winning Magazine

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

Special Interest Groups and Classes

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



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

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

Alamo PC SeniorComp

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

Expert Help

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

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

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

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



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

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

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

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

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

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

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

