

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

WEB ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

August 2008

\$5.00



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page 32

**Binary Floodgates on the
Internet Backwaters**
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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:

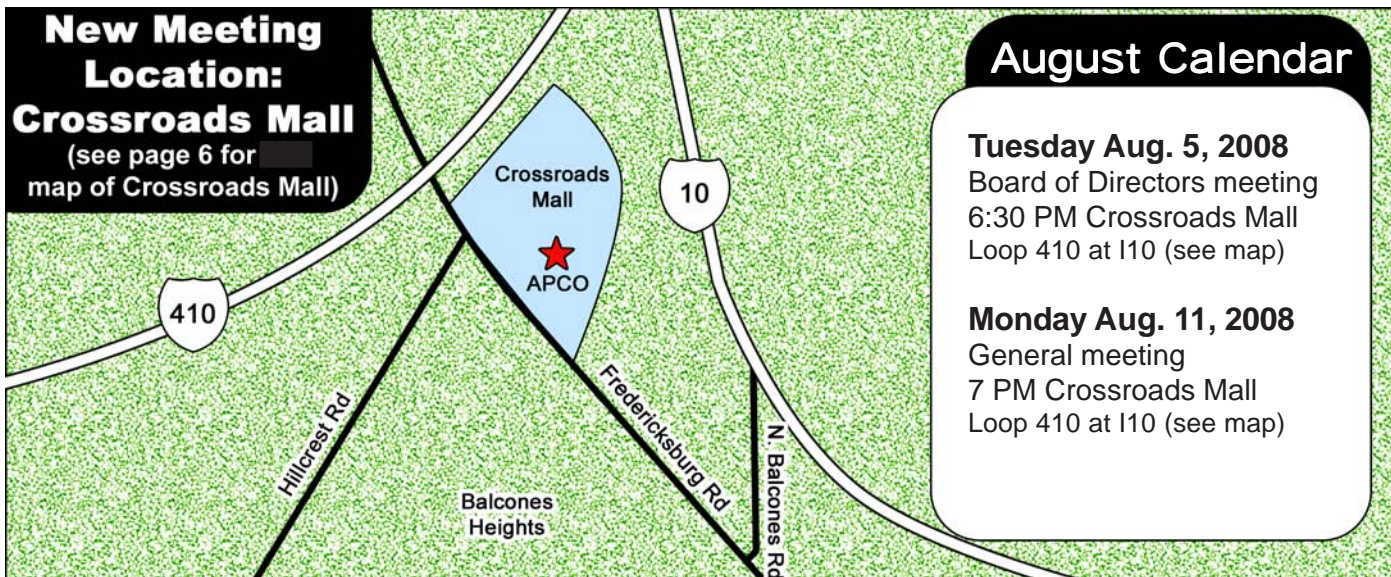
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



August Calendar

Tuesday Aug. 5, 2008
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Aug. 11, 2008
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

The Internet

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PC Alamode

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PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 2008 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of PC Alamode may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and PC Alamode. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

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

editor@alamopc.org

Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode
 editor@alamopc.org

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Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
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Half pg. (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

*Consecutive months

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product reviews

Computer Crimes
 Hardware Review: Zune 8 Review
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Board of Directors

President	Bill Klutz	532-9122 (Home)	president@alamopc.org
Secretary	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	secretary@alamopc.org
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Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

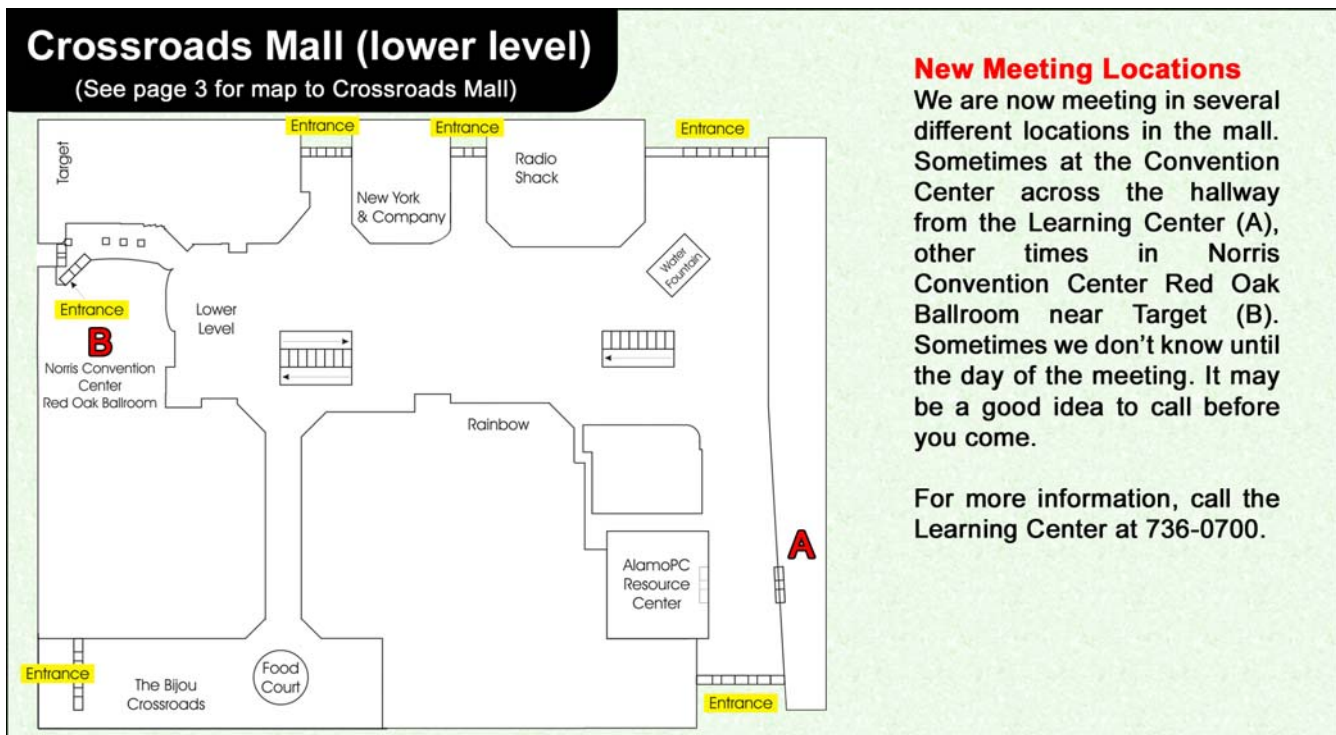
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

FAX 736-0032

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Study Groups Coordinator	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
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Webmaster	Mike Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Webmaster@alamopc.org
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Editor, PC Alamo Magazine	Joseph de Leon	unlisted	editor@alamopc.org

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



PC Alamode Links List



SoundFlavor

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

Soundflavor helps you make great music video playlists to play, share with friends, and post on Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, blogs, and other websites, using our Video Jukebox™!



FaxZero

<<http://faxzero.com/>>

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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.

Linda Bianchi, the head of the Education Department for Alamo PC, has recently been ill and will likely be taking care of herself and reduce the way she volunteers for Alamo PC. Her term for being a Board Member will be up in September and we're not sure how this will affect the Learning Center.

Do you remember what it was like the first time you stepped in to the Learning Center? Or what it felt like when you took a class, the details you learned? What about getting answers to a question? These are some of the things for which we can thank Linda Bianchi.

The Alamo PC Learning Center needs your help.

I am asking the members of our organization to please step up and help out our education department. If you're interested please call the Resource Center at (210) 736-0700 and leave your name and phone number.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"August" - A Devoid Month, Election Process Tries To Continue

This month I don't find anything of note on the calendar, other than the start of school for many. Children would not consider that even worth mentioning, except it means "vacations and play time will come to an end.

Then July BOD meetings was not able to be held because only two BOD members were present. Others had health issues of family problems to solve. The monthly General Meeting only had fifteen people present (which included three board members). No corporate presenter was available so David Steward showed a BBC video someone had sent him that covered Bill Gates/Microsoft from his early school days through his recent stepping down from the helm of Microsoft. His plan is to work more with his wife in the foundation efforts they have undertaken. If video was interesting to me and seemed to be enjoyed by those present. Again, the hand full of people affirms that overall interest in the organization appears to have waned. This is also confirmed through the ever declining membership and the fact that we have not had a full compliment of board members (one or more vacancy) for the past three years.


It is now late in July, and I have no indication that David Steward has any presenter for our next General Meeting (Aug 11th), other than himself. In early July he indicated he was working to get a Microsoft representative for the August General meeting, but has not confirmed that it will happen. 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, we may just have another in-house presentation. 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. I can only hope that someone will have made something available for the staff to pass along.

July is, and was, to be Alamo PC's annual nomination time for BOD positions that are vacant or expiring. Since a BOD meeting has not been held to activate the Elections Committee, that effort has been lacking. But since we have operated with one or more vacant positions since Oct 2005 (despite numerous pleas from me in past messages), and no one has unofficially put forth any names, it would appear the task may again prove to be difficult. As previously indicated, each member has a stake in this process - "This is OUR organization." Each member should consider themselves to be responsible for trying to identify individuals willing to serve at the BOD level. The opportunity to submit names will, hopefully, be available at the August General Meeting, for members who are present and providing we have a quorum. Once the list of individuals has been identified, individual biographies will be submitted for inclusion in the September PC Alamode. During September, the online election process will again be conducted to determine the list of Board members for the coming year (Oct 2008 - Sep 2009).

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



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\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Continued on page 9

<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 seeking 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 "Desk 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 wlklutzjr@juno.com). I appreciate all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

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

August Program

Bill Klutz

Currently (end of July), I have not been informed that our August General Meeting has a Corporate presenter scheduled. We are hopeful David Steward can secure one, as he indicated in early July that he was trying to secure a Microsoft representative.

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.



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Volunteer at the Alamo PC Learning Center

We need volunteers!

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

Please call (210) 736-0700

Student Practice Lab

Polish those new skills - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Can you help teach?

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Cables & Connectors
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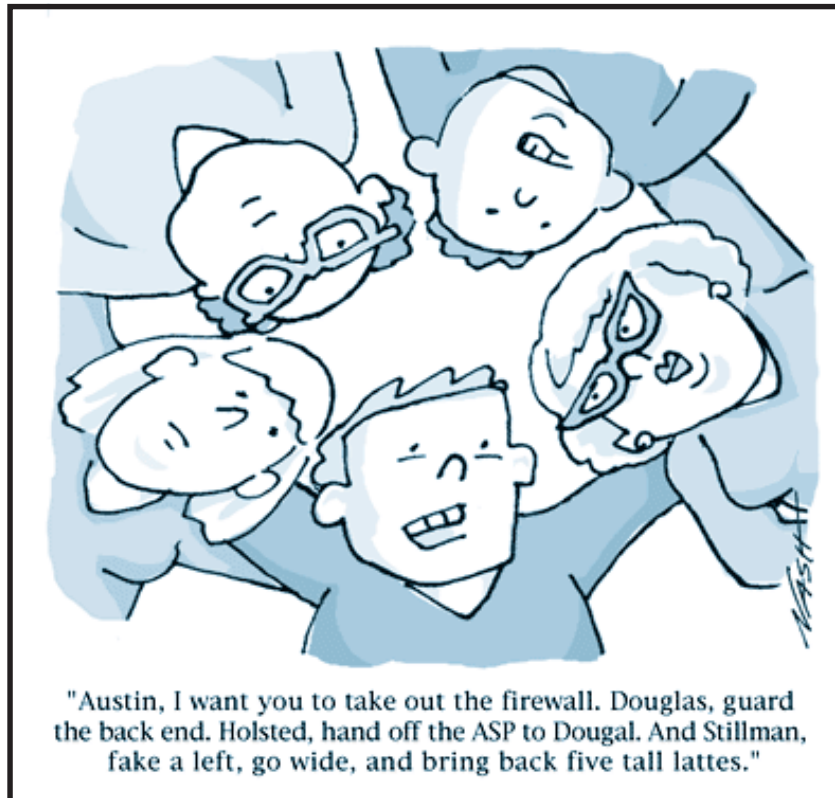
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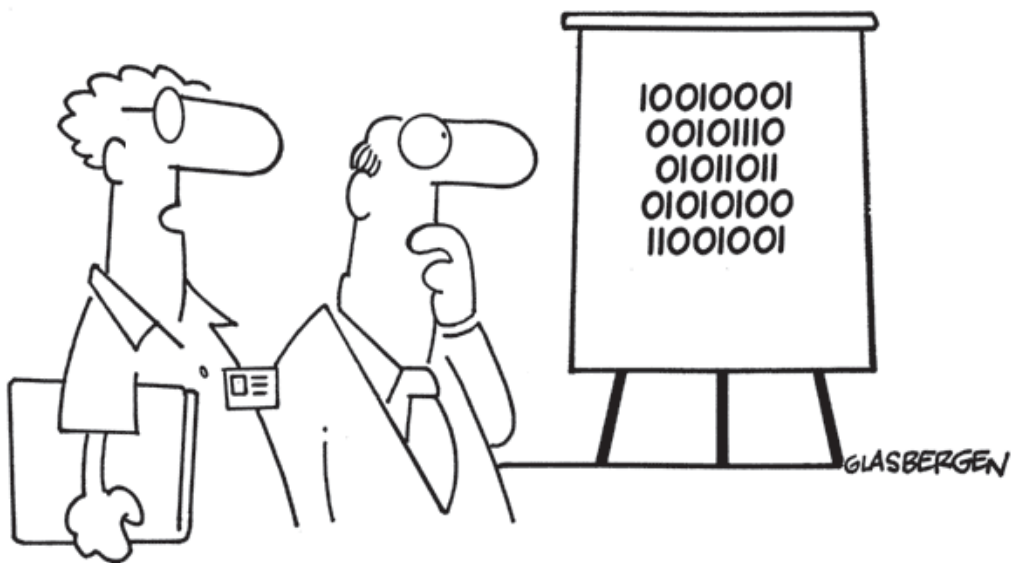


Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



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"We've devised a new security encryption code.
Each digit is printed upside down."



Ged rid of spyware

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

If you believe your system's compromised by spyware, take the following three steps to clean your system. First, conduct a spyware scan with your favorite anti-spyware program, preferably in safe mode. There are a few good free products: Spybot Search & Destroy or AdWare. However, commercial programs can provide a bit more power. The most popular are: SpySweeper, Spyware Doctor, or Counter-Spy.

Do NOT install more than one. They are known to conflict with one another.

After you complete this scan and have gotten rid of anything these scanners find, go on-line. Scan again with TrendMicro's House-Call. Also use Spyware Guide's X-Cleaner Micro Edition. Follow each applications instructions.

Finally, run your systems anti-virus program. On top of your own AV program, there are on-line testers as well (if you suspect a particular file). The first is Virustotal (<http://virustotal.com>). It uses 32 different anti-virus engines from different companies, such as Symantec, McAfee, and Kaspersky. Upload your file and the site will generate a set of results based on what each engine found. Due to the logic of each engine, you may receive various results depending on what each engine thought of the file. If you want yet another opinion, go to the Threat Expert. Click on Submit Sample to upload up to a 5MB file. This site analyzes the file and e-mails you a report. Not only will you discover what several AV engines thought of your file, this site will also tell you if the program tries to delete any of your files or directories, makes changes to your hosts file, or creates Registry keys. You can also see if the file tries to download anything from the Internet during installation.

Afterward, reboot and run your anti-spyware program again in normal mode.

Your system should be clean.

NOTE: There are a LOT of fake anti-spyware pop-up promotions out there. Under no circumstances should you use one of these services. Most of them actually install spyware on your computer when you visit their websites. These sites are always changing. You can find an updated list of known spyware sites at Eric Howe's Spyware Warrior site.

If the above steps haven't solved your problems, you may need to do a few more things. First, some spyware may live in your old Restore points. Delete all of these except the latest one on your system.

Some spyware programs are sticky. Another program you can use is HijackThis. You can perform a system scan and save the information in a log. You can forward this log to the forums at either SpywareInfo or Tech Support Guy to get advice from others on the forums.

Boot from your USB device

If you want to boot from your USB device like you used to with a floppy, download the free HP USB Disk Storage Format Tool. Copy three files from the root of your hard drive: boot.ini, ntldr, and ntdetect. Then, make sure your BIOS on your motherboard is set to allow booting from USB devices. If you're unfamiliar or uncomfortable with these steps, you can find a step-by-step guide at Tom's Hardware website.

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APC2008JUL

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Tweak Windows Virtual Memory

Most of you are aware that Windows creates a swapfile on your hard drive for quick access to data that won't fit in physical RAM. There are a lot of theories out there on what the optimal settings for these pagefiles should be. Microsoft recommends the following:

If you've only got one hard drive, leave the Windows defaults alone. However, if you have more than one drive, your system will increase performance if you keep the default pagefile on the boot drive and add a second to your other drive.

To add this file, right-click on My Computer (in Windows XP) or Computer (in Vista) and select Properties. Go to the Advanced tab (or Advanced System Settings in Vista). In the Performance section, click Settings and the Advanced tab. Under Virtual Memory, click Change. In Vista, uncheck Automatically manage paging file size for all drives. Leave the default page file alone. On the second drive, add another pagefile. Microsoft recommends you create a file with the same minimum and maximum size. They also recommend that you use 1.5 times the amount of physical RAM in your system. You can also opt to allow Windows to determine the size. If there is an existing pagefile on the drive, you'll be warned that the file already exists. As long as the two OSs aren't running at the same time, it's okay for you to overwrite or delete the other pagefile.

Now reboot your system and you're all set.

Until next month...

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Computer Preventative Maintenance, Part XIV

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

There are a few ways to get rid of old computers and perhaps, too, peripheral equipment for free including shipping or at least at a minimal cost. One, Dell will recycle any brand of computer at no cost when you buy a new computer from them. The company recycles all Dell products for free even if you're not buying a new unit.

Non-Dell products can be recycled for \$10. Two, Apple also provides free recycling including shipping, for any old computer, when you buy a new machine from an Apple store. Third, Hewlett Packard (HP) charges about the same as local recyclers, but then reimburses you with a coupon good toward a new HP computer. Four, Many computer retailers offer trade-in deals or will put you in touch with companies that buy and sell used computer equipment. Five, if your computer equipment is still in good working condition with the original software and is less than five or six years old, you can donate it to the National Cristina Foundation. The foundation arranges donations to on-profits and schools and will find organizations in your area that need computer equipment. Go to its Web site <www.cristina.org> for more information.

Anti-virus Removal Software

You should be careful if there's a reason for you to remove your Norton Anti-virus software using its Norton Removal Tool. You should create a restore point and/or back up all of your files beforehand. Otherwise, you may experience the misfortune to find that this "tool" removes essential files so that Microsoft Windows Search Companion would not work and you may not be able to upgrade Windows Messenger to the 5.1 version.

Defragmentation

Even though Windows comes with its own Disk Defragmentation utility, it does have some limitations especially if used when there are still open programs on your computer at the time of use. You will get a more complete defragmentation if you do not have programs or files open during the defragmentation process. To get an even more thorough defragmentation, you can reboot your computer into Safe Mode by pressing the F8 key when your computer is booting before the WinXP splash screen appears. This procedure prevents any applications from loading when your computer boots, including your antivirus and firewall software. With no programs or files open, the utility is free to defragment every file on the drive, with the exception of certain Windows files that must be in use at the time.

Drivers

If you want to know what drivers are running on your computer, Windows' Device Manager provides full details on a particular driver, but this information isn't helpful if you want an overview of all of them. In WinXP Pro and Vista, it's easy to view information on all of your drivers, select Start, Programs (or All Programs), Accessories, Command Prompt. At the Prompt, type `driverquery /v /fo csv >dr.csv` and press Enter. The report will open in Microsoft Excel or the program you've set as your default spreadsheet.

Manufacturer's Addresses/Phone Numbers

If you have need to contact a manufacturer to ask questions for a computer or other peripheral device, Computing.com's Tech Support Center provides an entire list of manufacturers from Ad Tech USA to Zone Lab. You will need to go to <www.smartcomputing.com> and click the Tech Support Center link. Next scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the Manufacturer Tech Support Index link under the Other Helpful Tech Support Tools section. Manufacturers are listed alphabetically here. You will want to be sure to check out the hardware and software vendor contact information at the bottom of the page, too. The links will connect you to Microsoft's vendor contact information lists. These lists are quite extensive and contain a wealth of information in an easy to navigate location.

McAfee's VirusScan 11

If your computer uses McAfee's VirusScan 11 and is running very slowly, it probably is caused by Emproxy.exe which may be using 85 to 97 percent of your processor's resources. Many people have experienced this problem with emproxy.exe. Emproxy.exe is part of McAfee's security suite. It checks incoming and outgoing e-mail messages for viruses. The company has responded with a fix. It should be relatively easy to install the patch. Other problems have been reported with VirusScan 11. For example, some people have been unable to send or receive e-mail. Users have also reported long delays when checking for new mail. The patch should repair all of these problems. First, open the McAfee SecurityCenter and then go to View Details in the bottom-right

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corner of the window. This feature will show you your software version. If your software is earlier than 11.0.213, you will need the update. Click the McAfee icon, which looks like a large red M, and select Updates and allow the updates to install on your computer. Now restart the machine. Your computer should be ready to go.

NET Safety

Your computer is your window to the world. You need to protect this fantastic capability. Here are some tips to ensure you continue to view the world without any major problems. 1. Update your operating system (OS) and software frequently. Failure to take this preventative step might enable a hacker to find a hole in your OS. 2. Run antivirus, anti-spyware, and firewall software often, too. Hacker will have more difficulty in accessing your computer if these programs are current and used every-day. 3. Beware of phishing expeditions. These are perhaps the most lucrative scams on the Internet and occur when your login information for a financial site is stolen. It happens when perpetrators send you a link in an email message pretending to be a legitimate financial institution. Never click an email link and then give out your personal information. Instead, launch your browser separately from the email and go to your site.

4. Watch out for modern pharmlers. In a pharming attack, you type in the address of a Web site in your browser, but the browser is hijacked and sent to a scam site. To protect against this threat, look at the address of a financial Web site. It should start https/, instead of http:.. The “s” means secure. 5. Avoid suspicious email attachments and links. Never open an attachment or follow a link from a stranger. Always run your anti-virus software against an attachment which should only be downloaded to a floppy disk or thumb drive but never to your hard drive. 6. Use parental controls. Children and grandchildren can really mess up your computer and/or access inappropriate Web sites. 7. Protect your home network. If a hacker breaks into your home network, this individual gets free rein to all of the computers in your home. Use the encryption built into your router and the computers so that no one can break into them. 8. Use caution in public places. Because when using computers at cafes, hotels and airports. Turn off file sharing, make sure your firewall is turned on, and watch out for “shoulder surfers,” who are people peering over your shoulders to try to steal your passwords. 9. Kill spam. Always delete spam emails. Several software programs kill spam for you. 10. If you’ve ever clicked on a pop-up; window when visiting a Web site, you’ve endangered your computer, because they can be downloaded malicious software to your computer. 11. Finally, guard and protect your passwords and pins. Keep them in a safe place and never share with anyone.

Performance Enhancements

There are many ways to enhance the performance of your computer especially needed if it’s an old one. Here are a few of them. 1. You can increase the RAM memory. RAM is measured in gigabytes (GB). More memory is generally better, but the law of diminishing returns for most home users really kicks in above the 2GB mark for both WinXP and Vista systems. Because most consumer versions of Windows are 32-bit operating systems, they can address a maximum of 4GB of RAM but 2GB of RAM is ideal from a price and performance standpoint. Before buying more RAM, it is important to check the documentation that came with the computer to find the maximum amount of RAM the motherboard supports because sometimes that figure is lower than what Windows can address. The first step when buying new RAM is to check the type and amount of RAM already installed on your computer to determine if an upgrade is even necessary. In WinXP, right-click My Computer, click Properties, and look in the Computer section of the General Tab. In Vista, click the Start button, right-click Computer, click Properties, and look at the figure next to the Memory (RAM) entry. 2. You may need to clean the Windows Registry. Windows updates the Registry’s configuration entries whenever you install or uninstall new hardware or software or make changes to Windows setting. Over time, the Registry accumulates corrupt or obsolete information. These bad Registry entries weigh down your computer’s performance by slowing the machine or even crashing it. To correct those problems, CleanMyPC Registry Cleaner has a good reputation for fixing those problems and improving your computer’s performance. After backing up your Registry, the CleanMyPC Cleaner scans the Registry and lists problems by category. 3. You should also clean up the Startup. You can speed up the startup process by configuring Windows to ignore some of the unwanted programs. In WinXP, click Start, Run, and then type msconfig in the Open field. Press the ENTER key. Once you’ve opened the System Configuration Utility, click the Startup tab. This tab lists the programs that automatically start when Windows starts. Browse the list and deselect the checkboxes next to any programs that you want to prevent from running at startup. Then click the OK button. You’ll need to restart your computer for the changes to take effect. In Vista, click Start, Control Panel, and then click Security. Click Windows Defender and then Tools at the top of the windows that appears on your screen. Next, click Software Explorer. The left column in this window lists the applications that can load when Windows starts up. 4.

Both WinXP and Vista have a Performance Options menu that helps you shake your computer free of its sluggish behavior. You can boost your computer’s performance by disabling some of the appearance settings. To access the menu in WinXP, click Start, open the Control Panel, and then double-click System. When the System Properties window appears on your screen, click the Advanced tab and then click the Settings button in the Performance section. Click the Visual Effects tab when the Performance Options window appears. In Vista, open the Control Panel and then click both System And Maintenance, and Performance Information And Tools. By default, Windows selects the Let Windows Choose What’s Best For My Computer radio button. You can boost your computer’s overall performance by clicking the Adjust For Best Performance radio button, but this is an extreme step because it turns off many of the user interface features that you may regularly use, such as the Common Tasks pane. If you want the best of both appearance and performance worlds, click the Custom radio button and then use the checkboxes to select your desired settings. Click the Apply button to see your changes.



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!

We're all familiar with accessible design in the physical world. Grab bars in the bathroom. Sidewalk cuts. Wheelchair ramps bypassing the stairs. Automatic doors. Close captioning for the hearing impaired.

We've also all noticed that these modifications are useful even to those of us without disabilities. Sidewalk cuts make it easier for moms with strollers to walk downtown. The ramp is a godsend when you are trailing a wheeled suitcase. That automatic door in the library sure helps when you have your arms full of books.

Accessible design for the Web follows the same principles.

A blind person may use a screen reader program that can't navigate unlabelled graphical icons. The same design principles that make a Web page accessible to the blind user also help people who turn off their graphics because they have a slow modem.

People with low vision often increase the font size on a web page. So do I. Some design techniques allow this; some lock in the font size and are not considered accessible.

A deaf person can't hear the audio track on an online video. Neither can the hearing person who uses the Internet in a public place like a library where the computers don't have speakers and sound cards.

The rules for accessibility can get quite complicated, especially if a site is required to comply with Federal or State accessibility rules. (Read the Federal rules). However, there are some simple things every webmaster can do to make his or her site more accessible.

The basic rule is to write good code. Screen reader programs are less forgiving than Netscape or Internet Explorer. If you forget to close a tag, for example, the entire process might seize up.

There are tools that can help you get it right. One of them is A-Prompt, a free program that will scan your site, identify problems and offer suggestions to correct them, all in a user-friendly interface.

Another tool is Bobby, an online service that will scan through your pages one by one and point out accessibility errors.

One of the neater tools I found is the free Web Accessibility Toolbar, from the National Library Information Service in Australia. It uses a technique called "bookmarklets" to install a toolbar on your browser. You can select from dozens of different tests from analyzing your code to simulating the Web experience for different users. Download.

Getting it right the first few times is difficult, but once you become aware of the principles of accessible design it becomes second nature.

As a minimum, graphics should be identified by using the "alt" tag. The format for this is

`.`

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STUDY GROUPS

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

Volunteer at the Alamo PC Learning Center

We need volunteers!

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

Please call (210) 736-0700

If a graphic cannot be viewed, the alternate text will appear. If the ALT tag is not used, a blank box will show on the screen – not very useful.

You can include a long description in the alt tag but it has some quirks.

When the graphics are disabled, only as much of the text as will fit in a space the size of the graphic will show permanently on the screen. If it is a big picture, all of it might fit. If it is small, none of it, or only a word or two, will show.

When you hover your mouse over the graphic all of the words will show but they will only stay on the screen for about five seconds.

So, keep descriptions short, but make them meaningful. Label them all. If a graphic is purely decorative, I usually call it “decorative doo-dad.”

Sometimes you may need a longer description than can be fit into the alt tag. There are several techniques for accomplishing this.

First, you can include the additional information elsewhere on the page, perhaps as a caption to the graphic or as descriptive text elsewhere on the page. Your goal is to make sure that everyone can get the information they came for. If you show a map to give directions to your business, also include textual directions.

Second, you can include a “D” link. The D stands for description and is placed to the right of the graphic. It links to another page that contains a more detailed description. It is fairly discreet and people who use screen reader programs will know what it means.

Finally, you can use the LONGDESC (long description) tag. The format is:

.

LONGDESC is not supported by Internet Explorer or Netscape but is supported by screen reader programs. The link takes you to another page (which you must create) that contains the longer description. You can create a separate page for each description or include all of the descriptions on one page and direct people to the right spot by using the NAME tag. The format for this would be:

.

Another visual consideration is color combinations. As many as one in twelve of your users may have some sort of color blindness; the most common is protanopia, red/green color blindness, caused by the absence of red cones.

I remember one of the first PowerPoint presentations I attended. The poor briefing officer had slaved over his slide show for days. When he showed his first chart the general blew his stack: he was colorblind and all the pie charts and bar graphs were meaningless blobs. The presentation had to be done over using patterns rather than colors for the data fills. Oops.

At Wickline you can run your Web site through 11 different online checks for color problems: it's enlightening!

Hearing impaired users have different challenges.

More and more Web content is multimedia: audio or video files, or Flash files. The ideal solution is to provide a full transcript for such files, but that is time consuming and not always feasible. An alternative is to caption audio files; one free program that helps you do that is MAGpie, the media access generator developed by the National Center for Accessible Media. It's a free download.

Accessible Web design is not only a kindness to your users with disabilities; it makes for a better overall experience for all of your users. It's not a lazy technique, but it is an essential one.

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



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.

While working the IBM Rational Software Development Show, I visited with the guys maintaining the registration, cyber café and the classroom setup. They told me they were using VMware for the classrooms and one actual machine could support three or four virtual machines. Since each training class was for a different purpose, some virtual machines were set up for different applications. I assume that the best reasons for using virtual machines is the hardware saving, less heat and lower power consumption, which all translates to lower costs.

In another conversation, I had noticed that security people were not scanning the badges of attendees entering the exhibit floor, but there was electronic equipment there. I asked if there were RFID chips in the badges and they confirmed there were. When an attendee passes through the entrance, the RFID chip in his badge is detected and the data is recorded for various purposes. The technician also mentioned that while on the show floor, the attendee could also be tracked when he was near an exhibit. As the RFID chip nears the booth exhibit, a sensor detects it and even would know the time duration the person was at the exhibit. I assume that service would cost the exhibitor.

He told me the attendee could opt out of the RFID chip when filling out the registration form, but only about 1% do that. I wonder how many people who are always in a hurry to fill out the application even noticed that option on the form. I would prefer not to be tracked.

*Are You Interested In A Second Life?

At a Central Florida Computer Society meeting <<http://www.cfcs.org>> Hewie Poplock and Mike Ungerman did a fascinating presentation on having meetings on the Net instead of in person, or even a combination of both. They used two projectors so the audience could see both laptop screens and what each presenter saw on their own screen. The displays sometimes included another member who joined them from his home. The presentation had a few glitches because they had not worked with it a lot, but Hewie and Mike are experts who will work out the bugs and refine the process to make it work.

They also demonstrated Dimdim <<http://www.dimdim.com>>, a free Web Working conference site, Paltalk <<http://www.paltalk.com>> where you can videoconference with up to 10 people, or voice and type chat to hundreds in public or private rooms, and Microsoft Live Meeting. They said the Association of PC User Groups is presently negotiating with Microsoft to obtain a license for Live Meeting for every APCUG user group and that there are several more applications that facilitate video chatting or conferencing; including a new Adobe site <<http://www.acrobat.com>> where you can try "Connect Now," presently in Beta testing. Here is a comparison Web site. <<http://hewiep.googlepages.com/cfcs20080615>>.

Along the way, they also threw in a little about "Second Life," a Web site that seems to have become a fascination for some folks and perhaps a sort of addiction for others <<http://www.secondlife.com>>. At "Second Life" you create a new, but

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Volunteers Wanted

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

David's Essential Domains



Website Hosting Starting at \$3.95/month!

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

Domain Names

.COMs starting at \$7.85!

FREE with every domain:

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

Website Tonight

Click 'n build your site online, in minutes!

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



SECURE SSL Certificates

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



TRAFFICBLAZER™

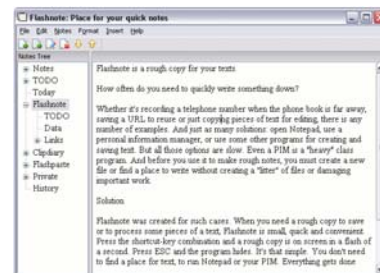
Prepare your site so the search engines find it!

<http://www.davidsessentialdomains.com>

virtual, life of your own, even creating and building just about any virtual item you wish. Second Life seemed limitless and you can buy virtual items, or sell virtual items you have constructed, using "Linden dollars." Some "residents" of Second Life have actually been able to earn a lot of real dollars by converting Linden Dollars into U. S. currency at L250=\$1. It was all completely new to me and the traffic on that Web site is tremendous. Hewie has a friend who spends up to 10 hours a day on the site.

*Just Paste In A Note

How often do you want to write something down for future reference while you're working on a project? Probably more than you realize. Flashnote can be helpful when you work with text and Flashnote is absolutely free software so it's easy to take a look at it. Whether you're recording a telephone number, saving a URL to reuse, or just copying pieces of text for editing, you could use a personal information manager or some other program for creating and saving text, but most of those options are slow. Flashnote is small, quick and convenient so here is a way to save time. <<http://softvoile.com/flashnote/?s=news4.5>>



*Keep Track Of Everything With This One!

Remembering all the things that have been planned can be a major nuisance, and when important tasks get neglected it can be really serious so here is a personal information manager. EfficientPIM Software announces the release of EfficientPIM version 1.61, the newest upgrade for its flagship tool, enabling you to maintain and secure personal information, make task lists and schedules, write notes, memos and even diaries to immortalize your memoirs. All this information can be password protected. With the Password Manager, you need to remember only one password to be able to record and find the others.



The Calendar display, Edit Note and Desktop Note functions have been improved from the previous version. You can literally stick some important notes on the desktop the way you do adhering paper notes to the fridge. EfficientPIM relieves your business life, enabling you to record, not only the information about your contacts, but all the events or appointments connected with them. The patented embedded search engine allows you to perform comprehensive searches, enabling you to find every piece of information you once recorded to the program.

EfficientPIM runs under Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista and costs \$39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. A coupon code "EFFI-OMRW" gives user group members a 20% discount. Enter the coupon code in the EfficientPIM purchase page. This coupon code expires on Oct. 31, 2008. Licensed users are entitled to free updates and priority technical support for 24 months. More information is available at <<http://www.efficientpim.com/>>.

Direct download link: <<http://www.efficientpim.com/download/EfficientPIM-Setup.exe>>

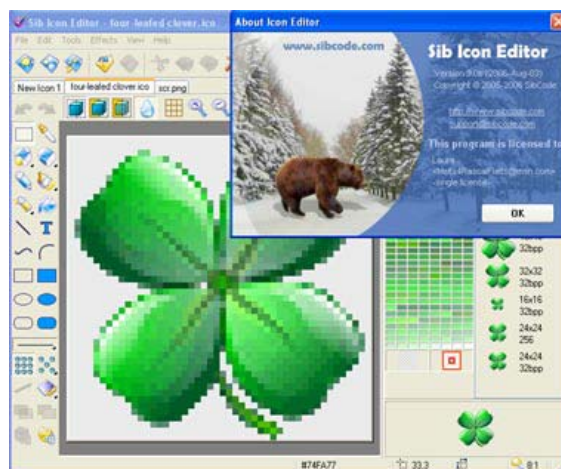
*Sib Icon Editor Goes Freeware

SibCode announces the release of Sib Icon Editor 4.0. The new version of this renowned icon editor is now being offered at no charge, and is available under a freeware license. Sib Icon Editor is a fast and light-weight image-editing tool designed for creating and editing icons, toolbars, navigation buttons, small logotypes and similar graphics. Fitting the niche between simplistic Windows Paint and the almighty Adobe Photoshop, Sib Icon Editor offers small-graphics designers a way to unleash creativity without the steep learning curve.

Sib Icon Editor supports icons, toolbars, logos and other graphics of any size, color depth or aspect ratio. Both 16 and 256-color images are supported while 32-bit graphics gets alpha-channel support for creating images with no edge jaggedness. The alpha-channel comes in handy when adding semi-transparent shadows that look extremely effective on Windows XP and Vista. Sib Icon Editor offers a choice between a number of pens, sprays and paintbrushes. There is the usual bucket tool for filling the void, and there are gradients and chess fills to quickly achieve desired effects.

Only a few clicks will add a translucent or opaque shadow, modify opacity, colors, and gamma. Disabled icons are typically grayscale, so there is a tool for that as well. Tools for smoothing, inverting and colorizing images are also available. The resulting image can be saved in ICO, ICPR, BMP, JPEG or PNG formats. Sib Icon Editor can also convert Mac icons into Windows format.

Sib Icon Editor is available for free at <<http://free-icon-editor.com/>>



*Beep Beep What??

I had some space left and would normally include some kind of freebie, but here is a tip I found in "Nuggets from Nuvo" by Joe Nuvolini, a great monthly column in the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society newsletter, Bits Of Bytes <<http://ppcompas.apcug.org>>. What's your state of mind when your computer does not come to life, but instead only gives you certain beeps? File this information away where you can lay your hands on it if, some day, that happens instead of booting. What do those beeps mean? Visit <<http://networking.ringofsaturn.com/PC/beep.php>> to get a list of the beeps. I wish my readers could read all the newsletters that I see for the valuable bits of information they contain. Not that I would know what to do with that information, but some of you might.

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>

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

Volunteers Wanted

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

STUDY GROUPS

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

PC 101

Microsoft Works - Vehicle data

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>

Considering the demographics of our group, I have elected to limit discussion of the Task following the Vehicle Data we discussed in the last issue. I don't see many of us coaching a Sports Team, Organizing a Fantasy Sports Team, or keeping Records for that team. There are however, two areas which could prove useful in the Sports & Fitness Task.

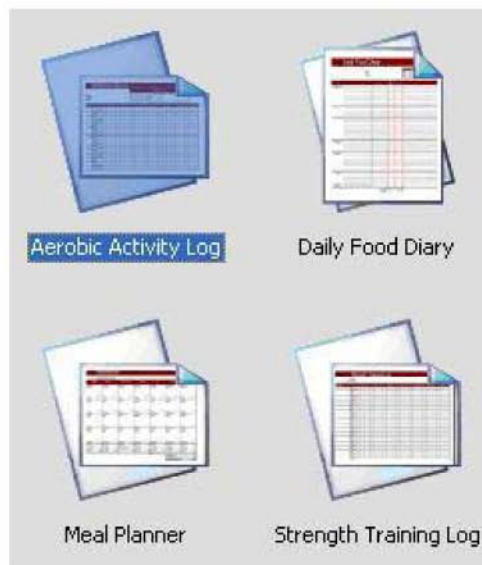
**Fitness tracking**

Get in shape with these handy templates to help track your exercise, training, or nutrition program.

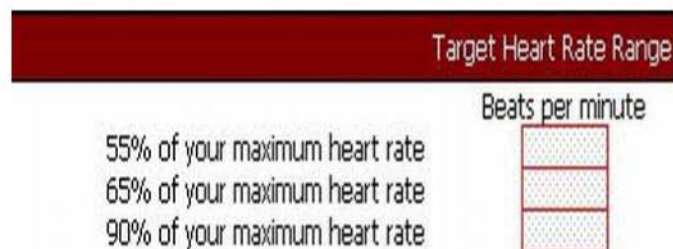
 [Start this task](#)

Most of us realize that we should be following the guidelines referred to above. Perhaps having an organized approach to tracking the activities will provide that little nudge needed to get going, or to stick with a program once begun.

Clicking on Start this task will bring up the window seen at the top of the next column. The Aerobic Activity Log is in spreadsheet format, listing all activities you might engage in during the day, beginning with Walking. There are columns for 14 days beginning with your selected start date, and 15 rows for the various activities. Each row is divided into two, one for the minutes involved, the other for your heart rate during it.



It also provides a chart to figure various heart rate levels, which which you should use to gauge your level of aerobic activity. I don't see a reference to how you determine your maximum heart rate to begin. Most guides suggest that your maximum heart rate should be 220 minus your age. Thus if you're 60, your maximum heart rate should be 160. The Target Heart rate Chart then gives you suggested rates of 55%, 65%, and 90% of maximum - 88, 104, 144 beats per minute. There is also a place to record the number of beats per 10 seconds, roughly 15, 17, and 24. Normal walking will most likely not cause you exceed the 55% level.



The thing to keep in mind here is that most fitness guidelines do not require continuous periods of activity, such as walking for 30 minutes straight. Cumulative activity spread out over the day can be just as beneficial. Besides walking, you might include stair climbing, or gardening activity - anything that you do for an extended period which can raise your heart rate above

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resting. You might be surprised at how much you might accumulate during a day, if you track it carefully.

The Strength Training Log is another spreadsheet that allows you to track any weight training you do. You track the amount of weight involved and the number of repetitions. I find it difficult to envision one even beginning to fill the 15 rows on this sheet.

The Meal Planner provides another spreadsheet in the form of a weekly calendar, with columns for each day of the week, and rows for Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, and a Snack.

Meal plan for the week of:

Monday		Tuesday	
<u>Breakfast</u>		<u>Breakfast</u>	
Calories:	<input type="text"/>	Calories:	<input type="text"/>
Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>	Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>
<u>Lunch</u>		<u>Lunch</u>	
Calories:	<input type="text"/>	Calories:	<input type="text"/>
Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>	Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>
<u>Dinner</u>		<u>Dinner</u>	
Calories:	<input type="text"/>	Calories:	<input type="text"/>
Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>	Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>
<u>Snack</u>		<u>Snack</u>	
Calories:	<input type="text"/>	Calories:	<input type="text"/>
Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>	Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>
Calories:	<input type="text"/>	Calories:	<input type="text"/>
Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>	Fat grams:	<input type="text"/>
% calories from fat:	<input type="text"/>	% calories from fat:	<input type="text"/>

I don't know where you get the ideas for what to include for each meal. I guess you're on your own to decide what to eat and determine the calories and fat grams for each meal.

Finally we have the Daily Food Diary, another spreadsheet to allow you track in detail what you stow away throughout the day. I imagine we might be surprised by the amount if we track it diligently.

Daily Food Diary

Name: _____
Date: _____

Meal	Food Eaten	Amount	Fat Grams	Calories
Breakfast				
Snack				
Lunch				

The rows go on to include dinner and two more snacks. It sounds like they've been following me around! Finally they include a line to keep track of the amount of water you drink during the day.

As I mentioned earlier, I haven't seen any assistance provided along the lines of menu planning suggestions or guides to fat grams and calories for any of the entries you make. I imagine that they expect you to get that from your doctor or nutritionist. These sheets are just a means to track whatever you select from another source.

If any of the items in the task serve to prod you into doing something about fitness, the task will certainly have been worthwhile. It's all too easy to procrastinate or neglect this activity altogether. I hear from some of my older friends that at an advanced age, they feel that they might just as well go ahead and partake of those things that give them pleasure. I personally think that one should strive to maintain one's health even if it means passing up on certain food or drink, and getting off your duff and getting some exercise. It might not add years to your life, but life to your years. □



BBSers

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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Crystal Ball Time

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

What does the future hold for personal computer users? When the present generation over the age of 60 is gone, there will be few people who have not been exposed to computing at an early age. Many will own desktop or notebook style computers and will have a good working knowledge of how to get the most out of them. But what is in store for them?

If you look at the programs that most of us actually use on a home based computer, be it Microsoft, Apple or any other type of machine, you will probably conclude that all we are really using is one of or a combination of the following:

1. The internet, mainly for e-mail, but also for tracking the stock market or other informational interests (also used by the bad guys to track us or exchange information on how to harm us)
2. Word processor, most likely MS Word, even though there are superior programs
3. Photo cataloging with possible photo enhancing software
4. Greeting card producer
5. A few of us might also be using some type of spreadsheet program, although it may be hidden inside some other software disguised as a "checkbook" or "financial" package
6. Well, that's about it

If you are using any of the more complicated features of the above programs, or other industrial strength software, it is more than likely in connection with your work. Teachers, draftspersons, photo restorers and others come to mind.

So what are the computer manufacturers and software developers doing? Mainframe comes to mind. In case you haven't noticed it, there is not much new that can be done with a personal computer. Just look at the money we have wasted "upgrading" to operating systems and programs that often do very little more than the previous version, and often do it less efficiently.

But the serious users are busily converting their programming skills to mainframe computers, if they weren't there to begin with. The machines are so unbelievably powerful and with such enormous data storage capacity that the average home user cannot comprehend what is going on. What appear to be personal computers in the workplace often are workstations tied into a mainframe somewhere else. And that, my friends, is where the industry money is going.

My guess is they have lost interest in the minor needs of personal computer users and very little money will be invested from now on in what we use.

But in the immortal words of someone (although Bill Gates denies ever saying it):

"No one will need more than 637 kb of memory for a personal computer."

640 kb was the original limitation of the IBM Personal Computer and only through a fluke did we get to the memory capability that we enjoy today. Apple never had such a limitation.

Time may prove me wrong, but judging from what I see in the stores and talking to the really serious users with whom I am acquainted, my advice is - get everything you need now plus spare parts, because you may not be able to easily get any of it a few years from now.

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Access: Wild Card Search - Find Anything

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

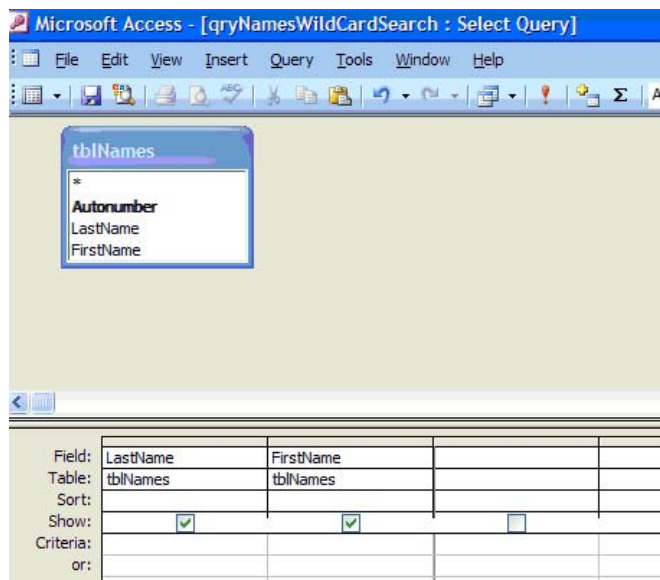
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

Queries in Access are usually looking for specific values or ranges. I have currently been working on searching for items that contain so set or subset of values. By using wild cards we can find a set of characters contained within a string.

For example, let's put some names in a table.

tblNames	
LastName	FirstName
Smith	Ralph
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie
Woodward	Larry
Ford	Robert
Dallas	Robin

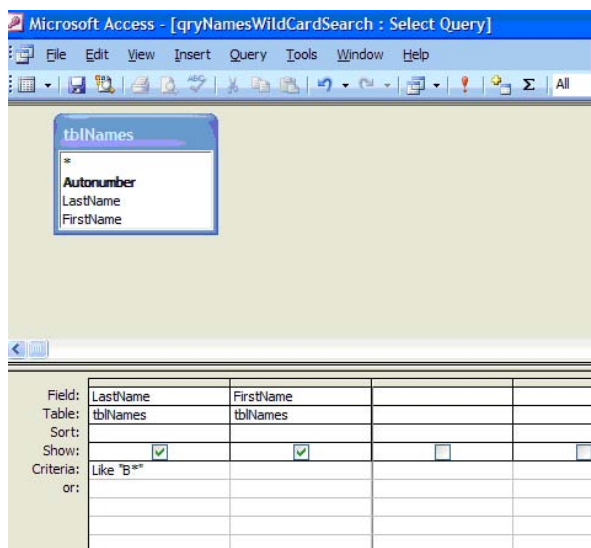
Now, Create a quick query using this table.



All we have done here is drag the Lastname and FirstName field to the grid. If we run this we will get a list of the last names and first names.

qryNamesWildCardSearch	
LastName	FirstName
Smith	Ralph
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie
Woodward	Larry
Ford	Robert
Dallas	Robin

But what if we wanted all the LastNames that began with “B”. That is easy too. In the criteria of the LastName column enter like b and press enter. Access will format the criteria to read “Like “b*”. The asterisk after the b is called a wildcard. This statement tell the field to display all the items that begin with b and ignore any other characters after that.



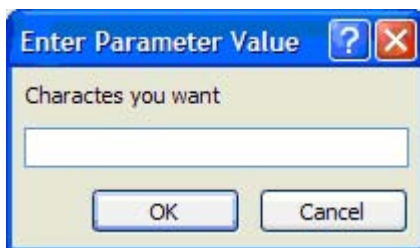
Run the data sheet view and we get a list of the Last names that begin with b.

Now if we wanted to search the LastName field for the characters “es” we just modify our search criteria to have the wild card “*” in the front and one in the back. The criteria would be “like *es*”.

qryNamesWildCardSearch	
LastName	FirstName
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie

In this case we get the same result. You will get a different set with real data. This example is fine for a couple of runs. Now if you want to get prompted for the characters you are looking at let’s change the criteria just a little.

Enter Like "*" & [Characters you want] & "*" into the criteria of LastName. Now you get a prompt and do not have to change the criteria for what you want. The prompt looks like this.



Enter the letter s and you get every LastName with an s in it.

Look in help for wild card and you will get a list of all the possibilities for searching using this method. Then just go WILD and create away. This then is incorporated into a form and used to populate a report and you have some real power and nice reports.

Get out there and put this to practice. Generate some errors, search the help for that little clue that corrects your code and makes your program run as you expected it too. This is United Way Fund drive time. I volunteer my time to a United Way Fund agency. They are doing exceptional work for the community. I feel humble to do a very minute part to give back to the community. When you help another you can hold your head up a little higher. You can affect how the community gets shaped.

qryNamesWildCardSearch	
LastName	FirstName
Smith	Ralph
Best	Katy
Best	Jessie
Dallas	Robin



The Keyboard: friend or foe?

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/>>

People are always being told about how typing for long periods of time is bad for you, but have you ever wondered what really happens and if there is a real cause for alarm? Unfortunately there is! Poor typing posture can cause pain and other symptoms in adults as well as children.

Low Back Pain

The lifetime prevalence of low back pain has been estimated at nearly 70% for industrialized countries (Anderson, 1991), and much of this is related to poor posture while sitting. Back pain is certainly not limited to adults. In fact, it has been reported that approximately 23% of elementary school children complain of backache and that this percentage rises to about 33% among the secondary school population (Mierau, 1984, cited in Marschall, Harrington, and Steele, 1995). Two European studies even found that as many as 60% of schoolchildren experience back problems by the ages of 15 or 16 (Balague, 1988 and Davoine, 1991, both cited in Mandal, 1997). A study of 500 US teenagers found that 56% of the males and 30% of the females suffered from degeneration of the spine as supported by X-ray evidence (Fish, 1984, cited in Knight and Noyes, 1999).

Hand/Wrist Problems

These include Cumulative Trauma Disorders, better known as CTDs, RSIs (Repetitive Stress Injuries), OODs (Occupational Overuse Disorders), etc. Since the late 1980s, the incidence of CTDs has skyrocketed, especially among that performing computer intensive work. The number of repeated trauma cases increased steadily from 23,800 in 1972 to 332,000 in 1994-a 14-fold increase (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1995).

Although there are few statistics on children and CTDs, with so many children starting to use computers at such an early age, there is no telling whether this may accelerate the incidence of CTDs. Since the average American child is currently spending one to three hours daily in front of a computer (Roper Starch, 1999), there is a great potential for injury. In their milder forms, CTDs may involve injury to the tendons and their sheaths within the hand and wrist area, which may cause:

- Discomfort
- Tenderness to touch
- Inflammation
- Weakening of the tendons

The more serious CTDs may lead to the following symptoms in the hands, fingers, and arms:

- Pain
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Loss of sensation
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)

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Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is one of the most serious and best known CTDs. It results when the median nerve does not "work" properly. Usually, this is thought to occur because there is too much pressure on the nerve as it runs into the wrist through an opening called the carpal tunnel.

Eventually, the pressure inside the tunnel reaches a point when the nerve can no longer function normally. Pain and numbness in the hand begin and progress if the cause is not eliminated. Repeated forceful movements made by the hands while in deviated postures (flexion, extension, ulnar radiation, and radial radiation) are known to dramatically increase the risks of developing this syndrome.

Ulnar and radial deviations contribute to CTDs, but it is flexion and, particularly, extension that are the real culprits. Remember that when the wrist is in a neutral position, the carpal tunnel is as large as it can be so the nerve has as much room as possible and injury can be prevented.

Preventing Injury

When it comes to preventing injury, adults and children need to use the following rules:

- * Keep their body and wrist posture in neutral positions while sitting and keyboarding.
- * Have an appropriate PC configuration.
- * Take breaks at appropriate intervals.
- * Neutral Keyboarding Posture

- * Upper and lower back well supported by chair
- * Chair height set so that the chair seat does not compress the back of the knees
- * Feet firmly planted on a surface for support (floor or footrest)
- * Head balanced on neck (not tilted back or too far forward)
- * Upper arms close to body and relaxed (not abducted to the side or flexed forward)

Sitting so that the:

- * Angle formed by the shoulders, hips, and knees is >90 degrees
- * Angle formed by the shoulder, elbow, and wrist is >90 degrees
- * Angle formed by the hips, knees, and feet is >90 degrees
- * Wrists at a neutral position, level with forearm (<15 degrees deviation)
- * Chair armrests not directly compressing any part of the forearms or elbows

Moving a mouse with your forearm and not just your wrist will reduce hand deviation. If you suspect you have an injury, get it checked by a professional.





All computers wait at the same speed

Vinny La Bash , Sarasota PC User Group

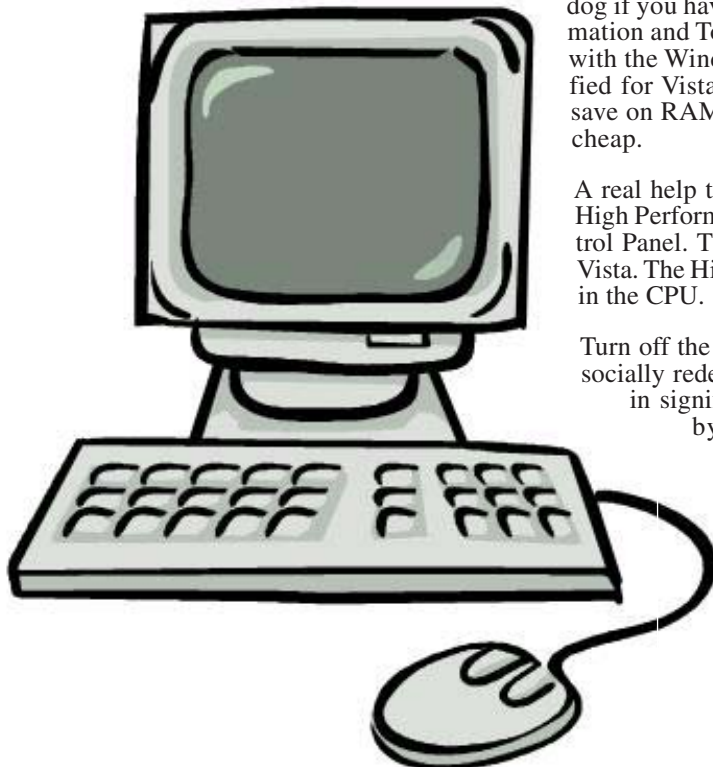
Vinny (SPCUG President in 1996-97-98) is a retired IBM'er and teaches computer part time at the Sarasota Vocational Technical Institute. <labash@spcug.org>

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Continued on page 31

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

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

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

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

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

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The Big DTV Transition

by Sister Dorothy Robinson, OSB, OMUG Newsletter Editor, The Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washington, <http://www.oly mug.org>, newsletter@oly mug.org

Computer users often speculate about how digital technology will affect us and our world. We are now entering the final stage of a rather large digital transition, that of digital television signals. Didn't know this transition was going on? You're not alone.

On February 16, The Olympian ran an Associated Press article on the digital television transition that is happening in the United States. The article said that in about a year, on February 17, 2009, all analog TV broadcasts will end in this country. If a TV does not have a digital tuner, or is not connected to cable or satellite or other paid services, it will need a digital converter box to receive and display digital signals. About 13 million households would be affected—those with older TVs (no digital tuner) or receiving signals only over the air as in the past. This is because analog tuners can't decode and display digital signals.

Options, said The Olympian, for continuing to receive TV signals after February 17, 2009 are to buy a digital converter box (\$40-50, according to this AP article), a new TV with a digital tuner, or get connected to a paid service. The federal government is offering \$40 coupons, up to two per household, good on the purchase of a converter box. You can now call 1-888-388-2009 or apply online at <http://www.dtv2009.gov>. There is also an option online to print out an application and mail it in. You may want to apply early.

<http://www.9wsyr.com> says "You will still need an over-the-air antenna in addition to the converter box to receive a digital signal on your analog television set. Your current antenna should work the same as before. Many major chains have been certified to sell the converter boxes, including Best Buy; Circuit City; Kmart; Sam's Club; Wal-Mart; Sears, Radio Shack and Target."

Best Buy, according to centredaily.com, "will stock an Insignia-branded analog-to-digital converter box exclusively, retailing at \$59.99."

PRNewswire.com states "Converter boxes at \$49.97 are on shelves now at Wal-Mart already."

According to radioshack.com, you can find a Zenith converter in stores for \$59.99. It is looking like the difference between the price of the converter box and the coupon will be \$10 and up.

The Olympian article said the reasons for the changeover are to allow for auctioning off excess airwaves (digital broadcasting is much more efficient so there will be an excess), for new wireless services, and "possibly" providing emergency air networks for disasters. Digital signals can also provide better picture definition—but that depends on whether high definition programs are being broadcast and on whether a TV is set up to receive high definition programs. Digital signals can support high-definition (HDTV) broadcasts—but is not the same as HDTV.

From How Stuff Works, <http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/hdtv1.htm>, comes this information: "Some people believe that the United States is switching to HDTV—that all they'll need for HDTV is a new TV and that they'll automatically have HDTV when analog service ends. Unfortunately, none of this is true." If you want more information on how HDTV works, check this site at the link above.

The government website at <http://www.dtv.2009.gov> has this to say about the reasons for the changeover: "Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders." It says nothing about auctioning off air wave spectrum or the intricacies of HDTV.

The Benton Foundation page at <http://www.benton.org/index.php?q=node/1257> has information on the background and time-line for DTV transition. It states:



"Digital television (DTV) is a new, more efficient technology for transmitting and receiving broadcast television signals. But DTV signals are not compatible with today's analog TV sets in most American homes. Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the amount of spectrum given to television station owners was doubled. The policy rationale for this was to enable the stations to transition US consumers to digital TV without interruption of analog broadcasts. But after ten years of digital TV broadcasts, only a small number of US households have made the switch to DTV, delaying the return of valuable spectrum that could be used by emergency officials and auctioned to offset federal deficit spending."

Included in benton.org's time-line called "Getting to February 2009: Implementing the Digital TV Transition," is this step:

"January 28, 2008 The FCC must conduct the auction of the licenses for recovered analog spectrum, commencing the bidding no later than this date, and is to deposit the proceeds of the auction in the US Treasury no later than June 30, 2008."

In other words, this is happening right now, if things are proceeding on schedule.

CNN.com's take on this topic in January of 2006: (http://money.cnn.com/2006/01/04/technology/pluggedin_digitaltv/index.htm):

"Once TV stations switch to digital transmission, they will return to the government a big chunk of the radio spectrum they currently use to transmit their analog channels. Some of that spectrum will go to first responders—police, fire and public safety officials—so they can better communicate with one another. Breakdowns in emergency communication slowed the response to the September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. New spectrum should help.

The rest of the spectrum will be auctioned off to the highest bidders—probably tech companies. The sale of this valuable, scarce real estate is expected to bring in about \$10 billion, maybe more. That will help reduce the federal budget deficit."

CNN also talked about the new technology and services that will likely be developed using this increased air availability, for example, cheap wireless broadband access virtually everywhere. Referring to an historical parallel, it states:

"Scheduled for 2008, the auction will be the biggest spectrum sale since a 1994-95 spectrum auction. That sale helped boost the mobile phone industry, boosting the number of cell phone subscribers in the U.S. from 24 million to 200 million. It also helped drive down the cost of wireless minutes from an average of 47 cents a minute to 9 cents a minute, according to analysis from financial services firm Stifel Nicolaus."

Whether we like it or not, the DTV revolution is on its way. The best we can do is prepare ourselves. For many of us, the \$10 or \$20 needed to buy a converter box is not a problem. Unfortunately, some people on fixed or low incomes will find it very difficult to get ready for the change. For them, the TV screen may go dark at midnight on February 17, 2009.




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Hulu Offers Free TV and Movies over the Net

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

One of my readers recently emailed me about an offer he received via email (probably a spam email) about a \$50 program that will allow him to view what was described as satellite TV over the internet, without paying a monthly fee. According to the email, with this program, he could discontinue his cable or satellite service, and watch over 3000 channels on his computer. I researched the product he referenced and found that it was a multilevel marketed program that was, in my opinion, deceptive in that it did not offer real satellite TV, but instead only offered a software utility that could receive the thousands of streaming videos already available for anyone to view for free, and that often required no special software to view. I strongly recommended to the reader that he not purchase the product, and instead just search for streaming video, and to keep his current TV provider.

In researching this service I came upon a recently released and legitimate way to view thousands of TV programs and movies over the internet, for free, and only using any of the common internet browsers. This free service (registration required) is the Hulu service available online at www.hulu.com. Hulu was founded in March of 2007, and is a joint venture owned by NBC Universal, and News Corp, and financed by \$100 million of venture capital. As I type this, Hulu is offering advertising supported content from over 50 sources, such as Fox TV, NBC, MGM, Sony Pictures, Warner Brothers, Lionsgate, 20th Century Fox, and other providers.

The content available for viewing includes TV shows, full length feature films, and clips. Several full length, prime time shows are available on Hulu the morning after they air, and include such popular shows as The Simpsons, and The Office. There are also dozens of classical TV shows, available as full length episodes, including such favorites as Miami Vice and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. If users are willing to put up with unobtrusive ads, often in the lower right corner of the image, or standard TV type commercials, they can watch for free such full length feature films as Ice Age, Three Amigos!, and many others. Hulu is headquartered in Los Angeles, with research and development being done in China.

Hulu will play on almost all current browsers as they are currently configured, and require no special software or add-ons to utilize the service, and requires a broadband connection to view the videos. Almost all computers already have Adobe's Flash Player installed, but if not, Flash Player is a free download from Adobe at www.adobe.com.

Once registered at hulu.com (free registration), a broad selection of videos becomes available for viewing at will. As I type this, there are about 11,200 full length TV episodes and feature clips available, with more being added daily. Currently available for viewing are almost all of the episodes of The Simpsons, 30 Rock, The Office, Knight Rider, House, Medium, Bionic Woman, American Dad!, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, 24, Prison Break, Heroes, about 160 full length children's cartoons (Woody Woodpecker, Spiderman, Astro Boy, and many others), and other TV shows of all genres.

For those partial to Saturday Night Live skits, there are about nearly 500 available, including such contemporary issues as presidential politics. TV wrestling fans would appreciate the over 300 matches available for viewing, while NBA fans can view over 140 clips from professional basketball games. A collection of recent (2008) full length college football games, including many of the bowl games are available for viewing, including the 2007 and 2008 Sugar Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, and others, enough to satiate any college football fans, and keep them glued to the computer screen for days on end.

Soap opera addicts will appreciate the well over 100 clips from Days of Our Lives. In total, Hulu lists 25 different TV genres for every taste, making something available for everyone. The large assortment of TV shows (and movies as well) can be displayed by clicking on "Type" (TV or Movie), and then "Genre"; this will display only those selections that meet both criteria. Simply clicking on the image of the selection will play that selection. All of the TV shows can be displayed in one window alphabetically

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

Holiday Ink

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at www.hulu.com/browse/alphabetical/tv, and can be run by clicking on their titles. All of the TV shows can also be displayed in one window, sorted by genre at www.hulu.com/browse/genre/tv.

Hulu is not just about TV, but also full length feature films, clips, and trailers. As I type this, there are 760 movies available, of which 80 are full length feature films, the remainder being shorts, clips and trailers. According to Hulu, the most popular full length films viewed by members are Ice Age, Master and Commander: The far Side of the World, The Girl Next Door, The Jerk, Usual Suspects, Planet of the Apes, Weekend at Bernie's, Dragon – The Bruce Lee Story, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, Three Amigos!, All Dogs Go to Heaven, and dozens more.

Movies are divided into 10 genres, including action and adventure, animation, comedy, crime and mystery, documentary and biography, drama, family and kids, horror and thriller, music, and sci-fi and fantasy. Movies can be selected by genre, or by studio. Opening www.hulu.com/browse/network/movies will display movies alphabetically by studio, with full length features being clearly indicated. Each of the movies shown is hyperlinked (click on the title) directly to the movie. Similarly, all of the movies can be sorted by genre, and displayed in one window at www.hulu.com/browse/genre/movies.

Hulu is about to roll out "HD" (High Definition) videos, and currently has 20 HD movie trailers available to demonstrate the service at www.hulu.com/hd. Since HD video carries more data than conventional video, the system requirements are higher to view HD. In order to view the HD videos, the computer must have a minimum of Flash Player 9.0.115.0 (a free download from Adobe, available for most operating systems), a 2.5Mbps or faster broadband connection (many of the basic broadband services are incapable of operating at this speed, and a premium or upgraded broadband may be required to view HD), a fast processor (3Ghz minimum for Windows or Linux, or a 1.83Ghz Intel Core Duo for Mac). Almost all modern computers of recent manufacturer meet the minimum RAM and video requirements to view HD videos.

While not a substitute for cable or satellite TV, Hulu can provide countless hours of entertainment for free. Since new content is frequently added, and additional providers are being solicited, Hulu has the potential for becoming a major entertainment resource.

The screenshot shows the Hulu website interface. At the top, the Hulu logo is on the left, and navigation links for TV, Movies, Login, Forgot Password?, and Sign Up are on the right. Below the logo, there are tabs for Most Popular, Recently Added, Browse TV, Browse Movies, Collections, and HD Gallery. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. The main banner features a promotional image for the TV show Mad Men, with the text "hulu DAYS OF SUMMER MAD MEN Day 35 Debut" and a description of the Season 2 premiere. Below the banner, there are four sections: Popular Episodes (featuring Burn Notice: Identity), Popular Clips (featuring Game Reviews: Soulcalibur IV), Featured Videos (featuring The Daily Show with Jon Stewart), and Days of Summer (featuring Mad Men).

The Internet

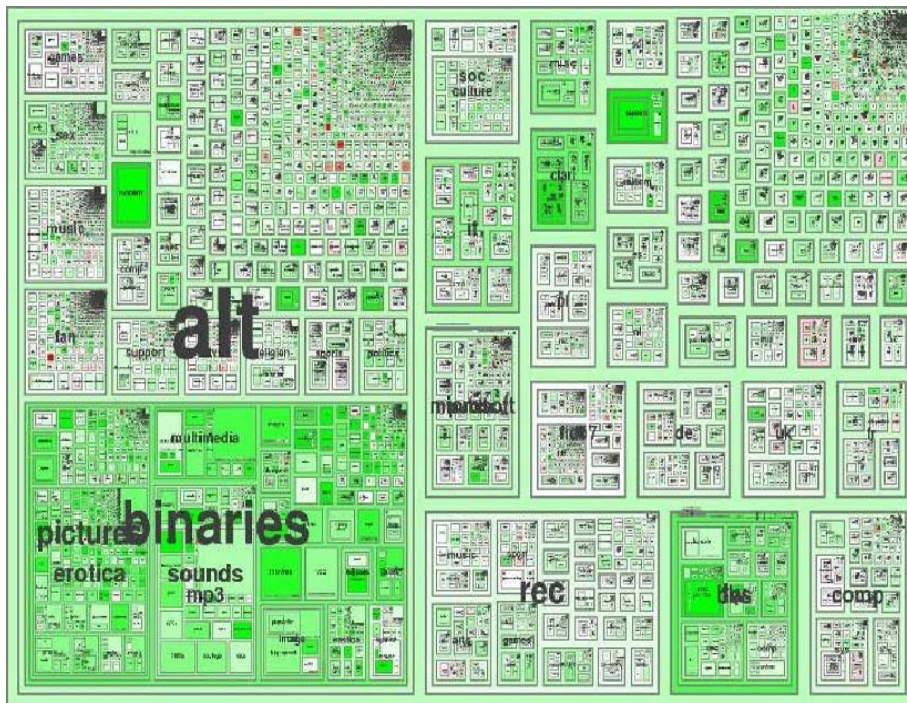
Binary Floodgates on the Internet Backwaters

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

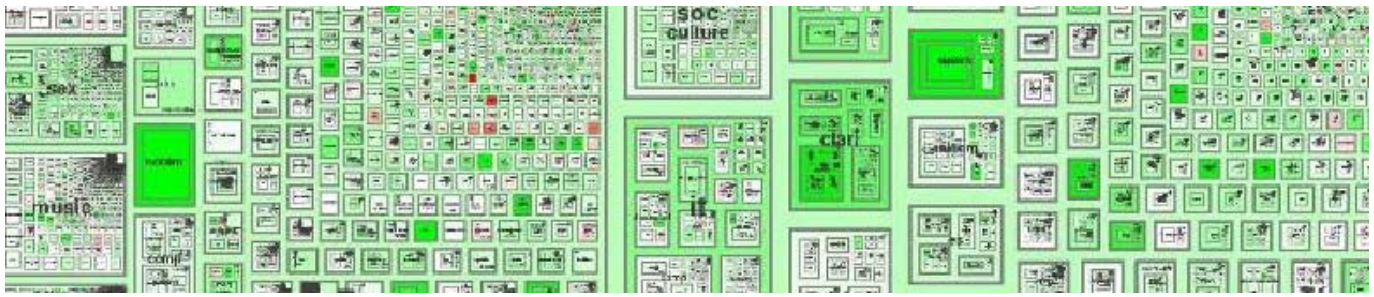
Back in the days before the World Wide Web, when computers connected directly to each other over telephone lines, we had a piece of software called a Bulletin Board System or BBS. BGAMUG operated a BBS from about 1989 through 2001 and aside from being responsible for the marriage of at least one member we know about, we amassed a collection of files that totaled, at last count, some 45 gigabytes in size, which was pretty impressive when you consider that there was not one among them that was copyrighted and marked as non-distributable material. Unlike many “boards” of the day, BGAMUG took special pains to make sure that the material we funneled through our member’s modems was all above board and free of distribution issues.

So-called pirate BBSs, where copyrighted software was swapped like recipes at a county fair, were not illegal to visit, but there were a few high profile cases with big fines involved and even jail time for the pirate system operators. For the most part, though, our legal system didn’t seem to be effective in prosecuting even the most flagrant cases, and the most that a copyright holder could hope for seemed to be a civil remedy by bringing suit.

Now the stakes have certainly been raised in terms of the volume of material swapped, and the material that is swapped today seems to be music more often than the latest PC game, but the copyright system in this country is still not very clear on the issue of sharing binary information. What is evident is that it’s the user’s responsibility to determine whether or not a given body of information has a copyright assigned to



Continued on page 37



another individual, and also to figure out how much of it can be used (viewed, listened to, stored, forwarded, sold, whatever) and still fall under the “fair use” doctrine.

Instead of this turning into a dissertation on copyright law, I will instead offer the foregoing as simply a caution. Please do not download copyright material and don’t use it unless you have clear permission or fair use rights. And please don’t take any of the following as a cookbook for copyright subversion because it’s not meant that way.

Having got that caveat out of the way, let’s go somewhere where the World Wide Web doesn’t go – USENET! [Pronounced YOOZ net].

Usenet is the bulletin board of the internet, and like a real bulletin board, its information is emblazoned on the internet like a ten foot high plasma billboard on Times Square in New York City. Usenet was conceived by a pair of graduate students, John Ellis and Tom Truscott at Duke University in 1979. Now lurid and lawless, Usenet has been given the unseemly reputation of being the Las Vegas of the internet because of the terabytes of binary pictures posted minute by minute in an unending stream of first-amendment fodder.

And we can find some dandy files on Usenet. Clip art, genealogical records, MIDI music and classical music, sound libraries, electronic books, recipes, quilting patterns, maps, GPS info, high quality desktop wallpaper, icons, and almost anything you can think of. This material is not usually found on the World Wide Web for several reasons, but primarily because people that put up web sites generally want to sell you something, and you can’t very well sell what is found on Usenet because it is sometimes difficult to find out if it’s under copyright or not. You can usually find someone to charge you for a collection of postage stamp images (for example) on the web, when in fact the sellers of the collection most likely just downloaded it from Usenet in the first place (probably in violation of a copyright or two!)

Usenet is and always was just text messages posted on internet machines known as news servers. Old timers still refer to Usenet as “net news” even though most of the posts have nothing to do with news. News servers use a protocol known as NNTP to transmit new messages on to other news servers down the pipe. The effect is that a new message posted to an NNTP server gets copied again and again over the course of hours or days until all of the news servers of the world have the message or file in their database. This copying occurs a little like e-mail, except that there is no way to make a post private. In fact, there is no way to address a Usenet posting to anyone but “ALL.” Usenet bears another resemblance to e-mail, and that is there is a LOT of spam (or pointless messages, ads and porn). But if you know where to look, or just exercise some very patient trial and error, you can find some great repositories of information. If you are looking for one specific file though, you had better be really lucky! Trolling for files on Usenet is a bit like fishing on a commercial fishing boat: you’re going to pull up just about everything that gets caught in your net!

Even though it’s text based, binary files (images or programs, for example) can be uploaded and downloaded to Usenet with ease, thanks to some very clever programming that allows seamless conversion from text to binary and back again. The difference between text and binary is not that important – just think of text as messages you can read, and binary as graphics, video, audio or program files.

Messages are organized by topic into a system with the following “top level” names:

Comp [computers]

Misc [miscellany]

News [internet news, such as new groups or new policies about usenet]

Rec [recreation]

Sci [science]

Soc [social and behavior, religion, philosophy]

Talk [just that, talk, mostly of the flapping jaw variety!]

Continued on page 38

Subgroups are separated by periods – for example, `rec.sports.tennis`, and this fully formed topic name is called a newsgroup. Unfortunately, the process for creating new newsgroups is not overseen very well, and over the years the list of newsgroups available has become truly massive and quite often inane, vulgar or pointless. There is also not a good standard convention for naming newsgroups, and thus we have many more “top level” domains that I’d really rather not see.

The top-level newsgroups can be considered the backbone of Usenet and, with the exception of the advertisements and some dramatic grandstanding in some of these groups, they can be fairly informative. In particular, Usenet news is a good place to obtain an anecdotal history for just about any given industry, profession, product or technology.

But now comes the red-headed stepchild of Usenet: `alt`.

`ALT` is a top level newsgroup hierarchy that was created to dump whatever didn’t fit in the other, more official newsgroups.

The `alt` groups carry most of the message traffic on Usenet, and as the tag implies, this is where the alternative thinking comes out in the Usenet crowd! The `alt.binaries` newsgroups collectively carry thousands of gigabytes of information across the internet daily. And where do you complain if someone posts something objectionable? You don’t. There’s no help desk and no complaint center. Usenet runs itself, as there is no news server that has any special authority over any other server. US courts have consistently held that the ISP that houses this information is no more responsible for its content than the owner of your local news stand would be responsible for the content of the magazines he or she sells.

Most of the files on Usenet are found in the `alt.binaries` section of newsgroups, and it is from these newsgroups that your news reader software (see below) will automatically process the messages into finished files that are ready to view, listen to or execute on your computer.

This seems like a good time to point out that executing any file obtained from an untrusted source really has to be scanned by a good, up-to-date viral scanner before you execute it. The safest policy is to just not run these files unless you do so on a computer on which you won’t lose any sleep over, should it become infected. However, it is difficult to obtain an infection from a document or audiovisual file, so these are probably safe to read or listen to.

You will find some groups on Usenet that end with ‘`.d`’, which stands for “discussion.” So for example, we have the `alt.binaries.sounds.midi` newsgroup, which contains actual MIDI files (Musical Instrument Digital Interface files), whereas `alt.binaries.sounds.midi.d` would be a group devoted to the text based discussion of the material found in the former newsgroup. In this context, the word discussion means posting information about a given topic, as opposed to real-time chat in a split-screen “chat room” environment. There is nothing real-time about Usenet because each client computer can be expected to update its Usenet database at different times, quite at random.

There are some groups that are moderated, where a real person is charged with the task of vetting everything that’s posted before you actually see it. This person or group, naturally, is known as a moderator, and they are really the only thing close to an authority on Usenet. As you might expect, some moderated groups have a better track record than others in keeping out the riff-raff and spam.

There is an interesting history of Usenet and how newsgroups came to be named at this link: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usenet>

You can receive and post Usenet articles (or binary files) by employing a news reader which is also sometimes referred to as an NNTP reader (nnTP is the Network News Transfer Protocol).

If you would prefer not to have to download and install a news reader, you can skip the hassle of learning the ins and outs of a new program. Try going to <http://groups.google.com> in your browser, and clicking on some of the links. Google Groups is a “front end” or interface to Usenet without the news reader. However, unless things have changed since I last took a look at Google Groups, they don’t support the `alt.binaries` newsgroups, therefore you won’t find any files on Google Groups.

My favorite news reader is called XNEWS, created by a fellow named Luu Tran. There is a user manual posted on the internet at this link: <http://xnews.newsguy.com/manual.html>

Xnews is a free download and there is no expectation for you to pay anything to the author of this utility. You can get the program at this link: <http://xnews.newsguy.com/release/xnews.zip>

The program does not need to be installed, you can just unzip it to a directory somewhere on your computer and run “`xnews.exe`.” Setting up “Xnews” is probably more easily accomplished in a workshop setting than a newsletter.





Bookmarks Page

by **Hank Pearson**, Treasurer and Webmaster, ASCIi (Arizona Association for Computer Information, inc.), www.asciigroup.org, hank.pearson@asciigroup.org

Wouldn't it be nice if you could view a searchable webpage of bookmarks for your favorite websites? You can, but why?

Find Bookmarks with Forgotten Names

One reason to view your bookmarks as a webpage (as an alternative to looking in a menu) is to be able to find sites when you can't remember the first word in the name.

Let's say you have a Firefox bookmark named Carbonite Online Backup, and you can't remember Carbonite but you know you are looking for the word Backup. On your Bookmarks page (you will soon learn how to view), you can easily search for Backup.

You are using Firefox, aren't you? If you haven't discovered Firefox, download it from Mozilla (<http://mozilla.com>). It's free, fast, and secure. Make Firefox your default browser.

View Bookmark Descriptions and Tags

Another reason for a bookmarks page is to give you plenty of room to view (and find) descriptions of your bookmarks. You will learn how to add tags to improve your searches.

Zoom In and Out

A third reason to display your bookmarks on a webpage is to allow you to zoom the text in and out so you can see it clearly. To zoom any webpage, press Ctrl+Plus or Ctrl+Minus, using the numeric keypad.

DIY for Fun and Learning

So, how do you display your bookmarks as a webpage? You could download a tool to do the work for you, or download a tool to search bookmarks. But it's easy enough to DIY (Do It Yourself). It's interesting, fun, and educational. Are you just using your computer to perform certain tasks, or do you also enjoy learning by experimenting? If you like to learn, this tip is for you.

Find the Bookmarks File

You don't need to create a bookmarks webpage. It already exists on your own hard drive! The name of the file is simply bookmarks.html. Press Win+F to find it. (While holding down the Windows key (next to Alt), press F, for Find.) In the left window pane, click 'All Files and Folders'. In 'All or part of the file name', type 'bookmarks.html' (without quotes). Click Search.

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If you get multiple results, it's easy to determine which bookmarks.html file to use. It's the newest one. In the View menu (of your Search Results window), click Details. In the right window pane, click the Date Modified column header (to sort the list). The file you are interested in has the newest date and time (for a file with the Type shown as Firefox Document).

Bookmark the Bookmarks File

Double-click that newest bookmarks.html Firefox Document to open it in Firefox. Press Ctrl+D to bookmark the bookmarks.html file. In the Name field, insert a hyphen (-) at the beginning (to name the bookmark '-Bookmarks'), so this new bookmark will appear at the top of the list.

Now, with your Bookmarks page displayed, press F5 to refresh the view. (F5 is a common shortcut key for Refresh.) Surprise? The new -Bookmarks bookmark is at the bottom - not the top. Let's address that. (This is Firefox 2.0.0.11. Future versions might vary.)

Create Another Top Bookmark

First, create another bookmark that will be displayed at the top. For example, open Google.com, press Ctrl+D, and name the bookmark -Google (starting with a hyphen).

Sort Your Bookmarks

Now, in the Bookmarks menu, right click any bookmark, and click Sort by Name. Look in the Bookmarks menu to confirm that the bookmarks are indeed sorted. Note the two bookmarks that begin with hyphen (-) at the top of the menu.

Look at your Bookmarks page again, and press F5 to Refresh. The new bookmarks are still at the bottom.

Rearrange Your Bookmarks

To force Firefox to rearrange your bookmarks page, move a bookmark in the menu. In the Bookmarks menu, drag, for example, either new bookmark that starts with a hyphen up or down to precede or follow the other bookmark that starts with a hyphen. (Having two hyphen-prefixed bookmarks lets you rearrange those two at the top without rearranging the other bookmarks.) Press Escape to close the menu.

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Refresh your Bookmarks page with F5. The bookmarks on the webpage are now arranged as shown in the Bookmarks menu. (Do you need to refresh three times? No, we simply demonstrated that the bookmarks.html file is rearranged when you move a bookmark in the menu.)

Finding Bookmarks on the Page

When you are viewing your Bookmarks webpage, press Ctrl+F for Find. Type Backup, for example, and press Escape (to close the Find toolbar). To find the next occurrence of Backup, press F3. (F3 is a common shortcut key for Find Again.) When you find the desired bookmark (link), click it (or Ctrl+click to open the site in a new tab). (Or press Enter, or Ctrl+Enter to open the site in a new tab.)

Add Descriptions and Tags

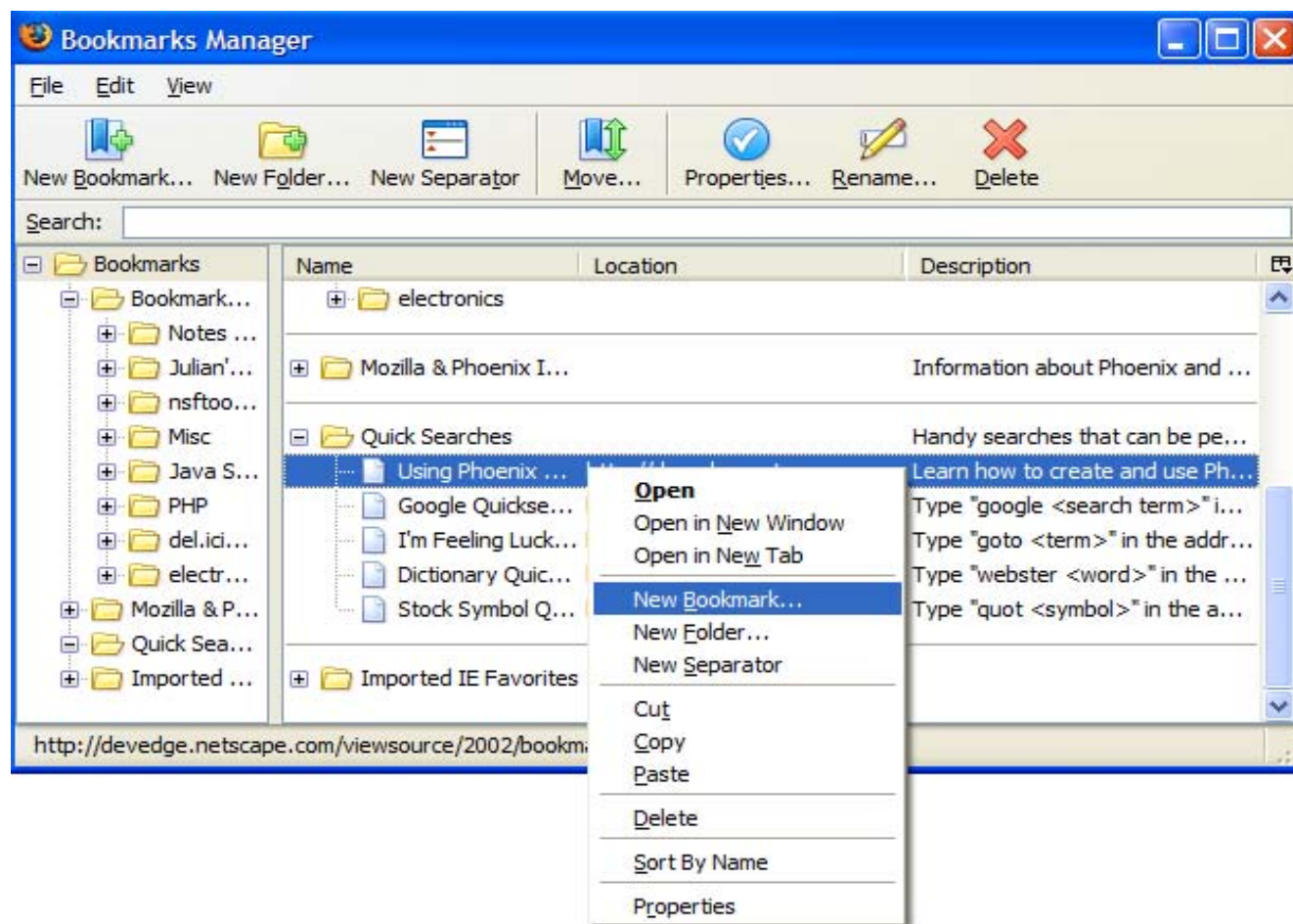
To add or change descriptions of your bookmarks, in the Bookmarks menu, right-click the bookmark you want to edit, and click Properties. In the Description field, type anything (including your own tags) that might help you find your bookmark and remember what it is for. After clicking OK and pressing F5 (for Refresh), you will see your new Description in the Bookmarks page.

Make Changes through the Menu

Now that you know where bookmarks.html is located, you might be tempted to edit it directly with a text editor. Mozilla warns that it is automatically generated, so do not edit it, as your changes would be lost. Make your changes through the Bookmarks menu.

Displaying your Bookmarks as a webpage is a start in discovering many more tips and tricks related to Firefox.

Hank Pearson (hank.pearson(at)asciigroup.org) is the Treasurer and Webmaster for ASCII (www.asciigroup.org). He is a long-time member who frequently writes articles for the group's newsletter, and has served as President, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Presentations Coordinator.



Connected or Discombobulated?

Ramblings by Judy Lococo, Director, Kentucky-Indiana PCUG,
www.kipcug.org, judy@thorobred.win.net

Everywhere you look today, someone is always talking about “connectivity” and how our new, improved world demands it. The more I see of this phenomenon, the less I think we are connected. The Internet and identity thieves have made us a nation of anonymity, and paranoid anonymity at that. We are electronically connected, but are losing the ability to look into people’s eyes, read their body English, listen to the voice inflections, and interact one-on-one with another human being.

It’s even impossible to keep up with all the acronyms! WiFi, DSL (I remember ADSL), URL, etc., have become entrenched in our lives so much that we no longer flinch when we hear one of them. And they keep stacking up at warp speed, so that even the nerdiest of us has to visit a website occasionally to find out what one means.

The morning newspaper used to be a shared experience at the breakfast table. Now it’s read online with only the parts that a reader prefers coming across the screen, and you don’t discuss your opinions with the rest of the family, nor listen to theirs. You no longer have to scan through the business section to find the crossword puzzle. You don’t have to pore through the sports pages to find automobile tires. IOW (another TLA), you don’t even have to talk to a soul without being considered rude.

Going to an office is not nearly as important as it once was. Now employees can work an 80-hour-week at home, without health insurance or retirement benefits. But you can work in jeans or sweats, so there’s considerable savings on wardrobe.

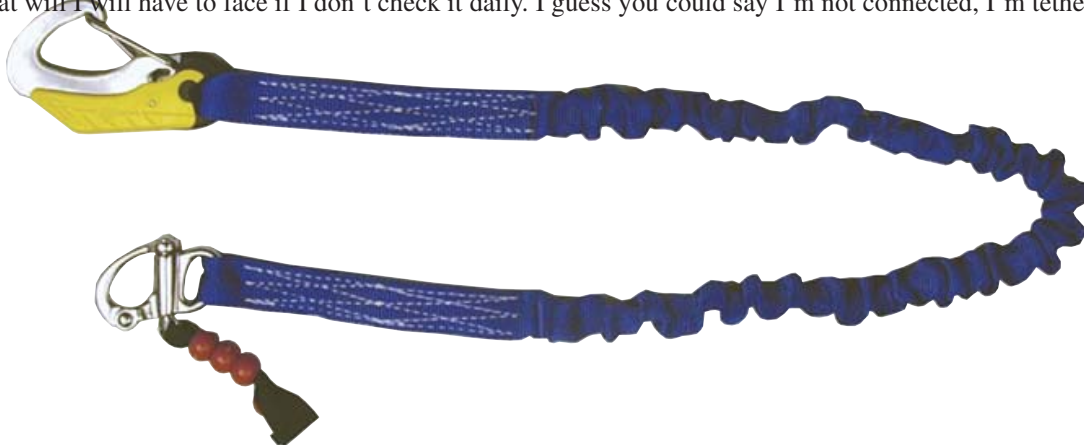
The chat rooms are so rampant with predators that parents are restricting their children’s surfing, and rightly so. But these chat rooms are yet another example of not connecting with a real, live, breathing person, only an image, which may or may not be accurate.

Email has replaced letter writing to the extent that I have to wonder if script handwriting will also be obsolete soon. Remember calligraphy? Have you seen any within the last three years? Will the dictionary of the future have “u r 2” as a comeback phrase? Will schoolchildren even be taught English grammar or typing?

And, of course, how could I not mention the answering machines, voice mail, and all other means of not speaking to people who are trying to contact you. If you reach a person on the first attempt, are you supposed to believe that person is not busy? Is this why nobody bothers to answer their phone any more, only return phone calls? If all one does is return phone calls, what happens when the one you’re calling also only returns phone calls?

As if all the time spent behind a monitor isn’t enough, our automobile windows are now designed to keep others from seeing you. So if there is actually a person around who is considerably higher up on the social ladder than you are, you have to roll your window down for them to see you! How gauche is that?

I have to admit, I’m just as guilty as the rest of the world of spending too much time on email and INet (look it up already...) It is a lot of fun to laugh out loud at a joke that somebody forwards, or follow a link to a You Tube video. I am not addicted, but afraid of what will I will have to face if I don’t check it daily. I guess you could say I’m not connected, I’m tethered. <BWG>



E-Mail Responsibilities

By **Bob Schwartz**, a member of HAL-PC, Texas, www.hal-pc.org, bobx@hal-pc.org

E-mail is a very valuable method of almost instant communication. However, many people operate under an illusion that it is private. It is not. Once sent, it is effectively broadcast to the world. So one should **NEVER** send anything that they might regret. Once it is sent, it is now in other people's hands. The recipient may or may not care as much about controlling your e-mails distribution as you do.

Just suppose you send something clever about someone you know to a friend or acquaintance and they bring it up on the screen. Then, they take a break and go to coffee, leaving it on the screen. Another person passes by, snoops, and sees the e-mail. They also think it is clever, and make a copy of it and send it to someone they know, etc.

Or, the employer records all e-mail traffic passing within their company, which they have every right to do, since the equipment is theirs.

Worse yet, some people send messages that they believe are benign and strictly business, yet some self-anointed "god" thinks otherwise.

Yet even sneakier are viruses that can unknowingly, by you, forward your e-mails elsewhere; or, police and other snoops tapping your connection. There are innumerable ways by which your "private" traffic can go public.

So, the **BOTTOM LINE** is: compose your messages with care, check the addressees listed, and review the message before pressing the "SEND" key.

Oh, by the way: do not think that once sent and "deleted", that the file is gone from your computer. When you "delete" a file, this **DOES NOT ERASE THE FILE**. All this does is change the first letter of the file name in the directory. The file, in all its glory, remains untouched on the hard drive, which is why it is so easy to recover it. Technology has provided a variety of means to recover and reconstitute "deleted" files.

To conclude, e-mail is a tremendously valuable means of almost instant communication. Just make sure that you use it carefully, thoughtfully and wisely.

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.



Google Search Bar and Your Telephone Number

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

If you know someone's telephone number, how hard would it be to find that person? Well, with Internet resources, it couldn't be easier. Type any telephone number into the Google search bar and you will quickly be given the name and address that relates to that number. Even a bit scarier is the fact that right next to the name and address is the word "map". Just click on that word and the location in question is marked with a big green arrow on a detailed map. One more click and you can see the building with that address from a satellite view.

I say this is scary because it is. This information may be put to good use by friends and relatives, but in the hands of a stalker or a criminal, it can be highly dangerous. Imagine how easy it would be to find a woman who lives alone in a rural area. Or think about a child who might innocently give out their telephone number and have a pervert be able to find their exact location so easily.

If you think that you are exempt from this because you have an unlisted or unpublished number, think again. Google states, "Our phone and address listings are gathered by a third party provider, which collects telephone directories and other public records available elsewhere on the web." It is the "other public records" that might get your telephone number into these listings. They use everything from public utility records, court records, and property records, to business records. I was able to easily find the names and addresses of several people who have unlisted telephone numbers.

Because of privacy complaints, Google has initiated a way to be removed from this reverse telephone lookup. Just search for your telephone number in google and click on the link with your name. You will be taken to another page with an obvious removal link.

Yet, if you want to remove your name and address from the entire Web, you should be prepared to settle in for a long, tedious task. Removing my telephone number from Google was easy. Unfortunately, I quickly found more than a dozen other places that had my telephone number listed including Yahoo, InfoSpace, Intelius, AnyWho, and addresses.com. Each one of these has a different method for removing your name and number, and often the process is quite convoluted. At Yahoo, there was an obvious "Remove my Listing" link. But the link went to the Yahoo help pages, which were not at all helpful. It took me about 30 minutes of searching to find the correct removal link. (<http://phone.people.yahoo.com/py/psPhoneSupp.py>)

Although most of the major search sites did not have listings for cell phones, I found that I could get the names and addresses for many cell phones numbers at Intelius for just \$14.95. Getting your name and address out of Intelius is even more complicated than removing it from some other websites. To opt out of Intelius they require that you fax them a copy of your driver's license or a notarized form proving your identity.

Even if you take the time to eliminate your name and address from all the directories that you find today, you might appear in some new directory tomorrow. Yet, if you want to guard your privacy, it may be worth the effort to eliminate yourself from as many of the directories as possible. It may also be time to realize that a simple thing like a telephone number can now lead to more personal identification than you ever imagined. Perhaps we need to start guarding our telephone number as carefully as we do our social security number.

How To Find Podcasts

by Mike Lyons, President Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, CA, www.orcopug.org, president@orcopug.org

Download the free 7.3 iTunes program from www.apple.com/itunes/ and install. Now, all you need is an mp3 player, and you're all set to download podcasts and listen to them on the go.

When you first open iTunes, click on the "Podcast Directory" at the bottom next to "Report a Concern." That actually takes you to the Apple Store. In the upper left corner is a magnifying glass and a space to search for a word or phrase. Type in "computer." The Apple logo in the top center area changes to a candy cane-striped bar as it searches. The bar will turn solid and display the results: Name, Time, Artist, Album, Price, Popularity and Genre.

Next to the name is a grayed-out circle with an arrow in it. This leads to more information about the podcast. It includes a description, user reviews, a list of the last 20 podcasts and a list of 5 "Listeners also subscribed to."

Headings are sortable by clicking on them, so if you click on Price, all the free ones appear at the top.

Some of the stuff is pretty explicit, that's why they call it the "wild, wild web." Podcasts are labeled "clean," "explicit," or blank which means the rating hasn't been determined.

I look to see how often and consistently the podcast occurs (some really good ones haven't been updated since 2006), check customer comments, and the "Also subscribed to" list.

If you want to subscribe, simply click on the "subscribe" button. To go back where you were, under the Apple logo on the left is a small button with a left pointing twirly. Click on this to get back.

After downloading podcasts, connect your mp3 player to a USB cable and right click on the file. Select "Send to" and click on the drive letter of the mp3 player to transfer podcasts to it from your computer.

Besides the iTunes Podcast Directory, you can find podcasts of Computer America shows at www.businessstalkradio.net/week-day_host/Archives/cc.shtml and National Public Radio at www.npr.org/rss/podcast/podcast_directory.php.

There are even locally-produced user group podcasts. The Los Angeles Computer Society has podcasts of their main meetings at www.lacspc.org/podcast/Archive.html

You don't have to have an mp3 player to listen to podcasts, though. If you left-click on the mp3 title, it plays right in your browser. Or, if you right-click on the title, select "Save Link As," and you can save it to a directory on your computer.

Besides playing podcasts in mp3 players and browsers, mp3 files on your hard drive can be burned to a CD. Then, you can play them in your car. Just burn them as a music CD instead of a data CD.

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Internet Security: iFrame Attacks

By **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**, Member and Contributing Columnist,
Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, bwsail@yahoo.com

I'm sure that most of you reading the title of this article are asking "What is an iFrame?". Well, sit back, get comfortable and I'll tell you about the latest method hackers are using to steal information from you.

First the definition of an iFrame, which is shorthand for inline frame. That clears it up doesn't it? I guess I'd better add some more to that. An inline frame is code within a web page that permits a second page to be imbedded inside the first page. For example, they can be used to imbed an ad that is located on a different web site. One example is the clickable scrolling ad you frequently find on web sites. iFrames generally load after the main page and may sometimes have their own scroll bar. The iFrame may contain Javascript programming code which can permit interactive content. Some iFrames may be invisible and may contain code which can redirect the user to another page or download trojans or viruses.

Whenever your Internet browser sees an "iFrame tag" in the web page code it sets aside the space requested in the tag. It also goes out to the web page specified in the code to download the requested information.

So is this something new? I thought it was until I read a report in a tech newsletter (Windows Secrets) about an attack on the AskWoody web site. It turns out that iFrame attacks have been recorded since 2004. The first exploit implanted a worm on thousands of computers. The only thing that stopped it was a patch that Microsoft had to apply to Internet Explorer 6. In June 2007 over 10,000 pages were infected in Italy. In November 2007 Monster.com had to shut down as a result of an iFrame attack. Then, this year the AskWoody site had iFrame code added to its main web page. His research indicated that the code originated on a Russian web site, which subsequently disappeared. The code placed on the AskWoody web page linked to a web site in China and subsequently to the Russian web site. This was all done by a short length of code that setup a single, invisible pixel on the web page. The code was designed to load data from the Chinese web site. Anyone with an unpatched IE 6 that visited the AskWoody web site would probably have been infected. However, it was never determined just what was being delivered by the offshore web site.

The worst part of this scenario is that the owner of the AskWoody web site did not find out about the iFrame exploit until he started receiving messages from someone who advised him that their AVG Resident Shield said his site was infected. That was followed by Google advising him that his site was infected and down rating the site. Google also provided a warning to anyone attempting to link to AskWoody warning them that visiting the site might infect their computer.

The question becomes, how did the iFrame code become attached to the web page? The code pages on web sites are generally password protected. Access to these pages for the purpose of making changes is controlled by the web site host and the hosting software. However, there are several programs available which enable hackers to take advantage of holes in web site security. Some of these are described as "kiddie scripts", indicating their ease of use. Others, such as Mpack, require a more sophisticated knowledge of programming. The problem is that thousands of respectable sites have been infected. The following are only a few that were reported in March 2008 by Dancho Danev's blog (a security information web site):

Continued on page 14

Student Practice Lab

Polish those new skills - A specific time period for students taking Alamo PC Courses to use Computer Lab (Classroom One) to practice their class assignments. Students may also make up missed class days, if the instructor has provided the course material to the individual. Seating is limited and on a first come, first serve basis.

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- eHawaii Portal - ehawaii.gov - 992 pages
- The World Clock - timeanddate.com - 944 pages
- Boise State University - boisestate.edu - 471 pages
- The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) - aoa.gov - 425 pages
- Gustavus Adolphus College - gustavus.edu - 312 pages
- Internet Archive - archive.org - 261 pages
- Stanford Business School Alumni Association - gsbapps.stanford.edu - 157 pages
- BushTorrent - bushtorrent.com - 147 pages
- ChildCareExchange - ccie.com - 131 pages
- The University of Vermont - uvm.edu - 120 pages
- Hippodrome State Theatre - Gainesville, FL - thehipp.org - 112 pages
- Minnesota State University Mankato - mnsu.edu - 94 pages
- Medicare - medicare.gov - 12 pages

In many instances it appears that the hackers were able to “harvest” passwords which gave them access to these sites. Then, if the site did not have current input validation patches, the iFrame could be added to web pages. In some cases, home users may have been the source of the initial password theft. By use of a keylogger a hacker can obtain passwords to any protected site visited by the user. In other cases clicking on a banner ad that attracts you can result in the download of a bot, a trojan or other spyware. This is especially true if you are still running an unpatched Internet Explorer 6. It appears that Firefox is less vulnerable to these types of exploits.

Also, clicking on an executable file in IE 6 generally results in running the file. In Firefox you are usually only given the option to download the file. Obviously you should never download or run any file that you don't know or don't recognize. This is especially true when the site tells you that you need some kind of add-on or special viewer to see the information you want. This is the type of social engineering being used to tempt users into downloading spyware.

There is also a danger related to the firewall you are using on your computer. A keylogger or other trojan needs to be able to report “home” without the user being aware that information is being sent out. This is done by opening a “back door” to the Internet; an outgoing port in one of the thousands on every computer. If your firewall doesn't check on all outgoing data and requests permission for new unknown activity, then you will not be able to block the trojans back door connection. So it is very important that your firewall check both incoming and outgoing data. Then, anytime your firewall requests permission for a program, one you don't recognize, to connect to the Internet, just say NO.

There is one other recognized method for obtaining the information needed to get into web page code. Hackers can purchase web site administrator information on the black market. One software application used to hack web sites, Mpack, sells for about \$1,000 US. The person behind this software is known as \$ash in the Russian underground. The software exploits six flaws in Windows and Internet Explorer. Thus for not a lot of money, hackers can obtain everything they need to exploit weaknesses in web pages.

As you can see, the iFrame attack is a real danger for those who surf the Internet. If you want to read more about these attacks, a Google search will provide you with tons of information. If you want to protect yourself from these attacks, your ability is limited. It is really up to your ISP and the web hosts to provide the security needed to prevent the web page intrusion of an iFrame. So what can a home user do? The following will help, but are no guarantee of protection.

1. Beware of pages that require software installation. Do not allow new software installation from your browser unless you absolutely trust both the Web page and the provider of the software.
2. Scan with an updated antivirus and anti-spyware software any program downloaded through the Internet. This includes any downloads from P2P networks, through the Web and any FTP server regardless of the source.
3. Use only a firewall that checks both incoming and outgoing data.
4. Beware of unexpected strange-looking emails, regardless of their sender.
5. Never open attachments or click on links contained in these email messages
6. Enable the “Automatic Update” feature in your Windows operating system and apply new updates as soon as they are available
7. Always have an antivirus real-time scan service. Monitor regularly that it is being updated and that the service is running.
8. OR another option would be to verify that the address is safe before going to it. You can do this by checking it at: <http://linkscanner.explabs.com/linkscanner/default.asp>

As you can see, for Windows users, the Internet is becoming more of a hazard to navigation. You, as a user, must always be cautious about clicking on links or accepting downloads. If in doubt, don't do it! If everyone practiced safe-surfing, it would be harder for the hackers to succeed.

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

Make Your Wireless Network Safe

By **Marjie Tucker**, Editor, Mountain Computer User Group,
www.mcug.org, mcug@dnet.net

Wireless networks are becoming more and more popular, but they do add some additional security risks. You need to spend a little extra time to ensure that your data and your identity are secure.

What are the Risks?

Because wireless networks don't require a cable between the computer and your Internet connection, it's relatively easy for someone else to use your Internet connection for free, to hijack your messages, or to sneak into your computer and view or steal your data.

So What Should I Do?

There are several important steps that you should follow to protect yourself and your computer:

1. Don't use a default password on your wireless equipment. Most networking devices are pre-configured by the manufacturer with a simple password to simplify the setup process. This is the password that allows you to access the router configuration. These "default" passwords are well known by anyone who has used a similar device and they are available online, eroding any protection they might have provided. Check the instructions that came with your device and immediately change the password.

Remember that the best passwords contain both upper and lowercase letters as well as numbers. And, always shy away from passwords that can be easily guessed by your friends - such as the names of your children or your dog.

Experts suggest using a poem to derive a "pass phrase." You merely take a line from a poem or poem title and use the first letter of each word. For example, using the poem "Mary had a little lamb" you would use the letters from the first line - Mary had a little lamb; its fleece was white as snow - mhallifwwas. Add at least one uppercase letter by capitalizing the M for Mary - Mhallifwwas. Next add at least one number by changing some of the letters to numbers, such as making the first letters for little and lamb into 1s. Now we have a phrase (Mha1 lifwwas) that is reasonably secure and very easy to remember.

2. Restrict your network to only your computers. Every computer device has an embedded address on it called a media access control (MAC) address. Wireless access points and routers can be configured to exclude all other MAC addresses.

3. Encrypt the data on your network. Encryption prevents outsiders from viewing your transmissions. There are two methods of ensuring that your information is adequately protected, Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) and Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA). Because WEP has several security issues associated with it, WPA is considered the more effective method, if it is supported by your equipment. However, since this is another area where a secure password is important, you should use a passphrase like I described in item #1.

4. Choose a unique SSID. Your equipment may have a default name that identifies your network, called an SSID. Be sure to setup a unique name and, if possible, avoid broadcasting that name. That will make it harder for outsiders to find your network.

5. Install a firewall for your network. Microsoft Vista and XP both provide a firewall that is designed to protect your computer, but your network itself will be safer with its own firewall. A host based firewall is easy to obtain (some of them are free over the Internet) and can be installed directly onto your wireless device.

6. Install and regularly update both anti-virus and anti-spyware software. You can keep attackers at bay with these protective programs. However, remember to update both of them on a regular basis. New viruses and spyware attacks are being developed daily; so your software must be updated to be effective.

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Windows Live Hotmail

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

I have had a Hotmail account for many years and use it regularly. The latest Windows Live Hotmail is easier to use and includes many impressive features. With 5 GB inbox so you don't have to worry about it filling up while you are away. Safety features, including color codes alert you to suspicious email and spam filtering automatically sorts out unwanted email. You can even drag and drop messages between folders to keep things clean and organized.

I use the full version, which contains some more advanced features but you can choose the classic version. Hotmail opens to the Today page, showing a status meter of mail usage, current news headlines, and a folders view showing how many unread emails are in the inbox.

Color codes make it easy to tell at a glance whether a message is safe or not. The bar at the top of a message comes in three colors: White means the message is from known contacts. Yellow means the message is from someone not on your contacts list. Red means the message appears to be fraudulent.

Control junk email with filters and senders lists. Select low, standard or exclusive filters. I use standard and it catches most of the spam. I also have junk email found with the filter sent to my junk email folder, where it is automatically deleted after five days. However, I look at the folder and empty it daily. After using the filter for some time, you may decide to immediately delete junk email. You can mark a message as safe or unsafe. Clicking the mark as unsafe link, automatically reports the sender to Hotmail's junk email filters and deletes the message. Then the sender will no longer be able to send you email and will receive notification that your address is not valid. If a non-junk email gets accidentally filtered to the Junk folder, clicking on the Not junk link to report a message as not junk. If someone is trying to solicit personal data, like passwords or financial information you can report the phishing scam. Click the down arrow by the Junk link and select Report phishing scam.

Maintain your safe senders, safe mailing lists and blocked senders to be sure you get the email that you need. Be careful when blocking a sender in choosing whether to block only the sender or domain.

I like to keep things organized and Windows Live Hotmail makes it easy to keep email organized. Just create new folders and file existing messages in them for later reference. Move messages by checking those to move, then use the Move to drop down menu to file them. The full version makes it even easier. You can drag and drop messages into the proper folder. To delete messages, select the messages, and then click delete.

If a filing system goes awry, you can use the search box above the inbox to find messages in one of your folders or inbox. Just type in a search and select the Mail button. Clicking web accesses images, news, or information across the Web based on your search.

Hotmail can even help maintain contacts. Contacts can be imported from Outlook, Outlook Express, Windows Contacts, Yahoo Mail and Gmail. On the other hand, when you receive an email from a new contact you can easily add that person to your Windows Live Hotmail contact list. Just click the Add contact link below the From: line on their email. And your address book automatically updates anytime a contact changes Windows Live contact information.

You can export Windows Live Hotmail contacts to a CSV file to transfer to another email account or save a backup copy. If you regularly add email addresses to your contacts when you receive mail, duplicate contacts can become a problem. Now when you add a new contact from your inbox by clicking Add contact in a received message and the contact has the same name as an existing one, you're asked if you want to merge them. You still have the option of keeping them separate, giving you complete control over your contact list. Running clean up duplicate contacts searches for and cleans up duplicates. Just choose to delete, edit or merge information into one contact.

Windows Live Hotmail contacts have fields for most information you need and probably more. Add a first and last name, nickname; personal and business email address, phone numbers and address; birthday and a note for other information.

Continued on page 50

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Options provide personalization features to suit your needs. Forward email from other accounts to Hotmail or forward Hotmail to another account. Set up a personal vacation reply when you will be unavailable. The reply is sent to any message that goes into the inbox. If you receive many messages from one person, they will get the vacation reply every four days.

Customize your email by selecting a language, reading pane settings and your email signature. Set whether to save a copy of sent email. You can even have sent mail include a different reply to address. Select the reading pane configuration to make the reading pane appear on the right or bottom of the screen or turn it off altogether. I personally keep the reading pane off in all of my email accounts. That way if a junk email gets through the filters, I can select and delete it without dealing with the message at all.

However, the full version of Windows Live Hotmail has a reading pane so you can preview a message without risk. The reading pane lets you quickly view your e-mail. Email from unknown senders has a yellow safety bar, and the attachments, pictures and links blocked to help avoid alerting spammers. You quickly go from message to message without opening and reloading the page. Double click the message to open it up in the full window. You can also change your inbox layout.

If you like to get an audible alert of new email, set Windows Live Messenger to notify you. In Windows Live Messenger, go to select Options in the Tools drop down menu. In Options select Alerts & Sounds and then Display alerts when e-mail is received.

To send an email, click the New envelope icon that in the top menu bar. In the full version, clicking the drop-down arrow to the right of the New button opens a menu to create new Folders, Contacts and Groups. If you click away from the email you're composing, you'll receive a prompt to Save as draft. Use font styles, sizes and formatting, bullets, graphics and even emoticons while creating a message. Add recipients to an email from your list of contacts. Or with the full version just start typing the first or last name of the recipient and auto-complete finishes it from your address book.

If you regularly send email to the same group of people create personal distribution lists. Create a new list from your contact list. Just click on All contacts in the Contacts section and select the contacts in a group and then click the down arrow to open the Add to group drop down menu. Choose to add them to an existing group or create a new one. Once a group has been created type it's name into the To box when you want to send mail to everyone at once. Remember to use bcc.

I personally don't use blogs but if you do you can publish blog entries to your Windows Live Space from Windows Live Hotmail. If you have a customized a MSN.com page you can add your inbox to it. Then a glance at the page lets you know when you have new email. You can access and reply to email from a Web enabled cell phone or mobile device. Browse to www.mobile.live.com and log into your Windows Live Hotmail account.



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Wireless Router Setup

By **Bob Elgines**, Editor, Colorado River Computer Club, Arizona,
www.crccaz.com/, elginesz@rraz.net

How to change the setup or configuration of your Wireless Router and PC. First we need to get to your router after the original setup by bringing up Internet Explorer on your direct wired computer (Master) and typing in one of the code addresses below:

TYPE	CODE	USER	PASSWORD	CHNL
Belkin:	192.168.2.1	(No Name)	(Leave Blank)	6
D-Link:	192.168.0.1	admin	(Leave Blank)	6
Linksys:	192.168.1.1	(Leave Blank)	admin	11
Netgear:	192.168.0.1	admin	password	10

A login screen will appear, if you used your own login name and password then use them. If you lost them and you wish to reconfigure your router you will have to push the reset button for at least 30 seconds. This sets the router back to its defaults and you can use the default values above.

During your setup you may have seen "Number of DHCP users allowed", reduce this to the number of total computers in your network or that number plus one.

SSID is your wireless network name, for example, Linksys will broadcast "linksys". First, we want to rename your SSID and then hide it later. After changing the name, we need to reconnect with each wireless computer. To reconnect, right click the icon in the System Tray (or task bar-right).

Windows XP SP2 - Choose Available Wireless Networks / Change Advanced Settings. Click the Wireless Networks tab, click Add button in the Preferred Network section.

type in the Network name you have chosen, then click OK twice.

Windows VISTA - Select Network and Sharing Center, then left click on View Status (located middle-right). Click on Wireless Properties button. Put check mark on "connect even if the Network is not broadcasting".

(Or go to START / CONNECT TO / click on your SSID and click the CONNECT button below. Then you can right click on your SSID and select Properties. This will get you to your Wireless Properties window where you can put the "check mark" and enter your Security code.)

Complete this on all of your wireless computers and remember how you got there!

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Owner must stay with computer during repairs

Continued on page 52

Second, now we can choose to stop your Router from broadcasting your SSID by selecting disable to “SSID Broadcasting” in your router setup. All your computers should be reading the wireless connection.

Next step is to select a Security type, let us try WEP first. This may be slightly different due to different manufactures. Usually you will find it under Security or Wireless tabs of your router setup. Select 64 or 128 bit encryption, then type in a word or phrase and let the router do the coding by clicking on Generate. Select #1 and write down this code for your wireless computers. Go to the Wireless Properties window and click on the SECURITY tab. Then set the ENCRYPTION type to WEP and enter the security code you wrote down, click OK and Close. Key Index should remain on one.

Look at the Security Type by clicking the down arrow on the right. Note these are the other types of security allowed: WPA2-Personal, WPA-Personal, WPA2-Enterprise, and WPA-Enterprise. Most newer routers and computer can operate with this type of security and is considered better than WEP.

We completed a simple setup to supply a secured wireless connection. You can go further and use one of the WPAs if all of your computers will accept this. Just disable WEP and enable WPA and roughly go through the same process. You could also assign your MAC addresses, but how far do we have to go?

Following are definitions for MAC, DMZ, WPA, DHCP, and the router FIREWALL:

DHCP – Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol as a server assigns IP addresses to all computers on the network (in this case the router is the DHCP server).

DMZ – Dedicated Multi Zone exposes a computer directly to the internet with a IP address. Some games require this direct access. You could give a false address not used by your computers to send intruders to an address that goes no where!

FIREWALL – The router’s firewall gives protection on data coming in, but not going out. If you wish full bi-directional protection you will have to use software and replace your windows firewall which is incoming only.

MAC – Media Access Control is a number related to the network adapter in a small network. LAN-MAC address is for your internal network and WAN-MAC address is used for router to modem connection. You can find your Client table (IP and MAC addresses) in your router’s configuration utility.

WEP – Wifi Encryption Protection is the old security standard that can be used with either 64 or 128 bit encryption.

WPA – Wifi Protected Access is the latest network security standard, but if your equipment is over two years old you may want to checkout www.wi-fi.org web site for information. For full instructions on activating WPA see PC Magazine’s step by step article at <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1819544,00.asp>



Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Women's Place, by Linda Grant

Paperback, Fawcett, 1994, \$5.99, 248 pages

Private investigator Catherine Saylor and her partner, Jesse, are hired to go undercover in a software company where the women are being harassed. While Jesse handles the technical aspects, such as stolen passwords, Catherine insinuates herself into the company. The harassment escalates, a woman is murdered, and Catherine becomes the next target.

This is a compelling case study of sexual harassment in an industry where women were – and still are – in the mi-



nority. Interesting look at the software industry, just as corporations were starting to drift away from their mainframes and over to networked PCs. Good writing, tense plot, interesting characters. This is an excellent series. Recommended.

Disclosure, by Michael Crichton

Paperback, Random House, 1993, \$7.99, 496 pages

A happily married executive at a Seattle computer company is seduced by his new boss; when he declines, she claims he started it. He counters with a sexual harassment suit. The company, on the verge of a delicate merger, has a hidden agenda in try-

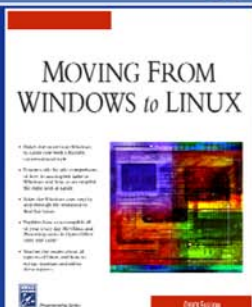


ing to resolve the case quickly (I won't give it away!)

Crichton says in an afterward that it is based on a true story, and the role reversal, although disturbing in places, helps you think more deeply about sex and power in the workplace. Lots of high-tech details, especially virtual reality-enabled databases and the process of bringing a new product to market. The miniaturization foreshadowed in the plot – tiny cell phones and DVD players – has come to pass. Made into a 1994 movie starring Michael Douglas and Demi Moore. Recommended.

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

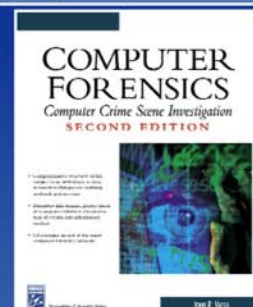
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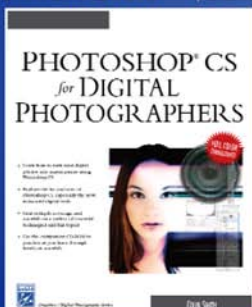
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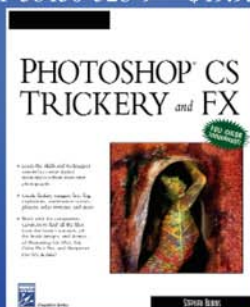
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Hardware Review

Zune 8 Review

Published by Microsoft

Reviewed by Ash Nallawalla, APCUG Director and member of the Melbourne PCUG, Australia, www.melbpc.org.au/, anallawalla@apcug.net

Thanks to good friends in the Microsoft Windows group in Redmond, I received a shiny new, red 8 GB Zune during CES. It has a beautifully engraved "www.zuneusergroup.com" (my site) on the back. Here is my assessment.

Packaging

The compact packaging of the 4/8 GB Zune does not contain a software CD like the original Zune. You get a manual, a USB cable and a set of earphones. The box comes in a soft pouch and could be mistaken for a perfume box.

Setting Up

You first set up the Zune software on the PC by going to www.zune.net/setup. You get to choose between the "full Zune experience" and simply downloading the software. I already had the latest software on account of my old Zune 30, so I explored the Zune.net site.

There you set up a Zune account, if you don't have one. This enables you to give your Zune a name and buy music from the Zune Marketplace, an online music store. You can customize your Zune at zuneoriginals.net.

The Zune 8 refuses to work until you have installed the Zune software on the PC and connected the player at least once. When you connect the device to the PC, it proceeds to update the firmware. This was painless.

Software

The Zune software is easy to use and is intuitive. It was able to find all my music, video and images and sync them to the player. I can also sync my podcast subscriptions automatically. Unless it was a coincidence, the software showed both my Zunes in their correct colours - a nice touch.

Controls

The main input on the player is the Zune Pad, a rounded rectangular touch-sensitive button. You change the volume and select options by rubbing your thumb from top to bottom or left to right.



The default touch sensitivity was fine for me, unlike the over-sensitive controls of the original Creative Zen, which tended to overshoot the desired selection.

Display

The tiny 4.5 cm (1.8-inch) scratch-resistant, glass-covered screen is watchable for short music videos that have close-ups of performers but it would not be fun to watch a full-length movie on this model. During music playback, the backlight disappears and helps to conserve battery life.

The USB cable acts as the media conduit to and from the PC and also charges the battery. There is a small, recessed set of holes to take a wrist strap, which is not supplied.

FM Radio

The FM radio displays RBDS data, so you can see the name of the radio station and the song being played. You cannot record a radio program, as you can on some Creative units. The tuner picked up all my local stations.

Sound Quality

The sound quality is fine too, just like the original Zune 30. There is a good selection of pre-loaded media. The supplied earphones do a basic job, but as with all players, you need to buy high-quality headphones to get optimum sound. There isn't an equalizer (EQ) control or preset, so you cannot customize the sound to your liking. This option is present on the old Zune 30, so its omission seems to be a deliberate decision. Why hobble sound quality?

Sharing

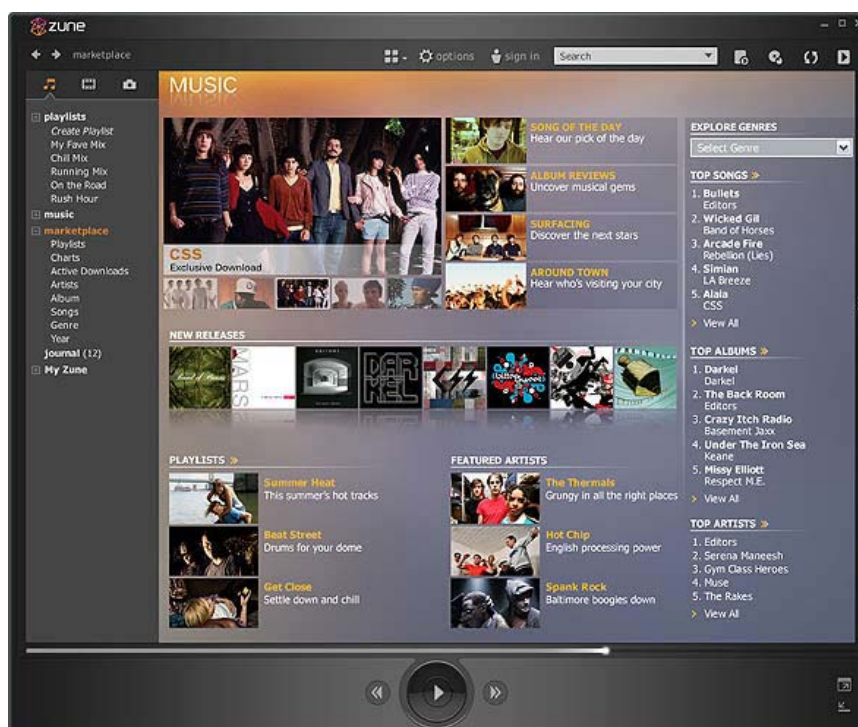
The latest 2.3 (1145) firmware is common to all models and renames "Community" to "Social". You can share a song by sending it to a nearby Zune (that is turned on and has wireless enabled). The other Zune has to accept it and will get three plays (the three days limitation has been removed).

Other Zune models

There is a new 80 GB model (only black) that works just like the 4/8 GB versions except that it contains a hard drive, not Flash memory and has a larger screen. The 4/8 GB models come in pink, red, green and black.

Conclusion

The Zune 8 is light, easy-to-use, has a good battery life, feature set, and great sound quality. The software is a testimonial to Microsoft as a leading software company. In conclusion, the 8 GB Zune is a fine multimedia player and you will not regret buying it (about \$185 online). Well done, Microsoft.



Software Review

Roxio Easy Media Creator Suite (v.10)

Published by Roxio

Reviewed by By John Roy, President, The PC Users Group of Connecticut, www.tpcug-ct.org, johnroy1@comcast.net

Roxio, a division and brand of Sonic Solutions, has been a leader in burning software for many years. I personally have used the product since it was distributed by Adaptec several years ago. The CD/DVD burning software today far exceeds the basic functions that existed in those early days. Roxio Easy Media Creator (EMC) will accomplish so much more than the basic burning tasks and is now a full featured suite.

Doing this review has allowed me to explore and appreciate the many applications within this suite. Because EMC is so comprehensive I will provide an overview in this article but follow up with more details in future issues of our newsletter.

Before I start boasting about some of these neat applications I must discuss some installation issues. The product would not install on my primary computer! After trying several times to install under various scenarios I checked for possible solutions using Roxio's web product support and also their user forum. None of those sources provided any clues so I connected with technical phone support. I was quite surprised that the wait time was very small and the technician was professional and extremely competent. Unfortunately after almost two hours of phone support the problem was not solved.

The tech support effort involved major system modifications including deletion of all files associated with my original EMC version 9, my Nero burner software, a complete registry purge line by line of anything remotely associated with or influenced by Roxio software, removal of all anti-virus software and firewalls, elimination of all startup files except system essentials and running registry clean utilities. Nothing worked! A trouble report was left open but I never received any further calls. In their users forum I did find one other person with the exact same problem and no solution.

Fortunately I have a couple of other computers at my house so I tried installing the version 10 on both an older desktop and on my primary laptop system. The install went smoothly on both of those systems. So until I get a chance to rebuild my primary desktop I won't know if I can ever use the latest version on it. On a side note before trying to install EMC version 10 I had version 9 successfully working. After all the system changes I could no longer load my EMC version 9. So now I struggled with that problem for a few days. Once again not finding any online solutions I contacted a phone support tech who was able to direct me to a download utility that cleared the problem and allowed me once again install version 9.

While the above debacle was frustrating don't let it deter you from considering the purchase of this capable applications suite. So let's look at why you should consider owning this product.

Once you get past the install you will see a super clean interface with applications divided into seven primary areas; Audio, Data and Backup, Copy, Media and Devices, Photo, Video, and Tools. Each application provides another set of choices. Audio has (13), Data and Backup (5), Copy (5) Media and Devices (2), Photo (9),



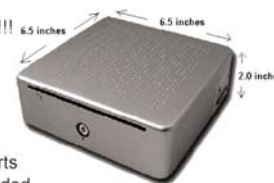
dvnation.com

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

Continued on page 57

Video (11), and Tools (8). Now that is a huge chest of applications at your disposal. If you were to purchase each primary application separately it would cost you a few hundred dollars. This package sells for about \$100 but if you watch for sales you can buy it for much less.

When you think of Roxio and burning software the primary reason most people purchase the product is for those tools. The Copy and Data and Backup modules take care of those basic requirements along with some other goodies. For anyone familiar with an older version, you will still find the original Creator Classic still there but spruced up. That old standby is quite the workhorse. You select the type and size of disc you want to burn and it will keep you updated on available space as you move files or folders you want to burn into a holding area. Once your files and folders are selected you can burn your CD/DVD directly or make an image for later burning. Of course you have advanced options to define the type of disc, speed, copies, etc. You can also make a bootable or multimedia disc and go directly to creating disc labels of your burn project.

The backup module provides capability to be selective of the files you want backed up or restored and at what frequency. If you want more powerful options then you will be provided an upgrade link. A range of backup devices and media including Blu-ray discs and HD DVD discs are supported. Large files can be automatically spanned across multiple discs as required.

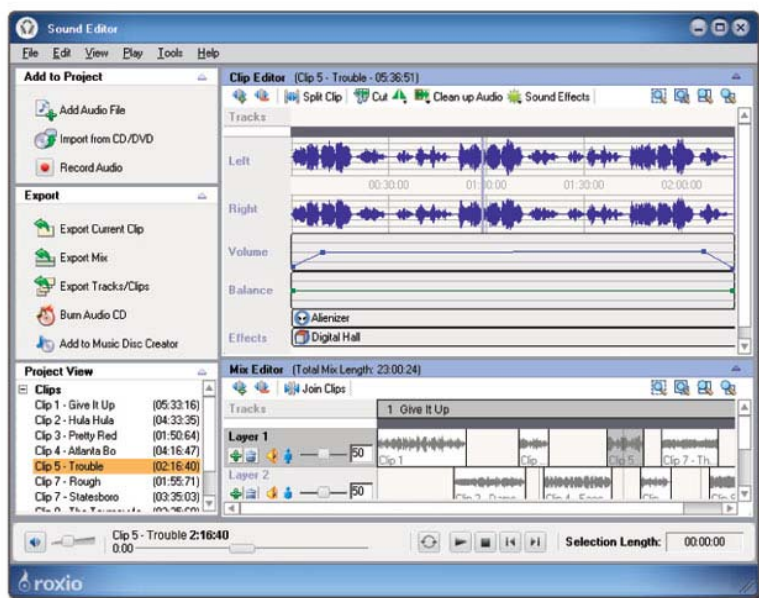
The Audio module provides thirteen selections that cover just about everything you could possibly want to do with audio. All the expected tools are there to rip CD's into MP3 files or create audio CDs from other formats. You can make custom CD's with fades, effects and mixing. Tools are there to edit song information and to do batch conversions to formats of your choice. One module allows you to instantly capture any audio playing on your computer, including streaming radio. There is one utility "Convert LPs and Tapes" that I was especially enthused about. At our meeting we have had the question of how to convert LPs and Tapes asked many times in the past. While there are several methods to accomplish this, Roxio EMC has made it easy and crystal clear with this application. So for those of you that have a desire to do this you should give Roxio EMC serious consideration.

The Photo application contains a full featured photo suite with powerful editing, effects and touchup tools. It is complete with all the ancillary things you want to do with photos such as creating slideshows, panoramas, albums, greeting cards, calendars and layout templates. You can quickly optimize a group of photos for sending email.

The Video application is another full featured suite for importing, editing, customizing and exporting video into various formats. Included is CinePlayer a full featured video player. The features are similar to those found in Pinnacle Studio or Adobe Premier. While some of Roxio EMC tools are not as robust as the leaders you will find some tools not available in the others. The fact that it may not be as flexible as the stand alone programs it will be easier for the novice. If you are a true video buff then even if you own other video software you would also want to have EMC in your software chest.

The smallest stand alone module is Media Manager that enables users to easily browse, manage, share and protect their media files. The final application module is Tools. This module is used for creating disc labels, obtaining drive information, erasing discs, creating virtual disc drives and a few other assorted utilities. Roxio EMC is Vista compatible and includes gadgets for doing things directly from the desktop.

I'm certain most computer users will find enough applications on Roxio Easy Media Creator to make the investment worthwhile. If this review has captured your interest pay a visit to Roxio's website at <http://www.roxio.com/>. They have some great videos that will demonstrate these neat features



Use Sound Editor to record, preview, cut, and enhance audio tracks - even remove pops & hiss from analog recordings.

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.

August 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 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 6 of 9 *PRR* PC Alamode Magazine & PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	2 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
3	4 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	5 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 5 of 6 *PRR* BOD 6:30 P.M.	6 Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 5 of 6 *PRR*	7 Student's Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon High Growth Stock Investing 6:30 - 8:30 P.M., (a/r)	8 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In, 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Beginners Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 9 of 9 *PRR*	9 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
10	11 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	12 Internet and E-mail 10 A.M. - Noon, class 6 of 6 *PRR* Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	13 Power Internet, 10 A.M. - Noon Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 1 of 6 *PRR* Windows XP 1 - 3 P.M., class 6 of 6 *PRR*	14 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	15 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In, 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 1 of 5 *PRR*	16 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M.
17	18	19	20 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 2 of 6 *PRR* IBD / Vector Vest 6 - 8 P.M.	21 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	22 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In, 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 2 of 5 *PRR*	23 MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR* Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 5 P.M.
24	25 CorelDRAW X3 7 - 9 P.M.	26	27 Introduction to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon, class 3 of 6 *PRR* WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M., (a/r)	28 Student Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon	29 Computer Diagnostic Clinic Dr. Is In, 9:00 A.M. - Noon Photoshop Intermediate Class 1 - 5 P.M., class 3 of 5 *PRR*	30
31						
<h1>AlamoPC Organization</h1>						
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
stephentechnjr@yahoo.com

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

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

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

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on

<APCORETRO@yahoogroups.com>

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechnjr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★★

Digital Camera & Photography Class

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

Instructor: need instructor

When: to be announced

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

Where: Computer Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing Classes \$

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

Intro to Digital Photo Editing \$

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

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

Instructor: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Digital Photo Editing \$

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

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

Instructor: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Advanced Digital Photo Editing \$

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

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

Instructor: needs instructor

When: to be announced

Fees: registration fee \$10

Where: Learning Center

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★

Technical Content Ratings

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

Visit the Alamo PC Learning Center

Can you help teach?

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

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

Please call (210) 736-0700

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

Photoshop CS2 Classes are open to any Alamo PC member who has Photoshop 7, CS, or CS2. They must have one of these software programs on their home computers. All students are provided a CD with images we will use in the classes plus written lessons to go by and practice at home. Texts will be recommended for those who want to purchase their own as reference.

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.

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Classified Ads

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

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

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

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



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

\$20.00

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

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

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

Monthly Meetings

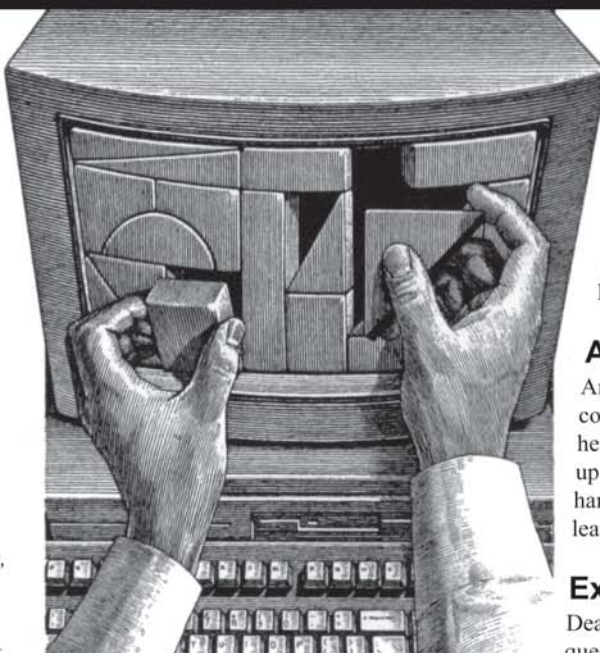
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

Award-Winning Magazine

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

Special Interest Groups and Classes

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



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

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

Alamo PC SeniorComp

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

Expert Help

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

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

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

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



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

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

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

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

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

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

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

