

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

PHOTO REVIEW ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

April 2008

\$5.00

So You Have a New Digital Camera?
page 32

Painter X Product Review
page 37

AutoMatting Unique Digital Matts Review
page 43

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



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

Registration number **210-736-0080**

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

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210-736-0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210-561-2278**

If you have questions about advertising call

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

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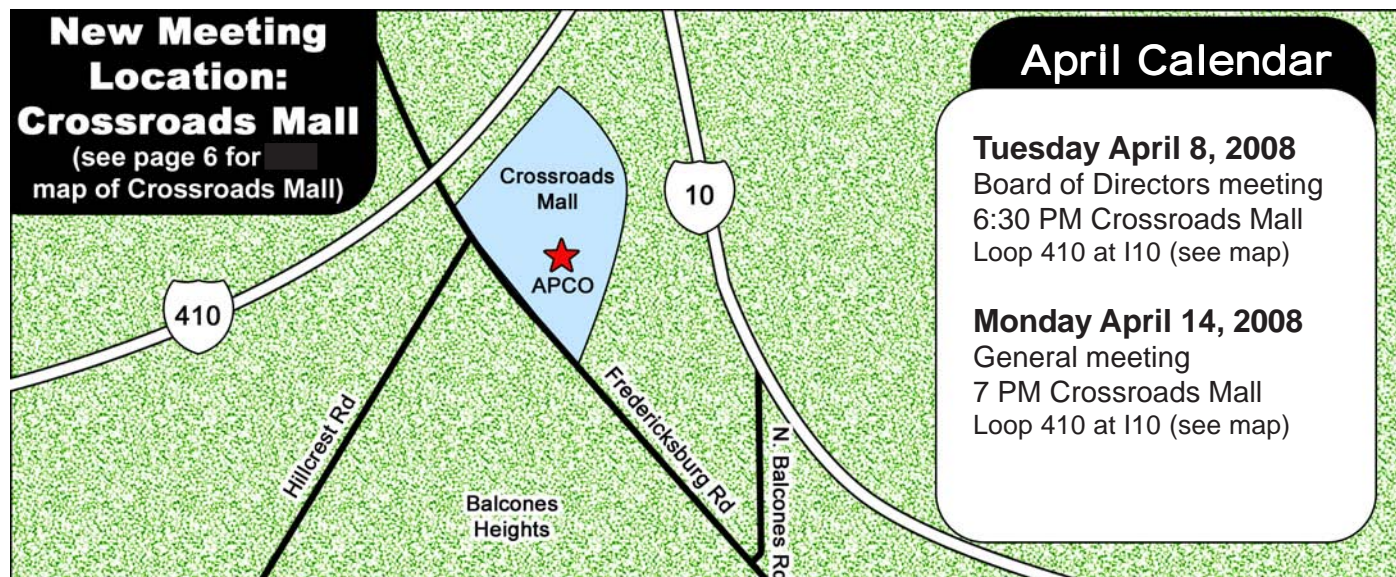
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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.

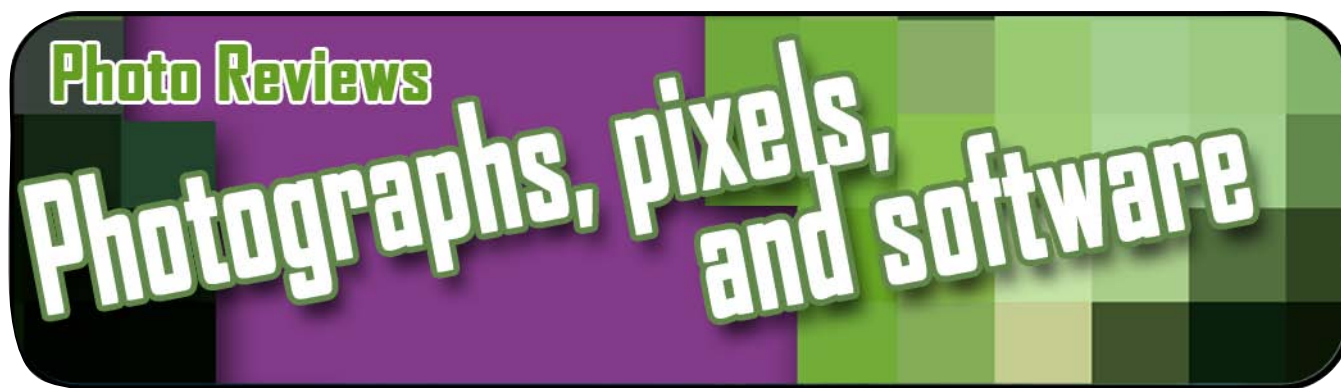
New Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 6 for map of Crossroads Mall)



April Calendar

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

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



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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

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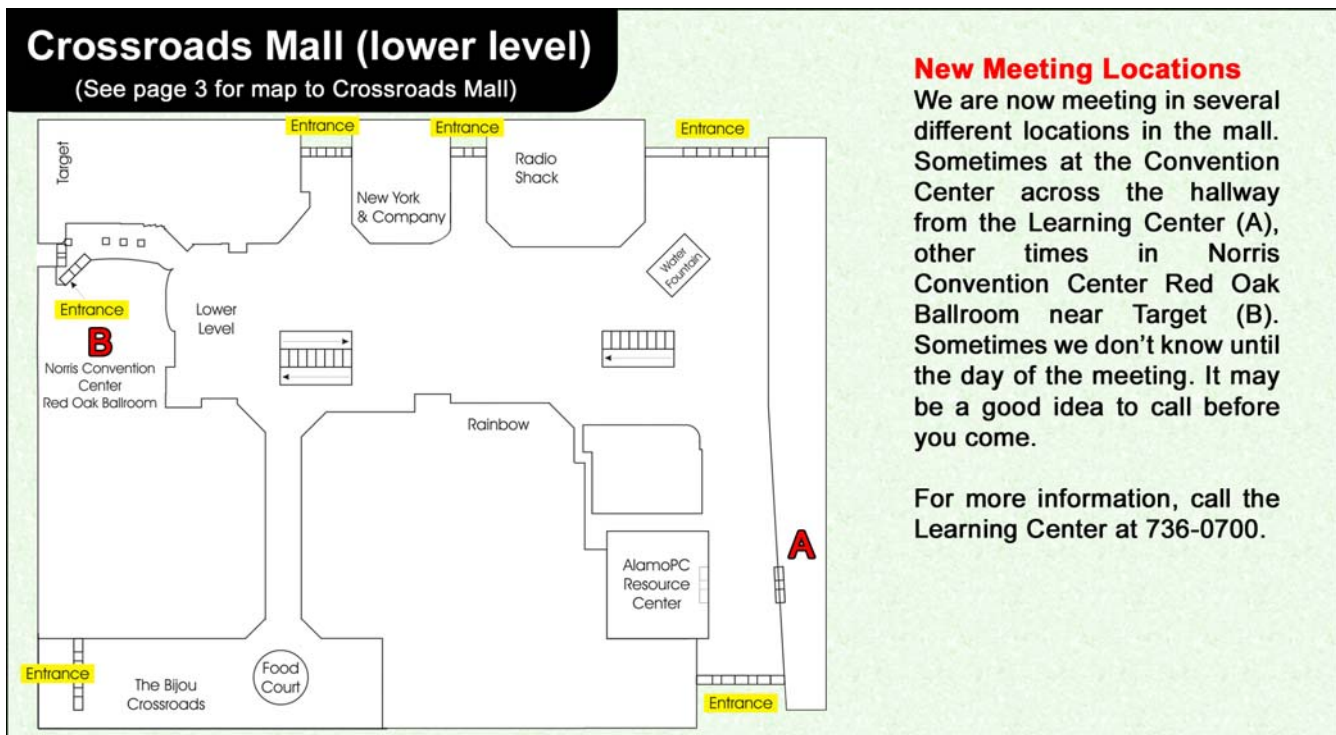
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

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



PC Alamode Links List



Consumer Reports Money

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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.



Joseph de Leon, Editor

editor@alamopc.org

Many of you enjoy the resources of our Learning Center, and you should! This is your Alamo PC. Your membership makes possible The Doctor is In clinic, The PC Alamode and classes.

We'd like to wish William Hudson the very best. He taught the occasional eBay class and is moving out of the state. That means we are short another instructor. Our members often bring their skills to the classroom. We invite you to think about the skills you can share with other members.

Please consider calling the Alamo PC Learning Center to volunteer to show others how to better use a computer, camera or software. Call 736-0080 or 736-0700.



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

"April" - Fool's Day, Passover, Earth Day

This month only has three things that may be of interest to some folks: 1st - April Fool's Day: With all of the national political action that is bombarding the many communications outlets (TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc.), the local happenings, the Internet scams, and other things that we are in contact with daily, some of us don't need a special day to remind us that we may have played the FOOL already; 19th - Passover (begins at sundown): the beginning of a religious event for many throughout the world; 22nd - Earth Day - a day to help remind us that we should be taking care of the place where mankind lives, but we should personally make every day our own AEarth Day@ and do what we can to contribute to the well-being of the planet Earth.

Some of us are still trying to adjust to the Daylight Saving Time change that recently was implemented. We will probably get adjusted this year, about the time Daylight Saving Time is no longer in effect. Then another adjustment!

The March BOD meeting was able to have four directors present at the meeting. We hope the remaining two members will be able to rejoin us soon (One has health issues and has been in the hospital recently. The other also has some health issues, but is having some ongoing recovery difficulty after being hit by a car a few weeks ago. One of those present has also missed meetings because he has been out of town some, dealing with his mother's health issues.)

Again, the monthly General Meeting did not have a scheduled corporate presenter. David Steward did another presentation and discussion. We only had about 17 people who came to the Learning Center, but from the discussion and Q&A many appeared to benefit from the material addressed.

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]. AIn years past, marketing departments of software publishers and hardware manufacturers would send professional guest speakers with free samples to computer groups, hoping to reach potential customers. But when more competition caused a drop in prices for hardware and software, marketing budgets for free speakers and free samples also dropped. Now, education programs of local computer user groups need more help from volunteer speakers....@


Currently (late March), David Steward has continued to work to try and secure a corporate presenter. He hopes to have an announcement soon, but based on the foregoing and his lack of success in recent months, we may have to rely on an in-house presenter once again. Since things can change, even at the last minute, 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).

Since almost all of our new members are obtained from walk-in traffic at the Learning Center, I am once again asking that you consider some of the following items available to members and talk to other potential members 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.

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>.

Continued on page 9



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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.

During the past few months, we have also suffered the loss of volunteers who have been diligent in giving of a few hours each week to be a part of the Learning Center ADesk Staff. @ This has been related to health issues and even the passing of some. Without someone present at the Learning Center, we may miss the opportunity to gain new members, that are desperately needed..

We are still trying to improve member retention, but are only moderately successful. Although new members have almost been sufficient to offset non renewing members, the member number total continues to slowly decline. 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."

April Program

Bill Klutz

Currently (late March), I have not been informed that our April General Meeting has a Corporate presenter scheduled. David Steward hopes he can secure one.

Where the meeting will be held (Norris Conference center, across from our Learning Center, or in our Learning Center) will be determined by the presenter available 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 (210-736-0700/0080).

Make plans now to come and bring some friends, as we hope to have an interesting presentation.

Volunteer of the Month

Carl Deneke



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>

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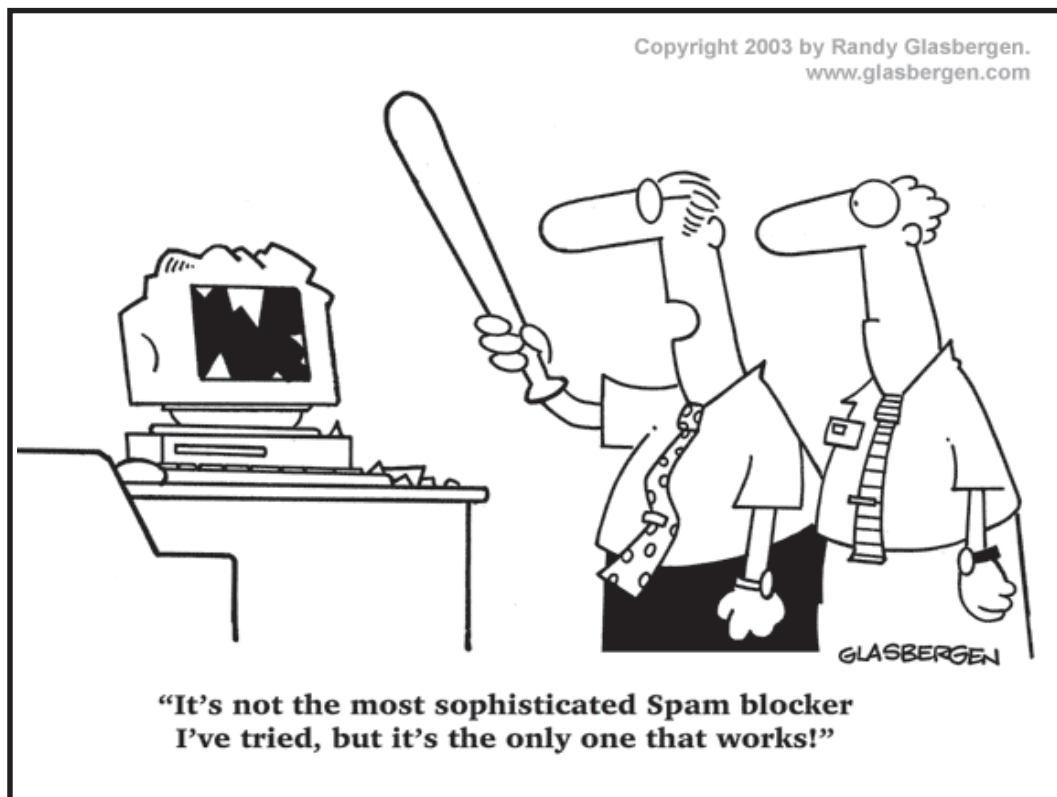
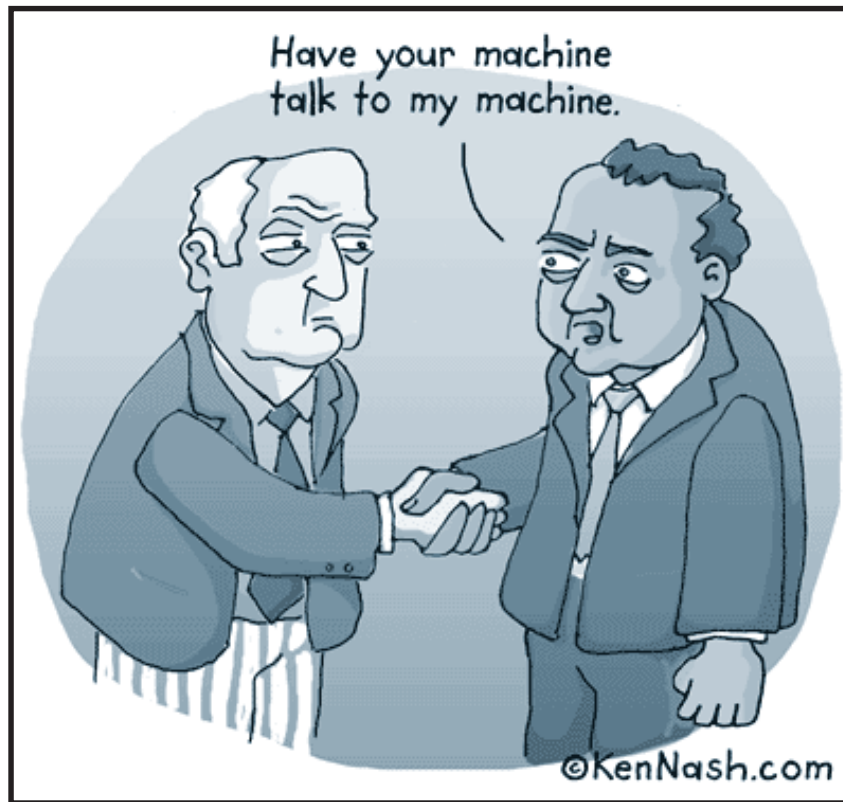
May 10, 2008
August 9, 2008
November 8, 2008
December 13, 2008

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



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Power Savings: Leave the Computer On or Off

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

I've been uncertain for awhile on whether to leave my computer on all the time, or turn it off when not in use, to save electricity. I've been told different things, but with current power management features available, you can still conserve a lot of energy while leaving your system on.

The first power management feature you want to investigate is called "hibernate," which powers down your monitor to about 5 watts of energy and your PC to 2.3 watts. By using "hibernate," or even the "sleep" feature found on most DELL and other PC models, the amount of energy consumed by your system isn't much more than turning it off and leaving it plugged in.

Of course, the EPA would still prefer you turn your computer off at night, for maximum energy savings. "We're all about energy savings, and when you shut off your computer at night, you save the most energy," says Craig Hershberg, program manager for office equipment and consumer electronics. But Energy Star supports the practice of putting computers in "hibernate" or "sleep" mode.

Here are some common misconceptions about energy and your computer:

1. Turning your PC off uses more energy than leaving it on.

This isn't true. The power needed to turn the system on is still much smaller than the amount required to keep it up and running.

2. Turning your PC on and off wears it out.

Computer parts don't work like they used to. In the days when hard disks didn't automatically park their heads when powered down, there could be damage caused by turning the system off and on. Now, computers are designed to handle 40,000 on/off cycles before failure.

3. Screen savers save energy.

In a DELL study, it was shown that screen savers use at least 42 watts of energy, with 3-D screen savers using as much as 114.5 watts.

4. The computer doesn't use ANY energy when it's off.

Unless your system is unplugged, it still uses about 2.3 watts. In "hibernate," it uses the same amount. In "sleep," it uses about 3.1 watts. Monitors do use zero energy when turned off.

How do you use hibernation?

You enable "hibernate" in the power options of Control Panel, selecting a time before hibernation begins. The most often recommend time is 30 minutes. However, if you're away from your computer a lot but still come back to it, you may want to use a combination of "hibernate" and "standby."

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

Facts of Life Explanation

A little boy goes to his father and asks 'Daddy, how was I born?'

The father answers, 'Well, son, I guess one day you will need to find out anyway! Your Mom and I first got together in a chat room on Yahoo. Then I set up a date via e-mail with your Mom and we met at a cyber-cafe.

We sneaked into a secluded room, where your mother agreed to a download from my hard drive.

As soon as I was ready to upload, we discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall, and since it was too late to hit the delete button, nine months later a little Pop-Up appeared that said:

'You got Male!'

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.

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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.

There are several versions of Vista. Vista Home Basic is just that “basic”. The best version is Home Premium or Ultimate. Home Premium and Ultimate give you a much better experience. You’ll be able to see all the improvements in Vista’s design. There are also more features in these editions. For example, they both include Media Center. With Vista, you’ll need plenty of RAM. The minimum you’ll need for Home Basic is 512 megabytes. For other versions of Vista, you’ll need at least 1GB but recommend twice that amount. Otherwise, you should be prepared to add more RAM later. This is particularly true if you’ll do photo or video editing.

You’ll also need plenty of graphics power. That’s due to Vista’s Aero interface. The minimum amount of video RAM you need for Vista is 128MB. Again, it’s a good idea to double this number. You should buy a computer with a dedicated graphics card. The card will have its own memory. Cheaper computers have the graphics system built in to the motherboard. This procedure is called integrated graphics. If you buy a computer with integrated graphics, the system RAM will also be used for graphics. This will slow down your machine. Things are different if you’re buying a laptop. You may opt for integrated graphics to improve battery life. Also, it will be more difficult to find a laptop with a dedicated video card. If you go with integrated graphics, settle for no less than 2GB of system RAM. You may want to add RAM later. Make sure the laptop will accept more RAM because some top out at 2GB.

Most people focus on the processor when buying a computer. These days, chips are powerful enough that most will do just fine. However, you should stay away from the budget chips, such as Intel Celeron and AMD Sempron. You’d be better off going with Intel’s Core 2 Duo or AMD’s Athlon 64 X2 dual-core chip. With laptops, buy AMD’s Turion or Intel’s Core 2 Duo Mobile. Don’t worry too much about processor speed. Any of these processors will be fast, but, if you can get a deal on a faster chip, then purchase it. If you’re buying a desktop computer, the hard drive will probably be 160GB or larger. This is more than adequate for most computer users unless you’re doing video editing. With laptops, hard drive size is more limited so shoot for 80GB or larger on a laptop. A CD/DVD burner is also essential. Fortunately, it should be standard on most computers you’ll see these days. Also, the computer should have plenty of USB ports.

Some laptops only have two but three or four. Memory card readers are also a good idea. However, they’re useless if they don’t accept the cards from your gadgets. Once you get your new computer, the next step is to set it up. Vista has a tool that will help you transfer data easily. It’s called Easy Transfer.

Open Windows

Windows Vista tosses windows around your desktop in a seemingly random way with programs covering each other or sometimes dangling off the desktop. With Windows Vista, the window at the top of the pile gets all the attention and it’s called the active window. The active window is also the one that receives any keystrokes you or a family member happens to type on your computer. Fortunately, Vista’s fancy new 3D view helps you find missing windows. You can find them by holding down the Windows key and pressing Tab. Vista does a magician’s shuffle with your windows, letting you see them hanging in the air. While holding down the Windows key, keep pressing Tab, or rolling your mouse’s scroll wheel, until your lost window has made its way to the front of the pack. Then let go of the Windows key to place that window at the top of your desktop. If your older PC can’t handle Vista’s 3D View, or if your newer PC’s graphics card isn’t up to snuff, hold down Alt and press Tab for the one-dimensional substitute that works the same or perhaps better. While holding down Alt, keep pressing Tab until Vista highlights your window, then let go of Alt to place your newfound window atop your desktop.

Software/Operating System (OS) Problems

If you have a new computer perhaps with Vista on it and are having troubles installing old or perhaps even some new software on the machine, there are some steps to take to help resolve this problem. First, make sure you have upgraded your operating system if that’s necessary to have sufficient memory for the software to work on it. Memory demanding programs will run sluggishly if they have to fight Windows for limited system resources. Second, the program you are attempting to install may conflict with another one already on your computer. Visit the Web site of the manufacturer of the older program that isn’t working for you. Third, sometime just uninstalling and reinstalling a program will solve the problem. Fourth, Vista, for example, has a Compatibility Mode which is a tool that changes the operating environment of it to mimic a previous version of Windows. If you aren’t using Vista and have received a document from someone using MS Word 2007, which isn’t the version on your computer, then you will have to download a Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack that will let your older version of Office open and read Office 2007 Open XML documents. A fifth possible solution to your problem may be old drivers. You might just need to download updated drivers for older programs and even peripherals. Again, the manufacturer’s Web site of the program should list updated drivers available to you. Finally, you just may have to purchase an updated version of your software program to be compatible for your new computer and its OS.

Continued on page 16

Print Queue

Sometimes after sending a bunch of files to a printer, you find that nothing's getting printed, and you need to check out the printer queue to determine the problem. Because WinXP supports background printing, a printer queue can get pretty stacked up with print jobs even when everything is proceeding normally. To check out the print jobs in your printer queue, open the Printer window with the printer queue by double-clicking the printer shortcut on the Windows desktop. If you haven't made such a shortcut, right-click the printer icon in the Notification area, also known as the system tray, on the far-right side of the Windows taskbar and then select Open All Active Printers and Faxes on the pop-up menu that appears.

After the window with the print jobs queued up for your printer opens, you can do any of the following things to the contents. To temporarily pause the printing of the documents in the print queue, choose Printer, Pause Printing. To remove a particular file from the print queue, select it in the list and then click Document, Cancel. To cancel the printing of all the documents, click Printer, Cancel All Documents instead. To change the position of a document in the print queue, drag the print queue description to a new position in the list. You can tell where the print job will appear by the appearance of the dark I-beam at the mouse pointer. Note that you can't move a print job to a new position in the queue if the document status shows that the job is currently being printed. After you finish reviewing and changing the settings for the jobs in the print queue, click the Close box on the printer window.

Product Code

If you're preparing to reinstall Windows Vista you'll need to locate your copy of the Windows Vista product key. Normally this product key is on a sticker on your computer or located with the Windows Vista product manual. If you've lost your product key, it's located in the registry but is encrypted and not readable, making finding it difficult. The key was not encrypted in previous versions of Windows like Windows 98. Follow the steps below to locate your Windows Vista product key code. Manually locating the Windows Vista product key from the registry is nearly impossible due to the fact that it's encrypted. The techniques used to locate the product key for operating systems like Windows 95 and Win98 only locate the product ID number, not the actually product key used for installation.

Luckily, a number of free programs exist to help find product keys. Choose a free product key finder program that supports Windows Vista. Download and run the key finder program. Follow any instructions provided by the software. The numbers and letters displayed by the program represent the Windows Vista product key. The product key should be formatted like xxxxx-xxxxx-xxxxx-xxxxx-xxxxx - five sets of five letters and numbers. Write this key code down exactly as the program displays it to you for use when reinstalling Windows Vista. Note: If even one character is written down incorrectly on your keyboard, the installation of Windows Vista that you attempt with this product key will fail every time. Therefore you must be sure to transcribe the key exactly otherwise you'll never be able to install Vista on your computer.

Sidebar

People who can afford enormous monitors will love Windows Vista's new Sidebar, that gadget-packed strip along the desktop's right edge. People with small monitors may find it a bothersome waste of space. Windows Vista contains a little blue screen icon in the taskbar's Notification Area -- that icon-packed area next to the desktop's clock -- double click this and click Show Sidebar. To see Windows Vista's collection of built-in Gadgets (minuscule programs that snap on and off their panel), click the little plus sign near the Sidebar's top edge. A window pops up offering a clock and slideshow, among others. Click Get More Gadgets Online to head to Gadget nirvana: A Web site packed with Gadgets, ready for the picking.

If you prefer your Sudoku game gadget on top, then drag it up there. You can even drag Gadgets off the Sidebar and onto the desktop if you have a huge enough monitor to sacrifice the space. To change a Gadget's settings, such as to choose which photos appear in your Slideshow, for example point at the Gadget and click the little checkmark that appears. To remove a Gadget completely, click the little X instead.

Vista Service Pack 1

Windows Vista Service Pack 1 is a collection of changes that address performance and reliability issues found in Windows Vista. Windows Vista SP1 also includes improvements in hardware and software support and some improved administrative tools and functions. Windows Vista SP 1 Fixes and Improvements: SP1 combines a number of bug fixes and patches already released into one package. SP1 also includes improvements not previously released.

The list of changes is quite broad, some of which are: Improves the speed of copying and extracting files; Improves the time to become active from Hibernate and Resume mode; Improves battery life by reducing CPU utilization by not redrawing the screen as frequently, on certain computers; A reduction in the number of User Account Control prompts when creating or renaming folders in protected locations; and The ability to choose the default desktop search provider.



Website on the road

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!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That done, start blogging! Each entry is called a post. You type in your post, then

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

But why stop with the basics?

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

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

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

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

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

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

I set up a BuzzNet account: you can see my moblog there at susanives.buzznet.com. Sign up for your own BuzzNet account at www.buzznet.com. If photos aren't enough, how about audio? Both Blogger and Journal Space allow audio blogs, which are sound files that you call in from any telephone and are automatically posted to your blog. These work through 3rd parties and are considered "add-ins" to the blog. You can listen to one at lazywebmaster.blogspot.com. I used a service called audioblogger www.audioblogger.com which is free and lets you post an unlimited number of 5-minute long messages by calling them in over your phone. Some other audioblog services allow much longer posts - up to an hour! - and allow you to record them on your computer using a microphone. Some people are actually doing full-length "radio" shows using audioblogs. Sometimes this is referred to as "PodCasting," as people download the audio from the blog onto their MP3 player (an iPod, for example) so that they can listen to it away from their computer. Video blogs (Vblogs) are also starting to show up. Look at www.audioblog.com for more info: their service is \$50 a year. This really just skims the surface of blogging. You can set up team or group blogs that multiple people can post to. You can enable a feature that allows others to add comments to your blog. There are blog communities that interact with each other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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From the Deals Guy

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <Bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> for past columns and some interesting articles.

The International Builders Show came to town again this year and I worked in it several days. It's the largest show in the amount of freight (thirteen million pounds) of any show that has been held here, and close to the largest in area. The dock basin was piled high with crates of all kinds. There were five beautiful modular homes set up on blocks in the parking lot for people to tour. The modules arrived a week before the show opened, but all the homes were assembled with the finishing touches in time for show days. One was a three-story 2700 square foot model worth over a million dollars, which was actually sold during the show. One home featured technology of the future such as calling you or sending you an e-mail at work if something goes wrong. I'll write a separate article about that which will be available on my Web site soon. Kohler had their million-dollar computer controlled waterfall again this year, and it was fascinating to watch it making letters, words, ad phrases and other decorative things to fall, all completely out of water. Mr. Kohler himself flew in to look over the display.

Another show we worked was the Orgill Show <<http://www.orgill.com>>. That is like a giant hardware store, but is a trade show (about 500,000 square feet of display area) with exhibitors showing their latest wares. Orgill is a large independent hardware distributor. Many exhibitors prefer not to take their booth's displayed products back home so some dealers come with large trailers and purchase as many products from vendor booths as they can carry, after the show closes. Some booths just leave their products, and volunteers from Habitat for Humanity collect as much as they can for that organization's projects. "Pallet pricing" and "coupon specials" are featured for dealers attending and the Orgill reps wear different colored blazers signifying their sales volume.

A coworker said an attendee was looking for me, saying he reads my column all the time, but my coworker unknowingly gave him incorrect location information and he never found me. I was very disappointed. It's not the first time someone has looked for me at a show, but they are often large areas and unless you know who to ask, getting together is difficult because most of us don't know much about where others were assigned to work, and my wife and I don't work all of the shows here.

March will bring the Electronic House Expo <<http://www.ehxweb.com>>, one of my favorites. I won't be working it, but hope to look around. Central Florida Computer Society <<http://www.cfcs.org>> has already made arrangements for their membership to attend at no cost. I recommend that one if you are in the area.

*Are You Ready To Tax Your Brain?

AlbyMedia has released version 1.1 of PIQE: Chain of Puzzles. It contains different types of challenging puzzles, has three difficulty levels and allows comparing your results with other players. It's a set of engaging puzzles giving you a real challenge. The game has progress check and result comparison features to provide you with detailed information on your development. The game has three difficulties, offering more sophisticated puzzles after you beat the easier ones. Please visit <<http://piqe.albymedia.com>> for a free trial of the product.

PIQE: Chain of Puzzles runs under Microsoft Windows and costs \$14.95 (USD) for a single-user license. AlbyMedia offers user group members 15% discount on the PIQE: Chain of Puzzles. Use the coupon code ALBY-JMGJ at <<https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=15534-3>>. Licensed customers get free technical support and free upgrades.

Direct download link: <www.albymedia.com/downloads/piqe.setup.exe>

Company web-site: <<http://www.albymedia.com>>

Here's Another Freebie!

DVDVideoSoft, an Internet resource dedicated to free software, multimedia software guides and tutorials has just updated Free Video to Flash Converter. The new version features 30+ player skins and new easy-to-use web integration, just copy and paste html code to the site or blog. Convert video files to flash (SWF and FLV). Convert the whole movie or just a portion. Free Video to Flash Converter is available at

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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! Parked Page w/ Domain
- FREE! Domain Name Locking
- FREE! Status Alerts

Website Tonight

Click 'n build your site online, in minutes!

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- 10 Page Site - \$8.95/mo
- 20 Page Site - \$12.95/mo
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TRAFFICBLAZER

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<<http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/products/dvd/Free-Video-to-Flash-Converter.htm>> for free download. The program contains no spyware or adware. No activation or registration is required. Just download and use it.

Video to Flash Converter is already the 15th free program developed by DVDVideoSoft and has developed a line of free tools: Free Video Dun, Free YouTube to iPod Converter, Free YouTube to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube to iPhone Converter, Free Video to iPod Converter, Free Video to iPhone

Converter, Free Video to MP3 Converter, Free YouTube Uploader, Free Audio Dub, Free YouTube to MP3 Converter, Free 3GP Video Converter, Free Video Flip and Rotate, Free Video to JPG Converter and finally Free YouTube Download <<http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/products/dvd/Free-YouTube-Download.htm>>.

All titles are available at <<http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd-video-software.htm>> for immediate download. Also here are lots of guides and tutorials related to different video tasks like burning and ripping DVDs, making DVD copies, converting between all video formats and more. All our programs run under Windows Vista/XP/2000. We respect our users' privacy and there's no spyware or adware.

***Comfort Should Be The Golden Rule!**

Comfort Software Group announces Comfort Keys 3.0, a successor to the popular hotkey management tool. The new version supports non-standard keyboard types (Ergonomic and Dell Inspiron 6000); speaks two new languages (Hungarian and simplified Chinese); has adjustable sensitivity for fast input of capital letters, spaces and other characters; has the option of hiding in the system tray and features an enhanced hotkey management window with a full list of hotkeys and new groups.

Comfort Keys is a multifunctional hotkey manager for Windows Vista, XP and 2000. The integrated clipboard manager extends the capabilities of the standard Windows clipboard allowing you to save an unlimited number of copied objects and reuse them as much as you want; and makes sure your clipboard data is saved in case of a power failure or hardware crash. It also features an advanced task switcher, sound control tools and a virtual keyboard that facilitates the choice and configuration of your hotkey combinations. You can quickly switch languages, convert the selected fragment of text into another language (or case), run keystroke macros, easily manage a window and even restart the computer using the keyboard.

Comfort Keys supports Windows Vista/2000/XP operating systems. A personal license costs only \$29.95. A multi-user license ranges from \$21.95 to \$6.95. The company offers a 30-day money back guarantee on all orders. More information on Comfort Keys, as well as its free trial version, is available at <<http://www.comfort-software.com/hotkey-manager.html>>

Products can be purchased from Plimus, the official reseller of Comfort Software Group products. Major credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, Amex and Discover) are accepted. User Group members get 30% discount at: <<https://secure.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1711308&couponCode=dealsguy>>.

***Wow! What a Clock!**

ALSEDI Group announces version 2.6 of PerfectClock. It delivers any number of realistic clocks onto the desktop or replaces your wallpaper with clock wallpaper. PerfectClock lets you know the time in the most convenient way by looking at stylish analog or digital clocks. Enjoy having as many clocks on the desktop as you need, each displaying the time for the defined time zone. You can use the wallpaper clock as a screensaver. PerfectClock supports scaling. You can set a label to a clock and customize fonts, color, position and other parameters. The Reminder feature is also customizable. On the official website are dozens of clock and wallpaper clock skins. It allows you to adjust hue, saturation, brightness and contrast to reach optimal appearance of the clock.

You can manually create a unique skin without being a programmer. ALSEDI Group has prepared a special offer for all new customers. Everyone purchasing PerfectClock can order a Personal Family Photo Clock Skin at no cost. It only requires selecting a frame pattern, sending a photo or two, and the skin will be delivered to you in three days. This skin makes a great present for family events. Visit <<http://www.perfect-clock.com>> to get the trial version of the program.

PerfectClock runs under Windows Vista/XP/2000. The Standard Edition costs \$16.95 (USD) for a single-user license and the Professional Edition, supporting the Wallpaper Clock feature, costs \$23.95 (USD). Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on PerfectClock, as well as a free trial copy is available from <<http://www.perfect-clock.com>>. Get a 20% discount on the registered Professional version by visiting:

<<https://www.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1717144&couponCode=GROUP20PERCENT>> and 20% discount on the Standard Edition at: <<https://www.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1695221&couponCode=GROUP20PERCENT>>.

Company web-site: <http://www.alsedi.com>

Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



AUTOHOTKEY

When it comes to hotkeys, many of us know the Windows defaults. Don't you wish there was an easy way to extend on that idea though? What if you could develop your own set of hotkeys that would help you get your work done faster? AutoHotkey is the freeware download that you need to make this happen. The best thing about it is that it does not take a college degree to figure it out.

Here is what the developers of the program have to say about it: "AutoHotkey is a script driven automation utility that enables you to automate almost any task on your PC by running applications or documents and/or sending keystrokes and mouse clicks.

The program supports many advanced functionalities that allow you to create complex with flow control, math commands, variables and expressions, file functions, message boxes and much more." One part of the program that I really liked was the Script Recorder. It allows you to do a simple task automatically by recording your mouse and keyword activities.

There is a learning curve to this program, but once you get it down you won't know how you existed without it. If you need a hotkey application that is simple enough for novice users and powerful enough for advanced users, AutoHotkey is your choice. There is no better free solution on Windows when it comes to this type of work. www.autohotkey.com

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

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STUDY GROUPS

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



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>



Certificates
Gift and card lists
Photo frames on the Web
Photo gifts
Photo greeting cards on the...
Photo Tips and Tricks
Posters and canvas Prints
Prints and enlargements
Sharing photos online

Perhaps you check this off when the purchase is done.



As you can see above, selecting the Cards and Crafts task opens a whole range of items from which to choose.

Certificates offers a wizard which provides a choice of ten different types of certificates, ranging from Best Mom Gift Certificate to a Science Certificate. There are Excellence Awards, Management Awards, Most Creative Award, Most Valuable Player, Personal Best Award, and a Science certificate.

None of these are very elaborate, but should suffice for general usage. When you select one, the Help Answer Wizard tells you that you may perform any tasks required to create the certificate just as you would in the word processor. If you prefer a different font from that in the template, you may simply change it on the toolbar. I don't find any way to remove the graphics to substitute something different. You may enter text appropriate to the specific award, as well as the name of the recipient.

I'm sure that the procedure for all of these is the same. Just give them a try to see what you can do.

Gift and Card Lists should prove very useful in managing these functions. There are four templates provided in Tabular form with the appropriate columns and headings. For example, the Gift List provides for the recipients name, the gift idea, a color, size, cost, and where to buy it. There are sixteen rows on each sheet. One column I don't understand is "Done?".

As you can see above, each of the lists is similar in design.

Photo Frames on the web opens an msn.com page for msn Photos. Here you may order prints from Fuji Photo and its Get the Picture retailers. They offer mail back service or in-store delivery of your print order. In-store orders can be completed and ready for pick up in as little as 2-4 hours. As with the rest of the msn offerings, you may only view them while using Microsoft Internet Explorer. I saw no mention of the price. You might be wiser to consider some of the other print services, such as WalMart, CVS, or Staples.

Photo Gifts allows you to create gifts online by putting your pictures on mugs, T-shirts, and other items. This too is an msn.com offering which I was unable to open successfully, even in Internet Explorer. I needed a Picture Selection Tool, which requires a change in machine user permissions or security settings. You might not have this problem depending on your settings.

Photo Greeting Cards on the web is yet another

Continued on page 23

offering of Fuji Film and msn.com. It is apparent that one must have the proper security or machine use settings in Microsoft Internet Explorer to be able to use any of these features. It also appears that you must establish an account with them as well.

Photo Tips and Tricks opens another msn.com page, loaded with all sorts of information from various sources. Clicking on the How-To option opens a page

msn Tech & Gadgets

Home

Product Reviews

Downloads & Tools

How-To

News & Trends

Mobile

Virus & Security

Games

Business & IT

Focus on Photos



Best digicams in the \$400 neighborhood

If you're shopping for a more-than-decent point-and-shoot digital camera, \$400 may be the magic number.

based on PCWORLD.com. Here you may find all sorts of tips for making the most of your digital photos.

How-To with: PCWORLD.COM

Fix Your White Balance

Good balance yields better color photos. Learn all about it.

Dave Johnson

Related Links

PCWORLD.COM

- Digital Focus: Master Your Camera's Depth of Field
- Digital Focus: Soft Focus for Your Portraits
- Digital Focus: More Digital Photo FAQs
- Digital Focus: Scanning Old Photos
- Digital Focus: Understanding Color Profiles

Color can be a tricky thing. While we rarely think about it, color is not absolute. Your eyes perceive color differently in the daytime and at night, for example. In low light, your eyes can't distinguish color and you tend to see mainly in shades of gray, usually without even

This particular topic goes for two pages. There are also links to related articles, having to do in this case with Digital Focus, Depth of Field, Soft Focus for Portraits, Scanning Old Photos, and more.

Posters and Canvas Prints is another of the msn.com and Fuji Film offerings. Use of these options requires a number of installations and security changes. I tried this task and after installing the Select a Picture and another to be able to choose an option of picking up at a store or having it delivered to an address. I never did see what I was ordering, i.e., a poster or a canvas. I feel that if you choose to use these tasks, you'll have to spend some time learning how to do so.

Prints and enlargements is also a task which involves msn.com and FujiFilm. While this might be a convenience, being able to do all these things from your computer, I'm not sure you wouldn't be better off checking around to see other means to the same end. I see this as another of Microsoft's attempts to monopolize various areas of the Internet and computer functions. If you are using Works, you become a captive audience or customer.

Sharing Photos Online takes you once again to msn.com. This page is full of useful information and tips. However, I was unable to find the specific area to accomplish the designated task. If you open the page, there is an advertisement for MSN TV, which apparently provides this capability. I didn't see any area

advertisement

Save
E-mail
Internet
Photos

- Share current family photos with your Mom anytime
- Slideshows she'll love seeing on TV
- Photos keep family close across the miles

VIEW THE PHOTOS DEMO

which specifically dealt with ordinary sharing of photos online. Again, I believe there are a number of other ways to accomplish this task, without being a hostage to msn.com.



eTherapy

Computer Hysteria

Berry Phillips, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

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

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

The printed Monitor eventually was transformed into the eMonitor, an electronic clone. I then became interested in eTherapy, a new concept, possibly because of the previous reaction to my column by one of my readers. Online counseling - eTherapy - is when a professional counselor or psychotherapist talks with you over the Internet, to give you emotional support, mental health advice or some other professional service. It could be one question, or an ongoing conversation, it could be by e-mail, chat, video or even Internet phone.

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

It is important to point out that eTherapy is not a substitute for traditional psychotherapy. If you can visit a therapist in person, you should. If you can't visit a therapist's office, online counseling can be a helpful and an effective alternative. There is general agreement that eTherapy is not appropriate for everyone. You should consider several issues before trying eTherapy. However, ethical, competent, and responsible mental health professionals are helping and healing people everyday on the Internet.

Jim Byrne is a member of the International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO) which is a nonprofit organization formed in 1997 to promote the understanding, use and development of online communication, information and technology for the international mental health community.

Mr. Byrne lists several advantages and disadvantages of eTherapy which is not comprehensive but should provide you with a general understanding of the pros and cons of using eTherapy

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Where memories Are made

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

Fran Crane helped me with the antivirus and firewall problem. For now I have switched to AVG for antivirus, and have purchased Kerio firewall from Sunbelt Systems. Although it hasn't yet been installed, it will be in the near future.

And as for the conflict between the external WD hard drive and my HP DVD burner, well it's funny what a little memory jogging can do. It finally dawned on me to look at the back of the DVD device because something was reminding me that it is both Firewire and USB cable ready. Yes, it is, yes I removed the USB connection and replaced it with the Firewire, and yes, now both of my devices are up and running at the same time. I now can transfer files from the WD to my DVD burner. Obviously I still don't know what was causing the USB conflict, but who cares? If I need to know that in the future, I will pursue it at that time.

The computer, like the wheel, has changed our lives beyond our wildest dreams. Many of us have no experience in accounting, not much in writing and virtually none in the arts. I'm not talking about all you superpeople out there. Just those of us who can't balance a checkbook, can just write a decent letter, can manage a simple arts and crafts project and can barely manage a point and shoot camera. But read on.

Most of us aren't any smarter about our money because we can use computer programs to help us prepare tax returns, but I venture to say perhaps we do understand the worksheets and forms a little better if we input all the information ourselves into tax software. It is certainly true in my case. In the past, my husband did all of our tax preparation the old fashioned way, filling out the forms by hand and doing the math. I hid my head in the sand during this process. With the advent of tax preparation programs such as TurboTax and TaxCut, some of us are getting more familiar with the process of filing our returns. In our case, my husband collects all of our pertinent material, then I operate the computer as he reads the information to me.

What this has done is teach me what documents need to be in our possession in order to accurately file our tax return. Until we started doing it this way, I didn't know a 1099 from a W-2. Also, I am what you might call, mathematically challenged and just the papers alone with numbers on them have always frightened me. But I no longer have that fear. Even if I don't know much about math, at least I know the significance of the papers we receive from various sources and what the numbers on them relate to, income tax wise. Although I don't particularly enjoy the process, at least this time of the year doesn't cause as much stress as in the past.


As for writing, the computer has made it so much easier to develop and organize our thoughts. Making changes is a snap and we can even make our "stuff" look good. We can keep multiple copies of our creations as well as easily print them for distribution. Some people still fail to utilize the spellcheck part of their word processors, but for the most part, it has become easier to make legible and understandable documents to share with others. Naturally our penmanship has suffered, but mine was never very good anyway.

Advancing our skills in the arts is a bit trickier. We can learn more about many forms of art by accessing the internet. We can find information about increasing our abilities in any art form if that is our aim. We most certainly can find all kinds of help with art appreciation, as well as learning more about the world at large. And if we aren't learning more about the science of photography since the introduction of digital cameras, then we just aren't trying. Ansel Adams and others made photography into art, so the two areas seem to overlap now. With so many wonderful digital imaging programs available, it is a shame if anyone fails to take advantage of what they have to offer. Merely making so-so photos look better is an achievement, but turning a picture into a personal masterpiece is a real thrill. And most anyone can do it.

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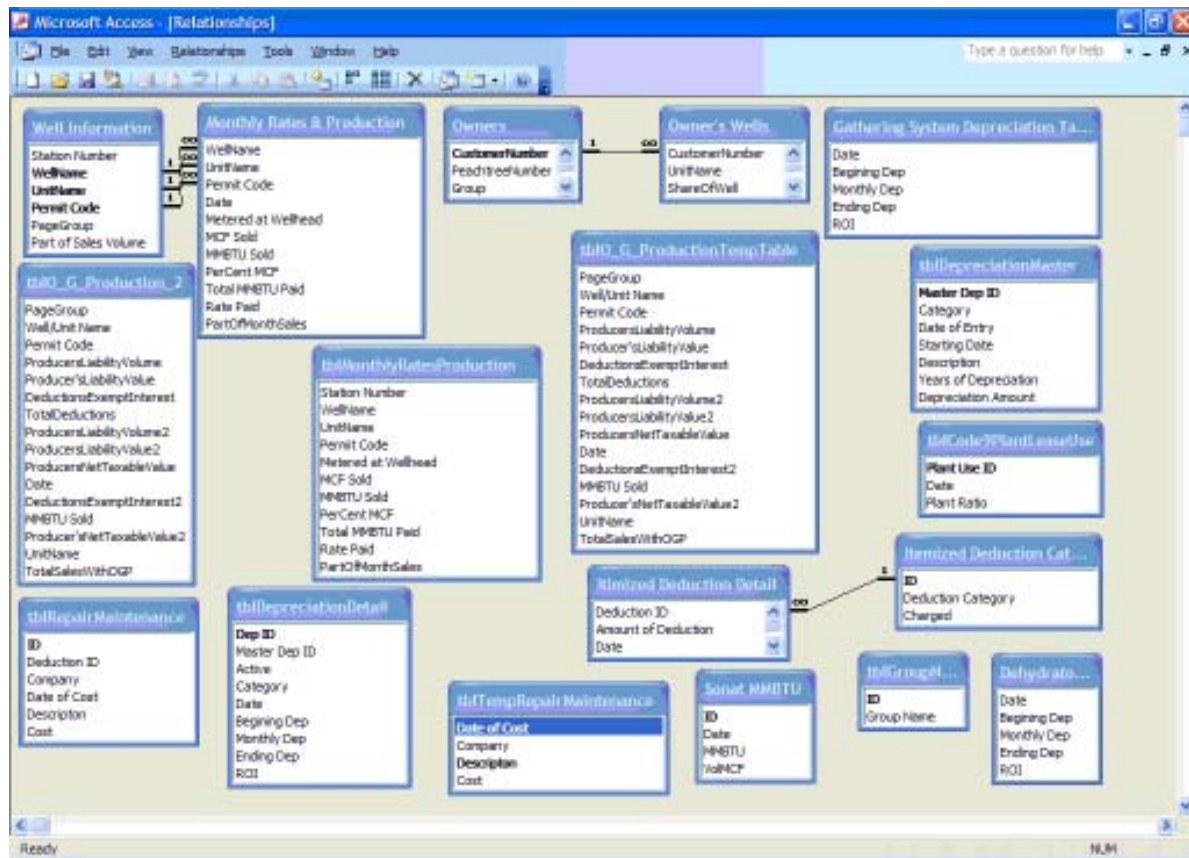
James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

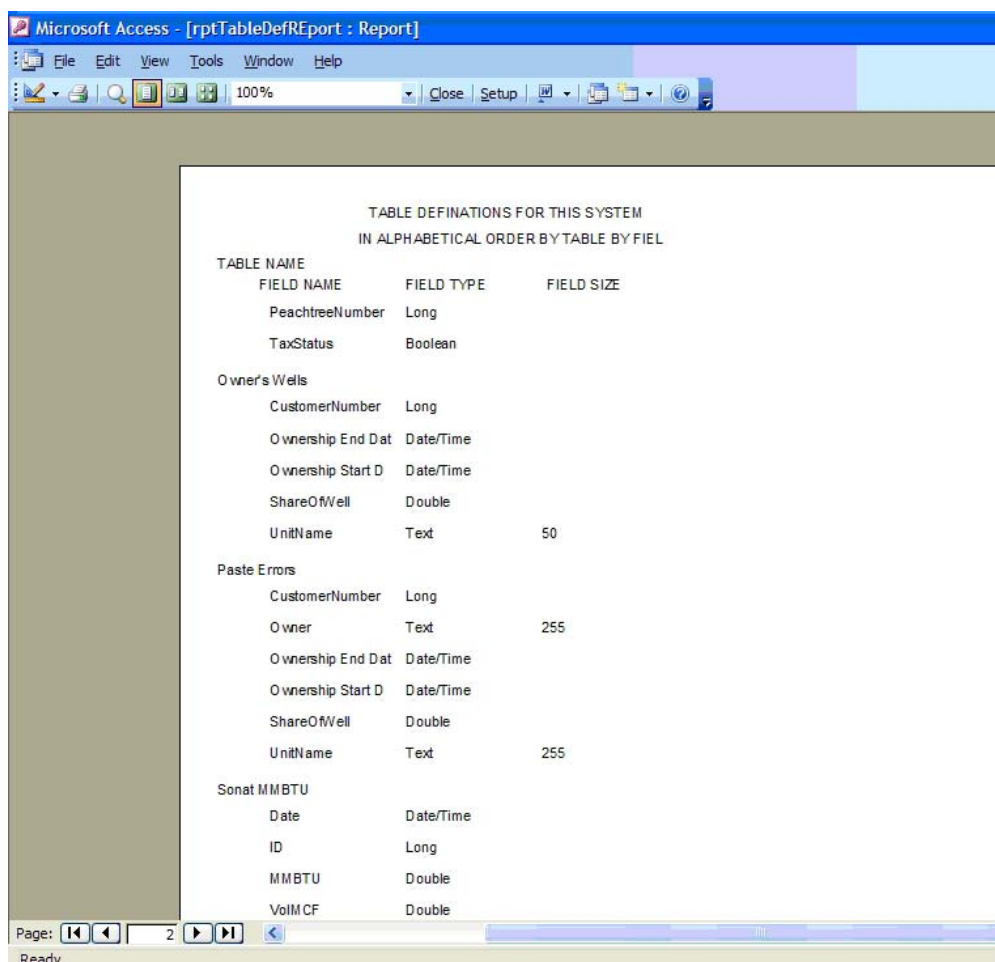


TABLE DEFINITIONS FOR THIS SYSTEM
IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY TABLE BY FIEL

TABLE NAME	FIELD NAME	FIELD TYPE	FIELD SIZE
	PeachtreeNumber	Long	
	TaxStatus	Boolean	
Owner's Wells			
	CustomerNumber	Long	
	Ownership End Dat	Date/Time	
	Ownership Start D	Date/Time	
	ShareOfWell	Double	
	UnitName	Text	50
Paste Errors			
	CustomerNumber	Long	
	Owner	Text	255
	Ownership End Dat	Date/Time	
	Ownership Start D	Date/Time	
	ShareOfWell	Double	
	UnitName	Text	255
Sonat MMBTU			
	Date	Date/Time	
	ID	Long	
	MMBTU	Double	
	VolMCF	Double	

Page: 2 Ready

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

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

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



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/>>

In the proper position, the keyboard should be placed just above the level of your lap. This is lower than most people normally place their keyboard, but lets your arms tilt downward while using the keyboard, leaving your elbows at a comfortable "open" angle. (If you don't have an adjustable keyboard tray, you may need to accomplish this by adjusting your chair height).

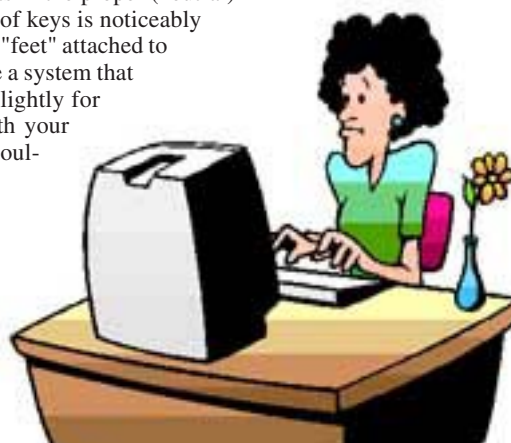
Using a slightly negative keyboard tilt will help you keep your wrists in the proper (neutral) position. Try to avoid positive keyboard tilt (i.e., where the top row of keys is noticeably higher than the bottom row of keys). Also, make sure that if there are "feet" attached to the bottom front of your keyboard, they are left un-extended. Choose a system that is height adjustable, this lets you tilt the keyboard away from you slightly for better posture (negative tilt), and allows you to use the mouse with your upper arms relaxed and as close to the body as possible. Use your shoulder, not your wrist for all mouse motion.

If you use a keyboard tray, make sure there's enough room for your mouse. It should be close to your keyboard and on the same level, so that you don't have to reach far to grasp it. Also, if possible use an elbow pad for the arm that is using the mouse.

Split keyboards divide the keyboard into two halves, each of which points slightly outwards. The outward angle lets your wrists and forearms point inward without requiring your elbows to come in as far, better conforming to the contours of your body. Conversely, thinner people may find a traditional "straight" keyboard more comfortable.

Repeatedly bending your wrists up and down constricts the structures inside the carpal tunnel in the wrist. This can cause pain and lead to injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome. When you're typing, your forearms tend to sag as the arms tire, putting the wrists into even greater wrist extension. If you are feeling any symptoms that may be ergonomically related, be safe and get them checked by a Chiropractor.

Continued on page 29



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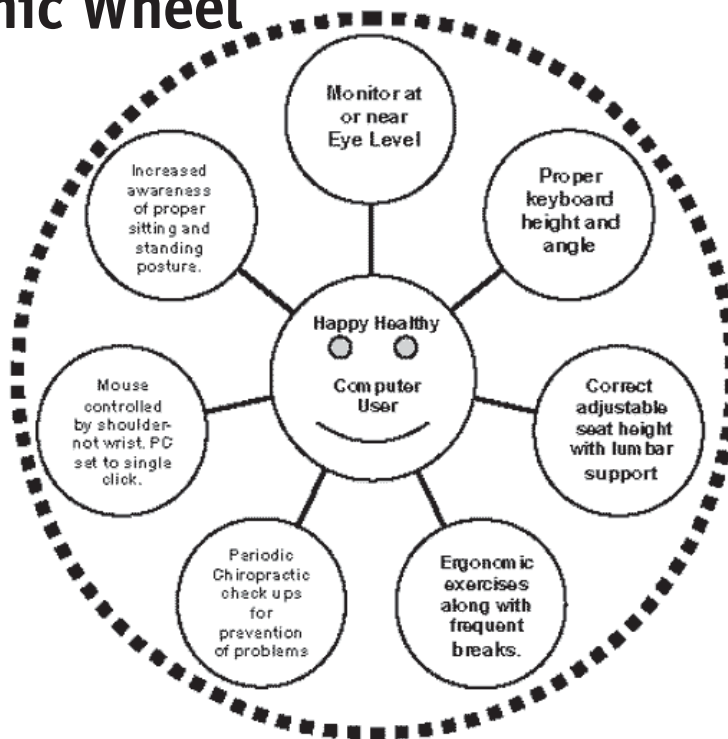
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This service searches for airfares in the United States, and if you have some time in which to book your tickets, then you'll do really good here. To get started, just specify all of the details about a flight that you're interested in and see what Farecast has to say about it. They analyze all available data and proceed to tell you whether you should buy now or wait for prices to drop. Their interactive graphs are extremely beneficial in helping you to visualize airfares over a period of time or across the entire nation. For those of you with syndication fever, you can even track an airfare by setting up an RSS feed for it. www.farecast.com

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



How to Forward Email

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>

Let's examine a typical email scenario. After opening your email, you find a message that you simply must share with all your friends. You press the "Forward" button and one way or another get all their email addresses in the "To:" box. Feeling quite satisfied after pressing the "Send" button, you sit back and take satisfaction in the joy you are sending to others.

You should be ashamed of yourself. You have just exposed everyone on your mailing list plus any people who received the email ahead of you to unending streams of spam, spyware, viruses, and other assorted electronic junk and mischief that hackers are prone to these days. What you have done is prove conclusively that you don't have a clue about the proper way to forward email. Your license to compute should be revoked immediately.

As messages get forwarded in this way they move along the internet, and the list of email addresses embedded in the note gets longer and longer. All it takes is for just one of these folks to get a virus or some other kind of malware, and everyone who has their email address in that list can be infected.

Anyone can take those email addresses, sell them or send out their own junk mail. Assuming you are a mature responsible adult, you most likely would not want to harm anyone, even inadvertently. What does a conscientious person do to stop or better yet, prevent damage?

When you click the "Forward" button you enter the edit mode of your email client. Before you do anything else DELETE all the other email addresses appearing at the top of the message. Let me repeat. DELETE them by highlighting them and THEN pressing the Delete button on your keyboard. It doesn't take long. When you've finished, delete any other junk that isn't actually part of the message, such as information about the original sender. Delete anything that is not part of what you want to send.

If you're sending the message to more than one person, do not use the To: or Cc: fields for adding email addresses. Always, always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the email addresses. The people receiving the message will see only their own address.

Some email clients don't automatically show the blind carbon copy option. If that's the case, click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the email address and choose the BCC: option. It's not much effort, and it eliminates the possibility of someone using the email addresses inappropriately. When you send using the blind carbon copy, everyone receiving the message will see "Undisclosed Recipients" in the heading information.

Continued on page 31

Some sites that will help:

<http://www.hoaxbusters.com>

http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/internet/a/current_netlore.htm

<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/bulletins/h-05.shtml>

<http://www.snopes.com/snopes.asp>

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

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If your email client requires that something be in the To: field, send the message to yourself and use the BCC: field for everyone else.

Remove any FW in the subject line. Better yet, clean up the subject line completely by fixing any spelling or grammatical mistakes. Why let someone else's errors appear as your own?

Sometimes you will receive an email that is a petition. It states a position and directs you to add your name, address, and sometimes other information. Then you're supposed to send it to as many people as possible. If enough people do this, an email can contain hundreds if not thousands of names and addresses.

The longer the list gets the more valuable it becomes to a spammer or hacker because the names and email addresses are valid. If you really want to support the idea behind the petition, a personal letter to the eventual recipient carries a lot more weight than a piece of paper with a long list of names. When you think about it, lists like these can be generated from telephone books. Do you really think that a member of congress is going to pay attention to something that could be so easily faked?

Sometimes these petitions come with statements or warnings that the emails are being traced. Don't believe it. While technology is constantly improving, there is still no way to trace emails through the internet.

One kind of really annoying email is the one that promises that something wonderful is going to happen, but only if I forward the message to at least ten people in the next ten minutes. However, if I fail to do so, some unspeakable evil will surely befall me. I always fail to do so, and nothing bad has happened yet, but I wonder if this could be the reason I haven't won the lottery.

Before forwarding some version of an Amber Alert, take a little time to check out the story behind the message. Most of these messages have been circulating around the internet for years. Some of them have been around for a decade. Almost all of them are much less than they seem.

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Photo Reviews

Photographs, pixels, and software

So You Have a New Digital Camera

By Robert M. Mayo, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA,
www.clickers.org, bobmayo1@cox.net

If you were lucky enough to buy a new camera, congratulations! However, along with this jewel, I'm sure you also got a complicated user's manual. I hate 'em! But cheer up; all the mystery will soon go out of that book. Don't worry, reading the manual will pay off.

When I bought my first digital camera, I felt lost. I had never worked from menus before, and they seemed so overly complicated. However, after a couple of dozen shots of my refrigerator, washing machine, and the cats, I began to feel comfortable with my new toy. And now, it seems intuitive; I can make changes in the settings without mental effort. In fact, I don't know how I ever got along without the wonderful features this camera has! So the point is: play with it; check out all of the menu options in the privacy of your home so you won't have technical problems later. Following directions in the manual, you're not going to hurt it!

* * *

Between photo sessions, it's best not to leave your rechargeable batteries on the charger. Many chargers provide a trickle that's excessive over a period of time, and this will degrade the cells.

* * *

In what we laughingly call "the good ol' days," we had a choice of films to use in our cameras. That was wonderful! There were so many films for color pictures available, as well as the still popular black-and-white shots. And within those two groups, there were fast (ISO 400) Kodak Tri-X films for B&W news (action and nighttime) pictures, as well as slower (ISO 25) Kodachrome film for beautiful, fine-grained slides. If you were happy with black-and-white prints, there was very fine grained Panatomic-X (ISO 32) that could produce great enlargements. There was a film for everything! But what if you had the Panatomic-X in your camera, and six frames hadn't been used yet; and you wanted to shoot a night baseball game under floodlights? You could remove the unfinished film from the camera, or you could bang away at the kids in order to finish the roll. Cheez! What a waste! Plus, you had to obtain a roll of the faster film, too. But with your digital camera, you have all of those "films" in the camera at the same time -- color or B&W-- with a choice of ISO values to be selected as you need them, regardless of the number of shots you've already made. If only they had done this years ago!

What Do You Use To Frame Your Digital Images ?

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

When using a 35mm camera photos are framed using a viewfinder. One of two basic types of viewfinders is used. One type used by single lens reflex (SLR) cameras is a through the lens (TTL) optical viewfinder. The SLR TTL viewfinders use a mirror and pentaprism or porro finder to reflect the light/image directly through the lens to the viewfinder without changing the light/image (what you see is what you get). The second types are optical viewfinders that do not project the actual image directly to the viewfinder. They are (1) rangefinders that use the principle of triangulation and mirrors and (2) optical tunnel viewfinders that consist of a tunnel that goes from a small lens, near the photographic lens, and the viewfinder. The problem with the optical viewfinders is parallax error. What you see is not exactly you get because the complete image does not come through the camera lens to the viewfinder. What you see is actually less than what you get.

Digital cameras have several different types of viewfinders, optical tunnel viewfinders as described above and TTL viewfinders. There are three types of TTLs liquid crystal displays (LCDs) that are located on the camera, Electronic Viewfinders (EVF), and the mirror and pentaprism or porro finder that are used in digital single lens reflex (DSLR) cameras.

An LCD panel is essentially a small TV built into the digital camera. The camera has a lens that admits light to an image sensor that converts it to data. The data is then sent to a mini computer in the camera that sends the data as an image to the LCD panel. The LCD panel is as active as a TV screen and changes as the image in front of the lens changes. What you see is what you get when you click the shutter button.

An EVF is basically an LCD panel, about 0.5 inches diagonally, located behind the small viewfinder on the back of the camera. The image that is seen through this eye level viewfinder is exactly what is seen on the LCD panel and will be captured when the shutter button is clicked.

DSLR cameras use the same the mirror and pentaprism or porro finder that are used in 35 mm SLR cameras. Very few of DSLRs use an LCD panel to frame the photo. The LCD panel in most DSLR cameras is used to view the image after it has been captured to the memory card.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the various types of viewfinders

Because LCD panels are TTL viewfinders they have the advantage of showing about 100% of the image that will be captured when the shutter button is clicked. There is no parallax error. You can immediately see the effects of zooming in on your subject. It is excellent for accurate framing. If you use an extension or a filter on the camera lens you will see the effect of the extension or filter. You can view the images and immediately delete those you don't want to keep. You can also view the camera settings if you desire. The LCD panel works well in dim light.

One of the major disadvantages is that they generally perform poorly in some situations such as when reflections and glare are present and in bright sunlight. The image is also difficult to see on monitor in



Canon PowerShot S3is



Casio QV10



Nikon Coolpix 4800

Continued on page 34

some dark situations because the human eye can see about twice the light the LCD portrays. Some of these problems can be corrected with antireflective coatings, trans-reflective technology that increases brightness provides better contrast, and wider viewing angles.

Some LCD panels are better than others. Larger LCD panels are easier to see than smaller LCD panels, but to place a 2.5 or 3-inch LCD panel on a camera you must have a large camera or give up the option of an EVF or optical viewfinder. Digicams without an EVF or optical viewfinder are less expensive to manufacture. LCD panels are made up of pixels. Poor quality LCD panels will have fewer pixels and may have a lot of digital noise (bad pixels). A better LCD panel will have more pixels, but it will use more power. See the manufacturers specifications for the number of pixels on the LCD panel.

LCD panels use backlighting consequently they use a lot of power. If the LCD panel is left on for a long period of time it will drain the battery very quickly. This in turn translates into lost pictures because there is no power or additional cost for extra batteries.

Most Digicams have the LCD panel located on the back of the camera integrated into the camera body. The first consumer digicam with an LCD panel was the Casio QV-10 released in 1995. This camera had an articulating body. Insert image of QV-10 Cameras with articulating bodies and articulating screens are still being manufactured today. With these cameras pictures can be taken from any angle such as overhead, out a window, pointing the camera at the subject but looking in another direction. Insert pictures of Nikon with articulating body and Canon with articulating screen.

The main advantage to a digicam with an EVF is that it is TTL focusing there is no parallax error when looking through the viewfinder. What you see is what you get. An EVF or optical tunnel viewfinder is a necessity if the LCD panel fades out in the sun or the battery power is low. If the digicam has a zoom power over 5X the EVF is the only eyelevel viewfinder available. The tunnel optical viewfinder is not an option.

The disadvantages of an EVF consist of slower reaction to changing views, the resolution is lower than an optical viewfinder, because it has an LCD it uses battery power, and it freezes between shots with rapid sequential shooting.

The old optical tunnel viewfinder has several advantages the first is that it always works, it uses no power and, light goes directly through the camera without changing just like the optical TTL viewfinder in an SLR. The optical tunnel viewfinder is ideal for someone who likes to hold the camera to the eye to shoot a picture.

Because the optical tunnel viewfinder does not use the photographic lens about 85% of the image is not seen, parallax error, as a matter of fact the closer to the subject the greater the variance from the photographic lens. The optical tunnel viewfinder should not be used when shooting a picture of the sun because there is nothing to protect the eye.

The optical tunnel viewfinder and EVF are omitted from many cameras because the cameras can be smaller and it is less expensive to manufacture them.

The future

An LCD panel is made up of a white backlight that changes color as it passes through a crystalline material. It is the power hungry backlight that depletes the battery power. A new type of panel being investigated is the organic light emitting diode (OLED). The OLED is carbon based as opposed to the crystalline material used by the LCD. The carbon-based molecules can be sprayed on any material and do not require a backlight that makes OLEDs more power efficient, brighter, and with a wider angle of view. From a marketing standpoint an OLED is less complicated and less expensive to manufacture.

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You'll also find photo editing tools built in, such as red-eye fix, resizing and cropping, changing the contrast and brightness, and so on. There's even a full set of tools for sharing photos, including burning them to CD, and sharing them on the Web, or easily sending them via email.

One of the program's nicer features is its customizable interface. Select either beginner, intermediate, or advanced, and the interface changes. At a beginner level, it's all graphically based; intermediate and advanced offer the ability to browse via a Windows Explorer-like interface, and to see hidden files and folders. www.photozig.com/

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

Why do some icons on your desktop have a little white arrow embedded in the picture? These are shortcuts (sometimes called links). They are small files that represent and "point to" the real thing. When you double-left-click on a shortcut icon, Windows reads the location of the file to open from within the shortcut file, then opens the target file.

Shortcuts are, in the lingo of computer programmers, symbolic links to actual files. They don't contain any of the file's information—they just point to it. In real terms: if Peoria, Illinois was a file, then its shortcut would be the map telling you how to get there.

Why do we use shortcuts? Why not just put the real, actual file on your desktop? There are several reasons. First, since a shortcut does not contain any of the target file's information, it can be deleted without damaging the file it points to. Therefore, placing shortcuts on the desktop (or in any directory) is safer. Accidental deletion of these links will not affect anything other than you may lose track of where your file was!

The other reason is that you can have many shortcuts and place them anywhere you might need quick access to your file. For example, when we give away computers, we organize the software links in various folders on the desktop. There's a folder for Educational software and Game software links, and for the software that is both Educational and Fun, we put links to the same program in both the Educational and Game folders. You can rename shortcuts to anything you want, and it won't affect the real name of the file they point to.

Shortcuts are also portable! If I know for sure that a program will be in a certain place on nearly every PC, I can e-mail a link to someone and tell them to place it on their desktop. Double-clicking on it should open that file on my recipient's PC! E-mailing a link is much more of a sure bet than e-mailing an executable file—because most e-mail servers just won't allow executables (files ending in .EXE) to be sent!

How does one create a link? The best way is to find the file you want the link to refer to, then do a single right-click on it. This brings up a context menu where you can create the shortcut. Once the shortcut is created you can move it to any directory or to the desktop. For creating desktop links, Windows provides a shortcut wizard that allows you to create a shortcut for any file type including a web page or another folder. From anywhere on the desktop, right click and select 'New' and then 'Shortcut' to activate this wizard.

By Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group, Kentucky, www.bgamug.org, ml.moore@insightbb.com

Shortcuts What are they?

Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



PHRASEEXPRESS

It's much more than just a clipboard utility. It allows you to manage your most frequently used text phrases right from the taskbar icon. You find yourself typing out certain phrases a lot. PhraseExpress cuts some of the work out of the equation and makes it simple enough to where it isn't more work to get the macro to work than it is to just type something out. Here is a little more about the program from the developer: The program is ideal for email reply templates, signatures, addresses, and other information that you are frequently typing. In addition, the program includes powerful macro functions to launch programs, files, or email messages, and to insert dynamic variables like incrementing values, dates, and more. There are many good reasons for people to use this program. www.phraseexpress.com

ORB provides the ability to MyCast. MyCasting gives the user instant access to photos, music, videos, live television, and other digital content on their home PC at any time and from any Internet-connected device, such as a mobile phone, PDA, or laptop.

Orb is first of its kind to allow consumers mobile access to all of their digital media. It is completely secure while having no restrictions in its use. Using any Web browser, Orb allows users to connect to their home computer and to stream digital content located on their PC. www.orb.com

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

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Painter X Product Review

by **Tom Ekvall**, newsletter editor and “Creative Imaging”
Columnist, Northeast Wisconsin PCUG, <http://webpages.charter.net/newpcug/>, tekvall@new.rr.com



Painter X is everything a photo artist, like myself, could ever want in the way of a digital imaging program—or should I say a digital natural media painting program. Corel Corporation has done a fantastic job upgrading its marquee program for both traditional painters, who create art from scratch, and those like myself who enjoy creating photo art.

The newest version, released in 2007, is geared towards running on Windows Vista (as well as XP and Macs) and incorporates under the hood performance enhancing improvements designed to make creating photo art a pleasurable experience – without the mess of paints.

I installed Painter X on my laptop, an Acer with Pentium Dual Core processors at 1.60 GHz, and 2 gigabytes of RAM. In the several months I have tried out the product, not once did my computer crash or significantly slow down due to running out of resources.

I first became hooked on the full version of Painter after using Painter Essentials 3 (a stripped down version but with plenty of power to create photo art). I got the Painter Essentials 3 free with my Intuos3 tablet. A tablet with pen is essential to get the most out of the program, although a mouse will work. However, using a mouse does not give you the pressure controls and other things that a “brush” can do using the pen.

After installing the program, which did not involve any problems, I was greeted with a Welcome Screen in the form of a flipbook. The welcome screen (image on left) gives you tabbed options such as retrieving documents, a gallery of what others have created, extra resources such as tutorials available, setting up Painter, and resources on the web. It can be turned off after you get familiar with the program.

I was pleased with all the tutorials, including video learning, available to help learn the product, which is a complex program but once mastered produces incredible, realistic painted creations that give the feel and texture of a traditionally painted piece of art. Corel goes the extra mile to make sure you have the resources to get the most out of the product and provides links to these resources. For photographers, a key feature is the Photo Painting System, which includes three modules: Underpainting, Auto-painting and Restoration.

Underpainting

The feature of Painter that I really enjoy is its cloning capability, whereby the colors come from the original source photo (rather than a separate color palette) with the brushes used to transform the image to a desired style. A Quick Clone feature as part of the Underpainting palette creates a copy upon which the photo art will be created. A tracing paper is also created at the time which can be toggled on and off to show the original photo (when on) as a guideline for the applying the brush strokes in the appropriate direction. Turned off, only the painted image is visible on the workspace. This is true whether using the auto-painting feature or applying the brush strokes by hand (pen).

Painter X provides as a new feature a selection of color schemes as part of the Underpainting palette, such as Impressionist, classic, modern, watercolor, sketchbook and chalk. Each style of painting may require changes to the original photo, such as increasing or decreasing saturation, increasing or decreasing contrast or making the colors more or less vivid. Pastels and chalks tend to be softer by nature while oil and acrylics tend to do best with increased saturation. Painter X allows you to use the Photo Enhance sliders as with Painter 9.5 and Painter Essentials 3 to make changes to the color, contrast or saturation; you can even use both to get the desired effect.

Auto-Painting

Despite the numerous brushes, effects, and paper textures that enable you to create every possible style of painting, Painter X also provides an enhanced auto-painting tool for those that may be somewhat artistically challenged as to painting, but want to create watercolor, oil, pastel, acrylic, chalk, charcoal or impressionist-style artwork.

After making selections of brush stroke, opacity, brush size and other variables, you then rely on the program to automate the process of creating the art work with the touch of the “Play” button on the palette. No continuous drawing of brush strokes is required.

The auto-painting feature does a very good job of creating a realistic “painted” photo from my experience using this tool. Some may wonder why a high-end program would even offer an auto-paint palette. I find it desirable, as it gives me a chance to experiment with different strokes, brush sizes, paint brush styles, and other factors and produce a final product within a relatively short period of time. If I apply by hand (not using auto-paint), I use a low level of opacity to gradually build up the color values and style, and this takes time.

What is new, and which I find favor with, is the addition of a speed setting with the auto-paint tool that allows you to slow down the process of creating the picture so that you can stop it, make changes to types of brushes, opacity or size, and continue the process of painting the picture.

Another new feature as part of the Auto-painting palette is the addition of Smart Stroke Painting and Smart Settings, where Painter will vary the stroke width, length, and pressure to follow the forms within the original photo as it randomly applies the brush strokes. There are 16 Smart Stroke Brushes including those for watercolor, chalk, acrylics, sponge, charcoal, colored pencil and more. This is especially helpful to those who may be new to “painting” as they learn and master the types of brushes and effects that can be created.

Restoration

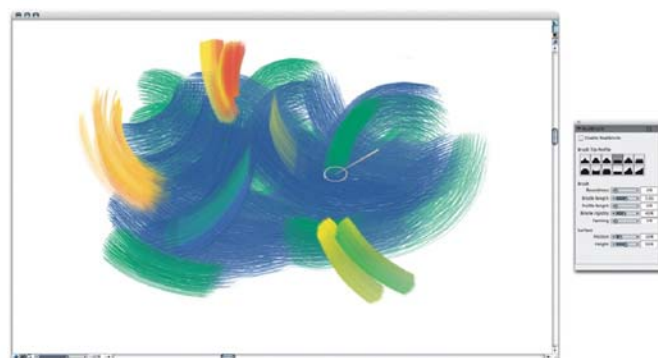
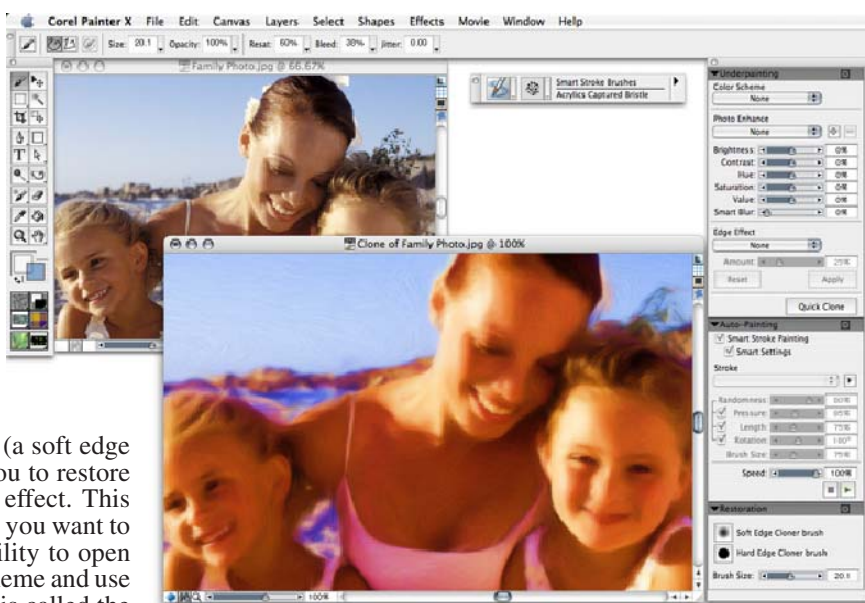
The Restoration feature includes two brushes (a soft edge cloner and a hard edge cloner) that enables you to restore original detail of the photo without a “painted” effect. This is invaluable when working with a portrait and you want to bring out facial features. Also new is the ability to open another photo/image with the desired color scheme and use those colors on the photo being cloned. This is called the Match Palette effect. I have not tried this effect yet.

Below is an image of the Painter workspace with the Photo Painting System and its Underpainting, Auto-painting and Restoration tools on the right hand side.

Brush selection

There are so many brushes, more than you can imagine. However, some of them soon become favorites as you experiment and see how each performs. I like to use the cloner brushes which are adept at creating photo art from colors in the source photo rather than the Colors palette. Other brush categories can be used to draw color from the source photo by applying the Clone Color option from the Colors palette. It looks like a rubber stamp. If you forget to apply the Clone Color option, the color applied will be from the Colors palette, which I have done on occasion wondering why the color was green (the active color on the palette), rather than the underlying color from the source picture.

Brush selection and control can be accessed on a toolbar on top of the workspace, with more than 30 types of brushes and



Continued on page 39

many more variants for each brush style available. The opacity, brush size, and other relevant factors for a brush are also able to be changed on the top toolbar below the menu items.

A major new brush category in Painter X is the RealBristle Painting System, which provides the most realistic rendition of a brush on a canvas, down to individual hairs (bristles) on the brush showing up as if created by a real brush on a real canvas. It seems each new version of Painter comes up with added realism and this one is no different as the RealBristle brushes reproduce the natural movement of the artist's brush. There are a number of brush variants to choose from such as Real Round Bristle, Real Tapered Wet Flat, and Real Fan Soft. Multiple colors can be achieved with brushes with strokes fading as color is used up in the brush.



The image below depicts RealBristle strokes created by another artist and a dialog box of brush tips.

As with prior versions of Painter, you can create your own mix of colors on a palette and blend and apply them to the canvas either to a photo or as a painting from scratch.

What has become an invaluable reference guide for me is Martin Addison's book, *Painter X for Photographers*, published by Focal Press. Everything in the book is geared for creating photo art and he goes into detail about each brush and brush variant, applications of the brush where best and pictures of the effect of each brush on the canvas. He also talks about Hand Tinting a photo with Painter X using layers, how to choose brushes, and how to customize brushes. The information is presented in a very understandable format and reduces the learning curve associated with mastering the brushes.

There are a number of other new features of interest to professional designers, photographers, and artists. Suffice to say, this is a great product whether upgrading from a previous version of Painter or Painter Essentials 3, or buying for the first time. I cannot think of any cons about this program. It does what it is supposed to do, providing the ultimate in realism, flexibility and brush control.

I opened up a photo of a landscape scene and proceeded to paint pictures using a watercolor effect, an oil painted effect, a chalk painting and other styles. See my creation of one of the images painted.

The regular price for upgrading is \$219 while purchasing new costs \$419. Corel is presently offering discounts through their website (www.corel.com) at \$199 for an upgrade and \$394 for new users. A 30-day trial version that is fully functional is also available as is Painter Essentials 3 (which runs \$99/discounted to \$79). The product is worth the upgrade, especially if you are using a computer with Vista installed as the Operating System. Those with Painter 6 or higher qualify for the upgrade price as well as those with Corel's CorelDraw Graphics Suite X3.

And there are so many goodies provided through Corel and others to make the experience fun, such as brush variations, paper texture effects, new gradients, and more. It is a great creative tool as part of my digital photo art studio, which also includes Photoshop CS3. Note: Corel has continued to make enhancements to Painter to complement Photoshop, preserving layer effects and masks.

System requirements for PCs with Windows include Vista, XP, or Windows 2000 OS; a Pentium III with 700MHz or greater of processing speed, and 256 MB of RAM (512 MB recommended). The more power the better.

My next project is to create "hand tinted" photographs using Painter X. Looking forward to some really cool results.

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Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



MediaMonkey

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

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

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



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Photodex ProShow Review

By Tom Ekvall, Northeast Wisconsin PC User Group
newsletter editor, www.newpcug.org, tekvall@new.rr.com

I love creating – and watching—photo slideshows, also known as photo montages or video montages. They are exciting as photos and video clips are set to music with special effects and sounds added to the production. Memories no longer need to be kept in photo albums or shoeboxes. The slideshows can also be burned onto a DVD or CD, shared by email or uploaded to a web site, or even kept as a screen saver.

I remember many years ago my dad used to take plenty of slides with his Nikon camera and would put together slide shows (real slides) of his trips, camping outings, and other occasions that all of us would watch. He even did travelogues that he showed to senior groups and others of his trips complete with two slide projectors, a dissolve unit, tape recorder and all the equipment to put on a first class production. He did slideshows of Civil War battlefields, the Smoky Mountains and other popular sites.

Slideshows must have become a family interest as my sister who lives near Denver also enjoys putting together photo montages on DVD of her vacation trips for others using a Macintosh computer. ProShow will not work, though, with the Mac Operating System; however, it can be used with success on those newer Intel-based Macintosh computers with a program such as Boot Camp that allows Macs to run Windows-based products.

Today there are plenty of software on the market for producing slideshows ranging from free ones through Microsoft with simple effects to ProShow by Photodex Corporation of Austin, Texas, that represents to me the “tops in class” of anything available.

Slideshows can be done as part of photo editing programs, created through video editing software that allows adding photos to a video production, or as a stand-alone product.

I tried out a number of slideshow products and feature for feature, nothing can compare with ProShow, especially the Producer version targeted at professionals who want the ultimate in what a slideshow can deliver (\$249.95). The company also offers a ProShow Gold version (\$69.95) aimed at photo enthusiasts that packs a wallop in creating simply amazing shows. The price is for download versions; add \$20 for download plus box version of Producer and \$10 for Gold.

The Gold version offers many of the features of the Producer model and both outshine any other product I have seen. There is also a Standard Version for under \$29.95, but I would opt for no less than the Gold version. The latest version is 3.2 with upgrades available free for 12 months.

What the ProShow products offer is the ability to fully customize any aspect of the production from beginning to end.

The product is available only through Photodex, either as a download or as a box version. The company also has a first-class support service for unlimited free help, including that for a trial version good for 15 days that you can download. I called in with a question that was immediately resolved. The company is dedicated to providing the highest quality service. I cannot think of few other sites that provide free technical support to trial version customers. My only complaint about the trial versions is that while fully functional, the output bears a strip across the middle of the slides noting that the photo show was created on trial software. By purchasing the product you receive a registration code that will eliminate the strip. Support help is available seven days a week by phone or by email.

I installed the Producer version of the product on a HP laptop computer running Windows Vista Home Premium with an AMD Turion 64 dual core processor and 1 gigabyte of RAM. No problems with the installation and everything set up perfectly. I was able to produce my first slideshow without reading instructions, attesting to the simplicity of the product while offering many customization tools that add a “WOW” factor to the production. The product will also run on Windows XP. The Producer version requires at least 1 gigabyte of RAM and a 1 gigahertz processor. The Gold version will run on Windows ME or 98 and can get by with 512 megabytes of RAM.

My first show was one featuring the college liaison person for the Northeast Wisconsin PC User Group which meets at the Fox Valley Technical College. He has been a longtime member and is also an avid balloonist and attends the computer and electronic shows in Las Vegas. We collected pictures of him and of the user group over the years, which I then used to create a DVD show. I had most of the presentation done early had brought my camera to our January meeting, at which time I took pictures of him talking about the Consumer Electronics Shows. Within minutes, the pictures were downloaded into the show, set to music and a DVD created in a manner of minutes presented to him as a surprise.

Continued on page 42

I found the rendering speed of the final product to be very fast to create the final product.

There are numerous features about the program (both Producer and Gold versions) I like which make it a must have. These include:

- The ability to add background music simply playing an audio CD on the computer and importing a track directly into the program; a show can also be created whereby the photos will automatically sync with the length of the music or link specific photos to specific tracks. I did a wedding show in which the wedding music began as the bride walked down the aisle (my wife). There were 150 photos and four sound tracks in the 15-minute production. I also did a one-click audio sync to a family Christmas show timing the photos (and transitions) to the length of a Christmas song recorded by my wife's cousin, who records children's music.
- Over 280 transition effects (much more than I could ever want, although it does not pay to put too many in a show without it becoming a distraction. The transitions can be set as to time length or set automatically for the show duration.
- Probably the best I have seen in motion effects (the pan and zoom or "Ken Burns" effect) for a slideshow program with the ability to do precise controls modifying many different aspects of each slide
- Layering capabilities that allow unlimited layers on any slide that can create amazing effects. With the Producer version, you can add video clips onto a still photo slide
- Masking and keyframing opportunities with layer opacity control on the Producer version only that enhance the layering effects as to motion with the slides with precise control
- Supports more than 100 input file types and can output to ipods, cell phones, Zunes, YouTube, and other portable devices; Producer version also supports RAW photos
- DVD burner support included with both Gold and Producer
- Video clips can be added to the show with both versions while video can be added as a layer in the Producer version

Other features of note include unlimited undo's, photo editing capabilities, multiple captions and text that can be animated to one or more slides, real time preview, drag and drop rearranging of slides, the ability to customize the background, built-in audio and video trimmers.

Tutorials are available through the company's website (www.photodex.com) as well as three DVDs through the company that cover layering, keyframing and audio controls (\$49.95 each). There are several user groups that I joined through Yahoo groups dealing with Proshow and the Producer version, where users offer comments about the product and its features and upload shows for others to critique. I get numerous posts each day from group members.

For photo professionals and others in the corporate world, the Producer version offers the ability to allow viewers to interact with the presentation on a computer, such as enabling the person to access a particular web site or other information, pause the presentation, or interact in other ways. A great tool for real estate professionals who may want to showcase their properties or lead them to links of places and information of interest. The Producer version also allows optional watermarking to protect the photos in the show.

The one thing the product does not have that I could determine is the ability to print pictures from the produced show, which may be an issue for someone wanting to share pictures with other for them to print out if desired.

In summary, this is a fantastic program. Either the Gold or Producer version will provide a professional tool to create exciting slideshows that you and others can enjoy. Producing a slideshow takes only a short time and the wide variety of control options enhances the creativity you can put into the show. If you are hooked on creating slideshows, I would opt for the Producer version even if you are only a photo enthusiast based on the added features, such as keyframing, masking, and timing controls. Settings can also be saved for creating future shows.

The slideshows so far produced were simple and basic, but very entertaining. Next month I will review in the newsletter the more dramatic effects that can be created such as keyframing, layering, and masking and training tutorials available from the company to create these effects. After watching videos produced by others on the ProShow user group sites, I can attest to the amazing things that can be done with a collection of photos.

AutoMatting™ — Unique Digital Matts ... Extraordinaire



by Neil Longmuir, a member of the Winnipeg PC User Group Inc.,
Canada, www.wpcusrgrp.org, longmur@ms.umanitoba.ca

AutoMatting automatically creates a unique matt for each image which is designed to make the photographer's work more attractive and appealing to the customer in a slide show or viewing mode." AutoMatting is a digital matting software program that creates a unique matt for each image. The traditional way to display photographs, was to mount the photograph to a matt board, and fit that mounted photograph into a matt opening cut to the size of the photograph. Matting a photograph helps separate the photograph from the surrounding background. Matting a photograph gives each photograph it's own visual unique and attractive look.

The way images are shown to customers, friends or family tends to be a bit boring. A set of prints is made from a roll of film or digital images. The pictures would be taken out of the photo lab envelope and passed around to customers, friends and family to look at.

This approach is fine if there are only a few pictures, but what if there are a large number of images. One solution is to create a slide show. Creating a slide show takes time to create. One major problem with a typical computer monitor or TV display is that the aspect ratio of the monitor or TV is not the same as the standard typical 3x2 aspect ratio of the images. Then, when we mix portrait (vertical) images with landscape (horizontal) images the images are not the same size. Portrait images are smaller than landscape images and have vertical black bars on each side. Landscape images have smaller black bars on the top and bottom. The bottom line is that you want your images to be visually more attractive to the viewer.

The solution to making the images more attractive is to use AutoMatting to create a unique matte for each image in a folder and resize that image to the aspect ratio of any monitor or TV screen.

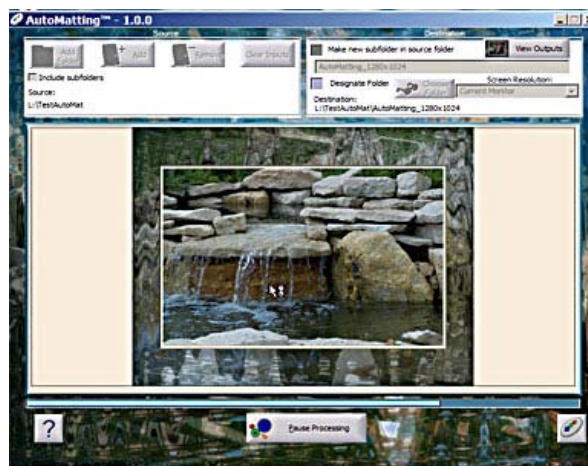
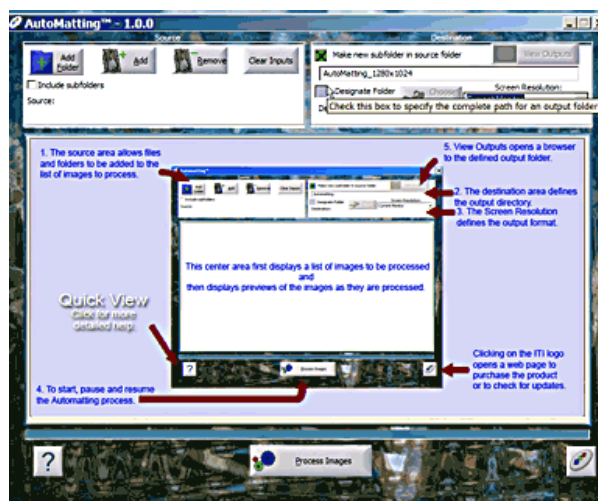
Also, if there are sub-folders under the main folder, those sub-folders can be included by checking the included sub-folders in the upper left corner. Once the images to be processed are selected, press Process Images at the bottom of the screen.

AutoMatting operates in a batch mode and creates a sub-folder of images using the colors and patterns in the original image plus a unique beveled edge border. The final result is an image that looks great on the display medium with no black bars appearing on the display. Figure 1 shows basic AutoMatting screen. Figure 2 shows the unique matting of a landscape image while Figure 3 shows the unique matting of a portrait image. Note in both cases there are no black bars around either image.

Conclusions

Automatting is a perfect example of a software application that was "thinking outside the box." This "New Wave" thinking application has given all end users whether they are professional photographers or ordinary every day photographers a great way to show their images to everyone on whatever display medium.

This is a terrific product. AutoMatting is available for a free "try before you buy" download. Visit www.imagetrendsinc.com and download the trial version for yourself. The cost to purchase this program is \$49.95 and is available for both the Windows and MAC platforms. This is a very impressive innovative product that works great for a new look to your images.



Irfanview 4.0 –

Freeware Image Editor and Media Player

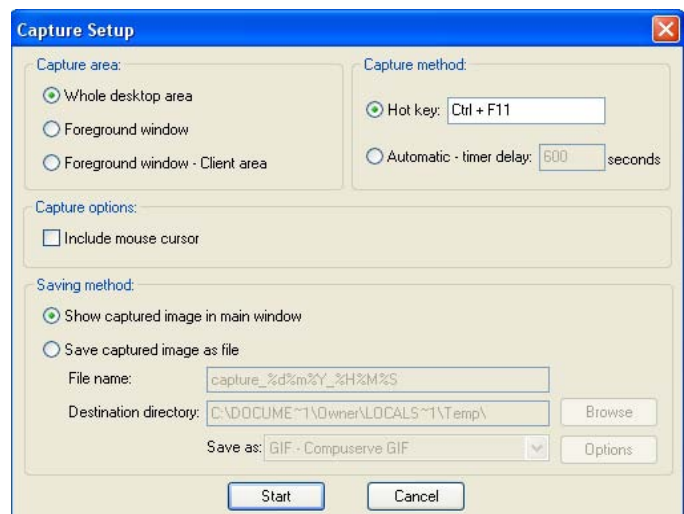
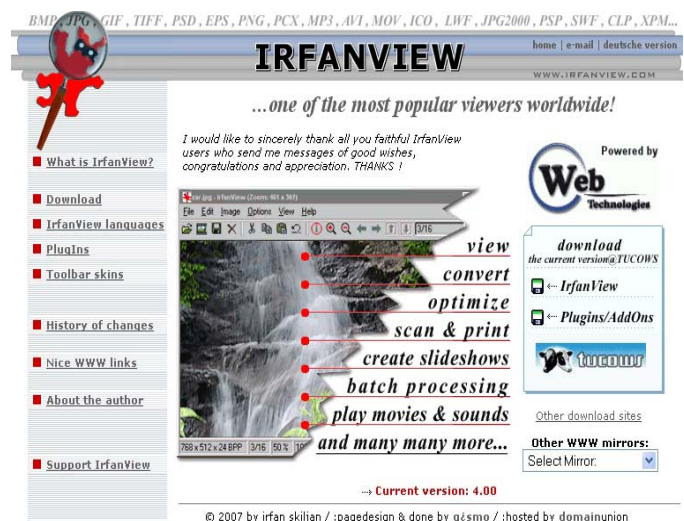
By Ira Wilsker

Imagine a free (for non-commercial use), full featured utility that can display and edit almost all known image formats, and convert from any one format to any other. Imagine a utility that can play almost every known audio and video format with its free “Plugins” file, all in a small and very efficient software package. Some skeptics may say that this sounds too good to be true, but lucky for us, it is indeed true. The program that can do all of the above, and more is the very popular Irfanview, version 4.0 (www.irfanview.com), written by a Bosnian named Irfan Skiljan. This outstanding program is not a well known secret, as the popular download site Download.com alone reports over 26 million downloads of Irfanview (including previous versions), with probably tens of millions of copies downloaded from countless other download resources, and over a million additional copies downloaded every month.

People send me several emails every day with images or videos attached, and I have Irfanview set as my default viewer and player for almost all images, audio files, and videos. Using Irfanview is fairly simple, straight forward, and somewhat intuitive. After downloading (www.irfanview.com) and installing the file, I recommend that the companion file “Irfanview Plugins” also be downloaded and installed. After installing the “plugins” the user is given the option to selectively choose Irfanview as the default for any or all of the file extensions it supports. It may not be a bad choice to allow Irfanview to be the default for those extensions, but the decision can be reversed if decided later.

One frequent function that I use Irfanview for on a regular basis is image editing. Recently, a relative sent me several unedited JPG digital photos of her new puppy taken at maximum resolution with a 6 megapixel digital camera. Each image was huge both in file size (several megabytes), and in viewing size. I have a big-screen monitor running at a high screen resolution, and still could not view the entire image without scrolling, as the image size was greater than my monitor resolution. Since I opened the attached images in Irfanview, it was but a few mouse clicks to edit them down to a more manageable size; I clicked on IMAGE – RESIZE/RESAMPLE and

Continued on page 45



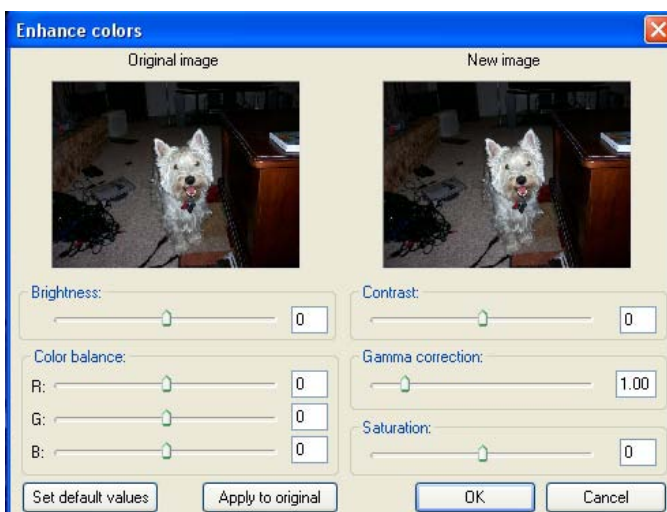
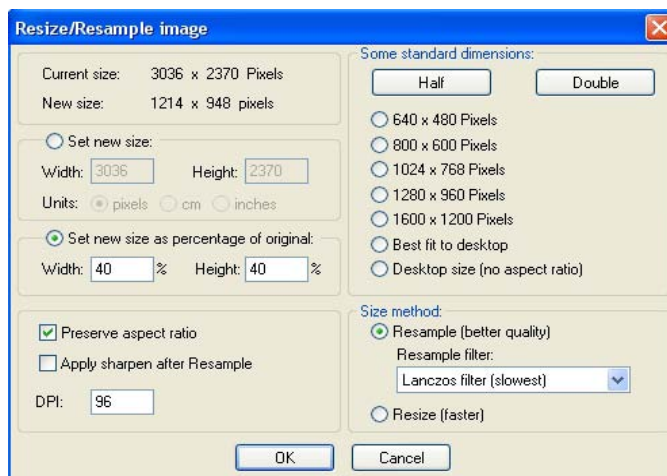
then selected a percentage of the original size, and then saved the image in its reduced size. It is good netiquette to reduce the size of multi-megapixel images, and then email the digital images in a more reasonable size such as 800x600 or 1024x768. It is also good netiquette to crop the image, which can be done simply by clicking and holding the left mouse button on a corner of the desired image, and then dragging it in a frame to the desired borders of the cropped image. EDIT – CROP SELECTION will instantly produce the cropped image which can be saved or further edited.

Another purpose of Irfanview is to improve the quality of digital images by enhancing the colors. The command IMAGE – ENHANCE COLORS opens a dual pane window that shows the unedited original image and the new image with the changes applied. Possible changes that can be made include brightness, contrast, color balance, gamma, and saturation. By using a slider or manually entering values allows the user to see the effects of any changes before saving the edited image. Another selection I often utilize is the “sharpen” command on the image menu; this automatically sharpens a fuzzy image. Other image commands include red-eye reduction, and a panorama function where separate images can automatically be knit together to make a larger panoramic image.

Readers of this column will notice that sometimes images are displayed along with the text. Most of these images are screen captures made with Irfanview. By selecting OPTIONS – CAPTURE/SCREENSHOT a hot key is then used to capture the image on the monitor. I use the default hotkey (Ctrl-F11) for image capture, crop the image as desired, and then save it in the desired format.

While there are many other image editing features included in the program, Irfanview also shines as an audio and video player if the plugins are installed. Popular audio formats, such as MP3, RA, and WAV are fully supported, allowing this single program to play almost any audio format, with full control of volume and other technical details. There are many video formats in common use, such as MPEG, AVI, and WMV that are often used for the videos that people email or display on a webpage, and Irfanview can handle almost all of them interchangeably, and can serve as an able substitute for Windows Media Player, and most other media players. Audio and video on CDs and DVDs can also be played with Irfanview.

Irfanview 4.0 will work well on all versions of Windows from 95 to Vista, and is simple enough for beginners, and sophisticated enough for professionals. The software is free for non-commercial use, and the author encourages purely voluntary contributions via PayPal. I suggest that readers of this column download it and try it. There is no adware or spyware embedded in it, and the program has a clean and uncluttered interface. I have personally used Irfanview on an almost daily basis on all of my computers for several years, and can strongly recommend it. Try it, and you may end up liking it as much as I enjoy Irfanview.



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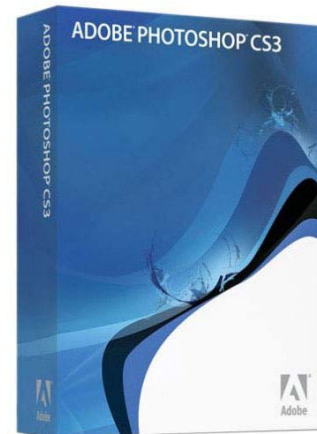
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Photoshop CS3



Product Review by Tom Ekvall, newsletter editor for Northeast Wisconsin PCUG, www.webpages.charter.net/newpcug, tekvall@new.rr.com

Some things just keep getting better. And the latest release of Photoshop CS3 is no exception. This new release offers major enhancements that will appeal to present Photoshop users as well as to those interested in transitioning to Photoshop CS3 from Photoshop Elements or other similar products.

As someone doing photo art, my interest in Photoshop CS3 centered on new features related to creating black and white prints and applying “smart filters” to photographs. And there are so many more enhancements to drool over related to everything from an improved interface to a new integrated Adobe Camera Raw that allows working with jpg and tiff images as well as those shot in the raw format.

Previously, I have used Photoshop Elements (Versions 1 through 5) to do my image editing and welcomed the opportunity to transition to Adobe’s flagship product. The latest version, which works with Vista, was simply fantastic to use and not all that difficult to make the transition. There is still a learning curve as the image editing product offers so many opportunities to “tweak” photos to make them look their best. However, there are many resources on-line and in book form to learn how to use the product.

I downloaded the product onto an Acer laptop running Vista Premium with dual-core processors and 2 gigabytes of RAM. After installing the product, I was amazed how fast Photoshop CS3 started up, just ten seconds. For those with previous versions of Photoshop, one will notice a revamped interface that focuses on collapsible palettes docked to the right side of the screen to make it easier to work on photos. This is especially helpful when working on a laptop or when you just don’t want a lot of clutter on the screen.

So what is new and improved? Many seem to be aimed at improving workflow performance through enhancing and simplifying the way changes are made.

Here are just some of the features I found of most interest, recognizing my passion for creating art as compared to creating perfect photos.

Black and White Enhancement

I have been very much interested in creating black and white photos from color images. Never could get them to look like that from Ansel Adams; however, the digital divide is getting narrower.

Typical ways to create black and white pictures was to either desaturate the photo of color, use the grayscale tool, or use the channels feature. Photoshop Elements 5 introduced a “Convert to Black and White” feature that presented thumbnail images of different effects with less or more of blue, red, and green channels in different styles.

Photoshop CS3 offers a fantastic Black and White adjustment that includes all six colors (cyan, magenta, and yellow in addition to the blue, red, and green) as well as the ability to simply click on a point on the photo and drag either right or left to either lighten or darken the appropriate tones of the photo, giving you more control over the photo. The dialog box also provides opportunities to tint the photo with slider bars for hue and saturation.

Continued on page 35

Trying out this adjustment, I found the quality of the photo to be much improved over previous ways of creating a black and white photo.

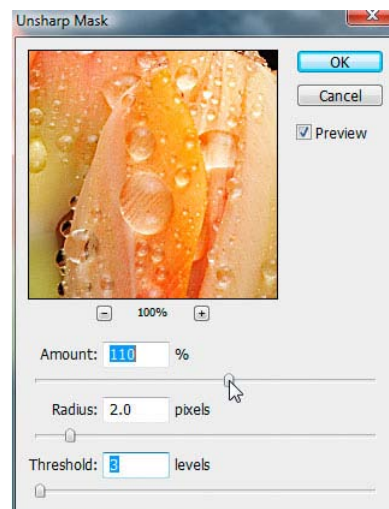
Continued on page 47

Smart Filters

The next feature I found to be very appealing to me, and undoubtedly to other Photoshop users, is the Smart Filter, a new addition from previous versions.

The Smart Filter feature enables the user to apply non-destructive changes to an image on layers when used in conjunction with Smart Objects. What this means is that I can try out one or more filters to enhance my photo the way I want without that change becoming permanent. This way, if I don't like the effect now or later, I can remove it, modify it or use a different filter without having to start over at a later point in time. Of course, you can always use the Undo command; but sometimes, you like to make the changes later after you apply another effect and then decide against the earlier filter effect. A layer can be converted to a Smart Object by right-clicking on this feature in the Layers menu.

Non-destructive editing is becoming more popular today, with CS2 introducing the Smart Object feature to layers.



Improved Raw Processing

A significant feature in image editing programs these days is the ability to edit photos shot in the raw format. Those cameras able to shoot in raw tend to be the digital SLR ones, which means that the camera does not make any internal changes to the image, but leaves that up to the software program.

With this release of Photoshop CS3, users can work with Jpg and tif images in Camera Raw 4 rather than only those shot in the raw format. Working with Camera Raw 4 is very enjoyable and provides a histogram of the image and sliders to make various changes, such as white balance, fill lighting, recovery (for highlights) blacks, brightness, contrast, and more. The feature can be accessed through File/Open As and then choosing "Raw." I especially like the HSL/Grayscale tab, which is new to this product, and gives outstanding control over specific color ranges in the image as you control the amount of each range of 'color' in the grayscale image. The saturation tab also enables creating a partial grayscale image with part of the image in black and white (or shades of gray) and other parts in color. This is a favorite of mine in creating photo art. I will definitely be using the Camera Raw 4 feature more often.

There are many other new features too numerous to elaborate on in this review but which will be of interest to current Photoshop users to justify upgrading to this new version.

These include:

- Improved Adobe Bridge, which is the photo organizer and media asset management tool, and includes a loupe to check out sharpness of the picture
- Quick Selection and Refine Edges tool, which enhance capabilities for selecting and masking areas of a photo much like a lasso tool
- Refinement to the Curves tool which adds a histogram similar to that in Camera Raw of CS2
- Enhanced 32-bit HDR (high dynamic range) support (a feature I did not try out but enables bracketed photos to be combined to get the desired highlights and shadows that would not be possible from a single photograph)
- The ability to Auto-Align and Auto-Blend Layers as part of advanced compositing tools
- Enhanced print with preview dialog box that make printing options easier to use for correct colors
- Revamped Clone Stamp tool
- Mobile Device controls
- Enhanced vanishing point
- And the list goes on and on for experienced users.

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Continued on page 48

System requirements include:

- Intel Premium 4, Intel Centrino, Intel Xeon or Intel Core Duo (or compatible) processors
- Microsoft Vista or XP with Service Pack 2 (Macintosh supported including those with multi-core Intel processors with faster performance)
- 512 MB of RAM (the more the better)
- 64 MB of video RAM
- 1 GB of available hard disk space

Photoshop CS3 can be tried out by going to the Adobe website (www.adobe.com) and downloading the product, which is valid for 30 days. All the features are available. A full version of the product runs \$649 suggested pricing while an upgrade can run \$199 or more. Those upgrading must have at least Photoshop 7 or higher to qualify.

I heartily recommend this product for those who are serious about digital photography who may be thinking of making the plunge from Photoshop Elements. While Photoshop CS3 may not have all of the "quick fixes" associated with Photoshop Elements, the product offers exciting features to create great photos and unlimited opportunities to customize settings as your talents develop. And for those who have a previous version of Photoshop, there are numerous enhancements and new features that justify upgrading. I wonder what remains for the next version.

Computer Buffet

With Dr. Herb Goldstein



AUTORUNS

To find out what programs are loading on your PC at startup, you can run the Windows-resident system configuration utility called MSCONFIG. But there's another free utility called Autoruns that does the job better. MSCONFIG entries tend to be rather cryptic, for example, but Autoruns includes a line of description for each entry in plain English.

Autoruns also lets you Hide Signed Microsoft Entries, which allows you to quickly narrow your focus to third-party programs. Disabling or deleting entries requires just one click (so you'll need to be careful!). This function really saved my sanity when my system was breached by a scrap of regenerative malware. www.microsoft.com/technet/sysinternals/default.mspx

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

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DustKleen Review

by Neil Longmuir, Winnipeg PC User Group Inc.,
<http://www.wpcusgrp.org/>, longmur@ms.umanitoba.ca

DustKleen is an innovative stand alone application from Image Trends Inc. DustKleen will automatically remove most dirt and dust from any scanned images regardless of the source. The scanned images can be color, black and white negatives, color slides including Kodachrome or prints. The technology which is patent pending, identifies the dust or debris on the image. These “defects” are removed without destroying the image quality. DustKleen is exactly the type of innovative software that digital image users need who use a scanner to convert images to a digital format. DustKleen occupies 2.97 mb of hard disk space once it’s been installed.

Working with DustKleen

When was the last time you installed a stand alone program that used so little hard disk space? My test hardware is running XP Pro with an AMD 3200 processor, 1 Gig Dual Channel RAM, 320 gig of hard disk space on two hard drives, CD and DVD burners, ATI Radeon video card with 64 mb of RAM. Windows NT, 2000 and Vista operating systems are also supported. A Mac version is currently under development.

The software interface is clean and very easy to use. Press the ? on the bottom left of the program to get a quick overview of how to use DustKleen. Clicking on the ? will bring up more detailed help information. The help files are very well written and have all the information required to answer questions. Because DustKleen is a stand alone program it works very fast. DustKleen targets one real problem, dust and debris on scanned images, and does the job it was designed to do very well. DustKleen can read BMP, JPG, PNG, PSD and TIFF files.

The automatic detection and removal default setting works great for most images without any end user intervention. There will be times when the default settings do not clean up all of the dust or debris defects. However, the good news is that the default automatic detection and removal gives the end user three tools for removing dust and debris. These tools are: dust size, dust amount and dust aggression. Any additional defects can be handled using the advanced “Manual Touch Up” mode. The Manual Touch Up modes lets the end user adjust both brush and dust size to target a specific area of the image. The “Add Touch Up” feature works very similar to the healing brush in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Photoshop Elements. If you do not like your change, pressing Ctrl+Z will remove it immediately or you can use the “Remove Touch Up” feature to remove either an automatic or manual correction in a specific area with a single brush stroke.

Figure 1 shows the dust and debris on a scanned Kodachrome slide taken in October 1970. The little black spots are dust on the image. Figure 2 shows the image after automatic dust and debris removal. The dust and debris are highlighted in yellow. As you can see there was a lot of dust on this image. Finally, Figure 3 (on page 51) shows the final image in Adobe Photoshop CS after the file has cleaned.

People do not want to spend a lot of time in front of a computer screen correcting scanned images. Cleaning up visible defects from scanned images takes time. I actually tried cleaning up some of these



Figure 1

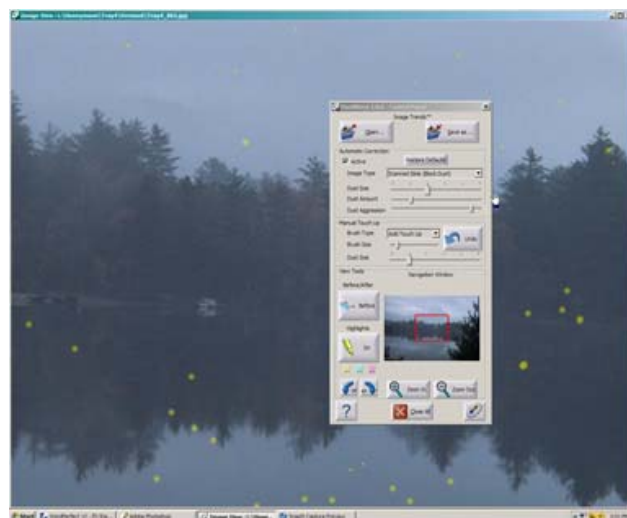


Figure 2

Continued on page 50

scanned images by hand using the healing brush in Adobe Photoshop CS. Guess what, I didn't come close to getting all the spots. I then ran the my supposedly cleaned up image through DustKleen. DustKleen found a lot more dust. This dust and debris was visible in the final print. DustKleen is an easy to use stand alone application that works and solves the problem! Question: Why not just use the "remove dust and scratches filter" that's available in both Adobe Photoshop and Elements? I tried this method as well but found that the image quality was degraded.

Scanning and removing visible dust and defects Kodachrome slides is no easy job. I scanned the Kodachrome slides with a Minolta Dimage Scan Elite 5400. This scanner supports Kodak's hardware Digital Ice. Digital Ice is a terrific hardware solution. However, Digital Ice does not work with Kodachrome slides or black and white negatives. Even if Digital Ice did work on Kodachrome slides, it still takes approximately seven minutes to scan a slide at 2700 dpi and to clean up dust and debris. Digital Ice works great on E6 processed slides and color negative film but is time consuming. By comparison, scanning four slides at 2700 dpi without Digital Ice takes about five and a half minutes. Cleaning up and saving the four scanned slides using DustKleen takes another minute.

Hint: Scan and save your files as PSD or TIFF. Then run DustKleen to clean up the file and save the file. When you want to make prints convert the files to JPEG and upload them to your favorite photo lab or print them on your own inkjet printers. Remember you do not lose any information when you save a file as a PSD or TIFF.

Conclusion

Every photographer, amateur or professional needs a "digital toolbox" to solve specific problems quickly. In my opinion, DustKleen is a very innovative working tool that should be in every digital photographers digital toolbox. Yes, most of us are now using digital cameras but there is still a sea of prints, negatives and slides that many end users want to convert to a digital format.

DustKleen worked great for me on scanned prints, color negatives, really old black and white Tri-X negatives, E6 processed slides and Kodachrome slides. In every case, there was dust that was not readily visible to the eye or with a loupe. The best part, was I now have some very nice prints made from Kodachrome slides.

DustKleen is a product that needs to be used to really appreciate just how good it is. Be sure to visit www.imagetrendsinc.com and download the trial version for yourself. This is a very impressive innovative product that works.

Recommended Improvements



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Not every piece of software is perfect on the first release, but DustKleen is very good. I would make a couple of changes to further improve the workflow. First, I would leave the Image Type to the last image type used, for example, scanned slide (black dust). More than likely the end user will be scanning images from the same format for some time and it's tiresome to keep changing from the default to the image type that is being scanned. When the end user changes the format he or she will change to the correct Image Type. The second change I would make would be in Save As. It would be great to just click on Save As and automatically have a user defined prefix added to the front of the open file name. For example, if the open image is named Tray1_025.jpg, the Save As image could be named automatically using the user defined prefix DK to DKTray1_025.jpg. Also, by default I would use the highest quality setting for JPEG images. Finally, Adobe's DNG universal RAW file format should be considered to be added to list of supported file formats.

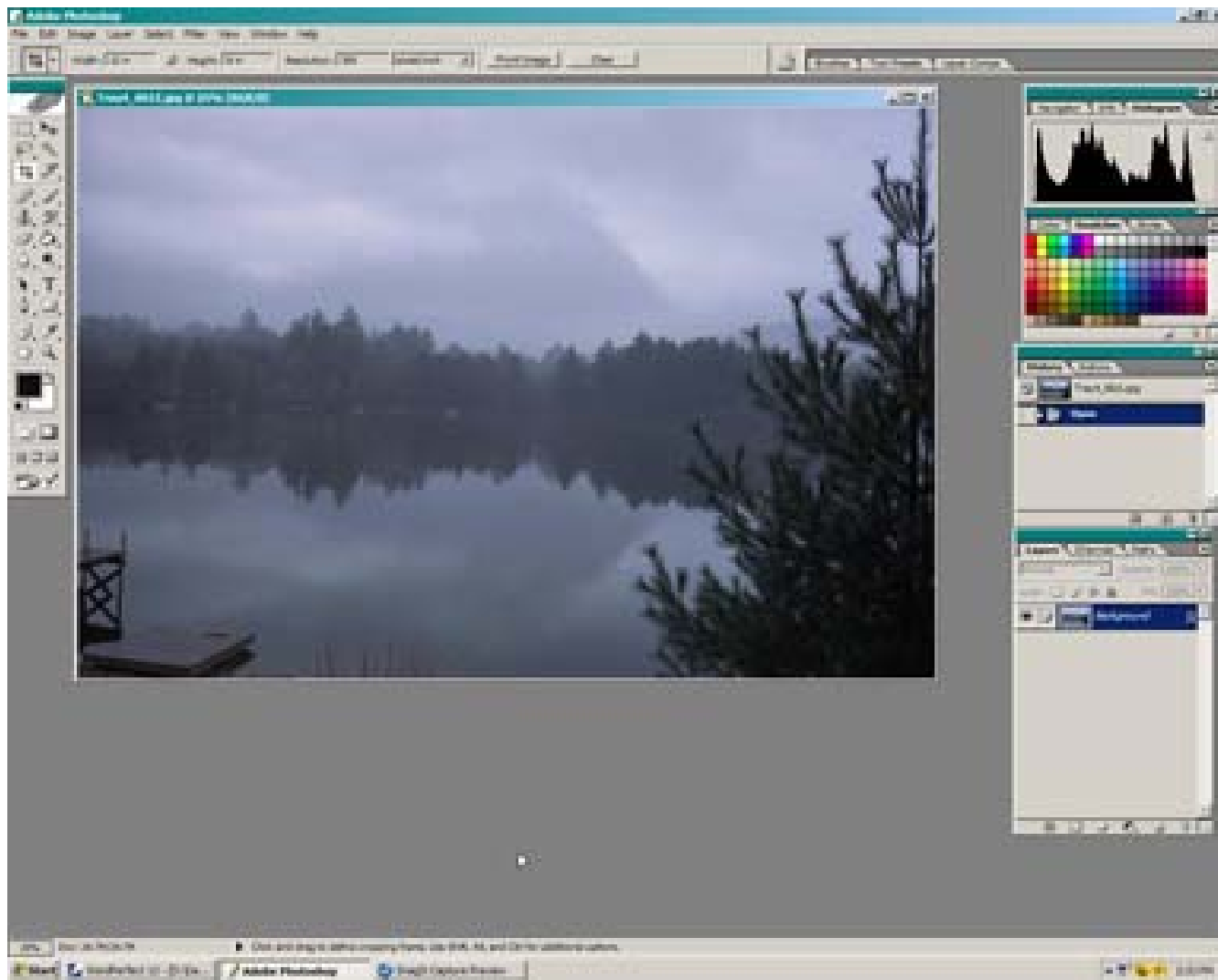



Figure 3

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Photoshop Lightroom: a Review

by **Tom Ekvall**, newsletter editor and "Creative Imaging" columnist, Northeast Wisconsin PCUG, <http://webpages.charter.net/newpcug/>, Tekval@new.rr.com

Do you like to shoot plenty of pictures with your digital camera?

If you are like me, storing and organizing them is always a chore so that you can find the right picture when you need it.

Enter Adobe Photoshop Lightroom – the new kid on the block for handling your digital workflow. Designed specifically for professional photographers, Lightroom is equally fantastic and impressive for any photo enthusiast.

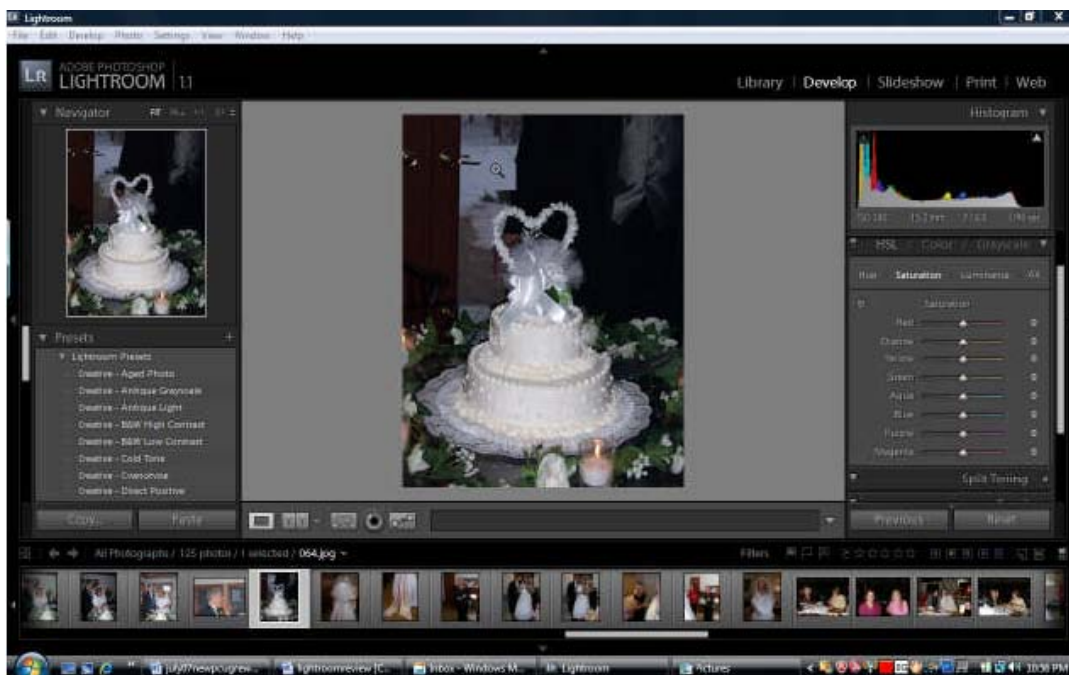
Lightroom is not designed to replace Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop Elements. However, It is the perfect complement to the programs, and for some who do not care for doing layers, may become the only product they need for digital imaging tasks.

While Photoshop is designed as a general-purposed tool to handle a variety of creative digital imaging tasks, Lightroom has only one focus—providing photographers with an effective, streamlined way to manage their photos, process them, and deliver a final product whether a print or web gallery.

The product incorporates many features I enjoy in Photoshop CS3, such as the state of the art black and white adjustment techniques and being able to edit JPEG and TIFF files in a non-destructive manner.

In fact, everything you do in Lightroom is handled in a non-destructive manner, so that .jpg images do not diminish in quality over time as editing changes are made. I like the way Lightroom lays out the photo editing tools on the workspace so that everything is at hand. Edits can be undone in the future and new changes made without having to create separate files for each change. Information is stored in a separate file associated with the image. The information is there in a Managed Photos folder whether you import the images into Lightroom's library or leave them in the original location.

Continued on page 53



Lightroom in fact is a cataloger of your photos, with the user having the choice where to store the images. It will even recognize pictures on removable drives or external hard drives as part of the catalog, something most browsers will not do. I chose to store my pictures in their original location for now.

When you start up Lightroom, you will notice a sleek, black interface with photos in the workspace depicted as slides.

The concept behind Lightroom is to provide a simplified workflow setup from shoot to finish with five modules identified on the top right hand section of the screen: Library, Develop, Slideshow, Print, and Web. Each module has a set of panels with pre-set information on the right hand side, task information on the left hand side, photo displays in the center and a filmstrip on the bottom of photos being reviewed. The filmstrip shows all in a particular folder, not just those opened up.

The Library is where photos are imported and cataloged with the ability to add keyword information, rate the photo on importance, and even mark it for rejection before a final deletion. It also includes Quick Develop controls that let you make simple edits with push button controls rather than sliders. Photos can be viewed in tandem to facilitate selecting, comparing, and ranking (stars and colors) photos for later processing.

The Develop module is where you do the non-destructive processing of photos including those in the .raw format. Whether you are in the library looking at a set of photos or in the Develop module, a histogram of the picture selected is always visible. This helps in evaluating which picture to keep or edit for printing.

The Slideshow provides a way to review photos or show them to someone else in an interesting format with the film strip of all the photos still showing on the bottom part of the screen.

The Print module provides all the choices for printing while the Web provides a tool for enabling the pictures to be viewed on the web either in html or in flash formats.

I love the way Lightroom is laid out on the screen as you can see from the accompanying image. Everything is so simple to use and user-friendly.

I also love the Color Adjustment sliders that adjust both the primary and secondary color ranges (all eight colors) with regard to the hue, saturation and luminance (HSL) characteristics of the image as well as the tonal controls including a new Tone Curve feature. Both allow you to make adjustments directly in the targeted photo.

Lightroom can probably handle most of my image-editing needs. However, there is still definitely a place for Photoshop CS3 for those things which Lightroom cannot do.

What Lightroom cannot do is apply layers, masks, and selective editing to a photo nor will it allow you to do compositing and montages. It is not a "fix it" program when extensive retouching is necessary, nor does it have filters and brushes to create artistic effects, something I love to do. Lightroom also does not work with video, which is no big deal to me.

Lightroom does provide for exporting the photo to Photoshop, Photoshop Elements or other image editing programs so that further work can be done to the photo.

Lightroom sells through Adobe (www.adobe.com) for \$299. A 30-day fully functional tryout version is available for downloading from their web site.

Final thought. This is definitely a must-have program for those who want to manage their photos and process them in a non-destructive manner. To me what sets this apart from other organizers/digital asset management programs is the quality and depth of the photo-editing tools. It is obvious the program draws upon the experience of Adobe staff in developing image-editing products such as Photoshop, Bridge, and Camera Raw.

The system requirements include Microsoft Vista or Windows XP, 768 MB of RAM (1 GB recommended) and a Pentium 4 processor. I installed the software on an Acer laptop running Vista with Pentium 4 dual-core processors (1.60 GHz speed), and 2 GB of RAM. No installation problems. There are a number of books out on the market to help you learn more about the software. The one I use is Photoshop Lightroom for Digital Photographers Only by Ron Sheppard. I like it for its simplicity in presenting information in an easy-to-understand format. There are a number of other great books out there.

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Saitek Optical Photo Mouse, Make Your Personal Computer More Personal

By Jan Fagerholm, Mouse Maven, Assistant Editor and
VP Membership, www.pcc.org, pcc4me@@netscape.net

The Bullet Points: The Saitek Photo Mouse is a desktop optical USB mouse that you can insert your own photos into. The photo area is illuminated. The mouse features 3 buttons and a scroll wheel.

What's in the Box: Mouse, User Manual with photo cutting template.

The Review: A mouse review? Hey, don't laugh – it's a perfectly good mouse that, as it happens, you can customize to make it a personalized desktop accessory. The photo part is the novelty, but first let's see the mouse.

Saitek makes a full line of PC accessories, including a wide selection of pointing devices with different talents. The Saitek Photo Mouse is a perfectly good medium-sized USB optical mouse that fits my hand well and performs better than most optical mice that I've used.

It tracks well on a variety of surfaces, which not all optical mice do. The ultimate test is to place it on a mirror, and even here it tracks accurately. The only surface that it is flaky on is those artificial wood grain coatings common to student desks and conference tables, but, hey, every other optical mouse I have has the same problem. Put a piece of plain paper under the mouse and it works fine.

OK, the gimmick here is the ability to place your own photograph inside the illuminated area where you may gaze upon it to your heart's content. This part is strictly manual labor with an assist from the paper template for fitting the photo.

Being a deep dish computer geek, I find reverting to "cut and paste" using paper and scissors real, um, 20th Century, y'know? The User Manual refers to an EPS template that can be downloaded from their Web site, but I couldn't locate it. Undaunted, I scanned the paper template into Photoshop and made a mask out of it.

Opening the desired photo, then pasting the template mask into the photo made it possible to resize and orient the image for best cropping in the mouse-shaped template. Beats the buttons off the



Continued on page 55

User Manual's advice for the paper template that, "you may have to try [printing the image] a few times before the subject appears exactly where you want it."

The Photo Mouse is as much a designer item as a mouse, and is pleasingly crafted in modern silver and black, with a blue LED in the scroll wheel and a white LED illuminating the photo area. There are 5 teflon pads on the underside which help it move smoothly on less than perfect surfaces. The cord is 4.5 ft. long and reaches my floorbound tower machine easily. Its ovaloid shape arches my fingers sufficiently to prevent inadvertent mouse clicks, a problem with mice that are too small or too flat. In other words, its function matches its form, so you will keep it after the novelty wears off.

Just in time for the holidays, the Photo Mouse makes a good stocking stuffer for the modern techno-intense family. Its fit and functionality takes it beyond its novelty value: in the long run it's a very usable mouse. Get one for yourself, then be generous: treat the other computer-using members of your family. They may like it so much that they'll put your picture inside. . .



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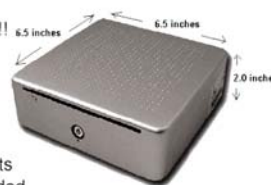
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Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



CONTROLLING WINWORD HYPERLINKS

Microsoft Word makes it very simple for us to create a Word document. It goes so far as to correct most of your spelling and grammar mistakes as you type. Using the AutoFormat and AutoCorrect options, Word takes care of almost everything, leaving you to focus on the content. One of the AutoFormat options apply to URLs. If you have ever typed in a URL or someone's email address, you have more than likely seen Word take over and turn it into a hot hyperlink. If you do not like this feature, you can easily turn it off using the steps listed below.

- * Click the Microsoft Office Button and select Word Options.
- * Click Proofing then AutoCorrect Options.
- * Select the AutoFormat As You Type tab.
- * Clear the check box beside the Internet and network paths with hyperlinks option.

Alternatively, you can also disable an individual hyperlink by pressing the CTRL + Z keystrokes immediately after you type the address.

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>

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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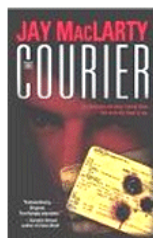
Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

The Courier

Jay MacLarty,
Pocket Star Books,
2003, \$6.99, 352
pages



Simon Leondovitch, an international courier, is hired by a Swedish firm to ferry papers and disks to their parent company in California. The nervous chemist who hands over the material slips in a second package - two computer disks to be sent to New York, address as of yet undetermined. He says he'll call later with the address but he can't - he's dead. The disks contain lab results of tests revealing that a new miracle diet drug causes fatal liver damage. The California pharmaceutical company hires a 'hunter' to recover the disks and Simon is forced to go into hiding to protect the disks and his family.

An edge-of-your-seat book; I couldn't put it down. Especially interesting from a techie standpoint is the way that Simon keeps connected while on the road - cell phone modems, patching into analog phone lines in a pension, hot connections from the airport lounge, Internet Cafes in Amsterdam - and his use of rooms to stay in touch. Highly recommended.

Death Watch

Lincoln Childs,
Doubleday, 2004,
\$24.95, 356 pages



More than a quarter of a million couples have been matched by Eden Corporation's innovative software. When two of the perfect couples - 100 percent compatible matches - inexplicably seem to commit suicide, the company calls in former FBI psychologist Christopher Lash to investigate.

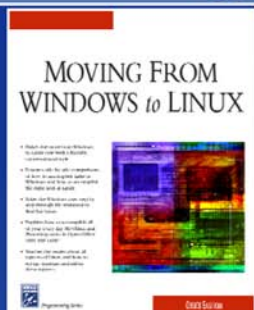
He is both attracted and repelled by the technology and forced to confront some of his own inner demons while being thwarted by someone inside the company.

The technology is a combination of artificial intelligence, incredible computing power and unlimited access to just about every database in the country. Lots of high-tech details.

A real page-turner - I guessed the ending about two-thirds of the way through but still couldn't put it down. Highly recommended.

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

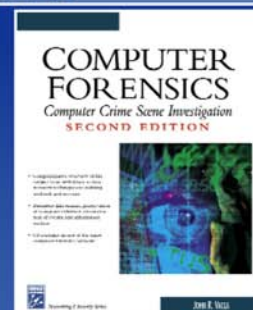
COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



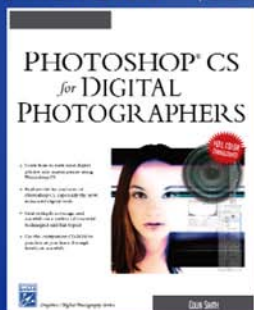
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



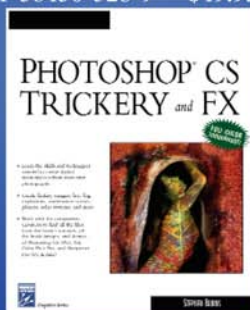
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April 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 3 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR* 	2 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 5 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 3 of 6 *PRR* High Growth Stock Investing (a/r) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	3 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.	4 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR* Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 5 of 5 *PRR* PC Alamode Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	5 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Photoshop Advanced Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 1 of 5 *PRR* C++ Study Group 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
6 HTML Class 2 - 6 P.M., class 5 of 6 *PRR*	7 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	8 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 4 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR* BOD 6:30 P.M. Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	9 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 6 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR*	10 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., Class 2 of 4 *PRR*	11 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Advanced Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 5 *PRR*	12 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Photoshop Advanced Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 5 *PRR*
13 HTML Class 2 - 6 P.M., class 6 of 6 *PRR*	14 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	15 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 5 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 5 of 6 *PRR*	16 Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 5 of 6 *PRR* Investors Business Daily (IBD) / Vector Vest, 6 - 8 P.M.	17 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., Class 3 of 4 *PRR*	18 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Advanced Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 4 of 5 *PRR*	19 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Photoshop Advanced Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 5 of 5 *PRR* C++ Study Group 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
20	21	22 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 6 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 6 of 6 *PRR*	23 Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 6 of 6 *PRR* WordPerfect Study Group (a/r) 7 - 9 P.M.	24 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Microsoft Excel 1 - 3 P.M., Class 4 of 4 *PRR*	25 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon	26 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M.
27	28 CorelDRAW X3 6 - 8 P.M.	29	30			

AlamoPC Organization

PRR = Pre-Registration Required

The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

COMPUTER CLINIC

The Doctor Is In

Each Friday morning, volunteer "Computer Doctors" share their time at the Computer Learning Center to handle technical hardware and software questions and solve problems. They attempt to 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 Alamode magazine online or download it to your computer or a CD. Students who want to download the magazine to a CD in class should bring a blank CD-RW (a read / writeable or recordable CD)

Instructor: Steve Tech
stephentechnjr@yahoo.com

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

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

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

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on

<APCORETRO@yahoogroups.com>

Technical Rating:★ - ★★★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechnjr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating★★

Digital Camera & Photography Class

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

Instructor: 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: ★★-★★★

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 April 3, 10, 17, 24

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: ★★

Volunteers Wanted

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

Technical Content Ratings

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

Internet And E-Mail - \$

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

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

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

Instructor: Don Robinson

Fees: Registration fee is \$10.00

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: YES call 210-736-0080

Technical Rating: ★

Alamo Coders Class

This is a class on using the DotNetNuke portal software for hosting your website and for those interested in developing Windows and Web applications using Microsoft's .NET. 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 Alamode 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

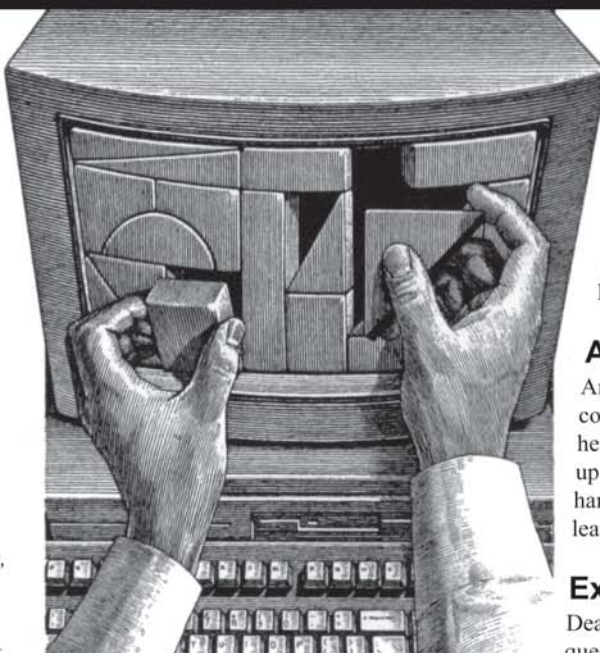
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

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.

