

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

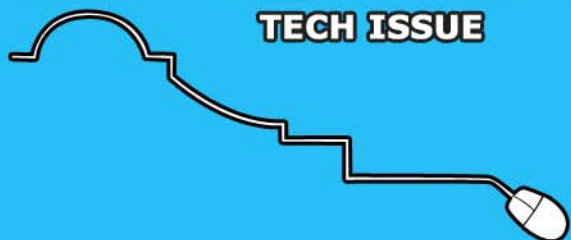
PC Alamode

TECH ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

June 2008

\$5.00



Scotty, I need more power!

Batteries vs Recharge

page 32

Art of Keeping Cool Part 1 and 2

page 39

How-to

A Stress-Free PC

page 44

Home Financial Records

page 55





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Alamo PC Organization

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



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

Registration number **210-736-0080**

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

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

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

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210-561-2278**

If you have questions about advertising call

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

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

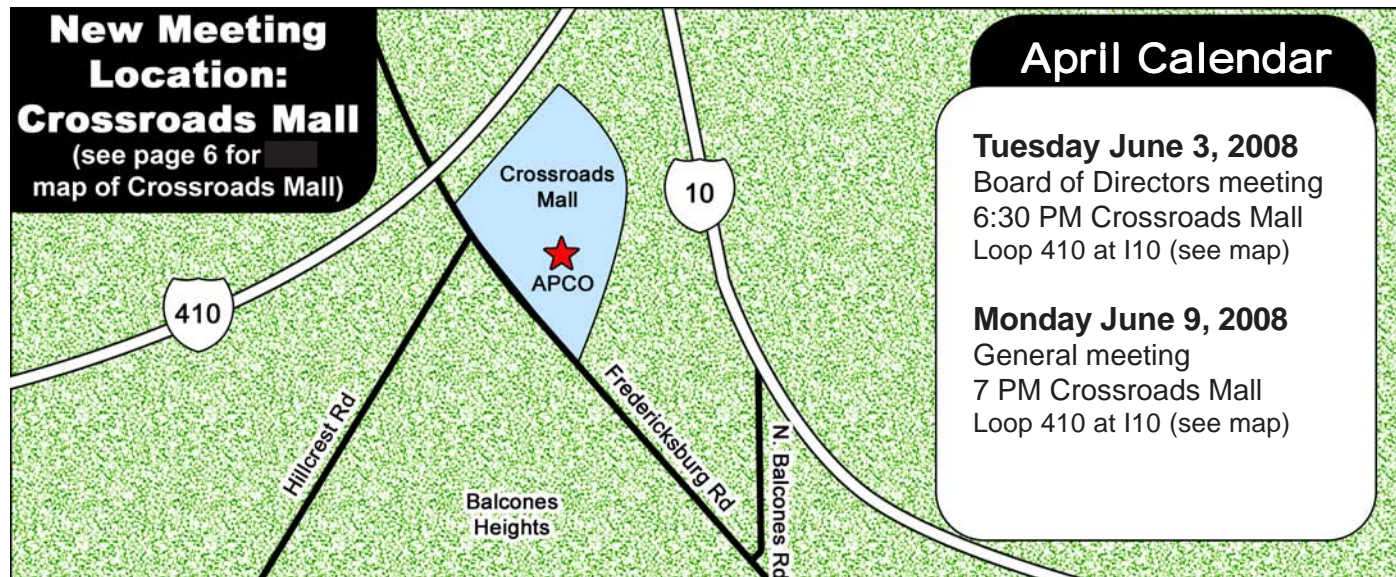
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

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

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

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



April Calendar

Tuesday June 3, 2008
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday June 9, 2008
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



departments

PC Alamode Links List	7
Enter <i>Joseph de Leon</i>	7
President's Message <i>Bill Klutz</i>	8
June Program News <i>Bill Klutz</i>	9
Volunteer of the Month	10
Funny Bytes	12

columns

PowerTalk <i>Shane Hicks</i>	13
Windows Tips & Tricks <i>Bill Beverley</i>	15
Lazy Webmaster <i>Susan Ives</i>	17

How to guide

A "STRESS-FREE" PC

Jim McKnight, Director of the Los Angeles Computer Society, helps you stop freaking out about computer troubles with these helpful tips.

see page 44

Computune-up

Berry F. Phillips of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City shows you how to keep your computer in tip top shape.

see page 51

guest contributors

The Deals Guy <i>Bob Click</i>	19
PC 101 <i>Ron Ingraham</i>	22
Computer Hysteria <i>Barry Phillips</i>	24
This and That <i>Elizabeth B. Wright</i>	25
Business Solutions <i>James D. Duncan</i>	26
Ergonomic Tips <i>John R. Chait D.C.</i>	28
Practicing the Blakc Art <i>Vinny La Bash</i>	30

Alamo PC Phone Directory	6
Map to Meeting Places	6
Alamo PC Calendar of Events	58
Study Groups and Classes	59-63
Help Numbers	64
Index of Advertisers	65
Classified Ads	65
Membership Application	66

Featured this month

Hardware

Scotty, I need more power! Batteries vs Recharge 32

Buying a Mouse 35

The story of a man who wanted a better monitor 37

Art of Keeping Cool - Part 1 - Fans 39

Art of Keeping Cool - Part 2 - Non-Fans Cooling 42

Power Supply Tips 43

How-to

A Stress-Free PC 44

"Computune-up" 51

Operating Systems

Get Ready for XP, Vista Service Packs 52

Why I like the Ubuntu OS 54

Software

Home Financial Records 55

Extras

Extreme Cooling Fans 41

The World's First Computer 48

product reviews

Computer Crimes 57

PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

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

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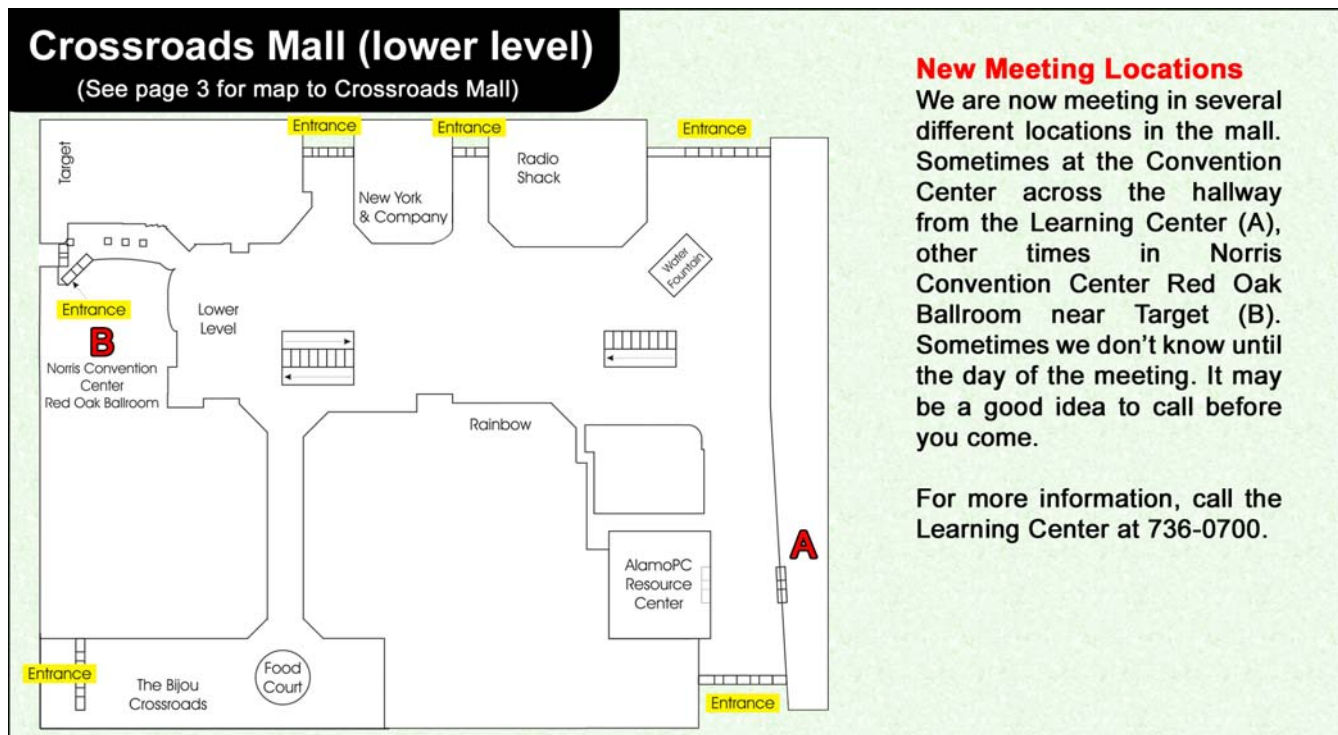
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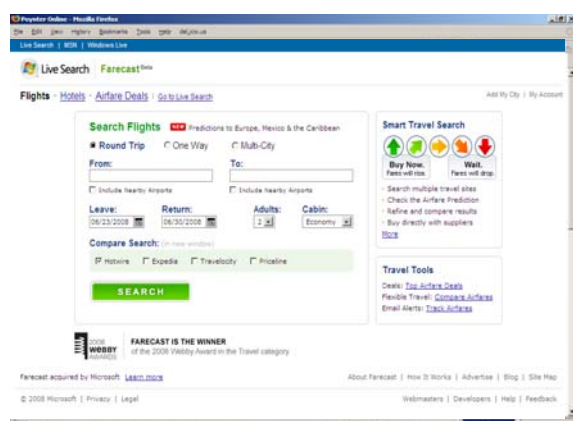
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For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0080 or 736-0700



PC Alamode Links List



Farecast

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

Search multiple travel sites, compare airline prices, search our travel deals, and receive free fare predictions.



Evolution of Security

<<http://www.tsa.gov/blog/>>

The TSA has opened their own blog.

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I hope everyone is enjoying the season. It may be hot, but it's fixing to get a lot hotter. Just like last year, forecasters are predicting a stronger than usual hurricane season. Let's hope they're wrong!

You'll notice some of the articles in this issue are bit on the technical side. While Alamo PC does help novice computer users make sense of that big fancy box with all the wires coming out of it, it's also a club for professionals and advanced enthusiasts.

Let me know what you'd like to see in the magazine and have a safe summer!

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

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

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"June" - Flag Day and Fathers' Day

We only have two things listed for this month that would be of interest to most folks, and they occur on successive days: 14th - Flag Day: In the United States, it commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened that day by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; in August 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress. The day is not an official federal holiday, though on June 14, 1937, Pennsylvania became the first (and only) U.S. state to celebrate Flag Day as a state holiday. (The week of June 14 is designated as "National Flag Week." During that week, the president will issue a proclamation urging U.S. citizens to fly the American flag for the duration of that week.); and 15th - Fathers' Day: A secular celebration inaugurated in the early twentieth century to complement Mothers' Day, in celebrating fatherhood and parenting by males, and to honor and commemorate fathers and forefathers. Fathers' Day is celebrated on a variety of dates worldwide (for US, the third Sunday of June). Also note the spelling, as I had the apostrophe in Mothers' Day placed wrong last month: Because this is a day for all fathers, the correct position of the apostrophe is after the letter s making it a plural possessive: "Fathers' Day." However many people incorrectly cite it as the singular "Father's Day" or they leave out the apostrophe altogether.

An out of town trip prevented me from attending either the May BOD meeting and the monthly General Meeting. Since no one has communicated with me about either, I am not sure they were even held. If the General meeting was held, I am sure it did not have a scheduled corporate presenter. And probably only a hand full of people even showed up, as I called the desk the day of the meeting and there was no information available to them on whether there would even be a meeting.

It is now late May, and I have no indication that David Steward has any presenter for our next General Meeting (Jun 14th), other than himself. I keep hoping he will have an announcement posted to the website, but, based on his lack of success since about November of last year, I am not holding my breath. Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting. On the day of the meeting, call the Learning Center for the most current information on location and presenter.

As in the past, 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>. 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.

As stated previously, we have lost our teacher for the popular Digital Camera & Photography classes (four different levels, each repeated once during the year). We are desperately seek-

Continued on page 9

Continued on page 9



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ing one or more individuals for the classes, as personal issues may not allow the former teacher to return to the classroom until 2009, if then.

During the past few months, we have also suffered the loss of volunteers who have been diligent in giving 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 not as successful as we would like to be. Although new members have almost been sufficient to offset non-renewing members, the member number total continues to slowly decline. We want membership to "grow" through each member renewing and trying to encourage others to join. (Please remember that you can help someone to join through the online process. They don't have to come to the Learning Center.) If you do not choose to renew, send a comment or two as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, with a copy to me (president@alamopc.org or privately wkklutzjr@juno.com). I appreciate all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

As, I have said before, the future of OUR organization will always rest in the hands of its members. Whether WE continue (or not) depends on OUR interest and involvement. But, it primarily depends on membership renewals and/or financial support. Without those, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations and 'business decisions' will have to be made that will affect everyone." With our past trend of fewer members each month, it may be sooner than later! I hope it does not come to that as it will be like the loss of a friend or family member.

June Program

Bill Klutz

Currently (late May), I have not been informed that our June General Meeting has a Corporate presenter scheduled. We are hopeful David Steward 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

Murray Adams



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.

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

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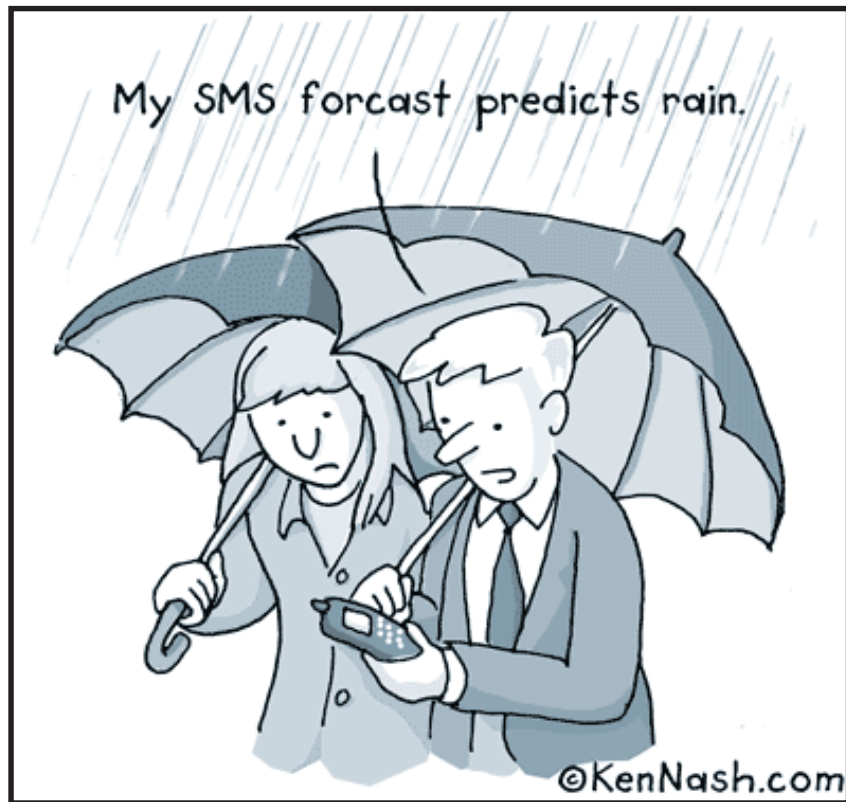
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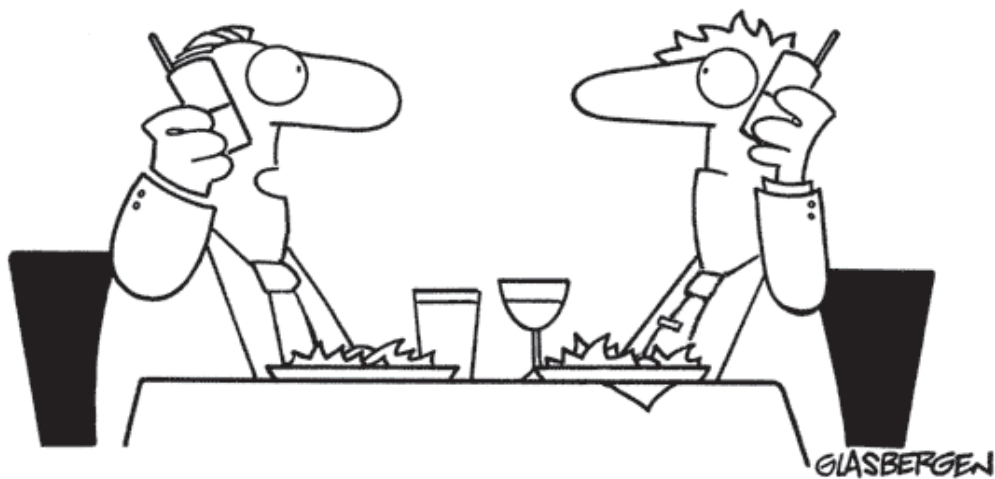


Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



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**"I use a cell phone for all of my conversations.
If a call is costing you 40¢ a minute I figure
you'll pay more attention to what I'm saying."**



Vista Tips (Part 2)

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

This month, we're continuing with a series of tips for using Windows Vista.

1. Increase System Performance with ReadyBoost

Hybrid hard drives, which include flash memory alongside the normal storage platters, are on the horizon. But until they arrive, you can still use your fast flash memory devices (like thumb drives) with Vista's ReadyBoost technology. The thumb drives act as a fast cache of extended memory between your RAM and your hard drive. In order to maximize efficiency, a ReadyBoost thumb drive should match the amount of memory in your system.

2. Using the Command Prompt

Many are used to using the Command Prompt to quickly issue command line operations. However, Vista prevents you from performing many functions by default. That's due to User Account Control blocking access to Administrator privileges. To elevate your command line privileges, navigate to the Accessories folder in the Start menu, right-click on Command Prompt, and select Run as Administrator. Now you'll be able to accomplish the tasks you set out for.

3. Shortcut Keys from the Quick Launch Bar

When you place items in the Quick Launch bar, Windows Vista automatically assigns shortcut keys to the first ten items. Just hit the Windows key plus a number key corresponding to the icon's position in the bar. For instance, to launch the third application in the Quick Launch bar, press the Windows key and the number 3.

4. Classic Menus

Do you miss the old File, Edit, and View menus from previous versions of Windows? Turn them back on in Vista by opening any window, click Organize, and click Folder and Search Options. Select the View tab and fill in the check box next to Always Show Menus. Click Apply and then OK.

5. Tell Security Center to Shut Up!

Are you tired of those security pop-ups telling that your anti-virus definitions are not up-to-date, often while the updates are downloading in the background? You may not even need one of the security features Windows is warning you about. To change what Windows warns you about, right-click the warning icon and click Open Security Center. Then, in Security Center, click Change the Way Security Center Alerts Me. You want to select Don't Notify Me and Don't Display the Icon.

6. Control Your Synchronization

If you'd like to synchronize something that isn't normally supported by Vista (i.e., to a digital camera, across folders, or even between different computers), you need SyncToy 1.4. This is a PowerToy from Microsoft which supports Windows Vista. It'll allow you to synchronize a folder to a removable hard drive, a network share, and other things. You can find this free tool from Microsoft's Download Center.

Continued on page 14

The Doctor is In



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7. Advanced Search for Applications

If you've been using Vista for awhile, you probably already know this one. But, if you're new to the OS, don't go scrolling through the endless number of applications found in your start menu when you want to launch a program. Simply click Start, and in the Search box at the bottom, type the name of the application (or text from any file your looking for) and Windows Vista will present you with a list of items that it matches to your search. Just click on the application you're looking for to start the program.

8. Shadow Copy Now Built-in to Vista

Have you ever accidentally saved over an important file, instead of saving your changes under a different name? Have you ever wished you could get that original file back without a lot of unnecessary work? Windows Vista now creates what are called "shadow copies" of your files daily. These are saved versions of your files. To recover from a bad save, right-click a Word, Notepad, or WordPad file and select previous versions.

9. Employ Bit-Locker Security

Unfortunately, laptops can have a tendency to walk away these days. You don't want to have you or your customers' sensitive information accessible if this should happen. Password-protecting your laptop is good, but it won't stop anyone that has any sort of computer knowledge. Instead, you need to encrypt your files. Vista Enterprise and Ultimate editions come with Bit-Locker Drive Encryption. You must create an extra partition on your hard drive (you can use the Vista partitioning tool on your install disc or with the Bit-Locker Drive Preparation Tool—a Vista Ultimate Extra). Create one small partition for essential OS files, and the rest of the drive will hold encrypted files. The encrypted partition must be formatted as NTFS.

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Windows Vista Part VI

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

If a family member dies and his/her Internet Service Provider (ISP) won't allow you to access his email account, there are several ways to approach this problem. Check to see if the password is stored in the Web browser. If you have access to the computer, this is where you should start. Your deceased family member's computer could be password-protected. Windows includes a hidden Administrator account that can be used for problems with other accounts. You can access it by restarting the computer into safe mode. First, restart the computer. As it starts, repeatedly press the F8 key. Instead of the familiar Windows screen, you'll see a text-only Advanced Options Menu. Use the arrow keys to select Safe Mode, press Enter, and then select the Administrator account. By default on most computers, it requires no password.

Once logged in, change the password of the account you normally use. To make this change, you click Start, Run. In the box, type "control userpasswords2" (without the quotes) and click OK. Select your normal account name in the list and click the Reset Password button. You'll be prompted for a new password. You can restart the computer and use the new password on your normal account. If you're completely locked out of your computer, you'll need software. Such services include Login Recovery, FastCrack, and NT Password and Registry Editor. Each is free. They make use of boot disks that you can download to a floppy or burn to CD. Of course, you'll have to use some other computer to do the downloading. Once you've got access to your computer, set a new password through Windows. To do it, click Start, Control Panel. Double-click User Accounts and select your account and click "Change my password." You'll be prompted for a new password. You'll also have the opportunity to enter a password reminder. It should trigger your memory if you ever forget your password. But the reminder should not be descriptive enough to allow others to determine your password. To find passwords in Firefox, click Tools, Options. Open the Security section and click Show Passwords. You'll see a list of sites and user names. Click Show Passwords again to show saved passwords.

Computer Recycling Options

If you purchase a new computer with VISTA, here are some ideas for using or discarding your old machine. One option is to sell it on eBay. You can search for comparable machines and see how people are bidding. You may be surprised by what you find there. Maybe you could reuse your old computer. For example, you could turn it into a DVR. This is relatively easy, not to mention inexpensive. Throw in a media extender or two, and you can watch recorded shows on TVs around the house. You could also turn the computer into a server. You can use it to store files and serve media. It also makes backups easy. You don't need a particularly powerful computer for a server or DVR.

But if the computer is a laptop, it probably isn't well suited for these uses. Or, maybe you just prefer to reduce the clutter. In that case, there are other solutions. First, maybe a friend or family member could use the old computer. Ask around; you may find a taker. Failing that, you can donate the computer to a charity. Depending on the machine, a charity might be happy to have it. And by donating it, you're extending the machine's life. You can try contacting local charities. For example, a church or a school may be able to use your old gear. If you have trouble locating an organization that will take your gear, contact the National Cristina Foundation. It has affiliates in every state and takes both PCs and Macs.

The National Cristina Foundation will help you find charities that will accept your donation. This can take a few weeks. You can donate computers, printers, peripherals and even software. In some cases, you may be able to donate computer parts. You'll also find trade-in programs for computers and other old gadgets. For example, HP accepts a variety of gadgets from many manufacturers. You will get a check for your trade-ins; the check can be redeemed on HP products. Toshiba has a similar program that offers cash for your trade-ins. Gateway's trade-in program is like Toshiba's. However, it is only available if you've recently purchased a Gateway or eMachines product. Toshiba will recycle its products for free. Gateway charges for recycling, as does HP. But HP gives you a credit toward a new HP machine. Costco also has a trade-in program. It accepts a variety of gadgets. You'll receive a gift card for the store. If the item can't be resold, Costco will recycle it for free. Certain items, like CRT monitors, can only be recycled. Shipping is free.

Dell will recycle any computer with the purchase of a new one. It also recycles its machines free of charge at any time. Apple has a free recycling program for iPods and cell phones. It doesn't matter who makes the phone. You can mail in the items for free. Or, take your iPod to an Apple store for 10 percent off a new one. Apple will recycle any computer and monitor with the purchase of a new Apple computer. Additionally, you can recycle Apple batteries at any Apple store for free. There are other options for recycling electronic equipment. Staples stores will recycle your gadgets. There's no charge for small items. Larger items, such as

Continued on page 16

computers, incur a \$10 charge. Televisions and large copiers are not accepted. Office Depot also offers a recycling program. You can purchase a box for \$5, \$10 or \$15. Fill it with as many acceptable items as it will hold. Then, drop it off at your local store. Acceptable items include CRT monitors, computers and more. Other retailers, such as Best Buy, offer free recycling of cell phones, ink cartridges and batteries. You must take the items in to the stores. If you have difficulty recycling or trading in your equipment, visit Electronics Recycling. It lists recyclers in your area. You may be charged for recycling. You may also contact the manufacturer of the gadget. It should offer recycling advice. Now, before you do anything with your old gear, erase your data from it. Otherwise, your identity could be stolen. And remember, simply deleting data from a hard drive is not enough. You should use a program like Eraser. I have a link to this free program on my site.

Parental Controls

Windows Vista includes a good set of parental controls. Its time limit settings are very accessible. To set them, log in to the administrator account and click Start, Control Panel. Then click Classic View on the left side of the window and Parental Controls. You may be faced with the User Account Control pop-up. Some find the UAC pop-ups annoying. Just click Continue to proceed. Now you'll be presented with a list of user accounts. Select a child's account. Under the Parental Controls heading, select "On, enforce current settings." Vista's default parental controls are wide open. You'll have to set them up manually. Under Windows Settings, click Time Limits. You'll see a grid of empty white boxes. The grid is labeled with the days of the week. Each box corresponds to an hour of the day. Click a time and day to block access during that hour. Block times will turn blue. You can set the time limit for bedtime. Your children will receive warnings before their time expires. When they run out of time, their sessions are suspended. Their sessions stay active in the background. None of their work will be lost. Others can use the computer while the limited sessions are suspended. They just log in as usual. The suspended sessions are held in the background. A session is restored when a child next logs in. Your kids cannot log in during blocked hours. What if they have a late night homework assignment? There is no easy or temporary way to override the time limits. You'll have to change the time limit settings and then change them back when your kids are finished or they could use the administrator account.

Remote Assistance

Remote Assistance was introduced in WinXP. It will let you log on to a computer expert's machine if you are in need of help to solve a computer problem. It is much more cumbersome to set up than GoToMyPC, which is an alternative way of seeking outside assistance. To set it up, click Start, Control Panel and double-click System and open the Remote tab. Next select "Allow Remote Assistance invitations to be sent from this computer" and click Advanced and select "Allow this computer to be controlled remotely." You can also set a time limit after which an invitation will expire. Click OK, OK. To send a Remote Assistance invitation, click Start, Help and Support and then click "Remote Assistance: Invite a friend to connect to your computer" and click "Invite someone to help you." Both parties can use Windows Messenger or Outlook/Outlook Express to communicate. On the next dialog box, you can send an invitation to a contact in Outlook/Outlook Express or you can use Windows Messenger. Once it is received, the remote work can begin! Things are different in Vista. To get started, click Start, Control Panel and double-click System and click Remote Settings. Now select "Allow Remote Assistance connections to this computer" and click Advanced and select "Allow this computer to be controlled remotely." You can specify an expiration for the invitation if you choose this option. Also, you can select "Create invitations that can only be used from computers running Windows Vista or later." Vista's settings are very different from XP's! Click OK, OK. To send a request for help, click Start, Help and Support and click "Use Windows Remote Assistance to get help from a friend or offer help." Next select "Invite someone you trust to help you" and click "Use e-mail to send an invitation." Enter a password and then confirm it. Click Next. An e-mail will be generated with an attached file. Enter the recipient's e-mail address.

User Account Protection Permission Messages


After 20 years of Windows development, Vista's still pretty naive. For example, when you run a program to change settings on your PC, Vista can't tell whether you're loading the program or a virus is loading it in an attempt to mess with your PC. When Vista notices anybody (or anything) trying to open something that can potentially harm Windows or your PC, it flashes a message asking for permission. If one of these permission messages appears out of the blue, Vista may be warning you about a bit of nastiness trying to sneak in. So click Cancel to deny it permission. But if you're trying to do something specific with your PC and Vista puts up its guard, click Continue instead. Vista drops the boxing gloves and lets you in. Or, if you don't hold an Administrator account, track down any Administrator account holder and ask her to type her password. Although an annoyingly security-guard robot polices Vista's front door, it's also an extra challenge for the people who write the viruses.

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Finding a Home for your Home Page

The Lazy Webmaster

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

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

After you design your Web site you need a place to host it. A Web host is a service that gives you space on their server, a computer that is configured for public access to Web sites.

1. Paid Shared Hosted Site:

This is by far the most popular solution. Web hosting companies will host your site and register your domain name for a modest monthly fee. You will be sharing a remote computer with many other hosted Web sites. Two companies that I have used are Hosting Matters and 5 Dollar Hosting. For less than \$100 per year you can get a year's worth of Web space and get a registered domain name <www.yourname.com>. Everything is arranged online with a credit card, and your name and space should be ready to use in a day or two. Two terms you need to know:

Storage space:

This is the megabytes (MB) of files that you can store on a server. At the least expensive level this is usually 25MB. Most Web sites will easily fit in this amount of space.

Data Transfer/Mo:

Each time someone views the front page of the SAVAE site they transfer 15 files totaling 41KB. If he or she clicks on the "Music" link they transfer another 34KB. If they decide to listen to the audio clip of Mananitas, they are transferring 125KB more. At the least expensive level you will get 2-5 gigabytes (GB) of data transfer per month. If you exceed it the Web host will alert you and charge you more or, if you prefer, close down your site for the remainder of the month.

Don't buy more than you need, but make sure you can scale up if your needs change.

For example, you might not need a shopping cart with the ability to accept secure transactions on your initial business Web site, but if this is in your future plans, make sure that it is available. Same with SQL (Structured Query Language), a standard interactive and programming language for getting information from and updating a database.

Some Web hosts will provide tools to make it easier to construct and design your site. Yahoo, for example, offers a program called Site Builder, that walks you through menus to design your site.

If you use Microsoft Front Page make sure that your host supports Front Page Extensions. Also, make sure it supports FTP and doesn't require you to use a clunky Web-based interface to upload your files to their server.

Most of the Web hosts will also give you free e-mail addresses and other services, but note that your Web hosting does NOT include basic Internet access – you're just buying space for your Web site, not access to the Internet.

Most Web hosting services offer a complete package – you can register your domain name, contract for the space and be online within a day or so.

One of the advantages to having your own domain name is that you can transfer your hosting service to another company and still keep the same Web address. Take the time to make the best choice for your needs, but take comfort in knowing that if it doesn't work out you can always switch.

Continued on page 18

STUDY GROUPS

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Please call (210) 736-0700

Free Web Hosts.

This is free service that you pay for indirectly by agreeing to include advertising on your site. Some of the most popular are

- * Tripod
- * Angelfire
- * Geocities

All of these include Web page building tools that use templates and wizards to help you build your site, or you can design them from scratch. The advertising - popup ads - are added automatically by the service. All of these also allow you to upgrade your service, for a fee, to eliminate the ads or use your own domain name. Your address will look something like www.geocities.com/yourname. Free is good, but most people find popup ads irritating. Use this for a personal site, but not for a business one.

ISP hosted services

Many Internet Service Providers — the company you get your basic Internet service from — include some free Web space. The address of such a site will look something like yourname.ispname.com or www.ispname.com/~yourname.

Some ISPs restrict the kind of site you can host for free - some prohibit business sites.

Contact your ISP to see if they offer free Web space.

It is, of course, possible to manage your own server, but this is complicated, expensive and beyond the scope of the Lazy Webmaster.

This is a decision you don't have to make right away - your Web site can be designed totally off-line and only uploaded to the public server when you are ready to go public.

The extra experience and breathing space might give you more data to ensure you are making the right decision.

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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.

*Friends Helping Friends!

A friend uses his computer a lot, but doesn't belong to any computer organization. I gave him a couple of PC Magazines I had read and he enjoyed them enough that he subscribed. He mentioned that he had a problem with his laptop not connecting to the router and I told him about the tech support included with the PC Magazine subscription he had just purchased. He called them and they helped him fix the problem quickly. His words later were "Boy; I've already gotten my subscription money back in just one day."

*Eat Or Be Eaten

I saw where EMC will acquire Iomega. Although it is taking much longer than he said, Ralph Nader said years ago that in 20 years most of the business in the US will be controlled by 20 or so large corporations, and it looks like that prediction is gradually taking place. Small startups that have a unique product are quickly scooped up by the big guys who also buy their competition to close it down. That's certainly a good way for a smart programmer to become a millionaire; just come up with a great idea that works. As for being bought up, foreign countries will soon own the US by repossessing us if we keep borrowing money from them.

The items below are announcements I received, but I have necessarily edited the wording. I have not tried any of the products.

*Free Tutoring For The Uninformed

Output I/S has launched HTML.net, a free HTML and CSS tutorial site that makes it easy to learn how to design and develop web sites. In about an hour, novice computer users can learn the essential information needed to build a web site using nothing more than an ordinary text editor. The Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) tutorial begins with the basics and introduces you to links, images and tables. You'll learn how to develop a site that can be viewed by all web browsers on all platforms. There are tips and tricks to make your web site attractive, fast loading, and effective.

The Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) tutorial teaches you to separate your web site content from your design, enabling you to quickly change the look and feel of your web site. CSS-based web sites improve your search engine rankings by making it easier for search engines to find and index your content. CSS is slowly replacing table-based HTML as the design tool of choice. The HTML.net tutorials are available 24/7, without charge. Tutorials are in English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Chinese, and more.

For more information, visit <<http://www.html.net/>>, or contact Output I/S, Kaj Munks Vej 10, 3.th, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark. Phone: (+45) 5194 5001. E-mail: <info@output.dk>.

*Free Screensaver

DealsGuy note: I am always suspicious of screensavers and I don't even use them myself, but my proofreader

found some decent reviews of the companion game from the same author, so this screensaver is probably OK..

A sweet and adorable fairy soars across a beautiful fantasy landscape. Along the way, she uses dazzling spells to defend herself against evil goblins and blazing firebirds. This delightful visual

Continued on page 20

David's Essential Domains



Website Hosting Starting at \$3.95/month!

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<http://www.davidsessentialdomains.com>

feast is the free Feyruna Fairy Forest screensaver from Jochen Kaercher Gamedesign, creator of premium games for casual players.

Fairy Forest screensaver includes the option to turn on atmospheric music and sound effects. As viewers listen to the soothing audio, they're treated to smoothly animated scenes featuring the otherworldly artwork of Feyruna Fairy Forest, a casual game created by Jochen Kaercher Gamedesign. Visit <<http://www.feyruna.com>> to download the 13 MB installation file and begin enjoying the free Feyruna Fairy Forest screensaver. Windows 95 or later is required.

Jochen Kaercher is an experienced game developer based in Germany. After launching his company in 1999, he created several freeware and shareware offerings for the PC. Kaercher is now developing more ambitious titles aimed at casual gamers. All offerings can be downloaded from <www.jochenkaercher.com>.

***Free USB Protection**



A.C. Element Company has made available the free version of MyUSBOnly for individual users. MyUSBOnly Free 2007 is a Windows security application that prevents data theft through your computer's USB ports. While USB ports have made computing much more convenient, they also introduce a security threat that could subject many computer users to identity theft and data theft. MyUSBOnly thwarts attempts to gain access to your computer via your USB ports.

New features for MyUSBOnly Free 2007 are:

- Syslog entries for copied, modified, deleted files/folders
- Firewall-like feature to allow/deny inserted USB devices

It acts as something similar to a firewall that monitors the USB ports for any storage device connected to the protected computer. Simply create a whitelist of all of the USB devices you want to allow on your computer. The program will recognize each of your flash drives, external disk drives, MP3 players, and other USB devices and add them to its list of accepted hardware once they are authorized by the user. When your list is complete, the software will then check the whitelist of allowed devices by USB brand (if you want to allow a certain USB brand) or by serial number (for specific USB devices you want to allow) depending on the settings desired by the user.

The software also has reporting features, such as e-mail notifications, each time somebody attaches a USB device to your desktop or laptop. MyUSBOnly also maintains a security log of all attempts to gain access to your computer via USB flash drives, iPods, card-readers, or any USB hardware. Modified and copied files are now included in the log entries and can be configured to send all log information to syslog. Use syslog viewers such as Kiwi Syslog Daemon TM to view all the log entries from one or more computers in the network, allowing administrators to be able to manage and audit security.

There is an option to hide the software from the user, by not displaying any tray icons at all, so it silently works in the background without the user even knowing it's there. MyUSBOnly makes it easy to lock down your USB ports to protect this critical vulnerability on your desktop or laptop.

MyUSBOnly runs under Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista/Server 2008, Download the software from our website <<http://www.myusbonly.com/usb/free.php>>. DealsGuy note: My proofreader noted some contradictions in the Web site information so look closely and clarify what you don't understand by trying the trial version before buying.

***Like Jigsaw Puzzles? Try This One!**



They claim, "It is even possible to see and feel the cardboard thickness.", but I am skeptical about feeling the cardboard thickness on the screen."

Gaia Dream Creation Inc. released its new 3D jigsaw puzzle game, and a puzzle screensaver named "Gaia 3D Puzzle" and "Gaia 3D Puzzle Screensaver." This 3D jigsaw puzzle game allows players to play jigsaw puzzles on their computer by selecting their favorite images and the number of pieces. The 3D view creates a totally immersive playing experience like a real puzzle game.

Continued on page 21

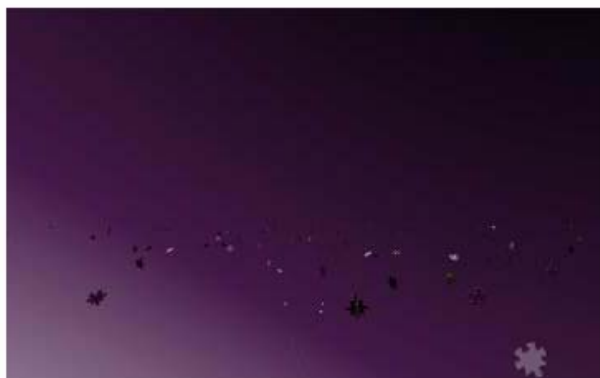
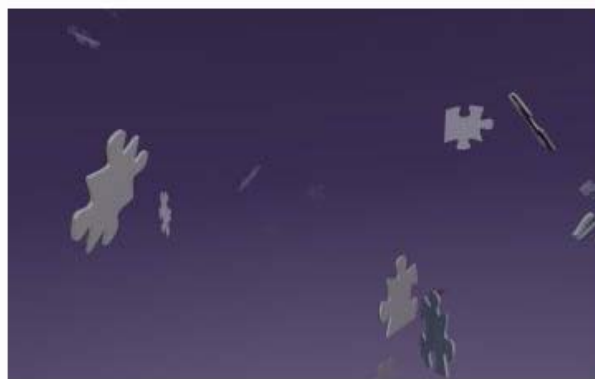
Gaia 3D Puzzle allows players to play with almost any images found on the Internet. Unlike other computer puzzle games, Gaia 3D Puzzle is in 3D. Players can see their puzzle as a real jigsaw puzzle and the pieces are as real as true jigsaw pieces. The pieces are not pre-cut image shapes. They are generated from advanced mathematic procedures to show the exact look and feel of true jigsaw pieces. It is even possible to see and feel the cardboard thickness. Players are able to play puzzles from 9 to 2000 pieces. Children can play and enjoy the same puzzles that adults play, but with less pieces.

A selection of 4 different piece shapes is available which increases or decreases the difficulty level. It's also possible to modify the degree of distortion in the pieces, meaning the pieces can all look the same, which is harder to play, or all look different, which is easier to play.

The puzzle game and screensaver are available in English and French for Windows 2000/XP/Vista. The puzzle game (Gaia 3D Puzzle) is \$29.95 USD and the screensaver (Gaia 3D Puzzle Screensaver) is \$14.95 USD. 20% is offered to DealsGuy readers with coupon code GAIA-XAKB-USAV. This code is valid until June 30th, 2008. You must download the trail version to make sure it works well on your system and that you are satisfied, then follow the URL in the product to pay using the discount code.

Website: <<http://www.gaiadreamcreation.com/games/gaia-3d-puzzle/>>

Screensaver: <<http://www.gaiadreamcreation.com/screensavers/gaia-3d-puzzle-screensaver/>>



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STUDY GROUPS

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

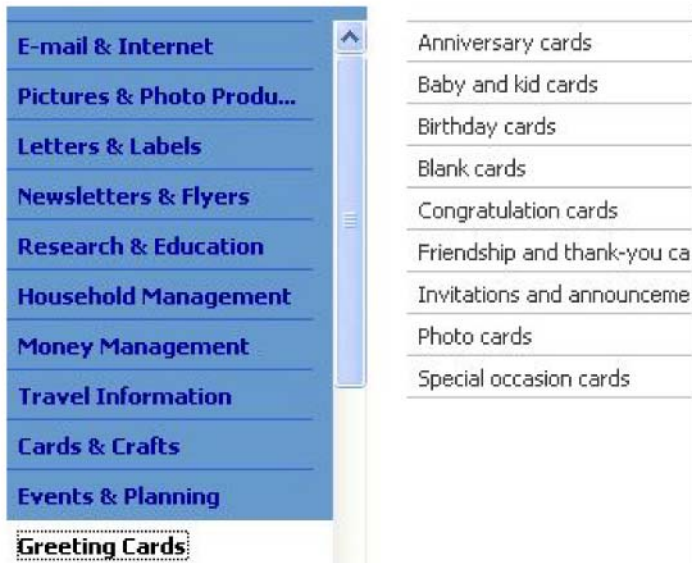
PC 101

Microsoft Works - Greeting Cards

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>

Even though we recently covered Cards and Crafts, the Greeting Cards area goes into detail on a variety of card types, as you can see below.

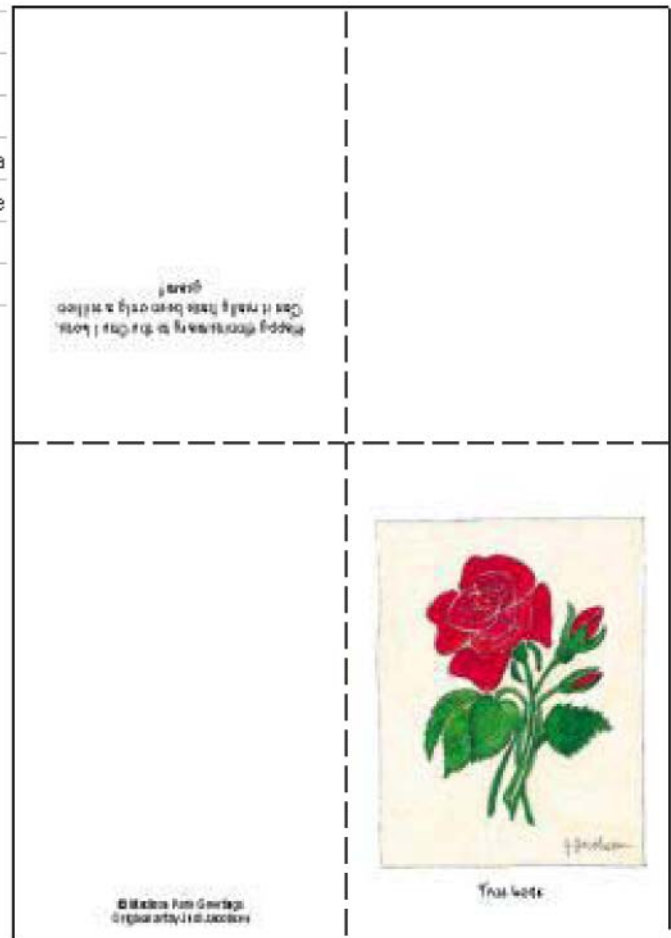


Selecting the first category, Anniversary Cards, brings up a wizard with three choices. After you select



a category, the wizard displays the card layout, which appear to be designed as quarter-folds on letter size paper or stock. As a result, the message area is inverted on the top left of the screen. Double-clicking

the box allows you to edit or add to the message as you wish. I found it a little difficult to work upside down, but found no option to change it. When you complete the editing, you can click on File < Print Preview to see the completed page.



If you've never played with greeting cards this may appear a little confusing. Once it is printed, you would fold it first horizontally across the middle of the narrow width of the stock. You then fold the resulting double sheet in half vertically. This is what I described as a quarter-fold card.

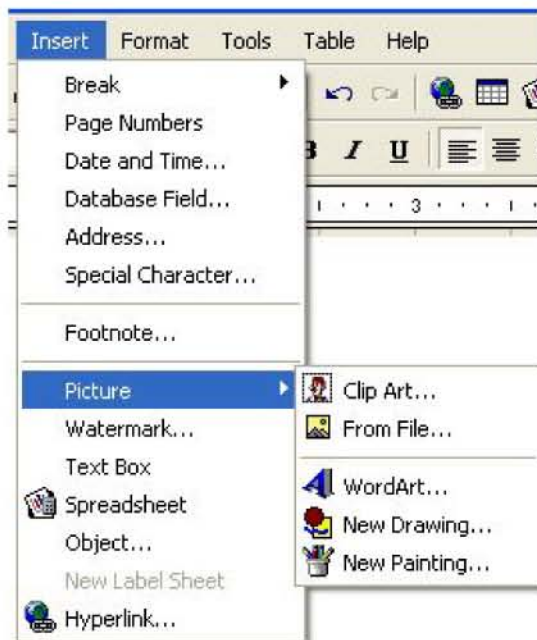
All of the remaining categories are also quarter-fold. Just the art work and prepared text vary.

Continued on page 23

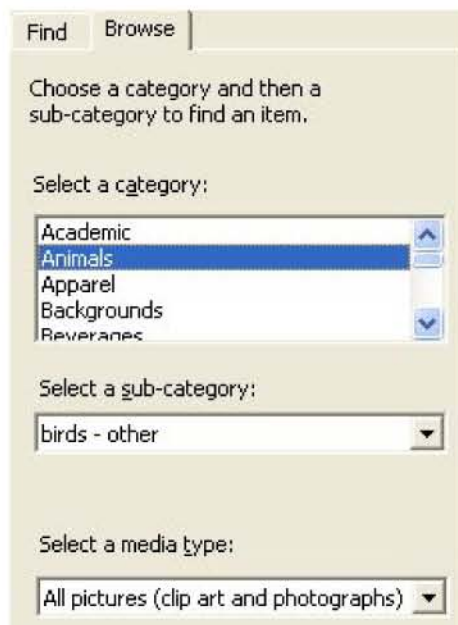
Selecting the Blank category allows the freedom to create a card that is distinctively yours. It is possible to delete the supplied graphics and substitute your own choice. I didn't find any of the stock graphics to my liking, so elected to delete theirs and insert my own.

The first step here is to double-click anywhere in the graphic to Select it, then go to the edit menu and select Clear. This removes the selection.

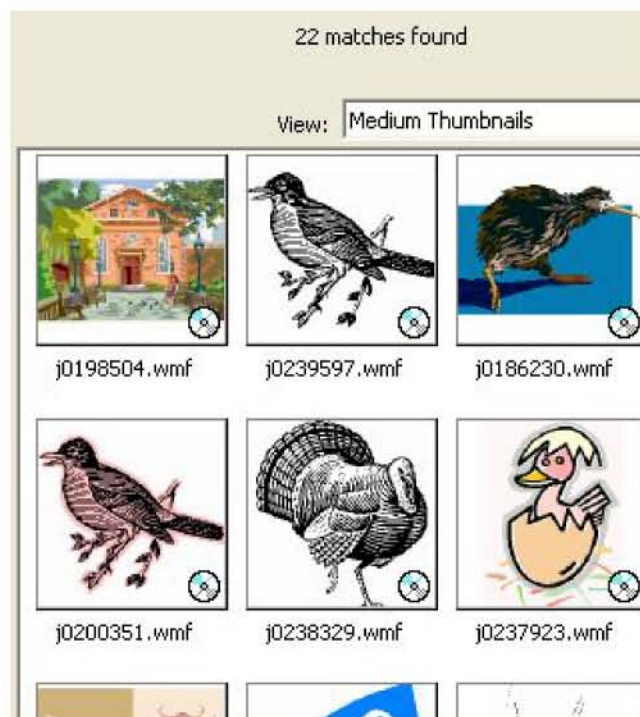
Then you may go to the Insert menu and make your choice from those displayed below.



If you elect to use pictures from available Clip Art,



you'll be given a choice of about 32 categories of stock pictures, five of which may be seen at lower left. In the Animals category, I selected the Birds sub-category. This produced 22 matches which may be viewed as thumbnails as seen below. I should point out



that selection of any thumbnail with the CD symbol in the lower right corner will require you to put your Works CD in the drive first.

If you prefer to use your own graphics, you should select Picture > From File. This will allow you to look in whatever folders you use to save pictures. Once you have selected the desired picture, you may wish to size it correctly before you insert it into the document, in this case your blank card. Insertion of anything into the card is handled the same as doing this in any document.

Once you have begun this task, you will see a Works Help area on the right of the screen. In this case it will come up as Create a Document with the Word Processor Wizard. This explains the process and provides an Answer Wizard where you can get specific information if needed.

The remaining categories are all similar to those we've looked at. Once again, open this area of your Works program and experiment with these actions. The only way you'll learn to use it is to do it. So you'll make some mistakes. In the long run you'll benefit by being able to whip up a greeting card quickly and easily.



Earth Probe

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

One stormy night, a long, long time ago, at the witching hour, I was reading "scifi" being a bibliophile at one of my favorite haunts that seemed to be a kind of nocturnal magnet. At the long table next to me, a strange conversation was going on that I could not cipher. I glanced out of the corner of my eye to see if they might be aliens but there were no antennas or a third eye on their foreheads. However, they could be humanoids! I then confessed to the strange group I had been listening and understood nothing that they were talking about and was curious about their group. (I did not ask them whether they were aliens wanting to be polite.)

They explained they were "BBSers" who were humans of a strange tribe called "Geeks" who seemed to enjoy the fact that I could not understand their conversation with a strange kind of hilarity. Well I was relieved they were not aliens but simply strange human "Geeks" and perhaps disappointed at the same time but still curious. I had been warned many times in my life that curiosity killed the cat, but I always reminded those skeptics that cats have nine lives!

The female Geek explained that they were all "SysOps" (System Operators) running local Bulletin Board Systems ("BBSes") in our area. While they were friendly to me, I sensed some social discomfort since they apparently preferred to interact with machines (computers) more than people unless of course they were members of their "Geek" tribe or the same breed of cat whichever you prefer. I further categorized them in my mind as "machine people."

Further, the female "Geek" said that I was a natural for computers since I was a reader. I then became paranoid thinking that she might be a humanoid using some kind of "Vulcan mind link" to know that I was a bibliophile. She further explained that she had seen me reading several times previously at our haunt during their various "Geek" tribal meetings. She then seemed to be determined to take me on as a "Geek"

transformation project especially when I explained that I was not technical and knew then nothing about computers and was from a liberal arts background. I soon learned that "Geeks" love challenges!

Let the learning begin! The Bulletin Board System (BBS) was created from software that allowed remote users to connect via an analog phone line run by a "SysOP" to perform various social and recreational tasks and communicate with others on the system. Remote users could perform functions like downloading software ("Shareware" was very popular.) and data, uploading data, listening to music, playing games, reading news, and exchanging messages with other users.

From the early 1980s to the mid 1990s, "BBSes" were run as a hobby free of charge by the "SysOps" while other BBSes charged their users a subscription fee for access. Internet Service Providers often had BBSes as part of their service to subscribers. The BBS was a local phenomenon and in many ways was a precursor to the World Wide Web and the Internet.

To avoid costly long distance charges, many "BBSers" were from the same area and often would meet socially but also were a bit reluctant to leave their computers for very long, lest they experience acute machine withdrawal.

The BBS survives today as a nostalgic hobby and via telnet offers free email accounts, web interfaces, ftp file downloads, irc chat, and all the protocols on the Internet. The website www.textfiles.com has a collection of historical data involving the history of the BBS.

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Curing Lens Distortion

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

First, the good news. The camera which quit working on our vacation last month was still in warranty (just barely) and Sony repaired it at no cost and it has been returned to me in working order. I was out the postage to send it to Sony, but I didn't mind that since I now have a working camera back.

On to more about the replacement camera I bought to use during the rest of our vacation. Many of you will remember the recent past when serious photographers tested their film camera lenses for flaws. There were all kinds of tests for "vignetting", "distortion", etc. The photo magazines were full of articles on the subject along with suggestions for what to do if bad problems were encountered. I shudder to think of what those solutions involved using darkroom techniques. But now we have: (drumroll) "Digital Cameras".

Last month I talked about buying a replacement digital camera for the one which quit working suddenly while we were on vacation. The original camera was a mid-range priced camera, not cheap but also not out of the ballpark. It took great pictures and had a lot of good features. The second camera was too expensive for what it is, but again, not unaffordable as long as I didn't buy anything else while on vacation. I had a similar one at home which I have used on occasion and should have had with me as a backup. Lesson learned.

So why am I rehashing old news? The explanation is that SONY, in my estimation, really goofed with the Cybershot DSC-S600. While still touting their line of Carl Zeiss, Vario-Tessar lenses, the lens itself had a terrible barrel* type distortion. I discovered this when I downloaded my pictures at home and found pictures I had taken of a doorway looking like something seen in a funhouse mirror. My immediate reaction was that SONY had accidentally put a defective lens in the camera. I now have a replacement DSC-S600 instrument, and it has the exact same distortion as the first one. I feel my money has been poorly spent, but that might be another story for later.

What to do with the pictures. Ah, that was a challenge. The doorway pictures were obvious, so it was back to finding an imaging program which could easily make the necessary corrections. JASC PaintShop Pro9 turned out to be quite adequate for the repairs. Below you will see the original picture and the one using the effect tools in PSP9 and the final cropped image. As usual, there was some trial and error to get the right combination of effects, but eventually I got something that resembled the actual door.

1. After starting JASC PSP9 and using the browser, open the picture to be adjusted. The first step for my picture was to rotate the it 90° as I had originally turned the camera to take a vertical view of the doorway. Once this was done the following steps are as follows:
2. Click "Effects" on the menu bar, then click "distortion effects / lens distortion". This will open the dialog box where you enter values to change the picture.
3. Since my picture demonstrated a "Barrel"* type distortion, I needed to use the option that would reverse this phenomenon.

Under "Settings", I chose "pincushion" from the drop down menu (accessed by the small downward arrow at the right edge of the "Distortion type" choice line) for the effect I wanted to create. After trial and error for this particular picture, I chose the values under "Center offset" of: Vertical 0, Horizontal 25 and in the "Strength" box I input a value of 15. I chose "Color" for the "Edge mode".



before



after

4. When the program made the calculations and came up with the altered picture, I then had to crop out the black spaces created by the pincushion effect. Obviously you will lose some of your picture when cropped, so if there is any element you want to keep, you might choose to live with the black pinched edges. The pictures below will show the results of these actions.

*Digital Photography Review website at: dpreview.com/learn/?/key=barrel+distortion

"Barrel Distortion By Vincent Bockaert" "Barrel distortion is a lens effect which causes images to be spherised or "inflated". Barrel distortion is associated with wide angle lenses and typically occurs at the wide end of a zoom lens. The use of converters often amplifies the effect. It is most visible in images with perfectly straight lines, especially when they are close to the edge of the image frame. See also the opposite effect, pincushion distortion."



Access-Tools to Document New System

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

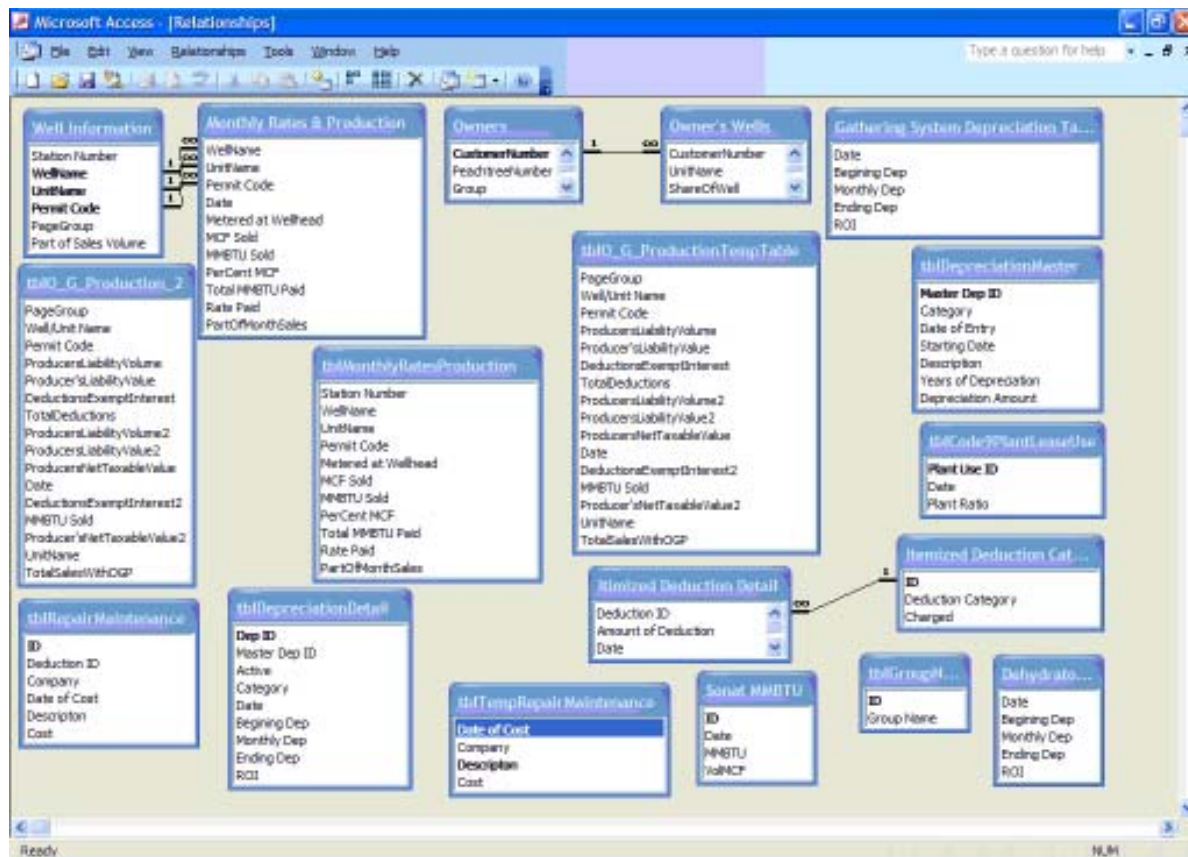
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

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 definations. If there are some extra long fields you will have to tidy up the report some.

Microsoft Access - [rptTableDefReport : Report]

File Edit View Tools Window Help

100% Close Setup

TABLE DEFINATIONS 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	
Sonat MMBTU	UnitName	Text	255
	Date	Date/Time	
	ID	Long	
	MMBTU	Double	
	VolM CF	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.



Computer Glasses

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

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

Today it is almost unavoidable to spend considerable time looking at a computer screen. Not only do we use the computer for both work and play, but, with the development of the Internet, we are using PC's for nearly all aspects of our life.

Viewing a computer screen is a visually challenging task that requires good functioning of the eyes. It also requires good acuteness of vision, focus of the eyes on the screen and reference materials, and good eye movement and coordination. If you're like many PC users, you may need a pair of glasses for your computer work that is different from your normal glasses, either with a different prescription or a different lens design.

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

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


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

www.soothers.com/Welcome.html

www.prio.com

www.dinapoliopt.com/computer_glasses.html

Continued on page 29



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Eye Care

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

The following steps can help improve the symptoms:

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

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

If possible, repair any low humidity or fumes problems.

Concentrate on blinking whenever you begin to feel symptoms.

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

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

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

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

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

Computer Buffet With Dr. Herb Goldstein



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



PC Pitstop- The Ultimate Tune-up

Practicing the Black Art

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>

If your computer's performance resembles that of a tortoise rather than a hare, bring it to PC Pitstop for an overhaul. The chances are high that this unusual website can cure most unspecified performance illnesses, relieve errors, and cure backup problems. It's especially good at reducing Vista related performance issues.

Fine tuning your PC is the website's specialty. It will take your rig through a variety of diagnostic checks automatically. All the diagnostic tools are entirely automatic, non-intrusive, and totally safe for your machine. Let the tools do their work, and you will be presented with a list of suggested improvements along with tips on how to implement them if needed.

Most people don't bother to keep their device drivers up to date either because they are unaware of the importance of doing so or more likely because they simply don't know how. Device drivers are essential pieces of software that allow your applications to communicate with your hardware. They instruct printers on what to print and how to print it. Drivers make sure that when you press an "A" on your keyboard an "A" shows up on your screen. Without device drivers, your computer would be useless junk.

The site offers a free Drive Alert Notification Service that determines if your drivers are up to date. Out of date drivers can be the reason why certain features on your hardware don't work. Obsolete drivers can introduce bugs into your system by creating memory conflicts. The tool is easy to use, and no specialized knowledge is required to take advantage of it. That can be said about any of the diagnostics on the PC Pitstop website.

Another special tool is the optimize feature that can bring your system running to its maximum efficiency. Manufacturers tune their systems so they will work reliably. Efficiency is rarely considered so as time goes on your machine runs slower.

PC Pitstop will check your internet connection to see if it is working effectively. The fine tuning process it uses gets you up to speed without having to install new hardware or undergo time consuming or difficult diagnosis on your own, and the site will inform you if you have been infected with any nasty internet bugs.

Extraneous registry keys can tear down your machine's performance over time. PC Pitstop can point out the redundant keys and tell you how to remove them without damaging your system. Temporary files that Windows uses when running are often not deleted before Windows shuts down. Sloppily written programs can leave incorrect information in the registry. Often files originally associated with the entries have been moved or deleted. Over time they can drag down your system.

Caches for your web browser can be cleaned up and resized to get your broadband connection working the way it was designed to work. Many systems have shown dramatic increases in download speeds after being properly adjusted. The site is able to do this by conducting dynamic tests under actual conditions with your connection.

Most of us have unnecessary programs that run every time we boot up. PC Pitstop will list these programs so you can remove them from automatic startup and get faster boot times.

Continued on page 31

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Vista's default settings are designed to visually dazzle rather than perform efficiently. PC Pitstop makes valuable suggestions and recommendations to make your machine more responsive without sacrificing its good looks. You can make these changes manually or purchase the Optimize module and have it done automatically.

The amount of free space on a disk drive is an important factor in hard drive performance. Once free space declines beyond a critical point, hard drive performance deteriorates rapidly. Fragmentation accelerates, web pages load slowly, and email send and receive can become unstable. PC Pitstop's tool DISK MD will alert you if it finds anything amiss on your hard drive, and will tell you how to fix it.

Windows has an important feature called System Restore which can be an invaluable aid in bringing back a crashed system. Its drawback is that Windows has to create and delete large files every day, which can add to fragmentation and hurt performance. Disk MD defrags those restore points where most defrag utilities do not.

There are many more useful tools on the PC Pitstop web site. Some are free and some are for purchase. You can pay them to take care of any potential or actual performance issues or note the problems and fix them yourself. It's your choice.



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Scotty, I Need More Power!

By Alan Mildwurm, President, Diablo Valley PC Group, California, www.dvpc.org, avm@mildwurm.com

When my kids were young, I bought batteries by the bushel. All of their toys required some batteries. The phrase "batteries not included" raised almost as much terror as "some assembly required." I still recall going out one Xmas morning in search of "C" size batteries because we missed the warning on the box. (7-11). One very cool pool toy took 16 batteries - in 3 sizes.



Continued on page 33

In those days, rechargeable batteries were garbage. Most rechargeables were nickel-cadmium and with a memory that made them useless after a few charges. Shelf life was a joke and power output dismal. For several years, I bought throw away alkaline batteries at Costco because they were cheaper than those clever bunny batteries. Not environmentally friendly, but definitely kid toy friendly. As the kids grew up, their needs for batteries diminished (actually they now buy their own), but my need for batteries is increasing. Wireless keyboards, wireless mice, gps, wireless game controllers (the Wii-mote takes 4 batteries per controller and there are 4 controllers), iPod external power units, camera accessories and on and on. I am going through more batteries now with my toys than I ever did with the kids! Luckily, rechargeable battery technology has come a long way.

Sanyo produces the eneloop (www.eneloop.info). According to their spec sheet, the AA battery is rated at 1.2 volts and 2000 mAh. Not bad for a rechargeable. (A disposable usually is 1.5 volts.)

There are two sizes of eneloop batteries, AA and AAA. They also produce C and D size cylinders in which you insert AA batteries.



From their site:

- eneloop is a totally new type of battery, which satisfies in a unique way the needs and expectations of the consumers.
- Consumers would like to have a battery, which can be used right after the purchase has a high performance has a long shelf life with no loss of energy can be used everywhere is cheap in purchase and usage is environmental friendly is easy to use
- So far these requirements could not be satisfied by a single type of batteries.
- The consumer had the choice between disposable batteries or rechargeable batteries.

Disposable batteries have several advantages:

- they can be used immediately
- they have a long shelf life with low loss of energy
- they are rather cheap in purchase
- they are easy to use and no charger is required

These advantages of disposable batteries however, had to be seen alongside several clear disadvantages:

- can be used only once and therefore mean substantial waste and risk for the environment.
- have to be purchased over and over again and are therefore expensive considering the life-time of your equipment.
- are not quite powerful enough in certain applications (like digital cameras)
- are being offered in many varieties and special application-specific types, which confuses the consumer.

The classical advantages of rechargeable batteries are:

- high performance, especially if high discharge currents are required (like in digital cameras)
- cheap in use, because they can be recharged many times.
- environmental friendly, because one rechargeable battery replaces 1000 disposable batteries.
- good performance at low temperatures.

Given these advantages, rechargeable batteries also have some disadvantages, which made consumers reluctant to exchange disposable batteries by rechargeable batteries:

- After purchase, rechargeable batteries have to be charged before they can be used.

Continued on page 34

- Rechargeable batteries lose the stored energy rather fast.
- The state of charge is hard to determine.
- Continuous charging or frequent charge (without complete discharge) can destroy the battery.
- Proper charging is complicated for an average consumer
- The charging takes quite long and rapid chargers are expensive.
- All these negative attributes have one root-cause: self discharge.

Self-discharge means, that a charged battery slowly discharges itself without any equipment consuming any current. This is the reason for rechargeable batteries being sold in discharged state. And this is the reason for that keeping charged batteries for some time did not make any sense. When you needed then, the energy was gone.

How was the self-discharge reduced? (For you techy folks!)

Modern Ni-MH batteries consist of two metal stripes (anode and cathode), which are separated by a non-conductive porous plastic foil (separator). These three stripes are laid on top of each other and are wound to a coil. This coil is put in a metal can and immersed with a liquid (electrolyte). Then the metal can is closed with a cap.

The self discharge of Ni-MH batteries is caused by three main reasons:

- the chemical decomposition of the cathode,
- the natural disaggregation of the anode,
- Impurities of the anode.

Now, how could the self-discharge in the eneloop been reduced?

The chemical decomposition of the cathode has been reduced substantially by the use of a new superlattice alloy. As an additional benefit the superlattice alloy increases the electrical capacity of the battery and reduces the internal resistance, which allows higher discharge currents. Another advantage of the reduced decomposition of this alloy is the fact that less Cobalt is needed to stabilize the alloy. The anode has been strengthened by another new material, which reduces the natural disaggregation. Additionally the separator and the used electrolyte have been optimized for low self discharge of the eneloop.

They really are good batteries!

I have been using eneloops for several months. They work fine. I have both a wall charger and two battery (AA or AAA) USB charger. Both chargers work very well. I like the USB charger and I love the fact that they come charged and ready to go.

The kit shown below lists for \$50.00 but is available at Amazon for \$32.00. It comes with 4 AA, 2 AAA, and 2 spacers each for C and D plus a charger. I have found even better deals with more batteries at Costco!!



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Buying a Mouse – More Important than You Might Think



By Vinny La Bash, Member and Contributing Columnist,
Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, vlbash@spcug.org

The average computer user recognizes how important the mouse is to getting things done. Mice have been part of the computer scene for over twenty years and with rare exceptions are simple devices to operate and control. That doesn't mean that people who use them are necessarily familiar with all their features and functions. That's not as bad as it may sound. Most automobile drivers don't have a clue how the internal combustion engine inside their auto engine works. Yet they usually manage to drive from one place to another without incident.

Selecting a mouse is much simpler than choosing an automobile, but there are things you should know before laying out money for a device that if not properly designed, may result not only in poor computer performance, but may cause you injury.

The mouse may be the most common of the tracking technologies used in modern computers, but it is not the only one. There are trackballs, touch pads, and for ThinkPad users, track points. They all have their advantages and drawbacks. We will focus on the mouse.

Mechanical mice, those with the rolling balls on the underside, are obsolete. They have a tendency to gather debris on the underside, and require cleaning. Moving parts are their most serious weak spot because they will break down sooner than devices that rely on other technologies. Newer optical mice suffer no such defects. They generate a beam of light that combines with an optical sensor providing a screen pointer that is well suited for meticulous graphics or serious game playing. No moving parts mean less maintenance and lighter weight. Optical mice will work on any smooth surface; a mouse pad is unnecessary.

Look for a mouse with a USB connection. It will probably be difficult to buy a mouse that does not have this type of connection today. Make sure it is compatible with USB 2. The mouse is not considered a high speed device so this caution may be unnecessary.

You may want a wireless mouse for no other reason than to reduce desktop clutter. There are many generic wireless mice on the market that will perform adequately, but doing this on the cheap comes with a price. You will have a mouse that requires AAA batteries. Save your pennies and get one with an integrated rechargeable battery. High end wireless mice include receivers that double as battery chargers, so your mouse will never suddenly expire in the middle of an important project.

Most rodents on the market today feature at least two buttons and a scroll wheel. The right button is used mainly for bringing up menus or lists of options. The left hand button activates functions or commands. The scroll wheel, as its name implies, is used to scroll up and down screens. Sometimes the wheel can function as a third button activating instructions. Advanced scroll wheel functions allow left to right scrolling which can be very useful in wide spreadsheets or large graphics. Used in conjunction with the keyboard, the scroll wheel can zoom in and out of some applications, and can be used to make text appear larger.

Mice do not come in a one-size-fits-all product. Enlightened companies such as Logitech manufacture mice that are specifically contoured to fit a wide variety of hand sizes. Logitech was among the very first companies to recognize that different sized people have different sized hands. Choose a mouse that is ergonomically designed to fit your individual hand size. This will go a long way to reduce the probability of developing carpal tunnel syndrome or some other crippling ailment.

A mouse is a simple device by computer standards, yet it seldom gets the attention it deserves. Take the time to find a good ergonomically designed mouse that suits the physical characteristics of your hand along with suitable options for your personal computing preferences. Productivity and good health are not mutually exclusive.

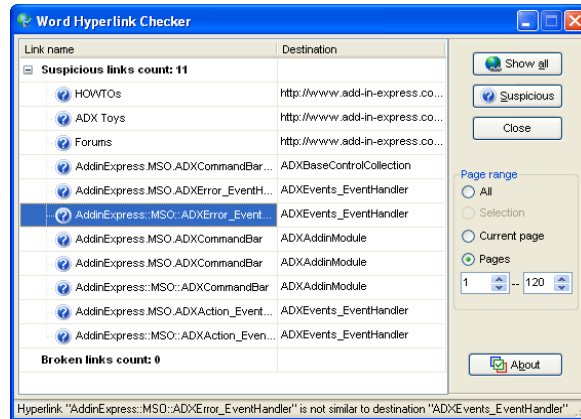
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Dr. Herb Goldstein is SPCUG's Software Evaluation Chairman and Review Editor for the Sarasota PC Monitor. Herb is an avid researcher on all things computer and passes on his acquired knowledge each month. <revieweditor@spcug.org>

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Careful What You Ask For!

The story of a man who wanted a better monitor

By Richard Kennon, Newsletter Editor, Amador Computer Users Group, California, www.acug.net/, editor@acug.org

This last Christmas I asked Santa for a nineteen inch wide-screen, thin, flat display for my computer. Santa, being busy and not knowing a thing about computers, asked our son to make the purchase. He decided that nineteen inch was for wimps so he picked up a twenty-two inch wide-screen. It is a beauty with 1680x1050, 96ppi resolution. That is super good... except. Wouldn't you know, my old Dell has a video card that does not go that high. So, buy a new video card, right? They are not so expensive. It turns out my old Dell does not have a slot to unplug the card and plug in a new one. I am not sure of the technicalities, but one tech suggested a new mother board as well. They are not too expensive either. Then his partner says, "If you are going to spend that much, why not let us build you a new computer for just a little more?" Golly, what a great idea. The old Dell is getting so slow, I am frustrated every time I use it. So, why not get a new supercharged dual processor and two gigs of RAM so I can really sail? We discussed specifications for a while and came to agreement. Then I said I would want the Vista Home Premium operating system. One of the partners said, "Why don't you stick with XP?"

What follows is not what he said but I figured out later that this is what he was thinking. "This old geezer is probably not going to outlast XP so why burden him with a new operating system that just eats up processor power and RAM without offering any benefit? He is going to continue to do the same things he has always done on the computer so why not let him enjoy the benefits of all this new horsepower without the burden of having to learn about a new operating system?"

Out loud he said, "This will allow you to use all the software you now have and won't require you to download all new drivers, etc." I had already decided I could not afford a new version of MS Office and would convert to Open Office, instead. There is no Publisher in Open Office so I would have to do something, I hadn't figured out yet, to continue publishing this newsletter. This idea gave me a great sense of relief - I could reap the benefits of the newer, faster hardware without having to give up software I have grown used to.

A little extra icing on the cake is that they will transfer all my Outlook Express folders and address book to the new box so I won't have to figure that out. Also, I have an 80 GB second hard drive in the old box that they will mount in the new. I use it for backup. The new main hard drive will be a 250 GB SATA drive and the second drive can remain an IDE drive. I haven't the slightest idea what that means except that SATA is supposed to be faster and they can mix the two types on one machine.

I am anxiously awaiting delivery of the new computer and will report next month on how it all works out. So, I have spent our Federal rebate already. You can't say I am not patriotic!

I got it!

Wow, it looks just like every other computer. Perhaps you will remember last month I reported I had received a new Samsung 22-inch wide screen display that my old computer would not feed. One thing led to another and I commissioned a local computer store to build a new com-



Continued on page 38

puter for me. It has a 250 Gbyte SATA hard drive, 2 Gbyte RAM and an AMD 64x2 dual processor. Also, it is loaded with XP Home operating system. I went into the 'why' last month. I was so proud of my smarts when I copied all "My Documents" to an 80 Gbyte backup hard drive and then had the store transfer this drive to the new box. But, when I went to access it, the latest copy had not taken. Bummer! Then I started to copy the files onto a flash drive to transfer them. About that time the old computer went bonkers - out of spite, I suppose. After many tries I got most of what I wanted transferred. I won't bore you with sordid details.

The first priority was to load the McAfee firewall and virus protection. I went to the McAfee site and mucked around for a while and finally got into a chat with someone called, Anish, on the other side of the globe, probably. He offered to help and led me through the most complicated procedure I have ever followed including typing Windows-R and typing in "%temp%." Then he said to delete all the files that popped up. There were about 250 files and perhaps 10 or 20 did not wish to be deleted. Every time I got to one that would not be deleted, I clicked 'OK' and had to start over again. After we finally got through that, he gave me a web site to access and everything went smoothly from there.

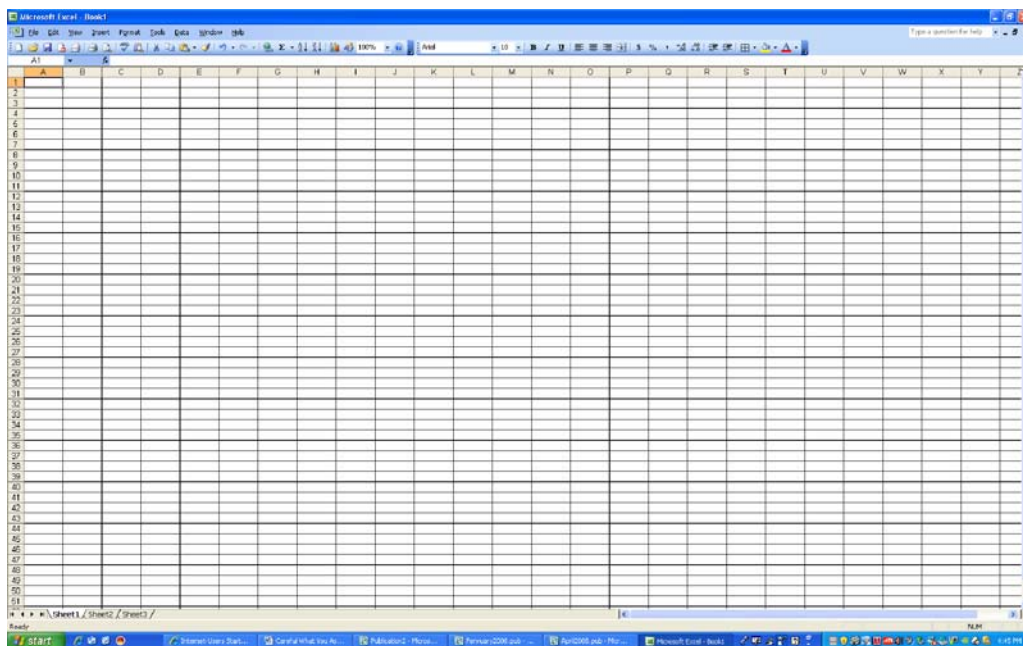
The next anguish was trying to load the HP printer drivers for my two printers. That appeared to go well at first but later something went very wrong and Microsoft volunteered that the problem was caused by Hewlett Packard and that HP had a fix on a site I could click to. That is really nice service! So, I did everything the HP site said to do but it kept failing with a message outlining three possible causes - none of which seemed to apply from the best I could determine. At that juncture, I decided to drop back to square-one and try to reload the driver in question from the disk. First, it was necessary to uninstall the driver and then re-install it. I did this but failed to read the fine print. It is clear now that one cannot install the driver if the printer is plugged into the computer. So, uninstall and re-install again but do it right this time, dummy. What do you know? It worked!

I reloaded MS Office 2003 Professional that I had been using for some time. That went quite well. Then I downloaded Service Pack 2 (or, is it 3?) and the Compatibility Pack I wrote about last month. That went well, also. It is interesting how even old people can learn, isn't it?

Next came Photoshop Elements 5.0 and after that will come TOPO!, which is a map program I like and several other smaller programs, including my Nikon camera software.

All in all, it has been not as bad an experience as it might have been and not as good as wished for. The backup hard disk is/was a great idea but somehow I fumbled the execution. My only advice is that if you want to get a new computer, plan, plan, plan and then consult as many others, who might have gone through it, as possible.

How about that? Twenty five and a half columns!



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.

The Art of Keeping Cool

Part 1: Computer Fans

by Jerry Goldstein, Vice President & Newsletter Editor, The PC Users Group of Connecticut, www.tpcug-ct.org/, attygoldstein@tiac.net

No matter how cold it gets outside your personal computer still needs to be cooled. Computers generate a great deal of heat and need a means of dissipating it. Heat reduces the life of your computer parts. Block your computer vents and your motherboard will fry leaving you with lots of nothing. Inadequately cooled computers suffer crashes and freeze-ups as the parts overheat.

You can check your computer's temperature during startup by going to Setup when your computer starts. Unless you do it through a reboot after you have been on the computer for a while you will not get a true reading. There is software available to monitor your CPU's temperature. Constant temperature monitoring is probably not needed unless you are overclocking (running your CPU faster than it is set for at the factory) your computer or packed in way too much gear.

To combat the heat computer users have a wide selection of choices, some that work better than others. This article will introduce you to a variety of means of keeping your computer cool.

As computers get faster and smaller the parts are getting hotter and hotter. The smaller the computer case gets the less space that heat has to go. For a while computer cases were getting bigger. About eight years ago I had a nice full size tower that had plenty of room for lots of gear and open space for the heat to dissipate. I still had extra fans running on that computer but the computer ran cool to start with because it had space for the heat to go.

In the last few years the over-the-counter computer started to be made with smaller cases which meant parts are being crammed closer together. That also meant there was less room for the excess heat to move away from the equipment. Adding fans are becoming more of a necessity as more is crammed into less space.

The standard computer comes with at least four small fans built onto the case walls and the CPU. These fans are self-contained units that either blow cold air into the computer or hot air out. You will find these fans spread throughout your computer with their location depending on the manufacturer's design. There is also a fan made to blow cool air directly onto an add-on video card, a notorious heat monger for gamers. The fan uses one or two expansion slots and sits over the video card forcing cool air onto the card. When adding fans think about placing some fans to bring in the



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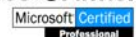
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Continued on page 40

Hardware

cool air while having other fans suck out the heat. Good airflow will keep things cool and lengthen the life of your computer.

For gamers, who always want the latest and greatest equipment, (meaning heat generating stuff), there's nothing like a huge fan built right into the top of the computer. These fans are larger than standard computer fans, usually as large as the case is wide. They sit on the top of the computer sucking the heat up and out as it rises through the computer. Way cool.

Of course a fan cooled computer will do you no good if you pack your computer into too tight a space or a closed environment. Be sure to keep a few inches for air to circulate in and out of the computer fan vents and don't put your computer in a closed cabinet. There is a reason computer desks come with an open back cabinet to put your desktop into. Air circulation is also the reason why internal computer cables are no longer flat. They found the flat cables blocked air flow. The round sata cables now in use cut back on air flow restriction. Sata cables are also made thinner to further increase airflow. Check how your cables run and maybe move them to the side to increase airflow. Air circulation equals good. Closed-in, tightly packed computer equals bad.

One drawback to fans is that they run off your computer's power supply. The more fans you put in your computer the shorter the life of your power supply. Power supplies are a lot cheaper to replace than a motherboard, CPU, hard drive, or video card. In fact, you should always invest in a couple more good fans to aid in cooling your computer. The manufacturers are looking to save costs so they are never generous enough with those fans. You'll always save money in the long run with longer lasting parts kept cool by those extra fans. That is if you remember to install them. Those extra fans won't help while they sit on the shelf waiting to be put in.

Fans also have a bigger drawback: noise. When you start up your computer that noise you hear is the fans starting up and running. The more fans you use the more noise you get. Its worth spending a bit more to get a better quality quieter fan. Check the computer magazines or on-line for reviews. Using one large fan that moves more air than two small ones will also save you noise. The law of diminishing return comes into play with fans. At some point adding another fan will not help anymore as the enclosed space can only move so much air.

The lower you keep your computer parts temperature the longer they will last. Taking the time to strategically place computer fans will save you time and money shopping to replace those overheated blown parts. Keep cool year round.



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Extreme cooling fan

Mark Purney has a crazy PC mod, he writes - "We thought a fast computer should have hot rod flames, working headlights, and a custom license plate. As for the cooling system, an LED case fan just wasn't going to be original enough. Instead, our case fan is a turbocharger commonly found on late 1990's Mitsubishi Eclipses and Eagle Talons."

From Mark Purney:

I receive a lot of email with similar questions and comments. I think some people are missing the point, and are taking this modification way too seriously. The primary focus was on looks (and to make a statement about how a word unrelated to computing gets thrown around by the PC industry with no thought to what it means). It has the added bonus of being actually functional, but that is secondary to what I was trying to accomplish.

Q: What's the temperature drop?

A: I have no idea. It's probably nothing to write home about. Does it matter?

Q: What PSI (how much pressure) does it run at?

A: None. The PC case isn't sealed. The idea is to blow air through the case, not to pressurize it. If the computer's case was sealed tightly enough to where pressure could actually build up, the side door would fly off and the USB cables would pop out.

Q: How fast does it spin?

A: 3500 RPM, which is nowhere near the speed it was designed to run at. However, it's enough to move some air without having to worry about the bearings, which are designed to be water-cooled. Obviously, I'm not going to pump water through this thing. I think the project is ridiculous enough already. :)

Q: Does it really work?

A: Of course. It's just not very practical, and I honestly don't plan to run the "cooling system" on a regular basis, just once in a while for a laugh.

What is a turbo? It's an air compressor that pressurizes the air in the intake manifold of a combustion engine. Instead of increasing the displacement (volume) of the combustion chamber, the turbo makes more power by stuffing more air into the same space. The turbo is powered by hot exhaust from the exhaust manifold, which flows over the blades of the turbine wheel. This wheel spins the shaft which also turns the compressor wheel in the intake path.

This computer case mod uses it in a different way. Cool air is forced into the front of the computer's case, helping to reduce temperatures. Cooling is essential to maximizing overclocking performance, and to increasing the lifespan of the components inside. Since there is no exhaust to spin the turbine wheel in this case, an electric motor is used to drive it with a coupling shaft.



<http://raktron.com/turbopc/>

The Art of Keeping Cool

Part 2: Non-fan Computer Cooling

by Jerry Goldstein, Vice President & Newsletter Editor, The PC Users Group of Connecticut, www.tpcug-ct.org/, attygoldstein@tiac.net

In part 1, we went into how to cool off your desktop PC with fans. In Part 2 we look at alternative and leading edge ways to cool your computer. We also discuss how to keep your laptop from frying.

To reduce computer noise pollution computer designers have come up with many solutions to reduce the heat. Strangely, liquids have proven successful in cooling computers. Liquids provide two benefits over air cooling your computer. Liquid computers run quieter than fan cooled ones and water is better than drawing out heat than air. For complete submersion of computer parts manufacturers have immersed the computer in a variety of oil, synthetic motor oil works well but cooking oil is also used. The oil is low conductive so the electrical parts are not damaged. Complete submersion is typically only used on extreme density computers made for business purposes. One problem with oil is that it evaporates so proper maintenance of topping off the oil must be done.

You may say water and electronics don't mix (go ahead and say it, no ones around) but computer designers have worked out a way. The water flows inside tubes through the computer passively pulling the heat off the components of the computer. It works the same as your cooling system in your car. A number of computers hit the market last year using water cooling systems. The obvious problem is leaks but since water cooling has proven successful with gamers, due to waters increased heat absorbing ability over air cooling, you'll probably see more computers next year cooled by water. Just make sure you don't change a water cooled computers parts in excess of the manufacturer's parameters or you may overheat the computer and cause a pipe to leak or burst.

To assist in reducing CPU heat sinks are used. Heat sinks are the fins you see rising above the CPU. Often the CPU fan rests on top of the fins as well. The heat sink works by giving additional square footage for the heat to dissipate. Kind of like when you spread out to cool off in a summer breeze. The extra space lets the air get to the heat.

Laptops pose a unique cooling problem as they are tightly packed and sit flat and horizontally and compared to the desktop's vertical tower. Heat likes to rise but, with the laptops configuration the heat gets trapped and needs to be blown out the bottom or sides. Laptops are more to user error as people tend to forget the laptop sides need to be kept free of anything that could block the exhausts. No exhaust equals a fried computer.

When this happens it may be cheaper to buy new laptop than to try to fix the parts. Than again it may be better for you to avoid laptops if you can not remember to keep them clear of blockage.

A common mistake laptop users make is to use them in bed. The laptop sits ensconced in the bedding getting all nice, warm, and cozy. That is until they fry. If you want to use your laptop in bed buy a laptop writing pillow. These are pillows with a hard surface on one side to keep the laptop free to breathe. Than you only have to make sure you don't fall asleep with your finger on the delete key erasing your "great American novel".

To assist the cooling of laptops you can buy a laptop external fan. These are powered off the laptop's usb and some even come with additional usb ports so you don't lose the port. These fans blow cool air on the bottom of the laptop helping to drop the temperature. You can also try to save some money by buying a notebook stand that will raise your laptop a bit off the desk to give the laptop a bit more air space below it to cool off. I find that the stands are being penny wise and pound foolish though. The money you invest in the laptop fan will save you more in the long run giving your laptop added longevity.



Power Supply Tips

By **Dan Hanson**, the Great Lakes Geek, Computers Assisting People, Ohio, www.capinc.org/, Dan@magnuminc.com,

We have all experienced the computer crashing seemingly for no reason. When it does, we blame Windows or a hardware problem or maybe a power surge or undervoltage. All are possible culprits but one often overlooked possibility is the power supply of the computer.

The power supply is the metal box with a cooling fan next to it. Typically it's in a back corner of the case and you plug your power cord into it. When you plug the power cable into the wall, the power supply converts the AC (alternating current) that runs through your home or office into the DC (direct current) that the computer needs.

If you bought your computer from a superstore or discount retailer it may have a low-cost, low-capacity power supply installed which may not be enough to handle all the things you do with your PC.

If you have upgraded your PC with newer or more components (like another CD or DVD player/burner, more RAM or another hard drive) then the power supply that came with your system may not be up to the task.

The physics of power supplies (ambient temperatures, 3.3V vs. 5V vs. 12V, etc) make it so that a power supply rated at certain wattage, say 300W, may not really provide that maximum wattage load. Some experts claim that power supplies are most efficient at 30-70% of their maximum capacity. So if you are nearing that maximum, you can be in for trouble.

Because the power supply gets a rush of AC (alternating current) when the computer is turned on and it heats and cools each time it is used, it is more prone to failure than many other components in your PC. You may notice a slight burning smell before it shuts down. Sometimes the cooling fan stops working and the system overheats.

Newer systems let you monitor the status of the power supply from Windows. Servers and other mission critical computers often have more than one power supply so that when one dies, the other kicks in and the system stays operational.

So what can you do?

Next time you buy a PC, don't just get a cheapo system with a sub-standard power supply unless you never plan on adding memory, drives or other components to the machine.

Take care of your power supply by keeping the cooling fan away from the wall or anything else that might block the air flow and make the fan work harder (and die sooner).

Keep the PC off the carpet or other surfaces where it may suck in particles and clog the fan. Cooler is always better with electronic components.

Periodically, blow out the fan and case with compressed air to get rid of dust and other particles that may clog up the fan and overheat the system components.

Add up the wattage of the components in your system to see if you are near the maximum of the power supply. E-mail us at dan@greatlakesgeek.com for a list of Estimated Power Requirements of common PC components.

If that is too difficult for you, look to see if most of the slots in the back of your PC are filled and if the drive bays in the front are being used. Those are indications that you may be close to maxing out your power capacity.

If you have a need, you can buy and install (or have someone else install) a new, heavy duty power supply. They come in several standard form factors to fit in most PCs. Warning this may not be a project for beginners though.

Get more tips at www.GreatLakesGeek.com



How to guide

A "STRESS-FREE" PC

Jim McKnight, Director, Los Angeles Computer Society,
www.lacspc.org, jim.mcknight@lacspc.org

As you know, there is no such thing as a totally "Stress-Free" PC, but there are many things you can do to reduce the stress and worry of owning one.

As we use our PC's, many of us worry about losing our data files, losing our email, losing our Music, our iTunes, our connectivity to the Internet, losing power in the middle of a critical activity, losing our ability to boot the PC, losing control of our PC to hackers, Spy-ware, etc. Wow, we worry a lot! It's a wonder we dare use our PC's at all.

To help solve and minimize these worries, here is a collection of ideas to help protect your computing environment. These steps are not really that difficult or expensive. In fact, many are free. There is lots of help available to you from User Groups, Friends, Internet Googling, PC Magazines, etc. to implement these suggestions. Details for implementing many of these suggestions are in the various self-help documents on my website at: www.jrmcknight.net.

Will it take a lot of time and energy to implement these ideas? Yes, at first, but once you have these processes in place, the regular time spent is minimal. Will I see a payback? You will only see a tangible payback for your time and energy if you experience some kind of catastrophic situation. Just like house insurance; if everything keeps running smoothly you will never know if it was worth it. You do get the warm fuzzy feeling of being protected, and you will sleep better at night.

Here are the three main areas of action. First: Protect your PC from bad things happening. Second: Prepare your environment so you can recover if bad things do happen. Third: Practice Secure Behaviors.

PROTECT YOUR PC FROM BAD THINGS HAPPENING:

1. Buy yourself Hardware Router (Even if you only have one PC)
 - a. The Router acts as a hardware Firewall.
 - b. Put it between your PC and your Modem.
 - c. Be sure to change the Admin Log-in password from the default to something private.
 - d. Either disable the Wireless feature and hardwire your connection, or lock-down the Wireless using WPA Encryption and a password.
2. Make sure the Windows Firewall is active.
3. Make sure Windows "Automatic Updates" feature is active and all your critical/important Windows updates are installed.
4. Install and activate an Anti-virus Program. Set it up to scan incoming e-mails.
5. Install and activate Windows Defender and other free Anti-Spyware programs. Defender will continually scan your PC for harmful activities (Note: Vista comes with Defender built-in).
6. Firefox (free) browser is generally safer than Internet Explorer.

Always check for the latest version of this document at:
www.jrmcknight.net

Continued on page 45

How to guide

7. Install McAfee Site Advisor (free) on each of your Internet Browsers. It helps identify risky sites. (Note: It is not related to McAfee's Anti-virus or security suite.)

8. Buy yourself a Battery Backup Power Unit (unless you use a Laptop), so if you lose power at a critical time, you can gently close the PC down.

9. E-mail:

a. The best single thing you can do to secure your e-mail is to pick a good password. Do not use a single word, but a short phrase, and include some numbers. ie: "happy2cu4now" or "my5kidsrgr8". I avoid passwords that include I, l, 1, 0, o, or O. Too easy to confuse my memory. I prefer to stick with all lower case for ease of entry, but if you like finger exercise, you can include UPPER CASE and special characters to make it even more secure. Be creative: "C@@LDUDE" could work and easy to remember.

b. Set up your email program to block images, unless OK'd by you.

c. Using "Plain Text" e-mail is safer than using "HTML" e-mail, but not as pretty.

d. Note: Your anti-virus program can scan incoming e-mails, but does not fully protect you.

e. Thunderbird is a more secure e-mail client than Outlook, Outlook express, or Windows Mail.

PREPARE YOUR ENVIRONMENT (so you can recover if bad things do happen.)

1. RESTORE/INSTALL DVD/CD's: Make sure you have your "Windows Install" or "System Restore" DVD/CD's on hand (or kept safe off-site). You need these in case of a catastrophic failure. If you do not have them, many manufacturers have instructions on how to burn your own Restore DVD/CD. Do it!

2. BACKUP PLANS: Put multiple Backup processes in place that include:

a. DATA BACKUPS: Plan regular backups of all your personal data to CD/DVD's (and kept safe off-site).

b. IMAGE BACKUPS: Plan regular "Image" back-ups of the entire hard-drive, preferably to an external Hard drive. This is a full image of your main Hard-drive that can be used to completely restore the PC back to normal.

c. TESTING: Test your back-up process to make sure it can restore the system. This is less risky if you do it when you first buy a PC, because you have your system restore DVD's (hopefully) to put things back as they were when you bought it.

d. ONLINE BACKUPS: If you like, sign up for an on-line automatic backup service like Carbonite, Jungledisk, or Mozy.

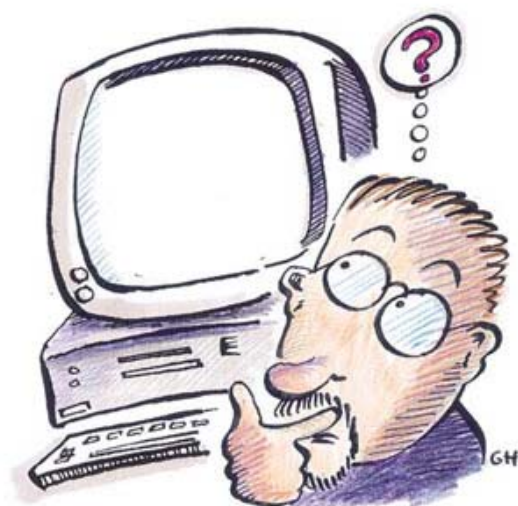
e. RESTORE BOOT DISK: Create a Boot-Disk (using your Backup Program), so if you need to restore from a backed-up image, you are ready to go. This disk should be tested for "bootability" and then kept off-site.

f. FLASH DRIVES: Warning: Do not trust Flash Drives as your only means of data backup. They are prone to unexpected catastrophic failures. Having 2 or 3 duplicate Flash Drives would possibly be a reasonable alternative to DVD/CD's for your personal Data.

3. HARD COPY BU: Write down or print out all your critical info, passwords, access info, log-in ID's, etc. and save off-site. Print out a hard copy of all your e-mail contacts and save off-site.

4. PASSWORD FILE: If you keep a list of Passwords on your computer, make sure the file is hidden and/or protected by encryption. Name your password file something that only has meaning to you. Do not name your file; "passwords.doc". Duhh. Use some-

Continued on page 46





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How to guide

thing off-beat, like Recipes.doc or Flowers.doc. Also, there are "Locker" Programs that are free or cheap that will hide, encrypt, and password protect your personal data files.

PRACTICE SECURE BEHAVIORS

E-MAIL:

1. Never open e-mail attachments from strangers.
2. Never click a button or link in an email. If desired, copy & paste the link into your browser and make sure it is going where you think it is going.
3. Be cautious about opening attachments & links from friends and family. Especially if it is something that was forwarded from someone else.

ANTI-VIRUS ~ ANTI-SPYWARE SCANS

1. Run a full Anti-virus Scan at least once a month.
2. For each of your Anti-spyware Programs, run updates and a full scan weekly or at least monthly.

SECUNIA SCANS

Once or twice a month, run a Secunia "Software Inspector" scan to make sure your most common programs are up to date against vulnerabilities. This runs from their website. You do not have to download any programs.

BACKUP, BACKUP, BACKUP

1. Do your planned backups regularly. At least once a month, backup all your personal data files, emails, pictures, etc. to CD/DVD's, and put them somewhere offsite. (A safe-deposit box or a friend or relative's house).
2. At least monthly, backup an image of your main Hard Drive to an external or second Hard drive.
3. If possible, physically take the external hard-drive containing your backed up image off-site so you can recover easily in case of fire, flood, theft, etc. (A safe-deposit box is good). There are now many small cheap external Hard drives that will easily fit in a Safe-Deposit box. Buy two and alternate them.
4. Periodically printout a hardcopy of your passwords and contacts. Save off-site.
5. Keep your external Hard-drive powered off when not in use.

HARD-DRIVE SURFACE ANALYSIS SCANS

Run a maintenance scan quarterly or semiannually on all your hard drives using a utility like "Spin-Rite". This helps assure you against a surprise hard drive failure.

REFERENCES & RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS:

Continued on page 47



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- Firefox Browser - Free: www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/
- Thunderbird E-mail Client - Free: www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird/

See Thunderbird Step-By-Step setup at: www.jrmcknight.net/

ANTI-VIRUS ~ ANTI-SPYWARE Products

- McAfee Site Advisor - Free: www.siteadvisor.com/
- AVG Free Anti-virus - Free: <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/downloads-products/us/frt/0?prd=aff>
- Defender - Free: www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.msp#
- AVG Anti-spyware - Free: <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/downloads-products/us/frt/0?prd=asf>
- Ad-AWARE 2007 - Free: www.lavasoftusa.com/products/ad_aware_free.php
- SpyBot Search & Destroy - Free: www.safer-networking.org/en/spybotsd/index.html

SOFTWARE SCANS & BACKUP:

- Secunia Software Inspector - Free: www.secunia.com/software_inspector/

Requires the latest version of Java to run: www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp

- Spin-Rite Program: www.grc.com/sr/spinrite.htm

The SpinRite Storage Utility Program is not free, but is money well spent.

- Acronis True Image Backup Utility www.ugr.com/

This program is available at a discount at the above listed site and includes a free Tutorial CD.

- Automatic Online Data Backup sites: www.carbonite.com/ & www.jungledisk.com/ Carbonite is

currently \$50.00 per year for unlimited storage. Jungledisk is variable priced on usage but cheap.

BATTERY BACKUP POWER UNITS (also called a UPS: Uninterruptible Power Supply):

- When buying a UPS, I suggest you add up all the power ratings on all the PC equipment you plan to connect to the unit, then pick a unit about 1.5 times that amount. ie: If your usage is 300 Watts, buy at least a 450 Watt UPS (equal to about a 700 VA unit).
- The VA rating (Volt-Amps) vs Watts rating is confusing. With PC equipment, 1 Watt is about 1.6 VA. I go by Watts. If the tag on your PC says 2.0A and 120V, then calculate 2.0 Amps x 120 Volts or 240 watts for that device. (VA would be about 400)
- A UPS that is rated too small will fault when first powering on all your equipment at once. The first 30 seconds or so is when the highest power usage occurs.
- The most reliable brands seem to be APC and BELKIN. Triplet is OK.

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The World's First Computer

by **Charlene Brown**, Newsletter Editor, Big Blue and Cousins, Canada, www.bbc.org, newsletter@bbc.org

"The mechanism has over 30 gears, the most amazing feature of which is the incorporation of a sophisticated system of differentials. Gearing of this complexity was not known to exist until 1575!"

Using Google Alerts is a good way to keep up to date on media coverage of on-going developments in scientific research. I have requested these alerts with various combinations of search words - archaeology + computer + maps or GPS or 3D models or mtDNA etc.—to obtain updates on the topics I write about in the area of computer applications in archaeology.

The alerts, which I receive several times a week, provide links to news stories and thus tend to emphasize surprising research findings or announcements of odd theories:

The discovery could accelerate efforts to clone woolly mammoths and other extinct beasts

Device made for contractors helps archaeologists create first-ever digital blueprints

Topographical or historical details in Gospel of John may be accurate

Some weeks ago, I received an alert about the Antikythera Mechanism, which caught my eye because it referred to two of the places I was planning to visit in October.

The Antikythera Mechanism is the world's first known 'computer.' It was developed at an academy founded by Posidonius at Kamiros on the Greek island of Rhodes. In the first century BCE, the mechanism was on board a ship, part of the treasure transported to Rome to support a triumphal parade staged by Julius Caesar.

Unfortunately, the ship sank in a storm off the island of Antikythera. Since the device was found in the wreck in the early 20th century, it has been the subject of much debate - some scholarly, some not.

Continued on page 49



The Archaeological Site of Kamiros

In prehistoric times the place was a ritual place of the deities called Mylantioi, who according to tradition had taught people how to grind the wheat to make flour and how to make bread.

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Various models of the mechanism have been constructed, based on fragments, now on display at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (two of the fragments shown). CT scans of the pieces have revealed much about the interior

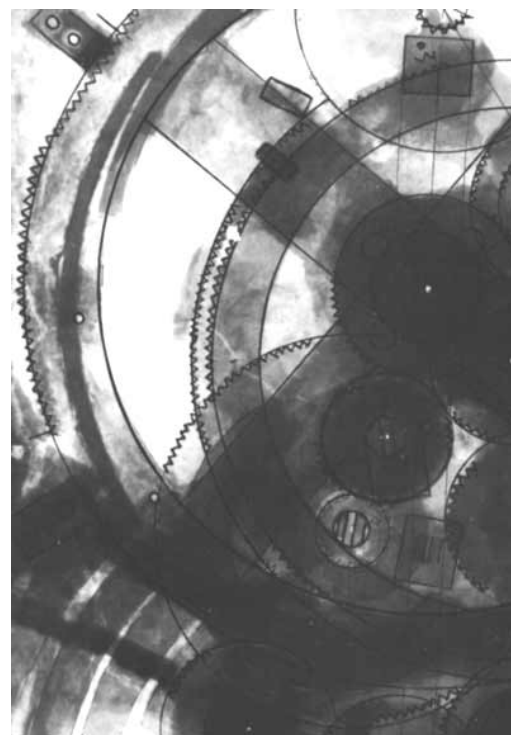
The mechanism has over 30 gears, the most amazing feature of which is the incorporation of a sophisticated system of differentials. Gearing of this complexity was not known to exist until 1575!

The device determined the position of the sun and moon, and calculated other astronomical information such as the location of planets and the timing of eclipses. The possibility has even been raised that it was based on the concept of heliocentricity, rather than the then-dominant view espoused by Aristotle, that the Earth was the centre of the universe.

This ancient, and apparently lost, 'computer' technology is mentioned on various paranormal blogs to support the theory that alien beings (usually arriving from space in chariots of fire) passed on advanced technology - but departed without providing follow-up support, another concept years ahead of its time.

Or perhaps failure to form a user group caused the technology to be lost until the twentieth century.

For more details visit The Antikythera Mechanism Research Project at <http://www.antikythera-mechanism.gr/>



CT scans of the pieces have revealed much about the interior



There are 82 remaining fragments of the mechanism that contain a total of 30 gears. The largest piece contains 27 of the gears. (Image copyright of the Antikythera Mechanism Research Project)

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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How to guide

"Computune-up"

by **Berry F. Phillips**, member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, www.ccokc.org, bfddata@1access.net

Do you want your computer to run faster and increase your productivity? Of course; if you have major problems, you will need to contact your manufacturer and/or professional technical support. Many of those costly major problems can be prevented by doing "computune-ups" yourself. Yes, you can do it even without being a computer geek! My thanks to Microsoft for some of the information in this article.

"Computune-up" (Software)

1. Clean up your desktop! If you have not used a program for a year or one that you never use that came bundled with your system why not delete it. You will get more space on your hard drive in return.
2. Clean up your system tray to the left of time on your Taskbar! When you remove icons from your system tray that you rarely use, it will speed up your system since your computer has to locate those programs whenever you boot up. I love a little freeware program called Code Stuff Starter that shows you what is running and lets you easily turn those programs on or off.
3. Defragment your computer and your registry which will make your system run faster by consolidating fragments on your hard drive and registry. I use freeware programs like SmartDefrag and Aus Logics Registry Defrag and there are others available on the Internet.
4. Check your memory. The more programs you have running the more demand on your system memory (RAM). Adding more memory to your system will increase speed and is very easy to do without paying for expensive technical support. You can do it with minimal instruction or have a technically-oriented friend or club member do it since it only takes a few minutes to replace.
5. Keep your operating system updated and run utilities weekly! I strongly suggest you download needed freeware software for your system from "46 best ever freeware programs" thoroughly tested and rated with commentary.

"Computune-up" (Hardware)

1. Make sure your computer is unplugged before cleaning and not plugged in until your system is dry after cleaning!
2. Make sure you have the following tools available: a screwdriver, can of compressed air (available from a computer store), cotton swabs (not balls), rubbing alcohol, paper towels or anti-static cloths (available from a computer store), and water.
3. Clean the inside of your computer case! Using a screwdriver remove the side of the case opposite your motherboard. Touch as little as possible inside the computer, keeping fingers away from cards and cords due to static electricity. Blow air around all the components and along the bottom of the case, keeping the nozzle four inches away from your machine. Blow air into the power supply and into the fan from the back of your computer case. Blow air into the floppy disk and CD drives. Wipe the inside cover with a lightly moistened cloth before replacing it using your screwdriver. Clean every three months if your computer is on the floor or an especially dirty environment. Clean approximately every six to eight months in a normal environment.
4. Clean the outside of the case! Run a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol around all the openings on the back of your case giving them one swipe with a dampened swab and one with a dry swab. Clean the remaining outside of your system. Do this whenever you clean the inside of your system.
5. Clean the mouse by taking out the screws and going inside with an alcohol swab. If there is a rubber ball, clean it with water, and let it dry. Then clean the outside of the mouse. Many mouse problems are simply caused by a dirty mouse.
6. Clean the keyboard! Turn it upside down and gently shake it and most of the crumbs and dust will fall out. Blow air in and around the keys. Take an alcohol dampened cotton swab and clean the top and sides of the keys. Do this monthly; your keyboard gets very dirty and can even spread germs. If you have a laptop, follow the same procedure but take extra care with your machine.
7. Clean the monitor with a moistened paper towel or a soft lint-free cloth. (You can purchase monitor cleaning products from a computer store). Don't spray liquid directly on the screen but spray on the cloth. Wipe the screen gently to remove dust and fingerprints. (Never touch the back of the monitor). I suggest you purchase a special cleaning solution from a computer store for laptop computers.

If you have finished your "computune-up," you are on your way to being transformed into a computer geek! Do not be alarmed for the "geeks shall inherit the earth"! Bill Gates, chief geek and founder of Microsoft Corporation, has already made it; he is the role model for the rest of us!

Operating System



Get Ready for XP and Vista Service Packs

By George Whitesell, a member of the Sarastoa PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, pcug@Comcast.net

Service Pack 1 for Windows Vista and Service Pack 3 for Windows XP are going to be released soon, perhaps even by the time you are reading this. I recommend not being one of the first on your block to install either of the new service packs. Let others discover any problems with the installation of the final versions of the Service Packs!

What are service packs? They are a compilation of all critical updates released since the initial release of an operating system or the last service pack. They often contain new features or enhancements as well. Service Pack 2 for Windows XP contained a number of security improvements and was arguably the most significant Service pack ever released. I think it was only because of the negative publicity Microsoft was receiving over weak security that led them to release it as a free Service Pack and not "Windows XP Second Edition" which they would have charged us for. You will not see any major changes or additions to XP in Service Pack 3 but you will still want to install it. Service Pack 1 for Vista is reported to have sped up some aspects of the operating system.

There is an article at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/935796> listing 11 programs that are blocked, do not run, or have a "loss of functionality" after the installation of Service pack 1 for Vista. Three of the programs listed are Zone Alarm, BitDefender AntiVirus or Internet Security and the New York Times Reader. Check the list before you install the service pack. Personally I will wait at least one week (maybe more) to make sure there are not any other problems that are affected by the final release of either new service pack. If you have been installing all Microsoft updates as they were released, you already have most of the service pack installed.

Here are some general guidelines for the installation of any service pack:

1. Run complete scans of your computer for viruses and spyware. A majority of the problems people encountered while installing Windows XP Service Pack 2 were caused by viruses and/or spyware on their computer. Service packs replace or update a number of system files. You want to make sure your computer is free of any malware.
2. Fix any hardware or software problems. If you are experiencing frequent lockups or system crashes, or extremely slow performance, resolve those problems before trying to install a service pack. Many people assume the installation of a service pack will clear up problems they may be experiencing. This usually is not the case. This is another frequent cause of service pack installations failing or causing more problems.
3. Create a System Restore point. If you found any viruses or spyware delete all of your old Restore Points and then create a new one. If you have a problem and use a System Restore point prior to the time you removed any viruses or spyware, guess what happens? That's right; you reload the viruses and/or spyware! Instructions on deleting System Restore points are at the end of this article.
4. If you installed a beta version of a service pack, uninstall that version before you install the final service pack.
5. NEVER attempt to abort the installation of a service pack (or any program). If you have started the installation and then decide you do not want to continue, allow the installation to complete; reboot the computer; and then uninstall the service pack (or program).

Follow the steps below if you need (or want) to delete all System Restore points:

Windows XP

1. Click the Start Button.
2. From the Start menu click Control panel.
3. Click on "Switch to Classic View" in the upper left portion of the Control Panel window.

Continued on page 53



4. In Control Panel double-click the “System” Icon.
5. Click the “System Restore” tab.
6. Check the box next to “Turn off System Restore on all drives”.
7. Click “Apply” at the bottom right corner.
8. Click “Yes” in the warning box asking if you want to turn off system restore.
9. Click “OK” and close all windows.
10. Reboot the computer to clear all System Restore points.
11. To re-enable system restore repeat the above steps; this time removing the check in the box next to “Turn off System Restore on all drives”.
11. Reboot Again.

Windows Vista

1. Click the Start Button.
2. From the Start menu click Control panel.
3. Click on “Classic View” in the upper left portion of the Control Panel window
4. In Control Panel double-click the “System” Icon.
5. On the Left of the System properties window you will see a list of Tasks, click on the “System protection” link.
6. Click “Continue” on the ‘User Account Control’ box if it appears.
7. In the System protection window remove the “check” mark for the drive you want to disable system restore on. A message will now appear asking: ‘Are you sure you want to turn System restore off’.
8. Press the “Turn System restore Off” button. System Restore will now be turned off permanently on that particular drive.
9. Click “OK” and close all windows.
10. Reboot the computer to clear all System Restore points.

To re-enable system restore repeat the above steps, but click the box next to the drive you require system restore to monitor (a check will appear in the box), then click the Apply button and system restore will resume monitoring the drive.



Windows Vista™

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Operating System



Why I like the Ubuntu OS

By Phil Vogel, Director at Large, The Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washington, www.oly mug.org, director3@oly mug.org

My interest in alternative operating systems started 20 years ago when I worked for the State of Maryland during a year of computer chaos. We had a good office system using WordPerfect but some high State official(s) made a decision to go with Microsoft Word. At our facility WordPerfect was no longer funded and we were no longer able to use it. Yet our mental facility didn't have the budget to buy all the copies for all of our computer, only a few.

Thus my co-workers and I became interested in alternative sources of software. One of the writing programs that we used was the predecessor of OpenOffice and not very good. And because of the high prices charged for an inferior product (Word compared to WordPerfect) at the time, we looked to finding an alternative Operating System to Microsoft products. I remember investigating Red Hat distribution of Red Hat Linux at the time. But at the time it was not up to par with Microsoft's Windows 95.

When I joined OMUG, I was delighted to find that there was a Linux SIG. "Linux" is a term for many operating systems (OS) using the Linux "kernel" or "heart" or "engine." The kernel "drives" the system like a car engine powers a car. Conrad Schuler, one of the leaders of the Linux SIG was promoting SUSE, a "distribution" of Linux which originally came from Germany. Paul Braget, another leader, liked Ubuntu. When joined, I found I was totally lost. However, I stuck it out and some of the understanding and data is beginning to stick to the walls of my mind.

I listened, worked on the Linux programs on the computers in the Senior Center and became convinced that I wanted to try it out for myself. I like laptops. I can grab a computer and move it to a room or across the country easily. In this country all computers are Microsoft friendly but only some brands and some models of the other brands such as Dell are Linux-compatible.

I decided after some research to take a chance on a new Toshiba Qosmio. We had difficulty installing SUSE and because of inexperience it became corrupted. However, it was easier to install Ubuntu.

"Ubuntu" is a South African word which means, "I am because you are." I am writing this article because you are here, OMUG. I am using Ubuntu because a lot of people around the world contribute to its innovation, maintenance, and security. By the way, the Toshiba came with Windows Vista Home Edition. I only use it for QuickBooks; that is, I can boot into Vista when I need to, but use Ubuntu most of the time.

I use Ubuntu to surf the web because it has a very secure hard kernel. It is almost impossible to attack a Linux based machine because all the software programs are attached to the outside of the kernel. At most a particular program will become dysfunctional but not the operating system. For this reason about 90 percent of the servers around the world use Linux based software. Some servers are so reliable that service is minimal.

The Linux kernel is simple, clean and fast, allowing me to turn it on and be on the web in a fraction of the time required by my Windows machine. My web browser is FireFox, an excellent free program.

I am writing this article with OpenOffice because it is another excellent writing program that is on a par with Microsoft Office. And it is a free program also. I must admit that Microsoft's "Access" program is superior to OpenOffice's "Data."

All the above programs are "open source" which means that you can obtain them for free by a download, or on DVD or CD for a nominal charge. However, there are also companies that will supply a person with disks, manuals and service contract just like Microsoft. But everyone is bound by the EULA of the "open source" contract, including companies and also users like me. For instance anyone who comes up with a change or improvement must make it available to any one else for free.

So this is why I like Ubuntu, FireFox and OpenOffice. I also use other features such as watching movies, burning DVD's, and WiFi—and they work well. Now I want to edit and burn a home made movie. Plus Ubuntu has an extensive Internet support system. New programs and updates are coming out all the time. It is an example of a technology rising up from the grassroots rather than from the top down.

Continued on page 55

Home Financial Records

By Richard Kennon, Editor, Amador Computer Users Group, CA,
www.acug.org, editor@acug.net

Dick Johnson gave us an excellent presentation on “Personal Finances” with emphasis on record keeping and check writing. I, like Dick, have used QuickBooks to write my checks and keep my financial records. Recently, a friend chided me for not using BillPay at my bank. I had looked into this a long time ago and determined that my bank charged a little more than it cost to write a check and mail it – so no good. After my friend prodded me to join the 21st century, I checked with my bank, again, only to discover that if they changed the name of my checking account, BillPay would be free. Done. So, I write many fewer checks than before. Perhaps I can write them by hand! (Gasp) That is reason #1 for this effort.

Reason #2 is that the average household (at least mine) does not need the sophistication of an accounting program to keep household records. About the only thing we need besides a check record (i.e. stubs) is a way to collect some information for the IRS each year. Twenty or twenty five years ago, I wrote such a program in Basic and used it for most of those intervening years. But, Bill Gates decided that he would no longer let me run Basic programs using his latest operating system. That program also printed the checks on an old Epson 24-pin printer that served wonderfully for at least twenty years. That is when I turned to QuickBooks.

These two intersecting forces of minimal “accounting” and lowered demand for check writing led me to wonder if, just maybe, an Excel spread sheet might do the job. Yes, I think it will. This thinking has resulted in a spread sheet that looks suspiciously like a check record in your check book. There are four added columns and they are “Account”, “Memo”, “Cleared” and “Reconciled.” Maybe “account” is too grand a term. What I mean it to be is a code name that may apply to a number of different checks written to a number of different payees. This might be like lumping the electric, gas, water and phone bills under “Utilities.” Or, lumping Red Cross, American Cancer Society and Yosemite Fund under “Contributions.” But, then, one might write enough checks to one organization (i.e. Church at The Cross) to make that a separate “Account” like “Church.” The Cleared and Reconciled columns are useful when it comes time to see if you and the bank agree. This is such an anxious moment that I use smiley faces to indicate it is done. Here is an example of what the spread sheet looks like. It is assuredly a fictitious account because I don’t think I know anyone with this much money.

I had to scrunch it together to print it here. It looks better on the Excel spreadsheet where I set it up to print in Landscape orientation so there is plenty of room for about 48 lines per page. There are lots more accounts you will want to use such as Taxes, Medical, Insurance, House Payments, etc. I am a terrible organizer so I am sure you can do a better job of this than I can. Think mostly of what you need for outside demands like the IRS. Don’t think in terms of detailed budgets because, admit it, you are not going to follow through with that. It seems as if I should be much more organized than I really am when I use QuickBooks or other accounting program. That is why I have a big “Miscellaneous” group in our personal records. That is none of the IRS’s business.

One nice thing about Excel is that when you start to type something you have typed above in the same column, Excel finishes the entry for you. So, we two-fingered typists can create entries more quickly later in the year! I have anticipated that you and

B6	fx											
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I			
1	Checkbook											
2												
3	Owner's Name	Dogburn Crankshaft										
4	Address	12345 Home Dr.		Tuesday, September 18, 2007								
5	City, State, Zip	Podunk, AK 99999										
6												
7	Payee	Account	Date	Check #	Amount	Deposit	Balance	Cleared	Reconciled			
8	Beginning Balance	Beginning Balance	03/15/07				\$123,456.00					
9	Church At The Cross	Church	04/23/07	BillPay	\$500.00	\$700.00	\$123,656.00					
10	PG&E	Electricity	05/19/07	BillPay	\$85.98		\$123,570.02					
11	ACES	Trash Hauling	05/25/07	BillPay	\$77.93		\$123,492.09					
12	Amerigas	Propane	05/17/07	124	\$234.00	\$123.00	\$123,381.09					
13	Church At The Cross	Church	06/21/07	125	\$400.00		\$122,981.09					
14	PG&E	Electricity	06/23/07	126	\$78.92		\$122,902.17					
15	ACES	Trash Hauling	06/24/07	BillPay	\$77.93		\$122,824.24					
16	Red Cross	Contributions	06/25/07	BillPay	\$25.00		\$122,799.24					
17	American Cancer Society	Contributions	06/27/07	BillPay	\$33.00		\$122,766.24					
18	Payless Market	Groceries	07/22/07	BillPay	\$44.00		\$122,722.24					
19	Cash	Cash	07/30/07	127	\$100.00		\$122,622.24					
20	Volcano Telephone Company	Phone	08/11/07	128	\$67.45		\$122,554.79					
21	Yosemite Fund	Contributions	08/13/07	120	\$25.00		\$122,529.79					
22	Wells Fargo Bank-Visa	Miscellaneous	08/24/07	BillPay	\$1,456.23		\$121,073.56					
23	Cash Machine Withdrawal	Miscellaneous	08/30/07	Cash Machine	\$200.00		\$120,873.56					

I will make less than 400 entries per year so have activated 400 lines on each sheet. Of course, the spreadsheet does the calculations automatically. The sheet is locked except for the columns where entries are required.

Now, how do we find out how much we gave to charity for the IRS? On the spreadsheet there is a little down arrow by each of the column headings that can be searched. I have clicked on the Account column arrow and a choice box has dropped down, then I have selected "Miscellaneous."

Do that for any other account name or payee name and you will have the information you need for preparing your income tax. You can print this sub-list in the usual way. Now, to get out of this, click the arrow in the same column and then click on (All). The original full list will show up. You can do that operation in either the Payee or Account column and you will have all you need to find out how much money you have spent in any given category. For some fun, you can click on the arrows in the Check Number column and search for a check number or all the checks over some number or under a certain number. You can do the same in the Date column. This may come in handy when the sheet grows large late in the year and you want to find an entry made on or before or after a certain date.

I did that here on the Check # column. Then I selected (Custom...). That sounds a little scary, doesn't it? It's not. The next thing to pop up is a Custom Filter dialogue box.

You can choose "is greater than" or any other description of what you want to find. Then, on the right you type in the amount, say 500. Click OK and all the checks with numbers greater than 500 will pop up. Again, close this out by clicking the arrow and then (All).

A word of caution – be consistent. That is, do not call the electric company "PG&E" one time and "Pacific Gas & Electric" another time. Do not call an account "Charity" one time and "Contributions" another time. Keep it simple. Life would be simpler if we did not have to pay so many bills and it is also simpler if you use fewer accounts. Miscellaneous is a wonderful account.

Printing may also present a challenge. If you click View>Page Break Preview, you will see that 400 lines cover eight pages. If you just click File>Print>OK, you will get the pages you want plus all the blank pages up to eight. So, In order to get just what you want, click on View>Page Break Preview first to see what pages you want. Then you can select just those pages in the print window.

I will be glad to share this spreadsheet with anyone who wants to look at it more closely with the usual disclaimers about it is not my fault if you go bankrupt and so forth. You can copy the last blank sheet as many times as you wish so the workbook can last forever.

If you are interested in constructing your own spreadsheet, here are some particulars that might be of interest. What I call the search option is accessed by clicking on Data>Filter>AutoFilter. If you do this while in the Payee heading, it will put the arrows and the function in all the contiguous headings to the right. I put a blank column after the Memo heading so it would stop there. The formula in the Balance column below the Beginning Balance is (are you ready for this?). =IF(OR(E9<>"", F9<>""), H8-E9+F9, ""). This is not so complicated. The classic IF statement says something like this: "IF(something is TRUE, then do this, else do that)." Now, the 'something is true' part says if cell E9 is not equal (<>) to blank ("") or cell F9 is not equal (<>) to blank (""). That is, if either of the two cells under the Amount heading or under the Deposit heading is not blank then... do some arithmetic. That arithmetic is subtract the Amount of the check and add the amount of the Deposit to the previous Balance, H8-E9+F9, in line number 9. The 'else do that' is leave this cell blank (""). That is why all the cells below the active row are blank but will light up with a balance as soon as an entry is made. Just click on the + in the lower right corner and drag this formula down 400 rows. Isn't this slick?

With BillPay in full swing, I find that I write many fewer checks but I still have to keep a record, don't I? The bank record is handy on the web but it only shows those charges that have cleared. I want to know whether I am solvent if they all clear. So I need a record. My accounting needs are mostly limited to keeping a ready record for tax purposes. Budgeting is not my thing. For these reasons a check record with the addition of an "Accounts" and a "Memo" column is satisfactory. The frosting on the cake is the added feature of being able to isolate various accounts and payees for whatever reason. While I may have made the transition to the 21st Century, I have also simplified my life somewhat by not being dependent on Intuit to write my checks for me and demand that I account for every last penny. How often is it that computers simplify your life?



The miniPC: The smallest Windows / Linux PC ever
* small spaces * CAR COMPUTER * any room * point of sales machine *



BASE MODEL FEATURES:

- * Window XP computer
- * dimensions: 6.5 in X 6.5 in X 2.5 in !!!!
- * 1.4 GHZ Pentium M (Celeron)
- * 512 GB RAM
- * 40 GB hard drive
- * DVD / CD-RW combo drive
- * 10/100/1000 (GIGABIT) LAN
- * 2 x USB, 1 X firewire (IEEE 1394) ports
- * DVI video output - VGA adapter included
- * TV output, S-video & component HDTV out!
- * Sound: stereo out, mic input, internal speaker
- * Software included: Nero CD burning, Drivers, Windows XP, full Office suite (Open Office)
- * Unlimited expansion via USB and firewire

UPGRADES

CPU	up to 1.7 Ghz
Hard drive	up to 160 GB
RAM	up to 1 GB
b / g wireless LAN	
Optical Drive DVD Recordable	
Install your own OS	subtract \$50

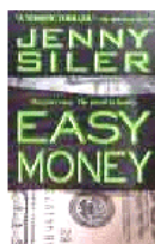


ALL this for just \$599
(Only \$549 if you install your own operating system)
Call Jason, 210-669-2156

Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Easy Money
Jenny Siler,
Paperback, St
Martins, 2000,
\$6.99 353 pages



Raised by a drug runner dad in Key West, Allie Kerry will courier anything, anywhere, any time. The easy money is a pickup outside of Seattle. Just a computer disk. No sweat, right? Wrong. The hot hidden data on the list ties a massacre during the Vietnam War to a drug running scheme in the present day. People will kill to keep it secret and the lure of easy money turns into hard bargain for Allie.

This was Siler's first novel - she's since published another and has a hardback due out in September. She has proved to be a lyrical writer with a feel for plot and a compelling, hardboiled heroine. The computer disk, although a bit player, had a

unique twist. The hidden data was concealed in a computer game and was revealed only when the game was won. Don't expect to see Allie's computer buddy in a sequel - he's toast.

Burn Factor
Kyle Mills, Hardback,
Harper Collins, 2001,
384 pages, \$25.00

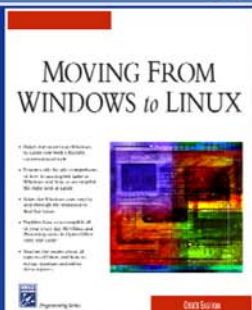


Young computer programmer Quinn Barry takes a low-level job at the FBI in hopes of worming her way into an agent assignment. A false positive match on an old DNA database that she is tweaking frustrates her. When she keeps niggling at what she considers a minor coding error she is banished to the boonies. Her reputation and professional pride on the line, Quinn sticks her nose into the middle of a high-level cover-up involving a serial killer and a secret revival of the star wars missile defense system.

All the best computer stuff is in the beginning of the book, when Quinn pulls an all-nighter and triumphantly ferrets out a few lines of hidden code that cause the search engine to reject a particular DNA sequence. The picture of a smart programmer worrying the code like a dog with a bone is a sweet one and challenges our naïve faith in the integrity of data. Mills is a competent young thriller writer with a substantial following; I find his characters a bit thin and his plots improbable, but there's plenty of action to keep you turning the pages.

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

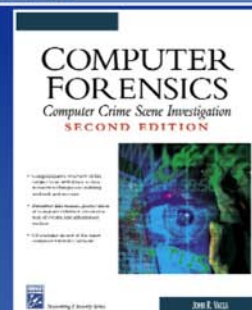
COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



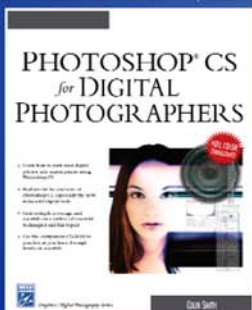
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



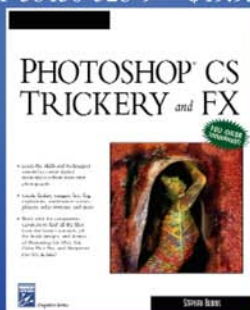
1-58450-328-9 \$49.95



1-58450-389-0 \$49.95



1-58450-321-1 \$39.95



1-58450-297-5 \$39.95



1-58450-387-4 \$41.95



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June 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	3 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 4 of 6 *PRR* BOD 6:30 P.M.	4 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 4 of 6 *PRR*	5 Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon High Growth Stock Investing 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (a/r)	6 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR* Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 1 of 9 *PRR* PC Alameda Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	7 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
8	9 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	10 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 5 of 6 *PRR* Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	11 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 5 of 6 *PRR*	12 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	13 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 9 *PRR*	14 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
15 Father's Day	16	17 Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M., class 6 of 6 *PRR*	18 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 6 of 6 *PRR* IBD / Vector Vest 6 - 8 P.M.	19 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	20 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 9 *PRR*	21 First day of Summer MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
22	23 CorelDRAW X3 6 - 8 P.M.	24	25 (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	26 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	27 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 4 of 9 *PRR*	28 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 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 Alamo magazine online or download it to your computer or a CD. Students who want to download the magazine to a CD in class should bring a blank CD-RW (a read / writeable or recordable CD)

Instructor: Steve Tech
stephentechnr@yahoo.com

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

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

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

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on

<APCORETRO@yahoogroups.com>

Technical Rating:★ - ★★★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechnr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★★

Digital Camera & Photography Class

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

Instructor: need instructor

When: to be announced

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing Classes \$

A series of Photo Editing Classes ranging from basic to advanced skills The Microsoft Digital Imaging 2006 software is not required for these classes but it would be helpful to have on your home computer. Students will need recordable CD's or Flash / Thumb drives to be able to save their class work.

Intro to Digital Photo Editing \$

Remedial computer work as it relates to the use of Image 2006. Any computer skills that will be essential for success in Image 2006. We will learn how to place files into the work area. How to control the work area. We will learn the use of the essential photo editing tools such as; color balance, sharpening focus, removing red eye, crop, straighten photo, etc.

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

Instructor: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing \$

Students will learn the basics of digital photo editing using Microsoft Digital Imaging 2006 and if time permits, extra tips and tricks about matting and framing plus interesting uses for your photos. The photo editing basics used in this class can be applied to almost any photo editing program.

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

Instructor: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating ★ - ★★

Advanced Digital Photo Editing \$

This class is for the student who is very serious about digital editing. It involves the manipulation of photos whether they are new or old. We learn to use the tools to do everything from making greeting cards to photo refinishing.

Prerequisites: Students must have completed either the Introduction to Digital Photo Editing Class or the Digital Photo Editing Class or completed one of Joe Davis' prior Digital Photo Editing classes

Instructor: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating ★ - ★★

Technical Content Ratings

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

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Can you help teach?

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

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

Please call (210) 736-0700

Photoshop Classes for use with Photoshop 7, CS, CS2 - \$

Photoshop CS2 Classes are open to any Alamo PC member who has Photoshop 7, CS, or CS2. 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.

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: Beginners Photoshop (nine sessions) June Fridays 6, 13, 20, 27, July 11, 18, 25, August 1, 8, 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: Intermediate Photoshop Fridays, August 15, 22, 29, September 5, 12 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: Advanced Photoshop Fridays October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 1 pm to 5 pm

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Restorations 1 and 2 Photoshop Lessons on Photo Restorations

Restorations 1 (one session)

When: Friday September 19 1 pm to 5 pm

Tuition Fee: \$5 for the class

Restorations 2 (one session)

When: Friday September 26, 1 pm to 5 pm

Tuition Fee: \$5 for the class

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 1 to 4:30 pm

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Photoshop Calendar Class (taught by Jane Montgomery)

When: Fridays, 1 to 5 pm, dates for 2008 to be announced 1 to 4:30 pm

Tuition Fee: \$25 for the course

Instructor: Beverly Bihn assisted by Jane Montgomery

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

Where: Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★★-★★★

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: ★★

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: ★

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. |

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: ★ - ★★

Volunteers Wanted

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

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: ★

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. Enjoy a comfortable seating area. Call (210) 736-0700.

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.

Advertisers Index

BJ Associates of San Antonio	37
Charles River Media	57
Computer Experts	45
Computer Fest	11
Corona Visions	14
Cramer's Computer Services	39
David's Essential Domains	19
DV Nation	56
Global Travel Trends	31
Holiday Ink	34
Inksell	IFC
Laura B. Grover, E.A.	40
New Life Toner	IFC
SA PC Help	51
United Service Association for Health Care	24
Water Ware	48


Classified Ads

E-mail your ad to the Editor, PC 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.

