

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TECH ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

March 2008

\$5.00

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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:

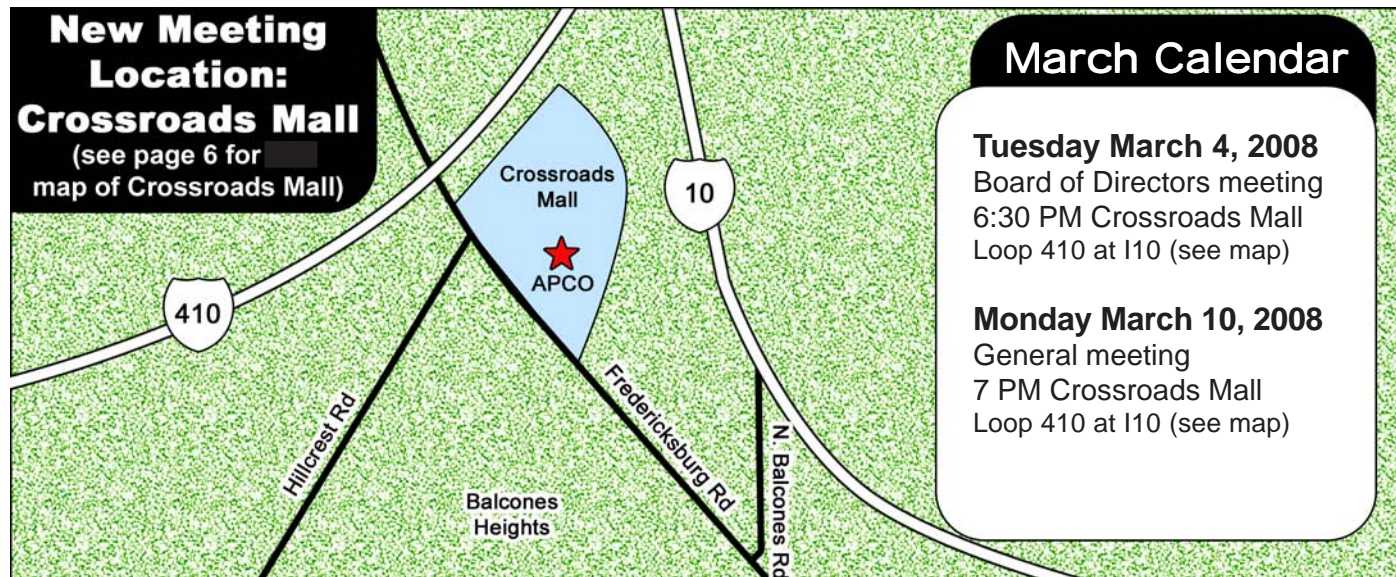
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



March Calendar

Tuesday March 4, 2008
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday March 10, 2008
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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Tax

IRS Again Offers Free Online Tax Preparation

Year 2007 Tax Software

Operating Systems

Hasta la Vista

Moving on to Vista

Look Ma, no hands!

Do You Ubuntu (yet)? A Linux Update

Tech Potpourri

Would You Sign This Contract?

New Technology Terms

Pros and Cons - 64 Bit Computing

Open Source – Mostly Free to Use and Modify

How To Answer the Question

product reviews

Computer Crimes

PC Alamode

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

editor@alamopc.org

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**To be paid in advance

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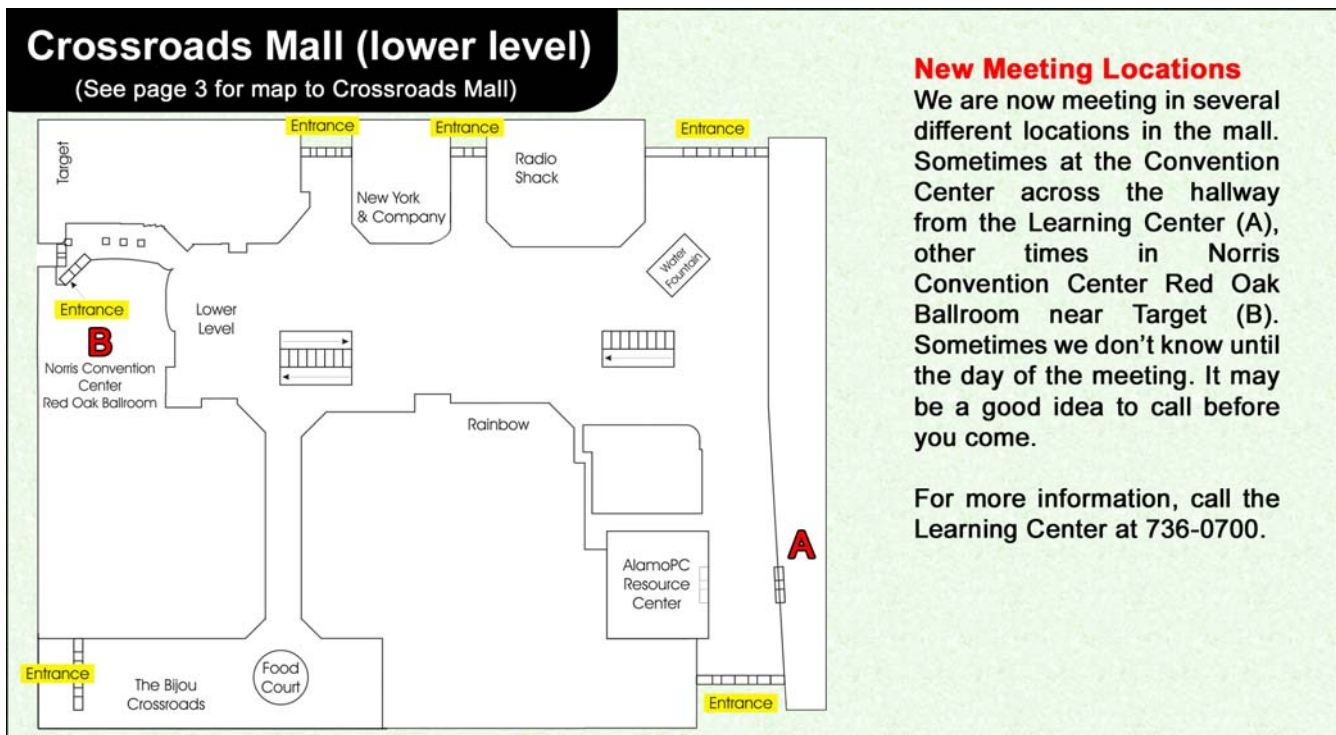
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



PC Alamode Links List



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<<http://www.consumerreports.org/>>

Money Adviser is completely different from any other financial publication on two counts: We are totally objective (our ratings are grounded in pure research) and 100% independent (absolutely no advertising accepted).



Internal Revenue Service

<<http://www.irs.gov/>>

IRS is the nation's tax collection agency and administers the Internal Revenue Code enacted by Congress.

← enter

Joseph de Leon, Editor
<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

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

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"March" - Daylight Saving, St. Patrick, Equinox, Easter

This month has six things that should be of interest to most folks: 9th - Daylight Saving Time begins: The national change last year extends the period about four weeks - starts about three weeks earlier, and ends about a week later than the previous decree. To remember which way to move the clock time indicators, keep in mind the phrase, "Spring forward, Fall back;" 16th - Psalm Sunday: the continuing of a segment of religious days for many (started with Ash Wednesday, last month [2/6] and culminating with Easter Sunday). A moveable feast which always falls on the Sunday before Easter. The feast commemorates the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in the days before his Passion; 17th - St. Patrick's Day: an annual feast day which celebrates Saint Patrick (circa 385-461), one of the patron saints of Ireland. Don't forget to wear green; 20th - Equinox: There is either an equinox (autumn and spring) or a solstice (summer and winter) on approximately the 21st day of the last month of every quarter of the calendar year. On a day which has an equinox, the center of the Sun will spend a nearly equal amount of time above and below the horizon at every location on Earth and night and day will be of nearly the same length; 21st - Good Friday: the Friday before Easter (Easter always falls on a Sunday). It commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus at Calvary; 23rd - Easter Sunday: celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

Once again, the February BOD meeting barely had enough directors to meet (only three). The monthly General Meeting did not have a scheduled presenter. David Steward did a presentation and discussion relating to online storage of data and pictures. We only had about 18 people who came to the Learning Center, but from the discussion and Q&A many appeared to be benefited..

Once again, keep in mind the following extract from the APCUG, fourth Quarter 2007 issue of Reports, [an article from the Rancho Bernardo Community Computer Club (RBCCC), San Diego, CA]. "In years past, marketing departments of software publishers and hardware manufacturers would send professional guest speakers with free samples to computer groups, hoping to reach potential customers. But when more competition caused a drop in prices for hardware and software, marketing budgets for free speakers and free samples also dropped. Now, education programs of local computer user groups need more help from volunteer speakers. Good volunteer speakers are in short supply so neighboring computer user groups share what they have." (The sharing 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.)


Recently, I read somewhere that major software developers are considering (which means it will eventually happen) not putting software in boxes and selling it through retailers. Individuals wanting the software will pay the manufacturer directly, then be able to download the software and associated manuals. Probably a few years away, but the concept appears to put more money in the pocket of the developer. Since most things are about the money, I say "It will happen!"

Currently (late February), David Steward is working on securing a presenter (Corel on their products, or Gene Barlow on Hard Drives and related items) for the March meeting, and he hopes to have an announcement soon. 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.

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, a 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 is not 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.

Continued on page 9



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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 ones in the next paragraph. Once it is determined that a class should be started, finding a teacher is usually a daunting task.

Recently we lost our teacher for the popular Digital Camera & Photography classes (four different levels, each repeated once during the year). We are desperately seeking one or more individuals for the classes, as personal issues may not allow the former teacher to return to the classroom until 2009.

We are still trying to improve member retention. Although new members have almost been sufficient to offset non renewing members, the total number of members continues to slowly decline. (At present, almost all of our new members are derived from "walk-in traffic" at the Learning Center.) We want membership to continue to "grow" through each member renewing and trying to encourage others to join. (Please remember that you can help someone to join through the online process. They don't have to come to the Learning Center.) If you do not choose to renew, send a comment or two as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, with a copy to me (president@alamopc.org or privately wlklutzjr@juno.com). I appreciate all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

As, I have said before, "the future of OUR organization will always rest in the hands of its members. Whether WE continue (or not) depends on OUR interest and involvement. But, it primarily depends on membership renewals and/or financial support. Without those, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations and 'business decisions' will have to be made that will affect everyone."

March Program

Bill Klutz

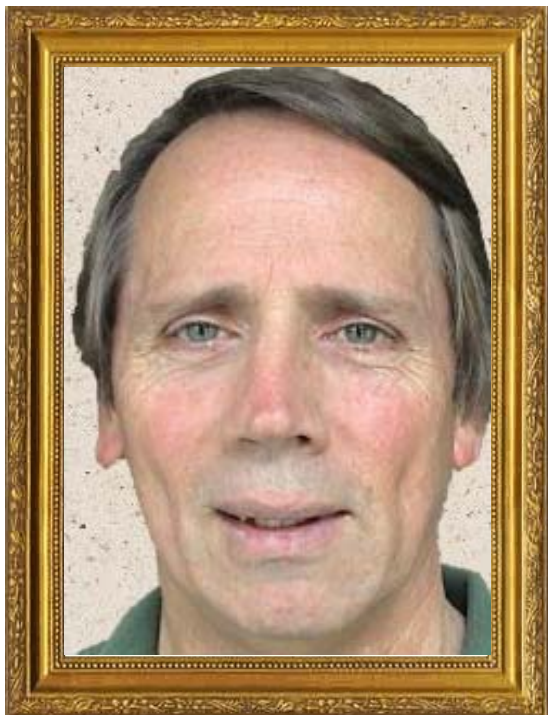
Currently (late February), I have not been informed that our March General Meeting has a Corporate presenter scheduled. David Steward hopes to secure a presenter (Corel on their products, or Gene Barlow on Hard Drives and related items).

Where the meeting will be 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, 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

Gary Grieve



Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



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Covet Windows Vista's new Sidebar feature, but still run Windows XP? KlipFolio provides the same functionality to your desktop via Klips, tiny dashboard apps that can handle RSS feeds, weather info, stock-price updates, Flickr photo searches, e-mail accounts, and more. Set up alerts for certain topics or keywords, and KlipFolio will inform when a relevant new article has been published. www.serence.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. <reviewseeditor@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 during repairs

Volunteers Wanted

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

STUDY GROUPS

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

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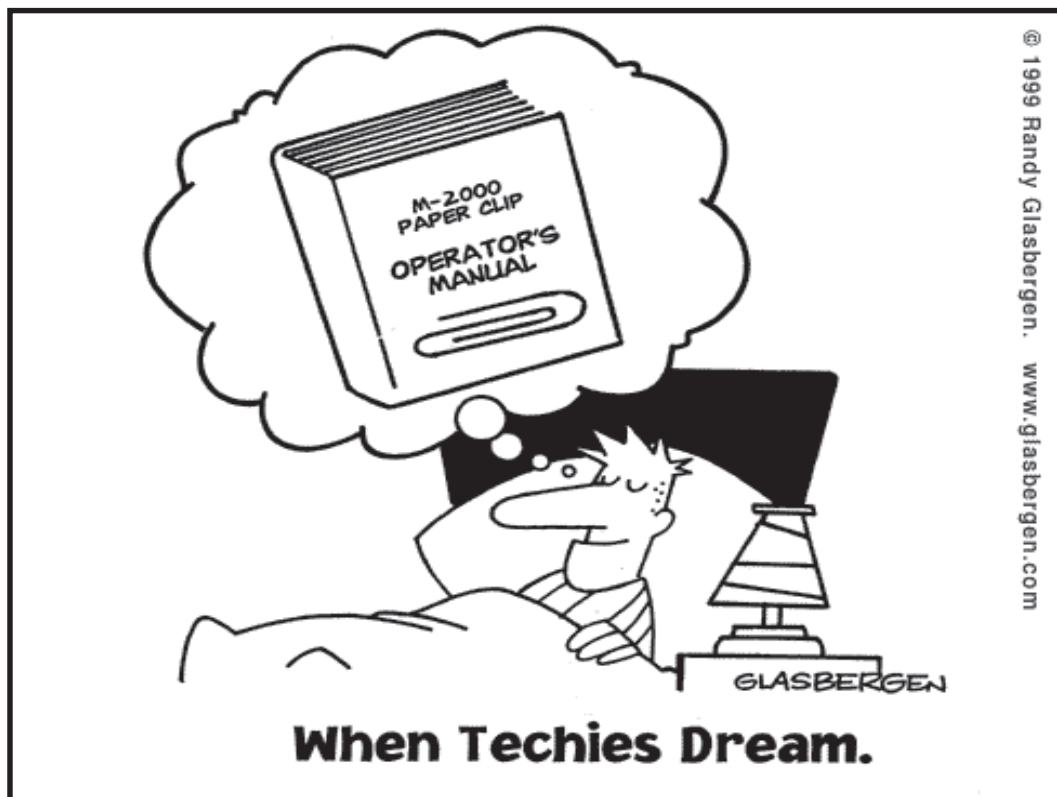
Show Dates:

March 8, 2008
May 10, 2008
August 9, 2008
November 8, 2008
December 13, 2008



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Slipstream Windows XP

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

As you sit idle, watching the list of critical updates scroll by (as of this writing now numbering well over 60), you say, “Why can’t Microsoft create a new Windows XP disc that includes all of these updates already?” Well, you don’t have to wait. You can do it yourself! The process is called slipstreaming and it allows you to incorporate all the latest updates into your installation.

The first step in the process is to download the FREE nLite tool from <http://www.nliteos.com>. At the time of this writing, the current final version is 1.3. Once you’ve grabbed this program, install and start it.

Now, grab your Windows XP disc. Using nLite, browse to the Windows XP disc and have it install the files into a directory of your choice. You can create such a folder (let’s name it Windows XP) on your desktop.

nLite will then display a summary screen telling you what you imported. It will give you the Service Pack level currently existing on your disc. If you already have a CD with Service Pack 2, you don’t need to slipstream that Service Pack into the installation files. Click past the Sessions screen (assuming this is the first time you’ve used nLite, you won’t have any previous sessions).

If you don’t have Service Pack 2 on your CD, download it from the Internet. nLite includes links that should take you to the place to download the latest Service Packs for Windows 2000, Windows Server 2003, and Windows XP. Once you’ve chosen Windows XP, scroll down until you see “Download and Deploy SP2 to Multiple Computers.” This will give you the full version of the Service Pack in a large, portable file (this is what nLite requires for slipstreaming). You can place this file on your desktop and select it in the “Select the Service Pack for Integration” within nLite.

Next, you’ll want to import all the Hotfixes that Microsoft has published since Service Pack 2 released. Download the Hotfixes to the location of your choice and, using the Hotfix screen in nLite, point nLite to the file and Insert it (after selecting the Hotfix in the Task Selection window).

Of course, you do have to locate all the Hotfixes you need on your own. An easy way to do this is to use the RyanVM Integrator, which you can find at <http://www.ryanvm.net>. This site maintains a post-SP2 update pack that collects the patches into one file. If you don’t want to use this one file, the site also maintains a list of all the updates, along with direct links to Microsoft (where the Hotfixes can be obtained one at a time).

If you are comfortable using the RyanVM tools, download the Integrator and the Windows XP Post-SP2 Update Pack. You can place these on the desktop as well. Start the Integrator and point it to your original Windows XP directory as the source of your files. For the destination, create a new directory on your desktop (i.e. Windows XP Patched).

When asked to choose an update CAB, select the Windows XP Post-SP2 Update Pack you downloaded. Click to integrate and wait approximately 10 minutes for the process to complete.

When the integration is done, restart nLite. Point nLite to your new directory (Windows XP Patched). Click next until you get to the Task Selection window and select Components. This will allow you to remove components installed by default, install without the user required prompts, change the install path, tweak registry and

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

service settings, and create a bootable ISO. At this point, we'll integrate the Service Pack—so click to Components.

In the Components section, you can remove programs that install by default.

nLite also allows you to enter your username, workgroup, time zone, and product key—so you don't have to answer any questions during installation.

Finally, go to the Options window. You can set the disc to automatically start the install during boot. On the patches tab, you can set the maximum number of unfinished TCP/IP connections and increase the polling of USB ports for faster mouse response. There are a series of other tweaks you can make. Feel free to play with these at your discretion. Once you've finished customizing your installation, nLite prepares your files.

You're now ready to finish off the project by creating your disc. You can use a CD for the Windows XP files. However, you may wish to use a DVD if you want to add other pieces of software to the mix. Feel free to copy any other files you desire into the folder that you created for your patched version of Windows. Set nLite to Direct Burn and click on the Make ISO button. It's highly recommended that you test your ISO before creating the final disc. You can do this by choosing to save the ISO to your desktop first. Test the ISO by downloading and running Microsoft's Virtual PC 2007 (it's FREE). This will allow you to perform a virtual installation of the OS before you actually attempt the install on an actual machine. If your satisfied with the way that the OS installs, burn your ISO file to your disc and you're ready to go.

That's all there is to it. Hopefully this method will save you a few hours of downloading updates the next time you need to install Windows.

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Win9x/Me/XP Computer tips & tricks

Windows VISTA Part II

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

Vista has many new features that aren't included in XP. It offers: Sophisticated graphics, better search and organization tools, improved security, easier access to information and applications, new multimedia functions and tools, and improved system tools for backups, updates, and much more. Vista is somewhat faster, smart, and one can create virtual search folders to revisit searches with a single click. Microsoft also gets networking right this time. Connecting to multiple wireless networks and hotspots is now a simple process for computer users. For security you get a firewall with outbound filtering, and a better browser. The big disadvantages are the need to spend money for hardware upgrades and/or a new computer. SP1 may solve some of those criticisms and increase the speed. Believe it or not, but it is already working on the next generation, Windows 7.

Anti-virus Software Removal Tools

You have probably purchased a new computer and found it came with an anti-virus software program already on it. They are almost impossible to remove if you want to switch to another anti-virus software program. Vista doesn't have any program to remove anti-virus software. You will need to go to the McAfee or Norton and download their software removal tool. Once you have removed the undesirable program from your new computer or operating system with the manufacturer's removal tool, you should then be able to install the anti-virus software of your preference.

Favorites

You can move your Favorites or Bookmarks in Firefox from the old computer to a new one. Start in Internet Explorer (IE) by clicking File, Import and Export. When a wizard window opens, click Next, Export Favorites and Next. Now select the main Favorites folder, click Next, select Export to a File or Address, click Browse, and navigate to Desktop and click Save. Note that the file name is Bookmark.htm and click Next, Finish. Your Favorites are on the desktop in a file named Bookmark.htm. Burn this file to a CD-R or copy it to a flash drive. Go to the new computer and copy the file to the desktop. Open IE on the new computer, click File, Import and Export. When a wizard window opens, click Next, select Import Favorites and click Next. Now select Import from a File or Address, click Browse, find Desktop and open it. Now click Bookmark.htm, click Open, click Next, and Favorites as the destination folder. Finally click Next, Finish. Firefox is just as easy. Click Bookmarks, Organize Bookmarks, File, Export, and browse to Desktop and click Save. The file's name is Bookmarks.html. Burn the file to a CD-R or save it to a flash drive. Take the file to the new computer and Save it to the desktop. Now, open Firefox on the new computer. Click Bookmarks, Organize Bookmarks File, Import. Under Import Bookmarks From, select From File, click Next, Bookmarks.html and click Open. That's it.

Dates for WinXP and Vista

During the first quarter of 2008 Vista SP1 was released to the public. Sometime soon Win XP will no longer be sold to consumers. In January 2009 XP will no longer be sold to businesses. As of April 2014, XP extended support will no longer be available to computer users.

Five Flavors of Vista

WinXP came in two easy-to-understand versions: One for home, and one for businesses. Microsoft confuses things in Vista by splitting it into five different versions, each with a different price tag. Only three versions are aimed at consumers. Most people will probably choose Windows Vista Home Premium. Windows Vista Home Basic: Reminiscent of WinXP Home Edition, this version leaves out Vista's fancier media features, such as DVD-movie burning, HDTV, TV recording, and other similar features. The backup program isn't automated, unfortunately, so you need to remember to back up your files. Microsoft left out Vista's Aero "glass" look. Windows Vista Home Premium: This version targets people who watch TV on their PC or want to create DVDs from their camcorder footage. Plus, the backup program is automated, taking place whenever you want. Windows Vista Business: This aims at the business market. It includes the built-in fax program, something not found in either home version. Windows Vista Enterprise: This business market version contains even more tools, such as support for advanced computer setups. Windows Vista Ultimate: It's a combination of the Home and Business versions. This version contains everything found in the home, premium and business versions. It's aimed at the wallets of hard-core PC users, such as gamers, people in the video industry, and similar others who spend their lives in front of their keyboards. Although five versions may seem complicated, choosing the one you need isn't that difficult. Run through the aforementioned list to see what features are most important to you.

Instant Search

Instant Search is one of the new features in Vista. It makes finding everything on your computer a snap. For those who aren't familiar with Instant Search, you'll find it at the bottom of the Start menu. Instant Search will search your e-mail account, documents, and Internet history. It will even find programs for you! This is surprisingly convenient if you have many programs cluttering your Start menu. It's true that you can save your searches. But you'll have to do so from Windows Explorer or the new Search Explorer. Before you save them, you have to create

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these searches. Go to either Windows Explorer (Start, All Programs, Accessories, Windows Explorer) or Search Explorer. To open Search Explorer, click Start. Type "search" (minus the quotes) in the Instant Search box. On the results list, click Start Search. In either window, enter your search term in the Search box. The results are updated as you type them. Included in the menu bar is a Save Search button. Instant Search includes advanced options.

The advanced options are pretty well hidden. To find them, click Search Tools, Search Pane. This opens another menu bar. Options there allow you to limit your search to a few types of files. There's also a link for Advanced Search. Click it. The pane expands to provide more options. You can limit search results to specific folders or a range of dates. Also, you can search tags you've added to your music and photos, among other search options. You probably will want to apply advanced search options before saving a search. Otherwise, you'll have too much information in the results. To save the search, click Save Search on the toolbar. Enter a name for your search. You can also use the navigational tools to select your save location. By default, Vista stores it in a special search folder. Click Save.

You can update the search results whenever you like. Double-click it to run it again. By default, Vista saves searches to the Searches folder. You can save it elsewhere (the desktop or Documents, for instance) if you like. If saving it in the Searches folder. To find your search, click Start and enter the name of the search in Instant Search. If you can't remember the name of the search, go to Windows Explorer. The Searches folder is listed in the left pane. Click it. The list of searches will appear in the right pane. Instant Search is included with all versions of Vista, but other features are specific to certain versions.

Mail in Vista

Windows Mail is the successor to Outlook Express. It is an integral part of Windows Vista. There are several easy ways to access Windows Mail. 1. Click Start, All Programs. Windows Mail should be on your list of programs and probably is between Windows Fax and Scan and Windows Media Center. 2. Click the Start button. In the search box, enter "mail" (minus the quotes), and press Enter. That will open Windows Mail. 3. Right-click an empty area of the desktop and select New, Shortcut. When the Create Shortcut window will opens browse to Computer, Local Disk C, Program Files, Windows Mail, WinMail.exe and click OK, Next. Name the shortcut Windows Mail and click Finish. When that step puts a shortcut on your desktop double-click it to open Windows Mail.

New Fonts in Windows Vista

If you're not happy with your current font selection, buy or download new ones and install them on your computer. Most fonts sold at stores come with installation programs that spare you the messy details in Windows Vista's font installer. But if your new font didn't come with an installation package, here's how to install it: First, place your new font in your Documents folder. Many downloaded fonts arrive inside a compressed folder, also called a zipped folder. If your font arrived this way, right-click its icon, choose Extract All, and let the wizard extract its contents to a folder inside your Documents folder. Secondly, right-click the downloaded font and choose Install. The downloaded font's icon looks like one of the two shown in the margin.

When you choose Install, Vista adds the font to your Control Panel's Fonts area, where it's available to all your programs. To delete any unwanted fonts, right-click their names in the Control Panel's Fonts area and choose Delete. Don't delete any fonts that came with Windows Vista. Just delete fonts you've installed. Deleting some of Windows Vista's built-in fonts will remove letters from your menus, making Windows Vista even more difficult to use. If you can't resist downloading free fonts from the Internet, remember that Windows Vista can handle TrueType fonts, OpenType fonts, and PostScript fonts. If you really get into fonts, buy a font management program sold at most office supply stores. Finally, always scan downloaded fonts with your virus checker.

If you have purchased a new computer with Vista and now want to transfer your programs from an old PC to it, here are some thoughts for you. Generally, moving data from old to new computers is easy. A number of programs can perform the transfer. Windows even has such a utility "Files and Settings Transfer Wizard" for that purpose. Programs, however, are more complicated than files or folders. Many programs require obscure files to operate. The necessary pieces are distributed to various folders during installation. Most programs also add entries in the Windows Registry. Theoretically, a program's many parts could be transferred to equivalent locations on a new computer. But often there is no way to identify those parts. If you guess, the transferred program might not work.

Or, it might behave unpredictably. The safe way to transfer a program is to install it on the new computer. A fresh installation ensures that all files are put in place. However, the program will be in its original form. Any updates will be lost. You may be able to get those updates from the publisher's site. Even without installation discs, you may be able to move programs. There is software available online that claims to move installed programs such as Move Me, \$40, and PCmover, \$50. However, these are not guaranteed to work for every program. Finally, consider moving to modern programs. Some can read data from similar, older programs. If you upgrade your current computer to Vista, it's recommended that you backup your programs and then do a clean install by wiping your hard drive and/or partition since these methods will be less trouble and faster.



Website on the road

The Lazy Webmaster

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!

Keeping your Website updated while you are on the road can be a challenge, but with prior proper planning no one will figure out that you are lying on the beach in Puerto Vallarta instead of hunching over your desk in San Antonio. Unless you want them to.

Of all the variables you should consider, the most important is whether you will take a laptop or rely on the kindness of strangers for your Internet access. Each solution has its pros and cons.

With a laptop you have access to a computer with all the right software, templates and passwords. The downside: you will need a way to connect it to the Internet.

Dialup, wireless, broadband. If you're staying at a hotel or RV park, check before you go to see what kinds of connections they offer and make sure you know how to connect. Check into the High Tech Traveler for some suggestions on hotels with in-room high-speed access and wi-fi and onto Linkspot for some RV parks with broadband. Many other resources are online; search for them before you make reservations.

If you have never attempted a wireless connection, work out the kinks ahead of time. (As of this writing, you can get a free day pass for T-Mobile HotSpots at Starbucks and could test it there.) You might normally use your laptop as part of your home or office broadband network, but if you are staying with friends you might need to dial up: do you know how? Some broadband providers – SBC DSL, for example – have dialup numbers you can use while you are on the road.

Make sure you have all your passwords and local access phone numbers – carry them in your wallet instead of your laptop case so if your computer is stolen (heaven forbid) the thief doesn't grab your passwords as well as your laptop.

Using a borrowed computer is easier in some ways – you know you'll have access and you won't be lugging a heavy laptop around. The issue here is software and peripherals.

I recommend taking an HTML editor, a photo editor and (absolutely essential) an ftp program. My recommendations are freeware – small programs that you can legally and easily install (and this is important) uninstall when you leave. Practice using them before you travel.

Here are some suggestions:

*** FTP:**

- o Coffecup Free FTP
- o Ace FTP Freeware

*** HTML:**

- o Sothink HTML
- o Ace HTML

*** Graphics:**

- o Serif PhotoPlus 5.5
- o VCW VicMan's Photo Editor:

Most computers you use will have a CD-ROM drive, so put the software on a CD rather than a floppy. I have a portable hard drive small enough to wear on a lanyard around my neck that plugs into a USB port on any computer. Mine is a Crucial; all the software fits on it.

Hint: although USB is supposed to be plug-and-play, the device may need a driver. Take all the drivers you may need on a CD

Most places will let you install your own software, but some won't. Some places may have similar programs already installed, some won't. Prepare for the worst.

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When you leave, uninstall the software. At the very least, log out of all programs and make sure that your user name and password is not lingering anywhere for the next person to use.

I also take a card reader for my photos: look at some options at xpcgear.com.

Hint: You could also put your programs on a smart card or compact flash, but a portable hard drive is cheaper.

Many hotels have a business center, often free, where you can use a computer and access the Internet. You can do the same at any Kinkos. There are cyber cafés all over the world. You can look up a list online at [netcafes](http://netcafes.com), but if my experience in the Middle East is typical, old ones die and new ones spring up constantly. The list I took with me was useless.

If all you want to do is post a travelogue about your vacation, there are easier roads to travel. I recommend a blog combined with a photo archive site. This might not be as fancy as a custom-designed Web site, but you will get the information out fast and won't need any Web design skills or special software. Gussy it up when you return.

A blog is shorthand for Web Log, a simple online journal. Sites such as Blogger use an online, Web-based interface that makes it easy to add and amend content. If you have never seen a blog, here's one I created last year <susansbooks.blogspot.com/>

The service is free and easy to use. Again, practice before you travel.

Blogger doesn't accept photos, so if you want to include a link to vacation photos you will need space at a photo-sharing site. I have free space at Yahoo that you can view at Yahoo. These were a few photos from my trip to the Middle East; the first picture is a friend using an Internet café in Aqaba, Jordan.

You will want to keep up with your e-mail. You should have a Web-based e-mail account if you are using borrowed computers. It's too complicated to set up a stand-alone e-mail program for short-term use. Most Internet Service providers have a Web-based system. It's slower than using Outlook or Eudora, but at least you can keep up with your mail.

Mailboxes overflow up quickly, so if e-mail is crucial to your business be sure to check it frequently so your clients don't get bounced mail messages.

A vacation traveler will have different needs from some running a Web-based business, but the principles are the same. When you are on the road,

- * Assess your needs
- * Seek solutions that meet those needs
- * Rehearse everything ahead of time to make sure it works
- * Accept everything will take two to three times longer to accomplish than it will at your base computer.
- * Enjoy your time away: if you are unplugged for a few days the world will not end.

Volunteer at the Alamo PC Learning Center

We need volunteers!

Call the Learning Center to volunteer to assist ongoing classes or help keep day-to-day tasks under control. Your computer user group can't function without volunteers.

Please call (210) 736-0700



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.

Time sure passes quickly. I wrote my first DealsGuy column in November 1994 and have never missed a month since. I am not a journalist by trade, nor do I pretend to be one, but I am flattered that this column has stayed popular as long as it has. Editors sometimes forward complimentary comments from their members about the DealsGuy column. Two groups print only part of it in the newsletters they place around their community to attract new members, and readers must become a member to get the entire column. I am also grateful for the many friends I made over the years through the column. I have been offered places to stay just about anywhere in the US.

Years ago, I received a request from a professional journalist to be added to my e-mail list for the column, and I told him I was honored by the request from him. He told me something that I have thought about a few times since. He said I had blazed a trail with the syndication of my DealsGuy column to user groups and that others would probably follow. At that time, most articles written were from the editor and the group's own members, mostly reviews, but some of the better ones were reprinted selectively in other newsletters. However, the DealsGuy column certainly has its hard-line critics. Some editors strongly dislike my column, and other editors feel I write too much about myself. In fact, I'm still reeling from one editor's strong comments at a conference. People sometimes request they be put on my e-mail list because their editor refuses to carry the DealsGuy column. A few editors only carry the product parts of the column because they say their members have no interest in my personal comments at the beginning, but I sometimes hear from UG members asking how to see the entire DealsGuy column.

In the early days of the column, it was not uncommon for user group people I met at conventions to ask how they could get into writing a monthly column as I was doing. I tried giving them tips, but how can a guy who began writing a column accidentally offer helpful tips when he himself doesn't really know what he is doing. Now days it's great to see so many authors writing interesting monthly columns that help provide a packed newsletter for any editor and there are many user groups with regular material from their own members. I guess that I'll stick with it a while longer since nobody else wants this job.

*Tax Tips

If you haven't done your 2007 income tax yet, don't forget about Tax Act <<http://www.2ndstorysoftware.com>> for computing your income tax or free, although I use the pay version because it brings forward information from last year's tax return (if you used it last year) along with some comparison features. You can even e-file with the free version. If you would rather someone else did the work, check when and where the AARP volunteers are working to help seniors out. There are other free ways to do your taxes on the Government site.

*Goodbye FedEx, Good Riddance

Remember my bad experience with FedEx delivery last month? They refused my claim saying that according to their log the packages were delivered to the address and that's all they were required to do since no signature was requested. Actually, they could simply throw them out the window as they were driving by, throw them away if they were running late and enter "delivered" in the log, or even just set them beside the road, as they would have had to do in our case, at 9:06 PM according to their log. When I was told it wouldn't be delivered after 8 PM, my son closed the driveway gate. They don't seem to have my conversation with the Phoenix office in their log, yet they called me back the next morning to offer a delivery time because the packages had been in the truck for two days. No packages were ever found at the address and their letter denying the claim says they hope they can count on my continued business. After another bad experience, not a chance!

*They Claim To Simplify Launching

This is designed to replace the standard Quick Launch. The program emulates the standard features of Quick Launch while including lots of grouping and menu options, a many useful plug-ins and some skinning abilities. True Launch Bar helps clear your desktop working space by

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David's Essential Domains



Website Hosting Starting at \$3.95/month!

Economy	Deluxe	Business
\$3.95/mo.	\$9.95/mo.	\$29.95/mo.
50MB storage	1GB storage	2GB storage
1 GB transfer	15 GB transfer	30 GB transfer
50 e-mails	unlimited e-mails	unlimited e-mails

Domain Names

.COMs starting at \$7.85!

FREE with every domain:

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- FREE! Domain Name Locking
- FREE! Status Alerts

Website Tonight

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- 5 Page Site - \$4.95/mo
- 10 Page Site - \$8.95/mo
- 20 Page Site - \$12.95/mo
- 100+ professional templates



SECURE SSL Certificates

Build trust, build confidence, and build your online business - with a Secure SSL Certificate!



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Prepare your site so the search engines find it!

<http://www.davidsessentialdomains.com>

removing randomly placed shortcuts and organizing them in convenient groups and menus. True Launch Bar provides users with a brand-new functionality enabling ultra-fast access to any of your PC contents!

True Launch Bar stores shortcuts in the same folder as Windows Quick Launch. All the icons installed into Quick Launch are automatically installed for True Launch Bar. True Launch Bar can be docked into the taskbar; you can simply drag your shortcuts onto the toolbar or menu by pressing any of the mouse buttons. Right button dragging activates a Context menu, grouping links into popup menus. The Virtual Folders feature allows you to add any folder as a menu and control it through Windows Explorer-like context menus. It can be any folder on your disk or on a local network (Favorites, Programs, Recent, etc.), as well as file system folders such as My Computer, Control Panel, Printers, etc. Toolbar buttons will not only launch the applications, but also act like small applets. If you add a Media Control plug-in onto the True Launch Bar, the button will become a real control center of the media player with Stop, Play, Pause and volume adjusting options.

True Launch Bar runs under Windows 9x, NT, 2K, XP, 2003 and Windows Vista. 25% discount makes the cost \$14.90 (USD) for a single-user license. Links to purchase with the discount are: Personal License (one person, one or more computers) (\$14.90); <<http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=51538&pc=7L0L7>> and Home license (one copy on multiple computers and multiple users) (\$35); <<http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=53346&pc=7U0I4>>.

Licensed customers are entitled to lifetime technical support and free updates. Additional information on True Launch Bar, as well as its fully functional evaluation version with a 30-day trial period is available from <<http://www.truelaunchbar.com>>.

Download link: 32-bit version: <<http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install/truelaunchbar42.exe>> (4,30MB)

64-bit version: <<http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install64/truelaunchbar64v42.msi>> (4,69MB)

Company website: <http://www.tordex.com>

E-mail: info@tordex.com

***Another Free PDF Maker**

Patrick Sullivan reads the DealsGuy column in The DataBus, a great newsletter from The Dayton Microcomputer Association Inc. <<http://www.dma.org>>, and he sent his favorite application for converting a file to PDF. He said a friend needed a free one and his search found PrimoPDF at <<http://www.primopdf.com/>>. He says its PDF file is not as small as Adobe Distiller creates, but he is well satisfied with it and has not found it to implant ads for itself. There is now a new release on their Web site, but he has not tried it because his version works fine.

***This Product Offers Canned Replies**

IT-Services Thomas Holz announces the release of version 1.0 of Textmodules for Software Support, a set of ready-to-use replies to quickly answer typical software-related questions by e-mails. The product is absolutely free and comes as an add-on to the new version of ReplyButler for Outlook. Enlarge the assortment of reply patterns and make your reply on the fly.

With a proper set of text modules, you can answer your e-mails quickly. In Textmodules for Software Support, you'll find 55 new text modules properly sorted into 18 folders. The modules include typical phrases, answers to common problems, questions for details and more. In addition, there are many reply patterns related to office work and journalism. It uses the correct name and gender in the addressing phrase by itself, securing against any typos in names.

You can get Textmodules for Software Support free of charge, as well as the trial version of ReplyButler for Outlook at <<http://www.replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php>>.

ReplyButler for Outlook runs under Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003/Vista and Outlook 2000/2002/2003/XP/2007, and costs 15.00 (EURO) for a single-user license. The company offers user group members 25% discount on the purchase of ReplyButler Business Edition. Licensed customers get the fully-functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on ReplyButler for Outlook is available at our Web site. (DealsGuy note: I included this item for the free part of it, but was unable to get through using their e-mail address for information about using the discount on their business version. Try a contact from their Web site.)

Product page: <<http://replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php>>

Product download link: <http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButlerE_Freeware.exe>

Free add-on link: <http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButler_TextLib_SoftwareSupport.exe>

E-mail: <presscontact@itsth.com>

Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



FASTSTONE CAPTURE

If you don't have Vista or don't like its Snipping Tool, you can always press to copy an image of your entire screen (or - for just the active window) to the Clipboard. But it almost always leaves out the pointer or cursor, and you still have to paste the image into and save it from Paint or some other image editor. For a fast, free, easy solution, try FastStone Capture. FastStone supports a variety of output formats, provides an editor for you to tweak your capture before saving, or lets you go directly to save (with auto file naming, if desired). www.faststone.org

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

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Volunteers Wanted

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

STUDY GROUPS

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

PC 101

Microsoft Works - Money 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>



Address finder on the Web (where you may specify a wide range of choices, such as Where you want to pick up your car, when you want it down to the hour, a class preference such as Minivan, SUV, Sports car, or convertible. If you prefer a particular rental company you may select that and then run your search. Choosing Enterprise at Orlando International Airport produced a list of eight different models with prices ranging from \$20.56 to \$67.10 for a 24 hour Sunday-Monday rental.

Currency Conversion on the web takes you back to MSN.com, msn.Money. Under Investing you may convert any amount from one currency to another.

Business finder on the Web ...
Car rental on the Web
Currency converter on the ...
Driving directions on the We...
Flight reservations on the Web
Place finder on the Web (W...
Plan a Vacation
Room reservations on the ...
Travel journals
Travel Planning Tools

**Address finder on the Web (U.S.)**

Never ask for directions again--get great maps online. Enter the street address or intersection to get a map of an address in the U.S.

 [Start this task](#)

The address finder on the Web in this case takes you to msn.com, Maps and Directions. This is very similar to other map programs, such as that provided by Yahoo. When I entered my own address here, it moved my house about 2 miles north. It did a better job on my sister-in-law's location, but still missed it by a block or two.

Business Finder on the Web is also provided by msn.com, this time on their Yellow Pages. The Category Browser allows you to choose from a broad range of business categories in a location such as a city. Browsing for Computer dealers in Melbourne came up with a list of 14 dealers, most of which are familiar to me. Naming a specific store brought it up immediately. In addition to the address and phone number, it also offered a listing of Coupons and Deals, which allows you to view all 16 pages of their current flyer.

Car Rental on the Web takes you to expedia.com

Currency converter

MSN Money uses current exchange rates to convert the value of currencies from around the world.

Convert this amount:

From:

To:

Clicking the Convert button gives you this result :

Results:

1.16700 Canadian Dollar

1.16700 Canadian Dollar per US Dollar

Driving Directions on the Web is another item on msn.com, Maps and Directions. This one works like most of those with which I'm familiar. I asked for directions from my house to my son's house in Jensen Beach, FL. The manner of making this request may be seen at the top of the next column.

Continued on page 23

Start

Type an Address	Paste an Address	Find a Place
Country / Region: United States ▼		Search Tips
Street Address		
<input type="text" value="9570 South Tropical Trail"/>		
City	State	ZIP Code
<input type="text" value="Merritt Island"/>	<input type="text" value="FL"/>	<input type="text" value="32952"/>

End

Type an Address	Paste an Address	Find a Place
Country / Region: United States ▼		Search Tips
Street Address		
<input type="text" value="Ocean View Circle"/>		
City	State	ZIP Code
<input type="text" value="Jensen Beach"/>	<input type="text" value="FL"/>	<input type="text"/>

Get Directions

Start: Depart S Tropical Tr, Merritt Island, FL 32952 on CR-3 (Tropical Trail S) (South)	0.3
1: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto SR-404 (Pineda Causeway) towards SR-404 / US-1	2.1
2: Bear RIGHT (West) onto Local road(s)	< 0.1
3: Turn LEFT (South) onto CR-509 (Wickham Rd N)	5.1
4: Turn RIGHT (West) onto SR-518 [Eau Gallie Blvd W]	2.3
5: Take Ramp (LEFT) onto I-95 towards I-95 / Miami	54.3
6: At exit 129, turn RIGHT onto Ramp towards SR-70 / Okeechobee Rd	0.4
7: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto SR-70 [Okeechobee Rd] towards SR-70 / Okeechobee	0.6
8: Turn LEFT (South) onto Local road(s)	< 0.1
9: Bear RIGHT (South) onto Ramp towards Florida's Turnpike / To Florida's Turnpike	0.2
10: Keep LEFT to stay on Ramp towards Florida's Turnpike South / Miami	0.5
11: "Toll road" Merge onto Florida's Tpk (Ronald Reagan Tpk)	9.4
12: At exit 142, keep RIGHT onto Ramp towards Port St Lucie	1.1
13: Turn RIGHT (East) onto SR-716 [SW Port St Lucie Blvd]	4.1
14: Turn RIGHT (South) onto US-1 [SR-5]	2.0
15: Turn LEFT (East) onto CR-707A [NW Jensen Beach Blvd]	1.4
16: Keep STRAIGHT onto CR-707A [NE Jensen Beach Blvd]	0.4
17: Keep STRAIGHT onto CR-732 [NE Jensen Beach Blvd]	0.5
18: Road name changes to CR-707A [NE Jensen Beach Blvd]	0.5
19: Turn LEFT (North) onto NE Skyline Dr	1.4
End: Arrive NE Oceanview Cir, Jensen Beach, FL 34957	

While I wouldn't choose this route, I did specify the

Quickest route. These directions would definitely get me there.

Flight reservations on the Web takes you back to expedia.com, where the process is similar to renting a car. It is interesting that the program remembered that I had asked to rent a car at Orlando International on April 2nd. This information was already in place. They just needed to know where I was departing from, the times, and how many travelers. They also offer to include hotels and car rentals in the process.

Place Finder on the Web returns us the msn.com, maps and directions, but the choice is worldwide. I asked for Middlesbrough, Cleveland, UK, where my cousin lives. As you can see below, this search pro-



duced a remarkably detailed map and an accurate location. Asking for directions from London gave a turn-by-turn route which would no doubt allow you to drive directly there.

Plan a Vacation opens a My Works Project, producing a To Do List for Track travel budget, Find Travel destinations online, Reserve Flights, cars, lodging Online, as well as Create an Overall Itinerary, a pre-travel checklist, and more. Each of these takes you to the appropriate service, such as Expedia, or a Works project area.

Travel Journals opens a Word Processor Wizard with templates for a Daily Travel Journal, an expenses spreadsheet, a Photo Log, and a trip log.

Once again I recommend that you open your works program and follow along as you read this article. I only skim the surface of the material that is there. Try each of these tasks for yourself. There's no better way to learn.



SN decoded

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

What is SN? Do you suppose it is some evil secret society like SPECTRE which James Bond, 007, has battled for years? I wonder if it might be another evil secret society like THRUSH fought by the Man from Uncle? I recently heard that SN was celebrating a twentieth anniversary. I also heard that there were hundreds if not thousands of card carrying SN members in the United States and now even in other countries who have regular meetings where a variety of issues are explored and networking takes place. You don't suppose SN is some kind of global terrorist network like the Illuminati? I sense your mounting impatience with this humble writer so will attempt to decode SN now!

SeniorNet is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of age 50 and older computer-using adults. SN's mission is to provide older adults education in computer and communication technologies to enhance their lives and enable them to share their knowledge and wisdom. The organization has benefited millions of seniors since its founding in 1985, supports over 240 learning centers throughout the United States and in other countries, publishes newsletters, holds regional conferences, and collaborates in research on older adults and technology.

SN publishes computer curriculum's used in the Learning Centers to get seniors up to speed as quickly as possible on their computers. The learning approach that works the most efficiently with seniors is a hands-on learning experience with SN instructors via a computer lab. Unlike alternative training, SN curriculum is focused on what you need to know to become productive eliminating lots of theory and technical jargon that is time consuming and often confusing to seniors often with little if any previous technical experience.

SeniorNet members learn and teach others to use computers and communications technologies to accomplish a variety of tasks including: how to touch up photos and send and receive them in email, to desktop publish documents, write their autobiographies, manage personal and financial records, and communicate with others across the country and the world and serve their communities. Many SN members had never used computers previously and all understand well after advancing to computer literacy going from the attitude of "Where would I ever use a computer?" to "I wonder how I got by without a computer!" The evolution from computer illiteracy to computer literacy and the new virtual world that opens to SeniorNet members stimulates interest, and improves mental health greatly improving quality of life. Today without a basic knowledge of computers, one soon feels abandoned on the sidelines of life as the world of technology rapidly evolves. SeniorNet networking provides many close friends since all of us are working together and helping each other to get higher on the learning curve to achieve computer literacy. All you need to do is bring the desire to learn about computing, and we will supply you with the rest of the tools you need including how to purchase intelligently a computer if you do not own one. You will be

amazed at how computer users help each other because we all started as beginners and help others advance as others have helped us to advance on the computer learning curve.

In 1965, Senior Net User Group, formerly meeting at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma joined the Oklahoma City PC Users Group renamed the Computer Club of Oklahoma City. Charlene Francis is the Senior Net coordinator, a former government systems analyst, who has been active in developing a very strong senior net learning center with the considerable technical expertise of David Robbins who maintains the computer lab at the learning center.

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Where memories Are made

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

The summer seems to have sent my brain on vacation. Most of my computer efforts have been in the nature of trying to edit old digital photographs and seeing if any new ones are worth editing. Recently though we made a trip to WaltDisneyWorld with our son and his children, so naturally there were opportunities for really good pictures. Unfortunately, not many of mine were very good at all. I guess part of the reason was getting caught in tropical storm Alberto. Lots and lots of rain, so getting the camera out of its protective pouch was often not an option. However, I am looking forward to receiving a CD with pictures that my son took, many of which I already know are quite good. So all was not in vain.

One recent software purchase was a Digital Scrapbooking program. I chose Leeza Gibbons Scrapbooking Software from Mountain Cow for one main reason. On the box, it indicated that the software is capable of fitting text to curves. I did not see another program which indicated that feature on the box. The program was somewhat more expensive than others, but the uniqueness of the text option was enough to potentially justify the cost.

However, expectation and reality soon conflicted. One thing that bothered me in particular in the real world was the requirement to install Microsoft network files from the CD before the program would finish the installation process. Possibly this was to make sure the product would be registered since the CD disk only installs a trial version initially. In order to activate the software with all of its features, the installation routine apparently uses the aforementioned network files to access the "activation number" online. This seems to be a new trend in software. I guess the new programs aren't Microsoft compatible for no reason. I now hope the installed files have not corrupted something else on my computer.

And after installing the program, I'm not sure it lives up to the blurbs on the box. Specifically, it is not particularly user friendly. Without some knowledge of how such programs work, it might take a really long time to figure out how to use this one since the help files are tedious, not well written and slow down anything you are trying to achieve. Certainly browsing for images to use is a cumbersome process, although with a lot of trial and error I was finally able to bring my own pictures into a page layout. The single biggest drawback to the software is its inability to handle multiple image manipulation except in one final step for inserting images into a page. Otherwise, each image you want to use must be individually imported which can require up to six steps. There doesn't even seem to be a utility that allows you to copy and paste images from other programs.

As for the touted "curved text" routine, it turns out to be nothing more than predefined shapes for text, a tool available in many other programs which make greeting cards, etc. I mistakenly thought (since the blurb did not spell out the process) that I could create my own shapes and fit text to them, but I guess that is only in high end drawing programs. It was my mistake, so I have no one to blame but myself. If there is more to the utility for curved text than that, I have yet to figure out how to do it. However, this does seem to be the only scrapbooking program which offers shaped text of any variety, at least from what is on the boxes for other software. It is an advantage if you want to add some special touches to your scrapbook pages.


Bottom line: I'm not sure any scrapbooking software is worth the money and trouble. However, if you want to share images with other people, this might be another way to do it in an attractive way. Without actually trying any other program of this type, I just don't know whether any of them are necessarily a good buy. Use your own judgment on this one.

I will keep trying to use the program, if for no other reason than one of these days I would like to print out some scrapbook pages and actually put them in a real book, one with hard covers and everything !

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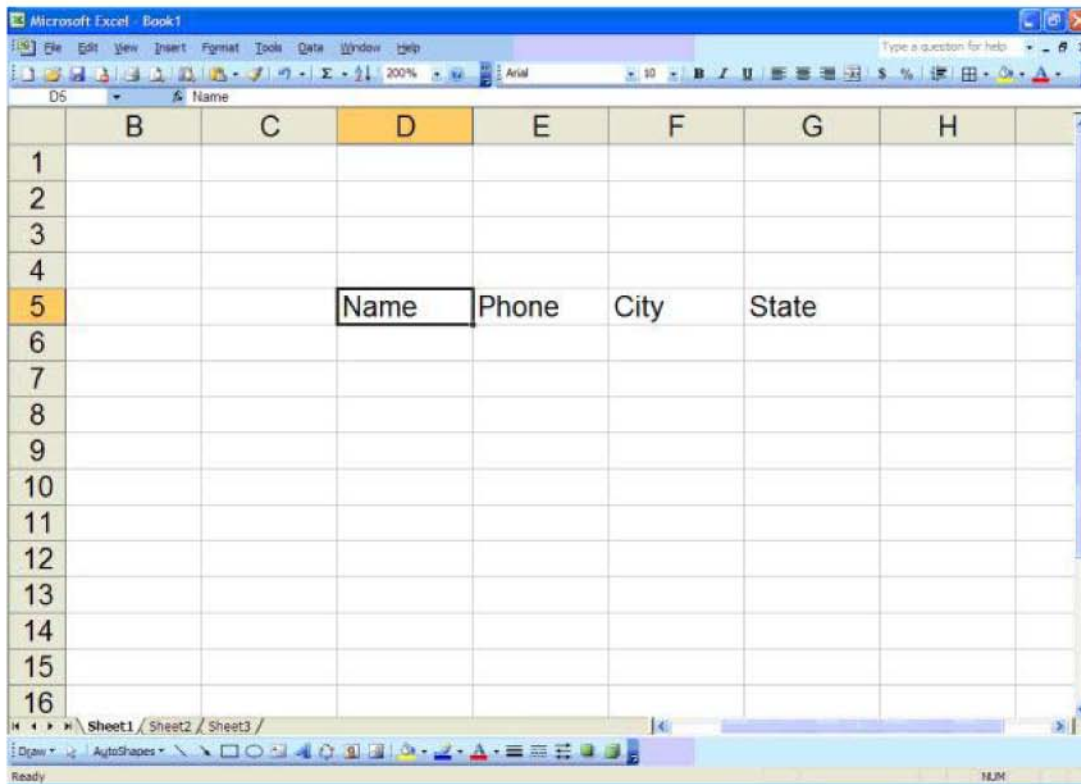
Excel-Fill in the Blank Forms-On Demand

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

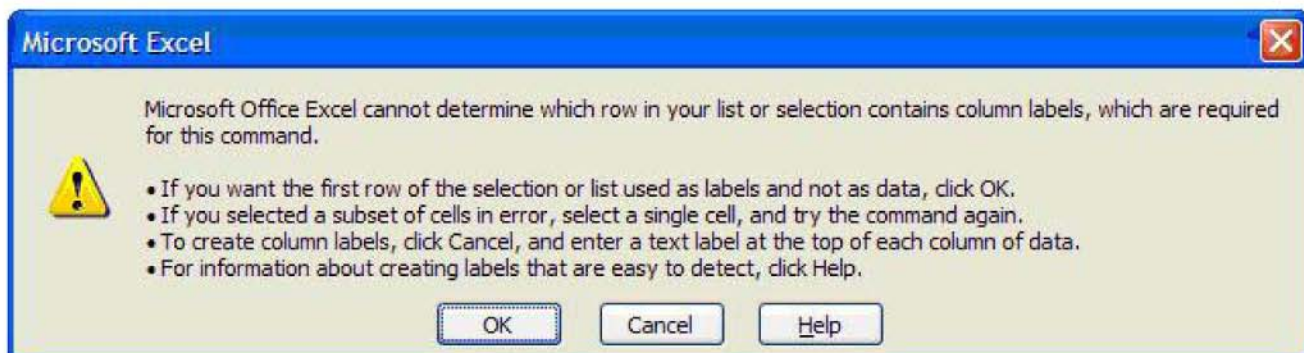
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

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

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



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



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

Continued on page 27

The next screen looks like this.

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

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

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

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

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

Microsoft Excel - Book1

Type a question for help

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

Sheet1 / Sheet2 / Sheet3

Ready NUM



Occupational health in the U.S.

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/>>

Today it is almost unavoidable to spend considerable time looking at a computer screen. Not only do we use the computer for both work and play, but, with the development of the Internet, we are using PC's for nearly all aspects of our life. Viewing a computer screen is a visually challenging task that requires good functioning of the eyes. It also requires good acuteness of vision, focus of the eyes on the screen and reference materials, and good eye movement and coordination. If you're like many PC users, you may need a pair of glasses for your computer work that is different from your normal glasses, either with a different prescription or a different lens design.

Or, you might need computer glasses for a vision disorder that would not otherwise require correction if you weren't performing a demanding visual job like using the PC.

Bifocals¹ or progressive addition lenses², usually prescribed for presbyopia, don't work well for computer work. The best solution for the presbyopic computer user is a lens that is specifically designed for the ergonomics of the computer workstation. Special computer glasses³ are designed to accommodate the unique viewing distances and angles at a computer; they work for presbyopic computer users and can also work for others who need lenses for their computer. These lenses also work well for common office work.

Here are some Website links where you can find computer glasses for purchase.

www.soothers.com/Welcome.html

www.prio.com

www.dinapoliopt.com/computer_glasses.html

Eye Care

Because we computer users don't blink as often as normal, we can endure eye irritation: dry eyes, tearing, uncomfortable contact lenses, blurred vision and so on.

The following steps can help improve the symptoms:

Use artificial tears to re-wet and lubricate your eyes, making sure to follow the doctor or manufacturer's prescription for use.



Continued on page 29

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

If you're seated in a draft or near an air vent, try to reduce the flow of air past your eyes.

If possible, repair any low humidity or fumes problems.

Concentrate on blinking whenever you begin to feel symptoms.

Every once in a while (especially when you feel the symptoms), close your eyes and roll them behind your closed eyelids.

Press firmly on your eyelids with the palms of your hands and hold for 10 seconds.

1 Bifocal, having one segment for near vision and one segment for far vision. Bifocals don't make good computer glasses because they correct only near and far vision, not intermediate.

2 Progressive lenses, (also, progressive addition lenses or PALs). Multi-focal lenses whose corrective powers change progressively throughout the lens. A wearer looks through one portion of the lens for distance vision, another for intermediate vision, and a third portion for reading or close work. Each area is blended invisibly into the next, without the lines that traditional bifocals or trifocals have.

3 Computer glasses is a cover term for glasses that are prescribed to improve the eyesight of employees whose work at a computer terminal means that ordinary corrective glasses are not adequate. Computer glasses are an aid/tool in the work place. In other words, glasses that are used in ordinary circumstances, and not only while working at the computer terminal, are not classified as computer glasses. Computer glasses are particularly appropriate for persons who spend a lot of time in front of the computer screen.

Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



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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>



All Computers Wait at the Same Speed

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>

I first heard that phrase about ten years ago at a geek conference in Seattle. A decade ago is earlier than the Stone Age in computer years. It was probably meant to make fun of the propeller heads that couldn't live without the fasted CPU on their motherboard. The geeks' concern with processing speed seemed ridiculous to those who understood that computers spend very little of their time processing information. They spend it waiting for us to tell them to do something. You would certainly find your life very boring if you had to spend 99% of your time waiting for other people to act before you could do anything.

What are we talking about? We're talking about keeping your system properly tuned so that you don't have to wait while it tries to do its job. It's no secret that Vista has had performance problems. Microsoft has promised that their upcoming service pack should resolve most if not all performance issues. We've heard similar kinds of promises from Redmond before, but this time they say they really mean it. In fairness, not every performance issue can be laid at Microsoft's doorstep, but it's always fun to blame them because they're such an easy target.

Vista puts great demands on your CPU due to Aero and other assorted graphical gizmos built into the product. They should have named it the Eye Candy OS. Responding to the user community, Microsoft also added security features and additional functions that were not present in XP. When you ask your CPU to do more, you're adding overhead. This means you need more CPU power or you live with a slower system. If Vista performance has been less than stellar, the good news is that you can do something about it other than buying a new computer. Here are some of the things you can do to make Vista more appealing from a performance standpoint.

You're probably tired of hearing this one. It's like mother telling you to eat your vegetables. You know she's right, but you don't want to hear it. **ADD MORE MEMORY.** Vista is hungrier for RAM than any of its predecessors, and with memory as cheap as it is, it doesn't make sense to keep it on a starvation diet. XP runs great on one gigabyte of RAM. Vista should have two gigabytes as a minimum, and you won't go wrong by installing even four gigabytes.

Even with enough physical memory, Vista can still act like a tired old dog if you have a lightweight video card. Go into the Performance Information and Tools utility in Control Panel, and check out your video card with the Windows Experience Index. You need a video card that's certified for Vista Premium and supports Direct X 10. Use the money you save on RAM to buy a good video card. Don't try to do this one on the cheap.

A real help to good performance is bringing your power settings to the High Performance option. Do this from the Power Options utility in Control Panel. The default setting is Balanced which is OK for XP but not Vista. The High Performance setting gives you full access to all the Power in the CPU.



Continued on page 31

Turn off the sidebar. While this feature is visually appealing, it has few socially redeeming traits. Turning off this feature can sometimes result in significantly faster startups and shutdowns. Disable the sidebar by right-clicking it. Select Properties, and remove the checkmark in the box that starts the sidebar when Vista wakes up.

Fine tune your indexing options. Vista has a great search feature, but it's totally dependent on indexing the files and programs on your hard drive. It's a mixed blessing. You have a fantastic search capability when you index all locations, but you take a performance hit. By indexing fewer areas, performance will improve, but your search feature will be less robust.

Vista won't let you turn off indexing completely, but you can disable indexing for locations that may not be important to you. Do this from the Performance Information and Tools utility in Control Panel.

Here's another "eat your veggies" type tip. Empty the Recycle Bin and adjust it so it doesn't take up more than 2% of your hard drive. Right click on the Recycle Bin, select Properties, and make the necessary adjustments in the dialog box. Don't forget to defrag your disk once in a while, and empty the Recycle Bin before you defrag, not after.

Open My Computer from the Desktop. Right click on the C: drive, select Properties and check how much space you have left on your hard drive. If you're approaching 90% or more, you need to take non-essential files and move them to another location. Vista needs free disk space to perform certain housekeeping functions, and if it has to hunt around for room or use virtual memory, your performance hit could be enormous.

Keep your device drivers up-to-date. Device drivers were designed to ensure that programs or hardware peripherals could "talk" to the system without problems and do their jobs properly. Newer drivers can improve 3D performance, fix bugs and other graphical glitches in games and video programs. Device drivers can avoid memory conflicts and prevent programs from squabbling over resources. Newer device drivers can support innovative features within applications, and ensure compatibility among different programs.

These are only some of the things you can do to improve Vista performance. Removing unnecessary startup programs, preventing spyware and virus infections, and updating old software are additional steps you can take. If your system is frequently hanging up or crashing after doing everything you can do to improve performance, then it's time to consider reformatting your hard drive and reinstalling everything, but that's another article.

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Tech Issue : Security



IRS Again Offers Free Online Tax Preparation and “e-Filing”

By **Ira Wilsker**, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; radio and Talk Show Host, iwilsker@apcug.net

Whether we like it or not, April 15 is fast approaching. It does not matter if we are due a refund, or owe Uncle Sam a bundle of money, we still must complete our income tax forms and file them appropriately with the IRS. This is a task that very few enjoy, and many more do not relish. While preparing our tax returns becomes more complex and time consuming, the IRS has once again contracted with a number of tax services to prepare our taxes online for free, if we are eligible. According to the IRS, the goal of the free file program is to enable 70% of taxpayers (97 million people, according to the IRS) to take advantage of the free online service; for calendar year 2007 (taxes due April 15, 2008), the calculated ceiling on eligibility for the free service is an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$54,000.

Continued on page 33

WEBSITES:

<http://www.irs.gov>

<http://www.irs.gov/efile/article/0,,id=118986,00.html> - Free File page

<http://www.irs.gov/efile/article/0,,id=118992,00.html> - Free File Instructions

<http://www.irs.gov/efile/article/0,,id=118993,00.html> - Information

<http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp> - List of participating Companies

http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-efile/free_file_agreement.pdf - Free File Alliance Agreement

<http://www.irs.gov/espanol/article/0,,id=163297,00.html> - Free File in Spanish



In addition to preparing federal tax returns for those eligible, the providers will also “e-file” (electronically file) the returns at no charge to the taxpayer. It should be noted that the IRS does not charge for receiving e-filed returns, but does not currently accept e-filed returns directly from individuals without first going through a third party service, for which a fee may be charged. There is no e-file fee for taxes prepared by the free preparers who participate in the IRS free file program.

The free filing service was created in 2002, and renewed again in 2005, when the IRS created a public – private partnership called the “File Free Alliance, LLC” where the IRS contracted with several tax preparation companies to offer free online tax preparation and filing. The Free File Alliance evolved from a “President’s Management Agenda”, which created a series of 24 “e-government” initiatives designed to improve government to citizen electronic capabilities. Originally, the program was limited to 60% of taxpayers, but the 2005 contract expanded the eligibility to 70% of taxpayers. The current agreement between the IRS and the preparation companies expires in October, 2009. The income eligibility ceiling, currently at an AGI of \$54,000, is adjusted annually such that 70% of taxpayers will remain eligible. Members of the Free File Alliance must conform to strict IRS established security and privacy requirements which insure the sanctity of the free filing service.

According to the IRS, there are several advantages and reasons for using the free tax services provided. The IRS claims that users can get their refunds in as little as 10 days, if they opt for direct deposit. Unlike commercial tax preparation offices, the online services are available 24/7, and taxes can be completed and filed at any time of the day prior to April 15. The IRS also claims that the service is environmentally friendly, in that it saves mountains of paper. Users of the free online services will benefit through the automatic checks for accuracy, and will receive a confirmation within 48 hours that the return was received by the IRS.

Users of the free filing service must start at the IRS website, IRS.gov, and initially access the free tax services through the IRS website. Many of the companies that are a part of the Free File Alliance also offer paid commercial tax preparation services, and the only way to get the service for free is to initialize the process through the IRS website. The list of participating companies, 19 of them, includes such well known companies as H&R Block, and software companies such as TurboTax. It is the responsibility of the user to verify his eligibility both for the program (up to \$54,000 AGI), and for the Free Alliance partner selected, as many of the partners have additional eligibility requirements for the free service. The user can either browse the list of individual companies (www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp), or can use the button “Guide Me To A Company” to narrow down the choices of free tax preparers.

Several of the companies, such as H&R Block’s “TaxCut Free File”, “TaxSimple Deluxe Version”, and “eSmart Tax by Liberty Tax Service” are available to anyone with an AGI of less than \$54,000, and who are also aged 50 or less. “TaxSlayer Free Returns” is available to anyone aged 25 to 68, or active military who meet the income requirements. “TurboTax Freedom Edition” is free to anyone with an AGI of less than \$30,000, or active duty military with an AGI of up to \$54,000. “Complete Tax” will do any age with an AGI of \$12,000 to \$54,000, while “Free TaxAct” will do anyone aged 19 to 54 who has an eligible AGI. Other free preparers have different eligibility requirements, including several that will prepare taxes for people for any age, but have geographic restrictions, in that they only prepare taxes for residents of specific states. Some of the preparers, such as “Online Tax Pros” specify that they also prepare taxes in Spanish. While not a requirement covered in the agreement with the IRS, many of the preparers listed will also prepare and file state income tax returns for residents of states that have a state income tax (Texas does not have a state income tax). While a few will prepare state income taxes for free, most have a nominal charge to prepare and e-file state taxes.

Once the taxes are prepared and completed online through one of the free providers, the returns are electronically checked for accuracy, and then e-filed directly with the IRS. The preparer will receive an electronic confirmation from the IRS that the return was received, and forward that confirmation to the taxpayer, typically within 48 hours of filing. If the taxpayer is due a federal refund, and selects direct deposit, the refund is deposited to the taxpayer’s specified account in as little as 10 days.

The IRS is to be commended for coordinating this service, available to nearly 100 million taxpayers. One improvement to the service that I would like to see is to allow those of us who prepare our taxes ourselves with commercial software, to be able to upload our returns directly to the IRS without having to go through a third party. That would be a great service to the millions of us who choose not to use, or who are not eligible for, the free filing programs, but would like the convenience of e-filing without sending our personal and private information to a third party.

For the eligible 70% of taxpayers who can utilize the free service, there are few good reasons not to use the service. The price can not be beat.

Year 2007 Tax Software



by **Milton G. Gugenheim, Jr.**, a member of HAL-PC, Texas, and an AARP Tax Aide Instructor and Local Coordinator for over 12 years, www.hal-pc.org, mgug@hal-pc.org.

Most of us seem to put the dreaded tax chore off until the last moment and then find ourselves faced with incomprehensible IRS forms, shoeboxes of receipts, check registers, antacids and headache pills. The return must be filed by Tuesday, April 15, 2008 (you can file an extension to delay filing until August 15, 2008. But payment, without P&I, is due April 15, 2008 – the IRS is nice, but not that nice!)

Fortunately help is on the way in the form of a couple of good tax preparation programs from Intuit – TurboTax, H&R Block – TaxCUT and 2nd Story's TaxACT. This review covers the two most popular programs.

In addition to well-crafted interfaces and good online help, both TaxCUT and TurboTax include Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser for seamless integration with the World Wide Web for updating. An internet connection is required to obtain updates as the software is released in December, before the IRS has completed all the forms, etc.

Even if you think that you need the skills of an experienced CPA in the preparation of your return, either of these programs will help you to become better organized and possibly keep accountant fees to a minimum.

I found the following software tax packages for the 2007 tax year: TurboTax Basic, TurboTax Deluxe, TurboTax Premier, TaxCUT, TaxCUT Deluxe, and TaxCUT Premier, for Windows 98, 2000, ME, XP, Vista and MacPowerPC processor. Most of the local office supply stores and other retail and software outlets stock the software.

There are free tax preparation programs on the web. Go to a search engine and enter "free federal income tax programs". TaxACT is a good free program. The program is easy to use and includes forms most tax payers require. A paid version is also available for more complex returns.

Features

TurboTax Basic is the basic package needed to file all individual returns including professional or sole proprietor, and includes Internet Explorer on the CD. TurboTax Deluxe includes all the features of TurboTax Basic and one free e-file (after rebate). Plus extra help for deductions – the deduction finder (library resources, tax planner, on-screen references and IRS publications, video advice and a financial planner). TurboTax Premier includes all the feature of TurboTax Deluxe plus help for investments, complex taxes, Schedule C business and Rental Property.

TaxCUT Deluxe is almost identical to TurboTax including Internet Explorer 6 on the CD. TaxCUT Deluxe includes all the features of TurboTax Deluxe, tax tips, on-screen IRS instructions and publications. All the programs will import financial data from most popular financial programs, and include details on preparing a return, reviewing a return, electronic filing (e-file) via a second party, planning for next year, plus help locations.

Installation

All packages were easy to install following the given directions. TurboTax Basic requires 175 MB of disc space without the installation of Explorer. TaxCUT Deluxe requires 170 MB of disc space without the installation of Explorer.

Manual

Both TurboTax and TaxCUT include a on-screen user guide with typical screens of the described function. All the usual files, edit, forms, tools and help are in the tool bar. TaxACT has almost as much on-screen help.

Continued on page 35

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General Overview

All of the packages have an easy step-by-step program to walk the taxpayer through the various steps required to do a return. The experienced taxpayer may prefer the forms method after completing a basic information page. The taxpayer selects the form and fills in the required information. Some have supplemental sheets for recording information, which is then transferred to the form. Help is available from any screen. All programs import from Quicken and Microsoft Money.

Details

The latest tax changes are incorporated in the packages (at the time of release). Each package allows the taxpayer to enter data on various forms after completing the basic information sheet. The return is then saved. Be sure to give the file a name if more than one return will be prepared using the same program. The programs may be used whether you are the organized type or the shoe box type. The shoebox type should organize the various types of entries first.

Printing

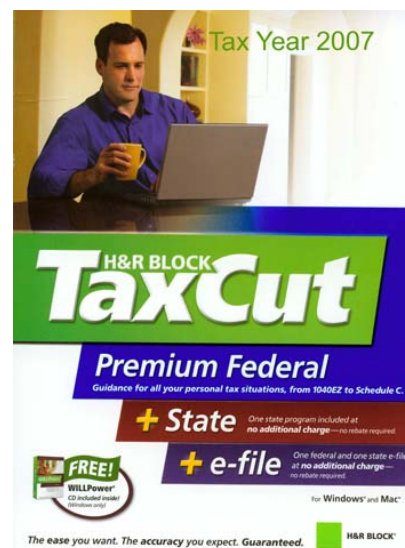
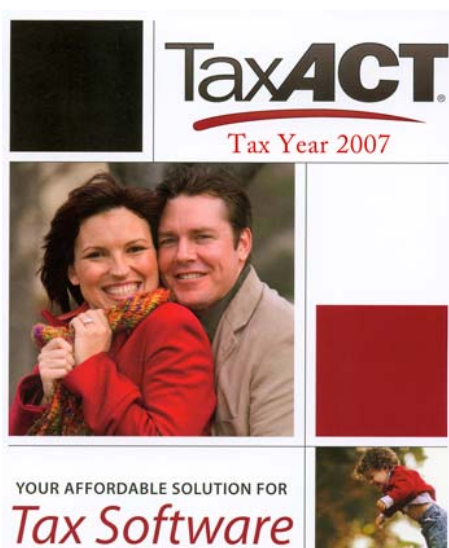
TurboTax and TaxCUT allow you to print an IRS return or select a form or schedule to be printed. The current computer printer setup does not have to be changed. Check to be sure you have the latest updates prior to printing the return for filing. Print a return for filing and a return for your records. The record return will contain detail sheets. I have no experience using these programs to e-file.

Summary

The Basic package of TurboTax or Deluxe of TaxCUT is more than adequate for most users. The upgrade packages are great for users who like the “bells and whistles” that include lots of helpful literature, suggestions, etc. The street price for the basic packages is around \$20, TurboTax Deluxe, and TaxCUT Premier is about \$40. Each company has an extensive business program for about \$70 +. A new program is required for the each tax year. TurboTax and TaxCUT sites, each sell the programs and it will cost more than the local stores.

Helpful Hints: I suggest the return be prepared in all caps since this is preferred by the IRS. All returns are mathematically corrected based on the input data. Most of programs have promotion tie-ins, such as a money program, anti-virus, etc. Read carefully the conditions before buying the program.

TurboTax, for more info goes to: www.turbotax.com/support. Block TaxCUT. For more info go to: www.taxcut.com and for TaxACT go to: www.taxact.com.



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. <reviewseeditor@spcug.org>

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Hasta la Vista

by **Lee Reynolds**, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida and regular contributor to Boca Bits, the BRCS monthly news magazine, www.brcs.org, leetutor@earthlink.net

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

Configuring the Taskbar

The Taskbar works very much like previous versions of Windows, particularly XP. You can configure some options on how it operates by right clicking an empty area on it and selecting from a popup context menu. For example, you can decide:

- To have various toolbars such as the Quick Launch toolbar and a Desktop or Documents toolbar displayed
- Show all open windows "cascaded" like a row of dominoes one behind the other, or show them side by side, or one on top of another to cover the desktop
- Minimize all the windows to show the Desktop
- Start the Task Manager application; or lock the Taskbar so that its settings cannot be modified without unlocking it first.
- If you select Properties from the context menu, you are given further ways of customizing the Taskbar.

As in Windows XP, there are options:

- to auto-hide the Taskbar (it reduces to a very thin line which only becomes visible as a normal Taskbar when you put your mouse over that thin line)
- keep the Taskbar visible over other open windows,
- group similar Taskbar buttons for the same application in a stacked list.

NEW OPTION

A new option available in the Taskbar properties page, is to determine whether or not hovering your mouse over a Taskbar button shows a live preview of the corresponding window (thumbnail.)

CUSTOMIZE THE NOTIFICATION AREA

Unlike XP, you now have a separate tab to customize the Notification Area, which is the part of the Taskbar on the right hand side, normally showing the system clock, a volume control for your speakers, a Network icon, a Safely Remove Hardware icon, a Power icon (if you are using a laptop on battery power), and others. You can put a check mark next to Hide Inactive Icons and then click the Customize button, in order to access a list of all icons that have shown up in the Notification Area.

This is broken down into two lists, those icons that are currently showing in the Notification Area, and those that have shown up in the past but are not currently there now. For each icon, you click to access a drop down list to choose Hide when inactive, Hide, or Show.

SYSTEM TIME

One of the things that you can show on the Taskbar is the system time (and that was in previous versions of Windows also), but this now has some modifications.

Hover your mouse over the system time in the Notification Area, you get a balloon tip telling the system date and day of week, but if you click on the system time instead, up pops a nice looking circular clock and a calendar of the current month, with a link to the Control Panel area where you can change the date and time settings.

In that area of Control Panel, you can now click on a tab for Additional Clocks and configure up to 2 more different system clocks to be active, each with a different time zone and time of day perhaps. If you do that, then hovering your mouse over the system time in the Notification Area will modify the balloon tip to show all active clocks, whereas clicking on system time will now show all these different clocks side by side, together with the calendar of the current month.



Moving on to Vista

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

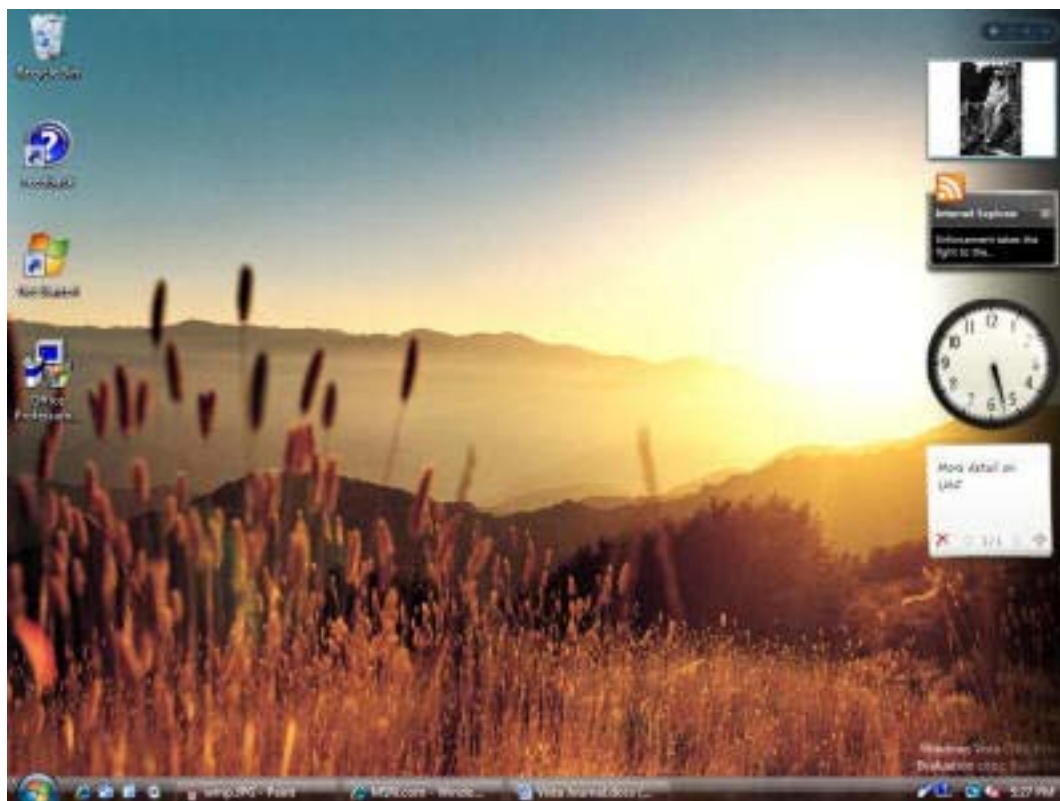
Your PC's desktop is the largest, most user defined area on your PC's screen. It contains all your own shortcuts, folder icons and your personal desktop picture. The desktop is really just a personal file folder on drive C. That means that any work you do on the desktop is saved for you on Drive C and not lost when you turn the computer off. Of course any documents, pictures, etc. that are "saved" on your desktop can be moved or copied to other folders on your hard drive.

After a while some of, make that most of us, find our desktop becomes loaded with program icons and shortcut icons. Program shortcut icons are a convenient way to get to programs that you use a lot. Unfortunately, when you install new programs most of them add a desktop shortcut and soon you have a desktop full of shortcuts, making it hard to find a shortcut when you want it. Here are a couple of solutions to this clutter.

The left end of the taskbar contains a "Quick Launch Toolbar". By default, Windows Vista places one or two program icons here (i.e. Internet Explorer). You can drag a limited number of additional shortcut icons for your favorite programs to this area and save space on your desktop. A "feature" of the Quick Launch Toolbar is that you only have to point at the program icons there and left-click once to start the program. This might seem a little confusing at first if you are used to double clicking on a program icon to start it, but you'll probably get used to it pretty fast.

Program shortcuts on your desktop point to programs that are also listed in your Start menu. The most frequently used programs can be seen when you click on the Start button. On the Start menu, click on "All Programs" to see all the other programs installed on your computer. You may need to use the scroll bar to see all of them and you will probably find more programs than you have shortcuts on your desktop. So, once you confirm that a program shortcut points to a program listed on the Start menu, you can safely delete infrequently used desktop shortcuts.

Continued on page 39



A third approach to reducing desktop clutter is to consolidate shortcuts. If you have multiple programs that do similar tasks (i.e. A photo catalog and picture manipulation program), create a desktop folder named "Photos". Then drag your shortcuts into the "Photos" folder and you're done.

Vista comes with a new set of desktop pictures. Access to alternative desktop pictures is similar, but slightly different, from what you may be used to with Windows XP. Right-click on a empty area of the desktop and click on "Personalize". On the "Personalization" menu select "Desktop Background". An array of available pictures will appear. Scroll through the pictures, select one. Make a selection from "How should the picture be positioned" and click OK.

That's fine if all you want to use are the pictures that came with Vista. What if you want to use something different? Just follow the steps list above but when you get to the "Desktop Background", instead of selecting one of the available pictures, next to where it says "Picture Location" click once on "Windows wallpapers". You'll see a list of other areas that contain pictures and colors. Want to use a photograph that you saved to your computer instead? Click the browse button. On the left side of the "Browse" screen, click on "Pictures". From the Picture folders on the right side of the Browse screen, make your selection, use the "How should the picture be positioned" if needed, and press the Open button to finish.

Windows Vista is a resource hog. A year ago, when I reviewed Vista for TAPCUG, my advice was to not upgrade an existing computer and buy Vista, wait and get it with a new computer. Today I stand by that advice. There are no new major programs that require Vista to run. If you're content with the way your existing computer(s) run with Windows XP there is no real reason to upgrade.

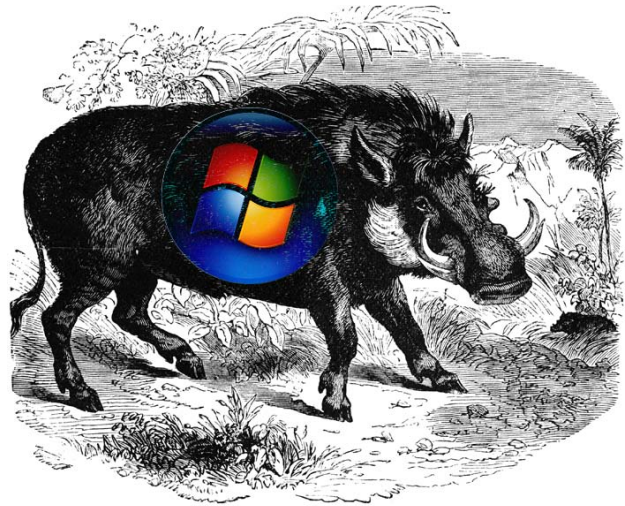
When you do buy a new computer there are several features you should look for for it to run Vista well. The first is RAM (random access memory). I don't think any manufacturer is selling a new computer with Vista with less than 1 megabyte of RAM but if you really want Vista to work well with large applications (Microsoft Office, video editing software, many games) try to get 2 gigabytes of RAM. You wont be sorry. There is no point in installing more than 4 gigabytes of RAM. Windows cannot access memory above 4 gigabytes.

The other issue is a video card. Vista wants at least 128 megabytes of memory for video. For best results, the memory should be installed on the video card. Some computers steal the video requirements from your computer's RAM. It works but the card will run slower. 256 megabytes of video card memory is even better.

Many people don't partition their hard disks, I do. I suppose it goes back to the days when larger hard drives started to appear and our computer operating system couldn't recognize and use the larger space. Of course all that has changed now, Windows can almost any hard drive size most of us will install. When I had to partition my hard drive, to fully utilize it, I discovered other benefits. Its easier to make a backup copy of a smaller hard drive. If I create a partition for just my photographs, and I only need to make a new backup of my pictures, I can just backup the partition containing the pictures and not everything else. A faster and easier process. I can also install another operating system (Windows XP or maybe Linux) on my computer by creating a separate partition and run it using a simple process called dual booting.

So I wanted to partition the hard drive that came with my laptop to use some of the excess space to store a backup copy of drive C. I bought a new copy of Partition Magic. I've used this program many times to partition drives on other computers. Unfortunately I discovered that Vista doesn't like Partition Magic. A trip to Symantec's home page showed that they have no updates for Vista. As I was wondering how I would solve this dilemma, I discovered that Vista has a new built-in Disk Management utility and one of its functions will partition hard drives.

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To use the you first have to get to the Disk Management window. From the start button, go to the control panel. Click on System and Maintenance and scroll down to "Create and format hard disk partitions", at the very bottom of the window. You will see what appears to be a table of every disk and partition installed on your computer. Among other things you'll see the capacity of each disk and the free space available. Select the hard drive that you want to partition and right-click on it. You need to free up empty space on the hard drive so on the drop down menu. Select "Shrink Volume" and specify the amount of space you want to free up in the Shrink Dialog box. The free space will appear in the Disk Management window as a black bar and labeled as "Unallocated".

Now you are ready to create your new partition. Right-click on the "unallocated space". From the menu select "New Partition". Then you just follow the wizard that appears to select the size and type of partition you want to create and format it. It may sound complicated but if you follow the steps listed above its easy.

Windows assigns drives (hard drives, DVD drives, etc) in alphabetical sequence so if drive letters C, D and E were already used your new partition will be labeled drive F. Typically, when you buy a computer from a company such as Hewlett Packard, drive C will be your hard drive, drive D will be a partition labeled "Recovery Drive" (used to restore your computer to "factory condition" in the event of a catastrophic crash) and drive E will be a CD/DVD drive.

Its a cosmetic thing but I like to group all my hard drives and partitions together. You can use the Disk Management window to relabel your drives. Just select one of the drives, right-click on it and select "Change drive letter and paths". When you left-click on "Change drive letter and paths" press the "Change" button and pick a new letter to label the drive. I usually start by re-labeling the Recovery Drive drive "R" to make the letter "D" available for a new hard drive or partition. Then I re-label the CD/DVD drive drive Z. When this is done, all the letters from D through Q are available for hard drives, hard drive partitions and flash drives.



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Look Ma No Hands

By **Bruce Jacobs**, Phoenix PCUG newsletter editor, www.phoenixpcug.org, editor@pcug.org

This article was not typed. I dictated it using the speech recognition feature in Windows Vista Ultimate.

I have been using this feature on and off for certain applications for a while and it has its good points and its bad points.

The intent of the software is to allow the user to speak words into the computer and for the computer to recognize those words, understand that some of them are commands, and also understand that some of them are input to programs. In other words, when I say the words "please save me", the computer must decide whether to add the words to the document I am editing as if I had typed them, or add the word "please" to the document, and then bring up the save dialog box to save the document with the name "me".

The program that is attempting to do this has two major hurdles to conquer. It has to recognize the spoken words correctly. This is helped by the training exercises. But it has its limitations.

It must also understand "in context" which of those words are commands and which of those words are to be part of my document. As time goes on, you learn to pause before speaking a command. So in the above example of "please save me", I would say the words altogether relatively quickly in order to enter them in my document. If I wanted to add the word "please" to my document then save the document, I would speak the word "please", then pause for a few seconds, then save the word "save." This would bring up the save dialog box and I could continue as if it was a command.

As far as the good points are concerned: If I'm working off printed list or when I know for sure what I want to say clearly, it can be a much faster way of inputting text than for me to type it. Some of that is due to my typing speed being somewhat slow. I am a faster typist than most hunt and peck folks, but I would never be able to keep a job as a secretary. It is also much better at spelling than I am.

If I don't know what I'm going to say in advance the program does not facilitate me speaking what I want to say and then recomposing it later. Some of this may be my fault. I find that I can type up an article by hand and maintain enough control so that in the end I have something coherent. When I just speak out what I want it does not always make sense. I spend way too much time revising it.

One of the disadvantages is that you need to spend a little bit of time training the voice recognition system. The system works best when you are running a very simple application such as WordPad or Notepad. It can even be used to some extent in Microsoft Word. However when using an application such as PowerPoint, the program spends so much time trying to figure out what possible commands you might be wanting to perform and not enough time actually realizing that you are trying to enter words.

Another problem is homonyms. These are words that sound the same but they have different meanings in English except for the possibility of some contextual clues. There is no way for the speech recognition software to know whether I want "2", "two", "to", or "too." During setup the program asks you if they can look at the contents of documents on your hard drive to help you determine what word you used most often and in what context. This does help it guess which homonym you want.

The final problem I wish to discuss is the editing features. Whenever I create a text document I will want to fix mistakes. There are some commands in the software that will help fix mistakes, but they are limited and clumsy. Some of them will even (in theory) help prevent mistakes by the voice recognition software in future. All that being said, I find that editing documents using the voice recognition software is very frustrating. I always resort to using the arrow keys and the mouse to navigate through the document.

Vista speech recognition is a helpful tool when transcribing printed text or when words have been spoken into a tape recorder. However for initial composition of documents or editing I do not find it useful. I do not believe that I could ever learn to use it as a complete 100% substitute for the keyboard and mouse. I would not consider it a replacement if I was disabled.





Do You Ubuntu (yet)? A Linux Update

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. <http://swipcug.apcug.org/>, swipcug@gmail.com

In February of 2002 I wrote:

"It has been said that Windows XP is less buggy than its Windows 95, 98, and Me predecessors; damnation by faint praise. XP is also more expensive, can only be used on a single computer, and presents many incompatibilities with existing hardware and software. It hogs resources. That led me to wonder how Linux is coming along."

Replace "XP" with "Vista" and history repeats itself. Furthermore, add that online security has dramatically worsened and that the security of Windows Vista is at best only marginally improved. At the time I got a copy of the Red Hat Linux 7.2 distribution (list price \$60), included in a 1000+ pages "Linux Bible" and proceeded to evaluate it. I found that the limited software included in the distribution was nice and useful, but trying to install additional programs from the Internet was a nightmare.

Six years later desktop Linux has matured beyond recognition. Lindows, later renamed Linspire, was the first distribution making it a one-click operation to download and install software from a large online library. Originally the cost of acquiring Linspire and a one-year subscription to the library was \$100, but more recently the service has been available for free. I am still using an older version of Linspire daily, mostly for Web browsing, accessing email, and playing Freecell, Yukon or MahJongg.

In 2004 Marc Shuttleworth, a South African by birth, started a free new Linux distribution called Ubuntu ("humanity towards others"). In 1999 he sold Internet security software he had developed to Verisign for about \$575 million. He spent \$20 million of that on an 8-day trip by Soyuz to the Space Station and had plenty left over for a free software project. By now Ubuntu has become the most advanced and popular desktop Linux distribution, with the help of numerous volunteer contributors.

Ubuntu undergoes continuous upgrades as new and improved software is being developed and tested. Twice a year, in April and October, a new version is released. The latest version is numbered 7.10, for October of 2007, and is nicknamed "Gutsy Gibbon." (The next issue in April, version 8.4, will be named "Hardy Hero." You get the drift).

I installed Ubuntu side-by-side with Windows XP on my desktop computer, equipped with an AMD Athlon64 X2 4800+ dual core processor, 1 GB of RAM and an nVidia GeForce 7600 graphics card. I put it in a separate Linux partition on my hard drive previously used for Linspire. Before committing to the installation I ran Ubuntu off the CD to verify that it was compatible with my hardware.

Once installed, Ubuntu was ready to go. It automatically set up my connection to the Internet with Firefox, and with my permission downloaded a large number of updates and additions released since October. The OpenOffice.org suite of programs, comparable to MS Office, was ready to go. I already had been using the Windows version of OpenOffice Writer so there was no learning curve whatsoever. The Gimp, an advanced graphics program similar to Adobe Photoshop Elements and with comparable features, came preinstalled. I also found drivers for my HP 812C printer and my Epson Perfection 3490 Photo Scanner. With all the necessary tools at hand I had no difficulty producing the January newsletter, including typing the articles, downloading articles from other user groups, and designing the layout and the new masthead. I printed the newsletter ready for Xeroxing and used OpenOffice Writer to save a separate version (omitting treasury data) to pdf format for distribution on the Internet.

Ubuntu provides many additional Linux programs:

- Thunderbird, well-known program.
- Pidgin, an Messenger graphical multi-protocol instant messaging client, capable of using AIM/ICQ, Yahoo!, MSN, IRC, Jabber, Napster, Zephyr, Gadu-Gadu, Bonjour, Groupwise, Sametime, SILC, and SIMPLE all at once.
- GRAMPS, genealogy program capable of GEDCOM files that are used in such programs as FamilyTree Maker for Windows. It can produce reports in various formats, such as text, HTML and PDF.
- GnuCash can track finances in multiple accounts, keeping running and reconciled balances. It has a graphical user interface, double entry, a hierarchy of accounts, expense accounts (categories), and can import Quicken QIF files and OFX files.

Continued on page 43

- Multiple sound and video programs for burning and reading CDs and DVDs, ripping and creating audio CDs, recording sound clips, playing movies, etc.

- Popular games, including aisleriot (anagram of solitaire), a large collection of card games, including Freecell. Also blackjack, glchess, gnome-sudoku, gnometriz (Tetris), gnomine (minesweeper), mahjongg, and many others.

Additional programs can be installed with the Add/Remove function. Some powerful Linux programs that are not (yet) specifically adapted for Ubuntu can be retrieved with the Synaptic package manager, an easy-to-use graphical program to download applications from the Internet. I used it to download and install Scribus, an advanced desktop page layout manager capable of producing commercial grade output in PDF and Postscript.

Difficult to use for a non-professional, but it worked just fine.

Installation

It is easy to install Ubuntu and Windows on the same computer in separate partitions. Previously that required manually repartitioning your computer with a program such as Partition Manager, but the latest Ubuntu version, Gutsy Gibbon, includes its own Linux-based partition manager, GParted, and automatically uses it to scan your computer for available space and to reconfigure that space (with your approval) to install itself. During boot-up the computer displays a menu of startup options, including Windows or Ubuntu.

I evaluated the ease of installation on an old Dell Inspiron 3800 laptop computer, with a 600 MHz Celeron CPU, 320 MB RAM and 880MB free disk space. Installation alongside the existing Windows Me went flawlessly. The computer didn't have a network card, but Ubuntu recognized the PCMCIA wireless network card and connected to the Internet after I provided the router parameters.

"Sounds Great, But Why Bother?"

For the same reasons people move out of the city to the suburbs: security and cost-of-living. To enjoy the best of both worlds, install Ubuntu side-by-side with a basic Windows program. No need for expensive MS Office or Adobe programs. Use Ubuntu for safe online access, and keep Windows for those few occasions where Linux does not (yet) provide the means. As time goes by, it will probably be possible to abandon Windows altogether.

Give it a try!



Would You Sign This Contract?

By Rob Rice, a computer specialist living in Anchorage and a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, www.ccokc.org, articles@isp.com

Ok, here's the deal; I offer you a big, 56-inch, shiny new Filch Plasma Screen TV and I will sell it to you if you will agree to have a camera installed in your home so I may watch you watching the new television. Sound fair? You also agree that should you disable or inhibit the free operation of the camera in any way, you forfeit the television and your money. Neither am I responsible for any damages to your home from the equipment or its use nor do I guaranty privacy or even that the television will work.

Would you sign such a contract? Many of us, in a sense, have already agreed to something like the above scenario when we clicked on the End User License Agreement (EULA), the contract that accompanies most software these days.

It pretty much goes without saying that most of us do not read EULAs. They are often long, dry, and hard to understand documents written in a very small type face and crammed in a tiny window. Even if there is something bad in it, what are the chances it will have any real affect? After all "I'm one among millions".

We may often think of ourselves as just one among many cattle feeding in the pasture, so "The chances of lightening striking me are remote". But lightening did hit hundreds of folks in the form of a Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) lawsuit. Hundreds of persons have been sued for allegedly downloading music illegally. For example, RIAA filed a lawsuit against 12-year-old Brianna LaHara, whose mom had paid a \$29.99 service charge to KaZaA for the company's music service, said Brianna, "I got really scared. My stomach is all turning," "I thought it was OK to download music because my mom paid a service fee for it. Out of all people, why did they pick me?" (1)

But what we have learned since Brianna's case came to light is that many intellectual property owners are using eavesdropping techniques to monitor end user compliance. Whether it's intercepting data traffic over an Internet connection or placing spyware on your computer the name of the game seems to be intimidation through litigation. Of course heavy-handed tactics do tend to produce mistakes and bad public feeling, such as RIAA's disastrous lawsuit where they sued a deceased great-grandmother who reportedly had never owned a computer. (2)

But what is interesting is that software that tends to operate in a dubious manner will typically tell you up front, or give you some hints in its EULA. Take for example this classic EULA that was analyzed by Benjamin Edelman back in 2004, he is an assistant professor at the Harvard Business School and a member of the Massachusetts Bar. It is Gator, an advertising pop-up software that often came embedded in



Continued on page 45

weather monitors, organizers and clock synchronizers, (The company changed its name to Claria Corporation. GAIN stands for Gator Advertising Information Network) The EULA, with over 5,900 words of text, informed the user that:

- “You agree that you will not use, or encourage others to use, any unauthorized means for the removal of the GAIN AdServer, or any GAIN-Supported Software from a computer.”
- That includes removing it with Adaware or SpyBot, which listed it as spyware.
- “Any use of a packet sniffer or other device to intercept or access communications between GP and the GAIN AdServer is strictly prohibited.”
- Meaning you cannot monitor what it is doing while it is on your computer!
- Mr. Edelman’s website is a very good resource for the wary and worth a look, (<http://www.benedelman.org/news/112904-1.html>).
- Sony has faced some embarrassing headlines as of late with their music CD’s EULA and rightly so. Take for example these observations by the Electronic Frontier Foundation regarding the contents of the Sony EULA:

If you file for bankruptcy, you have to delete all the music on your computer.

- The EULA says Sony-BMG will never be liable to you for more than \$5.00.
- If your house gets burgled, you have to delete all your music from your laptop when you get home. That’s because the EULA says that your rights to any copies terminate as soon as you no longer possess the original CD.
- You must install any and all updates, or else lose the music on your computer. The EULA immediately terminates if you fail to install any update. No more holding out on those hobble-ware downgrades masquerading as updates.
- If you move out of the country, you have to delete all your music. The EULA specifically forbids “export” outside the country where you reside. (3)

Most EULAs that I have read place all of the burden and financial responsibility upon you. You pay the money, you take the risk, and you take the liability. The software company decides everything in its favor and takes no responsibility what-so-ever even for the software doing what it claims to do! It would seem that you in effect given up your legal rights in exchange to use a piece of software.

Ok, so you read the license agreement but the mind numbing experience had you re-reading the same sentence over and over and by the time you were done you felt like the first documented case of someone having actually died from boredom. What is worse, you still don’t know what it said! But cheer up, there is help available. For example, The Electronic Frontier Foundation has a helpful article titled, “Dangerous Terms a User’s Guide to EULAs” by Annalee Newitz. (4) It describes some of the more dubious terms found in some EULAs and what to look out for. Such as:

1. "Do not criticize this product publicly."
2. "Using this product means you will be monitored."
3. "Do not reverse-engineer this product."
4. "Do not use this product with other vendor's products."

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5. "By signing this contract, you also agree to every change in future versions of it. Oh yes, and EULAs are subject to change without notice."

6. "We are not responsible if this product messes up your computer."

You can also use some of the EULA analyzers that are available. While they are not a substitute for carefully reading a user agreement they can be very helpful by flagging suspect sentences, especially when you have an insanely long contract such as the over 32,000 words found at the Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum's web site. Figuring this would bring any EULA analyzer to its knees, I put it through the Spyware Guide's on-line EULA Analyzer. (5) It performed beautifully and flagged areas that the Analyzer thought suspicious, including:

You agree to pay us three thousand dollars per unsolicited e-mail sent, or prohibited comment posted to the CPRR Discussion Group, or telephone call and fifteen thousand dollars per e-mail address added to your commercial mailing list in violation of the foregoing, plus damages. The CPRR Museum participates in Project Honey Pot which allows us to track and help catch spammers who harvest e-mail addresses from our web pages.

One analyzer that I have been using for several months now is the EULalyzer by Javacool Software LLC, who also publish SpywareBlaster. This is an application that is very simple to use, just click analyze and then drag the application's pointer over the EULA and automatically copies it into the program. Click the "Analyze" button and it gives you its assessment almost instantaneously.

The EULalyzer personal is free for educational and personal use and a Pro version with added features is also available. (6)

If you are still not convinced of the importance of reading the EULA, you might consider this; the folks over at PC Pitstop (<http://pcpitstop.com>) decided to see just how many people read the agreement. In their EULA they actually offered monetary compensation for reading the document! It stated:

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

A special consideration which may include financial compensation will be awarded to a limited number of authorize licensees to read this section of the license agreement and contact PC Pitstop at consideration@pcpitstop.com. This offer may be withdrawn at any time.

Unfortunately it took four months before anyone collected. Doug Heckman was the first person to email them in 3000 downloads! For his efforts PC Pitstop gave him \$1000. So there you have it, incentive to read the license agreement!

Reading EULAs can actually be quite an interesting experience. Read enough of them and you quickly learn how bold some companies have become in trying to thwart trade laws. But don't take my word for it, take a look at some of the Microsoft, Google, or as the hardware industry attempts to apply the same yoke on its customers, Lexmark EULAs and see what they have to say, you may be amazed!

(1) Fox News, "12-Year-Old Sued for Music Downloading" <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,96797,00.html>

(2) BetaNews, "RIAA Sues Deceased Grandmother" http://www.betanews.com/article/RIAA_Sues_Deceased_Grandmother/1107532260

(3) Electronic Frontier Foundation, "Now the Legalese Rootkit: Sony-BMG's EULA" <http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/archives/004145.php>

(4) Electronic Frontier Foundation, "Dangerous Terms A User's Guide to EULAs" <http://www.eff.org/wp/eula.php>

(5) Spyware Guide's on-line EULA Analyzer, <http://www.spywareguide.com/analyze/analyzer.php>

(6) EULalyzer, <http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/index.html>

This article's reference to the Electronic Frontier Foundation should not be construed as an endorsement of the organization by the author. Rob Rice is a computer specialist living in Anchorage Alaska and a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City. Rob can be contacted at articles@isp.com.

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New Technology Terms

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

Words, words, words....In the fast-moving world of technology, new words and phrases are constantly introduced. In order to keep up with the times, you need to learn about the current terminology. This need not be a drudgery. In fact, it can be fun to see what new words and abbreviations are popular. Check these out and you can wow your friends next time computers and technology become the subject at the 19th hole or the neighborhood cocktail party.

SSD (Solid-State Drive)

This is a type of memory that you will be hearing more and more about in the future. It is a type of flash memory that has no moving parts. Some small laptop computers are appearing using SSDs for storing data instead of hard drives. Because SSDs have no spinning disks like the ordinary hard drives, they offer improved battery life for laptop computers. They also have better data access speeds than hard disks.



404

You may recognize this as a common message on the Internet. It indicates that the requested page could not be found. This may mean that the page has temporarily or permanently moved and is not currently available. However, recently the term 404 has come to have another meaning. It refers to someone who is totally clueless. From the error message “404 not found”, this has become a slang term meaning that the person’s brain could not be located. If you decide to call your spouse a 404, make sure that he or she has not read this column or you’ll be in big trouble.

Crowdsourcing

Using the skills of a wide variety of people to do a job or perform a task is called crowdsourcing. The people who perform such a function are often found on the Internet. Although these people can be paid, often they are often volunteers.



Geotagging

This is technology built into a digital camera or part of a camera add-on device that is able to tag each photo with the exact location that the picture was taken. Photos can then be sorted based on where they were taken. They can also be plotted on maps.

HDMI (High-definition Multimedia Interface)

This is a newer audio and video interface that is often found on televisions, DVD players, video game consoles, video cameras, and other video equipment. This type of connector replaces older standard connectors like composite video, S-Video, component video, and DVI. HDMI carries both audio and video in one cable. It supports digital rights management systems. HDMI cables can be very expensive in comparison to older audio and video cables.

One Laptop per Child (OLPC)



Led by Nicholas Negroponte, this is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to design, manufacture, and distribute affordable laptop computers to children around the world. The laptops were initially called the “\$100 laptop”, but the final build cost almost \$200 each. In 2007, the One Laptop per Child organization started distributing these laptop computers to children in developing countries. The laptops are bright green and white portable computers with special features like a sealed keyboard. They are called XO computers.

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SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Search Engine Optimization is the process of tweaking a website to improve the volume of traffic that is produced by search engines. The idea is to give the website a higher ranking in the search engines thereby producing more traffic to the site. SEO includes using keywords and website design to get higher rankings with search engines.

Skype

This is an online service that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet. The software is free and there is no charge to call the computers of other Skype users. Your computer must have a microphone in order to use Skype. With the addition of a webcam, Skype callers from computer to computer can also place video calls where they can both see and talk to each other. Skype also allows you to call landlines and cell phones for a fee. Skype has other services such as instant messaging and file transfer.



FTW

This stands for "For The Win". You may remember it being a part of the game show "Hollywood Squares" where a certain square would be selected "For the Win." It is also used in some online games like World of Warcraft. It is now a popular term that usually projects a boast, as in "I did it FTW." It is often used ironically and sarcastically.



Bot

A bot computer is one that has been infected with some type of malware that allows the computer to be controlled by an outside entity. Millions of computers are bots that are now under the influence of malware distributors who use these computers to send out spam, attack other computers and websites, and carry out scams and identity theft. The computer owner is usually unaware that their computer has been compromised since this activity is performed in the background.

BotNet

A series of bot computers, sometimes as large as millions of computers is called a BotNet. The BotNet does the bidding of some entity that has compromised the computers and taken control of them by installing some type of malware.

Zombie

This term that means the same thing as a Bot. It is a personal computer that has been infected with a virus that allows an outside force to control it. Such a computer can be used to send out spam or attack other computers without the owner's knowledge. Millions of computers today are zombie computers. They are part of a Zombie Network of computers that are controlled by hackers.

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Pros and Cons 64 Bit Computing

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

In July 2005 I wrote an article for the Monitor on using the 64 bit version of Windows XP. My conclusions at that time were that most users should wait the arrival of Microsoft's next operating system before leaping into 64 bit computing. So Vista's 64 bit version (Vista x64) has now been here for about a year, should you be considering a change from your 32 bit processor to a 64 bit processor? I'll lay out some of the pros and cons of this so you can make a decision.

First, let's consider why 64 bit processing is in the future of computing. To do this we need to consider some very basic information on how computers function. As most of you are well aware, computers process information as either a 0 or a 1. Or in the really old days of computing, these were switches that were either "on" or "off". Each value constitutes one one binary "bit" or instruction. A central processor with a 32 bit instruction set can process 32 bits per clock cycle. Thus if you have a CPU that runs with a 2 GHz (2 billion cycles per second) clock cycle, it is processing 64 billion bits per cycle. That's the theory, in practice there are limitations which may reduce the actual processing speed. Anyway, a 64 bit processor could handle twice the number of bits per second as a 32 bit processor. Again, because of other limitations, the actual processing speed advantage is less.

There is another major advantage to 64 bit computing and that is the size of the address space or the amount of memory that can be used. For a 32 bit processor, working memory is limited to 2 raised to the 32nd power (2^{32}) or 4 GB of memory. A 64 bit processor can address 16 Exabytes of Ram. That's, 2 to the 64th power (2^{64}) or 16 Million Gigabytes! At the present there are no machines that support this much RAM. For one thing the cost of that much memory would be excessive. So manufacturers are generally limiting motherboards and chipsets to 128 GB of RAM or less as Vista x64 can only address up to 128 GB of RAM. The maximum RAM is usually greater than the 4 GB limitation of the motherboards designed for 32 bit processors.

So the question becomes, why do computers need any amount of memory even close to any of these figures? The answer relates to how people use their computers. A lot of users, and I'm one of them, open more than one application at a time. This can have a definite effect on the speed of operation of the computer. When you open an application in either Windows XP or Vista, the operating system sets aside a 4 GB memory space for the application, drivers and other required information. So each application that is open has its own 4 GB memory space. It is a rare personal computer that has 4GB or more of RAM. In fact, Windows XP can not address more than 4 GB of RAM and it uses almost one GB for its own components. So how is this handled?

The solution to the requirement for very large RAM space for each application is called "Virtual Memory". The computer stores much of the required information for an application on the hard drive. It then moves data back and forth between RAM and the hard drive as it is needed. A paging table is used to track the locations of data on the hard drive and in RAM. So, even when you open only a single application, a large part of it will be stored on the hard drive or in "virtual memory". When information on the hard drive is needed, the paging table remaps it to RAM memory and also moves data from memory to the hard drive. Because read/write access to the hard drive is much slower than read/write access to RAM, the overall processing time is much slower. If you are simply doing word processing or writing e-mail, then the speed difference is not really noticeable. If you were doing calculations using a large spreadsheet while setting up a Power Point presentation with complex graphics, then you would probably notice a slight slow down in the overall operation of your system.

So the primary advantage of 64 bit computing is the tremendous increase in address space. This advantage is also present when running 32 bit software on a true 64 bit machine. Running 32 bit software on Vista x64 is referred to as running on the Windows on Windows64 or WoW64.

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By utilizing the added address space of x64, the time required for loading, unloading and switching processes can be greatly reduced or eliminated. This can also eliminate the frequent hard drive cycling that is referred to as "thrashing", which can occur in a 32 bit system.

If you decide to move to a 64 bit system, just be sure to add plenty of RAM. Certainly you should have a minimum of 8 GB. The motherboard should also have a system bus designed to work with a 64 bit processor. Otherwise the bus can become a major bottleneck. In fact, you really should not try to upgrade a 32 bit machine by installing Vista x64. To really be successful, you should buy a machine which is designed from the ground up to run Vista x64. Also, the upgrade version of Vista x64 will only upgrade the 64 bit version of Windows XP.

That brings us to the "cons" about Vista x64 and 64 bit computing in general. 64 bit processors have been available for four or five years for desktop computers. However, when we relate this to machines with Windows operating systems, the big problem is slowness of the adoption of 64 bit hardware and software by manufacturers. One example is the lack of device drivers for peripheral hardware. So just what do you need drivers for? The one that affects most people is the printer driver. Operating systems don't always include a printer driver because of the great variety of makes and models. Although I know that many HP printer drivers are delivered along with the 32 bit Windows OS. However, this is not true for the 64 bit version. If a 64 bit driver is available for your printer you may have to download and install it yourself.

With Windows Vista, you not only must have a 64 bit driver, it must be a "signed" driver or Vista will reject it. A signed driver contains a digital signature or a certificate in the program code which meets Microsoft's requirements and is from a company that has a license (Publishers Identity Certificate) from Microsoft. You may have already encountered an "unsigned driver" message when you tried to install software or drivers. In Windows XP and 32 bit Vista you were able to continue the installation in spite of the lack of the signed driver. In Vista x64 this is not possible. Vista will discontinue the installation after advising you of the lack of the signed certificate. This procedure was implemented to try to stop "rootkit" malware from installing itself in the heart of the operating system – the kernel. Rootkits are able to hide within the computer by altering register keys and processes. By blocking the installation of unsigned device drivers Microsoft is hoping to reduce the rootkit problem.

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A driver is also needed for your graphics cards. Both ATI and NVidia released 64 bit drivers for their newest cards in December, 2007. There is considerable doubt that they will produce 64 bit drivers for any of their older cards. Another reason why you have to consider new hardware when you are thinking of transitioning to a 64 bit OS. Other hardware that needs 64 bit drivers include scanners, sound cards, modems, serial ATA (SATA) / RAID and just about any other hardware peripheral. So you may need to update all of your hardware in order to get 64 bit drivers. Also, since the graphics drivers have only appeared almost a year after Vista's debut, other hardware manufacturers may still be working on drivers. You definitely need to do your homework if you are considering the purchase of an x64 system.

Software is another area that is slow to take advantage of the extra processing capacity of Vista x64. Although, as I mentioned earlier, x64 can run 32 bit software it is done in an emulation mode. The 32 bit application can not take advantage of the wider data path that is available in x64. Although there is some advantage due to the added memory in an x64 machine, the software is not using the hardware to full advantage. Just as happened when computers shifted from 16 bit processors to 32 bit processors, there was considerable delay before manufacturers moved solidly into the 32 bit realm.

So what applications are currently most likely to have 64 bit applications that can use the full capacity of x64?

- Applications for creating digital content in computer-aided design and digital video editing.
- Applications that require mathematical precision and floating-point performance.
- Applications that involve large, high-performance databases.
- Vision acquisition and analysis applications with large amounts of data moving directly into memory at rapid rates.

I suspect it will still be several years before 64 bit computing will be the mainstream for personal computers. So, unless your requirements are similar to the above list, I would suggest you stick with 32 bit systems for a while longer.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems. He can be reached at bwsail@yahoo.com.




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Open Source Software – Mostly Free to Use and Modify

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

WEBSITES:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-source_software

<http://mashable.com/2007/09/23/open-source>

<http://openoffice.org>

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird>

Wikipedia defines Open Source Software as, "... computer software which source code is available under a license (or arrangement such as the public domain) that meets the Open source definition. This permits users to use, change, and improve the software, and to redistribute it in modified or unmodified form. It is often developed in a public, collaborative manner." Open Source software has been around in its current context since 1998, and hundreds of titles are available for almost any computing need. As a general rule, Open Source software is free to use, modify, and redistribute as the user sees fit. For this reason it has evolved from products that only a geek could love to software that it widely used in corporate, academic, and home environments. Some Open Source software, such as the comprehensive and free office suite, Open Office, has in some places taken a substantial market share from its pricey commercial competitors with hundreds of millions of users. Much of the Open Source software is now in the mainstream, and is no longer in the exclusive realm of nerds.

Open Source software should be seriously considered as an alternative to commercial software. One website that lists almost 500 categorized Open Source products is online at mashable.com/2007/09/23/open-source. This website contains a wealth of resources that are mostly free for the taking. All businesses, and many households, need some type of accounting software, and Open Source is a viable choice. Some of the accounting programs listed provide budgeting help, personal finance assistance, point of sale (POS) applications that work with barcode readers, inventory control, and other fiscal functions.

Many businesses are now dependant on "Customer Relationship Management" software, known in the industry as CRM. About 20 CRM titles are listed on the mashable.com site listed above. Generally, these titles allow for the recording and utilizing of customer data. One product intended for charitable or religious use, is listed as "CiviCRM - The world's first downloadable constituent relationship management system; fund raising software that allows users to manage information about donors, volunteers, etc." CRM software generally allows for



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the creation and maintenance of mailing lists, client tracking, project management, and other customer related information.

Many of us would like the opportunity to customize what we see on our Windows desktops, and not be forced to utilize what Bill Gates provides us. Open Source obliges by providing about a dozen “Desktop Environments and Shell Replacements”. Some of the functionality added to Windows by these programs includes enhancements like minimizing windows to floating icons, freeing the taskbar, controlling wallpaper and icons, real-time wallpaper effects, and other customizable functions. For those who like to tinker with Windows, these desktop environments and shell replacements can be a lot of fun to play with.

One computing function that almost all of us deal with on a daily basis is email. While the industry leader, Microsoft’s Outlook Express is free (bundled with Internet Explorer), and its commercial big brother Outlook is commonly bundled with Microsoft Office, there are some excellent alternatives in Open Source software. One of the most popular Open Source email clients is Mozilla’s Thunderbird, which is a very full featured email client with millions of users. Thunderbird can be downloaded (free) from

www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird. Thunderbird has much of the look and feel of Outlook, but provides many advanced features not available in Outlook. Thunderbird is compatible with almost all email services, and is easy and quick to configure. Thunderbird generally provides better security than Outlook, and includes some protection from phishing (identity theft) scams. Spam email is the bane of email, and Thunderbird offers active spam filtering which routes suspicious email to a junk mail folder for quick review and deletion, if desired. It is also a universal email client in that it can run on Windows, Mac OS-X, and Linux, and is currently available in over 30 languages. Thunderbird would be a great alternative for those who want to get away from Microsoft products. Thunderbird, as popular as it is, is not the only Open Source email client listed; there are about a dozen email clients listed. The selection is good, and the price can not be beat.

Another computing function that many of us partake in is ripping music, and converting it to formats that can be utilized by our portable music players. Some of us edit videos, such as the ones we take with our camcorders. The Open Source website at mashable.com/2007/09/23/open-source lists over three dozen ripping, music editing, and video editing utilities. Formats supported by some of these Open Source utilities include MP3, MPEG, MPEG1, MPEG2, DivX, WAV and several other formats. Some of the software will edit and repair damaged audio and video files, while others allow for the conversion of DVDs to other video formats. There is an impressive selection of audio and video utilities available as Open Source, and they are worthy of consideration. Once media is available in digital formats, some means of playing it may be necessary, and this website lists several dozen media players.

Another popular computing task is file sharing and “FTP” (File Transfer Protocol), and there are about three dozen free utilities listed. While some are for traditional file swapping, others allow for the remote access and synchronization of computers.

Many of us are artistic and graphically inclined, but the major commercial graphics design programs are often expensive. Open Source can come to the rescue with about 40 titles to choose from, allowing for an excellent selection. Some Open Source graphics utilities are simple photo editors, while others include 2D and 3D animation. Other Open Source utilities provide sophisticated webpage authoring tools where a novice can produce a professional appearing webpage.

Adobe’s PDF (Portable Document Format) has become the de-facto standard for saving and distributing documents in “What you see is what you get” (WYSIWYG) format. While Adobe Acrobat (writer) is an expensive utility, there are about a dozen Open Source programs that can perform a similar task for free.

A lot of busy individuals need a “PIM” (Personal Information Manager) to keep track of their personal information, appointments, calendars, address books, to-do lists, and other daily mundane tasks. About a dozen “Personal Information and Task Managers” are available as Open Source, which may provide some help in controlling our often hectic lives.


There are several other categories of Open Source software listed, including project managers, reporting tools, RSS (news) feeds, system utilities, office suites, office programs, and web browsers such as Firefox. Open Source is here to stay and may be a key player in the future of software. It is definitely worthy of a serious look and consideration.

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How To Answer the Question

by Mike Kerwin, President, Central Maryland User Group,
kernary@comcast.net, <http://mycmug.org/>

"What do you recommend as the best _____?"

OK, I'm not being mysterious but addressing an issue that most Geeks encounter often. I suspect that most of you have been asked The Question many times by friends, relatives, and acquaintances. I refer to the expectant "What do you recommend as the best _____?" (Fill in the blank for PC, notebook, PDA, digital camera, camcorder, DVR.) Folks who know me and my penchant for gadgets and gizmos frequently ask me this. Lately the most popular subject is notebook computers. Now I do get a bit of a stroke that I am asked for my opinion about things digital, and I do understand the seemingly overwhelming number of choices being marketed, but I also get frustrated when my response elicits blank stares.

My thinking is that people ask this due to despair at the multitude of choices currently available and the wide range of pricing options. And, of course, the options lead to even more confusion. A few years ago the world seemed to be simpler when the number of manufacturers of notebook PCs diminished to just a handful. Today, despite the consolidation, the remaining firms now offer several complete "lines" of notebooks along this continuum: superlight, ultralight, mobile performance, entertainment, general purpose, budget, desktop replacement... You could probably suggest even more categories. Now too we have designer notebooks in a range of case colors and

branded logos (Ferrari, LiveStrong, Hello Kitty). Then there is screen size and the directly linked weight factor; since LCD screens use glass front panels and glass is rather heavy, the larger the screen the heavier the device is to lug about.

Answer a Question with a Question

So what do I have to offer in the way of advice? I've learned to follow the experts on my reply: from the online Buying Guides back to Socrates, the recommendation is to answer with a question. (I don't think Socrates knew about decision trees, but that's what we have here.) Specifically I first ask, "Do you have a price point in mind?" followed by "Do you have a brand preference?" These two questions narrow the choices considerably. I know some individuals and organizations are strictly wedded to one brand, such as Dell, and that becomes a major factor in deciding on what is the "best" in that environment. Price is

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also a great divider of the pack with budget machines being advertised under \$500 and high-end performance units listed for prices around \$3K - a very wide range.

The next question along this tree is, "What do you intend to do with the computer?" The answer will be very different for a Road Warrior backed by a corporation which can deduct business expenses versus a student heading off to college, or someone who just wants to use it for email at home without being tied to a cable. For example, the weight of a notebook can be a major consideration if you travel frequently, as everything gets heavier at the end of a long flight or stressful day of sales calls. For travelers the features needed can also be important considerations as some of the lightest notebooks don't have built-in optical drives (see Dell) but use optional peripherals which can add to weight, bulk, and extra parts to keep track of recommendation is to have as few pieces as possible for simplicity's sake.)

The Fine Print

Speaking of weight, you must read the fine print of the specifications, as I learned this week looking at the new Toshiba Protégé line of notebooks. This company is making great claims for this "superlight" line. Digging a little further one soon discovers that the quoted weight is for the main clamshell case and internal parts. This is really light at under 2 lbs and is possible through the use of solid state memory in place of a traditional spinning disk HD. But, it won't do much without a battery, which adds at least 0.6 lbs additional for the limited capacity, standard battery; an optional, long-life battery weighs more. And then there is the transformer (aka brick) which weighs in at 0.5 lbs. Then one might look at whether the 68 GB of HD equivalent would be sufficient running Vista which reportedly takes nearly 10 GB just for the OS and then allocates an additional 15% of the HD for Restore points. These can take up lots of the internal HD and then one would have to consider carrying an external drive for storing data, presentations, pictures, etc which could add additional weight. And for all of this one would pay nearly \$3K.

At the other end of the price scale are the budget models which barely have enough onboard memory (or capacity) to run the old WinXP. As more Vista applications become available over the next couple of years, these machines may be left in the dust, unable to accommodate current versions of software. This could lead to early replacement before the expected lifespan of 3-5 years.

Then there are optional/necessary features you might want in a notebook. One feature is an optical drive which most, but not all, units have as a standard feature. Then there are different flavors of CD/DVD readability and writability. Virtually all of these units will read and write CDs and DVDs, but perhaps not all three formats of DVD, plus the capability for dual layer data storage and, in some cases, LightScribe technology to burn labels on the back side of special disks. Unfortunately the industry has not settled on a standard technology for a new generation of

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disks to store HD movies (and eventually data), so if this feature is important to you, you might plan to add the capability externally sometime in the future.

Another common feature is WiFi. This technology has advanced from A to B to G and now to N, but not all notebooks support all of the types so again you have to read the fine print.

For a notebook to be sent off to college, you might look for a built-in webcam to keep in touch and help ward off homesickness by the young adults. You'll also want to look at anti-theft features such as locking adaptors and "phone-home" software. Some of the new anti-theft features are biometric password-type locks such as fingerprint scanners and wireless proximity alarms (if the PC goes one way and the owner with the alarm gets too far away then the alarm sounds).

Another consideration is the warranty provided. Notebook PCs are very compact so popping the top to add or replace defective parts is not something to be undertaken lightly. I recommend checking to see how long any unit is under warranty and what is covered, such as what is the turnaround for repairs and where are they done (and who is responsible for getting it there).

In the end, I think the process is straightforward, though it may require several decision branches to arrive at the "Best" recommendation for a specific individual. These details always seem nagging pests when searching for instant gratification, but the old adage of "Buy in Haste, Repent at Leisure" can be avoided by taking just a little time up front to make a good choice. I hope this approach might of use to some of you.



Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Media Center

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



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Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Codex

Lev Grossman, Hardcover, Harcourt, 2004, \$24.00, 348 pages



Young banker Edward Wozny is offended when a big client requests him by name for a special project, just two weeks before he's set to depart for a new job in London. Catalogue books? Sounds menial. He's drawn into the search for a medieval book, one scholars claim has never existed. Life turns weird when a computer game he is playing seems to mimic his search for the codex. With the help of a teenaged medieval scholar he picks up at the library, he sets out to solve a mystery that has perplexed the world for 700 years.

If you liked the Da Vinci Code and The Rule of Four (neither of which had even a whiff of computers, alas) you will enjoy Codex. There is a LAN party

scene that will appeal to gamers - tell me it's not really that strange! A fast-paced book with an interesting puzzle at the core. Recommended.

Millennium Project

Joseph Massucci, Paperback, Leisure Books, 1998, 360 pages, \$5.99

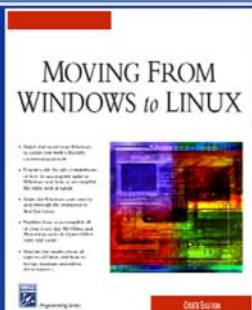


An embittered and crazy chip manufacturer has planted rogue chips in the country's satellite defense system and the computers used by financial markets. Abetted by a doomsday cult leader with a highly trained kamikaze army, he uses paranoia about the Y2K bug to create chaos in the defense and aviation industries while going after his real target - takeover of the world's financial markets. Center for Disease Control scientists team up with army special forces to stop him.

The computer details are superficial but frightening. Among the items covered are a next-generation biological computer that uses a DNA soup as its memory and the power that a dominant manufacturer can covertly accumulate by strategically placing its hardware and software in critical systems. At heart, this book is what my husband, John, calls a "shoot-em-up." After about page 12 I lost track of the hundreds of people killed and tortured in gruesome and graphic ways. It's a comic-book novel, not terribly sophisticated, but readable. If you like this sort of thing, it's not bad, but certainly not at the top of my list.

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

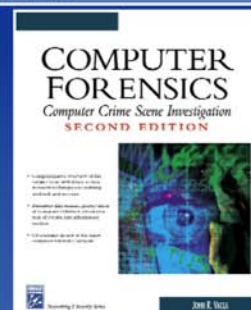
COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



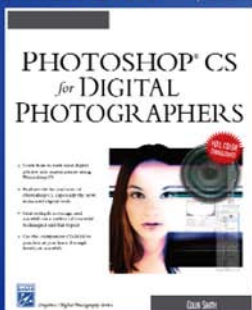
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



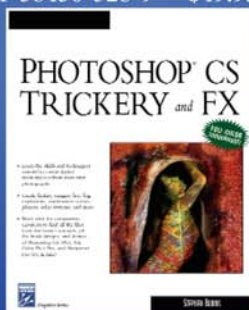
1-58450-328-9 \$49.95



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March 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 HTML Class 2 - 6 P.M., class 1 of 6 *PRR*	3 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M. @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	4 Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M., class 1 of 4 *PRR* BOD 6:30 P.M.	5 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 1 of 6 *PRR*	6 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., class 1 of 4 *PRR* High Growth Stock Investing (a/r) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	7 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR* Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 1 of 5 *PRR* PC Alameda Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	8 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 5 *PRR*
9 HTML Class 2 - 6 P.M., class 2 of 6 *PRR*	10 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	11 Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M., class 2 of 4 *PRR* Alamo Coders (DeNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	12 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 2 of 6 *PRR* Microsoft PowerPoint 7 - 9 P.M., class 1 of 2 *PRR*	13 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., class 2 of 4 *PRR*	14 Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 5 *PRR*	15 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 5 *PRR* C++ Study Group 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
16 HTML Class 2 - 6 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR*	17	18 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 1 of 6 *PRR* Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M., class 3 of 4 *PRR*	19 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 3 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 1 of 6 *PRR* Investors Business Daily (IBD) / Vector Vest, 6 - 8 P.M. Microsoft PowerPoint 7 - 9 P.M., class 2 of 2 *PRR*	20 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., class 3 of 4 *PRR*	21 Clinic Computer Diagnostic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 5 *PRR*	22 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M. Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 4 of 5 *PRR*
23 Easter Sunday No classes today	24 CorelDRAW X3 6 - 8 P.M.	25 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* Microsoft Word 6:30 - 8:30 P.M., class 4 of 4 *PRR*	26 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 4 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 2 of 6 *PRR* WordPerfect Study Group (a/r) 7 - 9 P.M.	27 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., class 4 of 4 *PRR*	28	29 Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 5 of 5 *PRR*
30 HTML Class 2 - 6 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR*	31					
<div>PRR = Pre-Registration Required</div> <h2>AlamoPC Organization</h2>						

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

<jcinqury@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

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

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 Alamo magazine online or download it to your computer or a CD. Students who want to download the magazine to a CD in class should bring a blank CD-RW (a read / writeable or recordable CD)

Instructor: Steve Tech
stephentechnjr@yahoo.com

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

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

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

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on

<APCORETRO@yahoogroups.com>

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechnjr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★★

Digital Camera & Photography Class

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

Instructor: 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. They 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.

Please Note: All students requesting fee based classes will be placed on a standby list for that class until the fee is received. Please continue to register in advance for the classes.

Beginners Photoshop

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) June Fridays 6, 13, 20, 27 and Sat. June 28; July Fridays July 11, 18, 25 and Saturday July 26, 1 pm to 5 pm.

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

Intermediate Photoshop

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

When: Fridays, March 7, 14, 21, 28, April 4, from 1 pm to 5 pm

OR

Saturdays, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, from 1 pm to 5 pm

OR

Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, from 1 pm to 5 pm

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Advanced Photoshop

Lessons on Rollovers, Animations, Warp Tool, Image Adjustments, Creating Curled Edges, Lighting Effects, Creating Patterns, Photo Restorations, Photo Edits

When: Fridays and Saturdays, April 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 from 1 pm to 5 pm

OR

Saturdays, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, from 1 pm to 5 pm

OR

Fridays September 5, 12, 19, 26 and Saturday Sept. 27, from 1 pm to 5 pm

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

New Fancy Photoshop Class

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

When: Fridays, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, from 1 pm to 5 pm

OR

Fridays, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, from 1 pm to 5 pm

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, 1 to 5 pm, dates for 2008 to be announced

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Instructor: All classed above taught by Beverly Bihn, assisted by Jane Montgomery

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

Where: Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★★-★★★

Photoshop Calendar Class

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

When: Fridays, 1 to 5 pm, dates for 2008 to be announced

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Instructor: 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 basic functionality, menus, toolbars, icons and shortcut keys. Learn how to create, format, save and print an Excel spreadsheet.

Prerequisites: Students must have completed the Windows XP course or have the equivalent knowledge. It is also best if the student is familiar with another software package such as Microsoft Word.

When: 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.; Thursdays
March 6, 13, 20, 27

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: Six Sessions, Sundays; 2 pm to 6 pm Classes are held in March and September

Where: Learning Center

Prerequisite: Students should have familiarity with the Windows OS.

Pre-registration: yes, e-mail Mike at <webmaster@alamopc.org>

Technical Rating: ★★

Internet And E-Mail - \$

The Internet and E-mail course will cover basic techniques needed to effectively and enjoyably "surf the net." Students will learn how to find information on the net, download files, applications and graphics, and how to purchase items from "e-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. 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. The course outline is as follows:

Wk 1: Opening the application, selecting a template, and saving documents

Wk 2: Formatting, Using Bullets and Numbered Lists

Wk 3: Headers, Footers, Pagination

Wk 4: Developing, Inserting, and Tables

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

When: 4 sessions, 6:30 to 8:00 pm, question session afterwards; Tues. March 4, 11, 18, 25

Instructor: Belinda Ramirez

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

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

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

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

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

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★

Student Practice Lab

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

Lab Instructors: Joe Gentry, Sarah Thomas

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Content Ratings

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

Help Numbers

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

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

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

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

Step One

1 Computers for Beginners

2 Windows 98

3 Windows XP

Microsoft Office

4 Word

5 Excel

6 PowerPoint

7 Publisher

8 WinFax Pro

Corel Office

9 WordPerfect

10 CorelDraw

11 Quattro Pro

12 Paint Shop Pro

Photoshop

13 Adobe Photoshop

Internet and E-mail

14 Internet Basics / ISP Connection

15 Web Page Development

16 Internet Explorer

17 MS Outlook Express

18 Opera

19 Mozilla

20 Dreamweaver

21 .Net

22 Flash

23 RoadRunner

Open Office

24 OpenOffice

Financial

25 Quick Books

26 Quicken

Auction Online

27 eBay

Genealogy

28 Family Origins for Windows

29 Genealogy

Communications / Management

30 Time&Chaos

31 Act

32 Goldmine

Data Base

33 Access

34 AlphaFour

35 dBase

36 Paradox

37 MySQL

Networking

38 Networking

Other

39 Hardware / Setting Up A New PC

40 Maintenance and Security

41 Home Help

Step Two

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

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

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Classified Ads

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

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

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

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



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

\$20.00

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

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

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

Monthly Meetings

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

Award-Winning Magazine

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

Special Interest Groups and Classes

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



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

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

Alamo PC SeniorComp

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

Expert Help

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

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

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

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



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

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

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

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

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

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

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

