

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TECH ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

January 2009

\$5.00

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Alamo PC Organization

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



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

Registration number **210-736-0080**

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

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

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

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210-561-2278**

If you have questions about advertising call

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

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

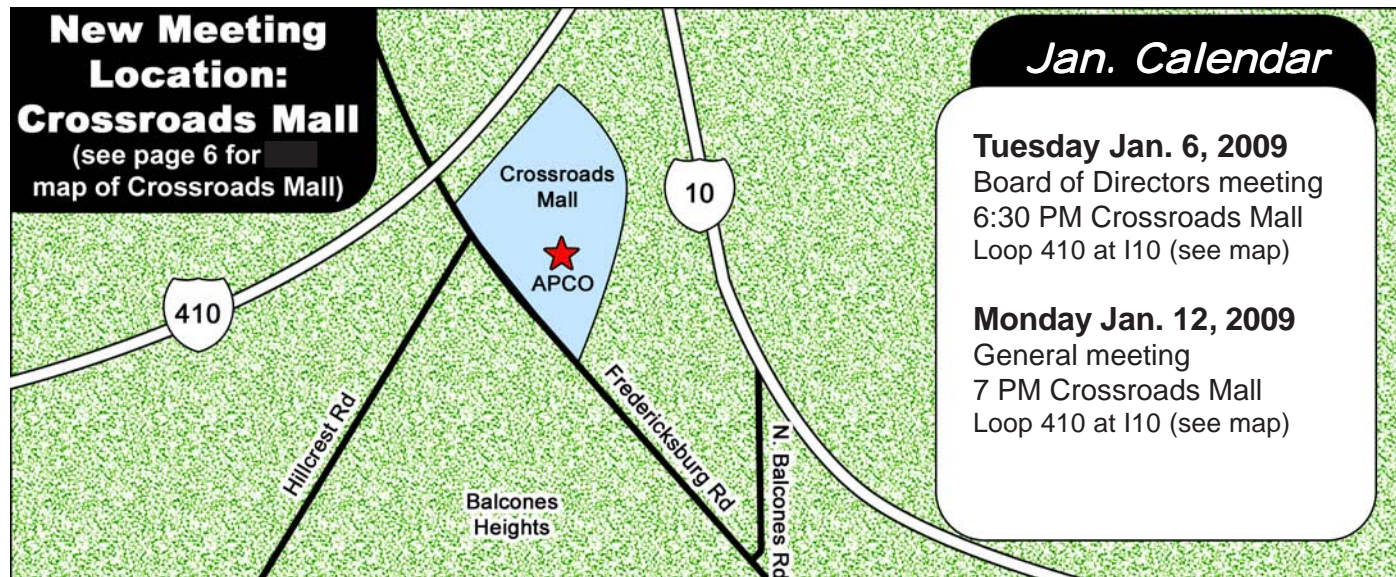
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

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

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

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



Jan. Calendar

Tuesday Jan. 6, 2009
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Jan. 12, 2009
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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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 © 2009 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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EDITOR

Joseph de Leon

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Joe Barth
Susan Ives

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bill Beverley
Bruce Cramer
Shane Hicks
Tim Hoke
Bill Hudson
Susan Ives
Russell James
Larry Lentz
K. Joyce McDonald
Paul Vaughn

INTERIM PRODUCT REVIEW COORDINATOR

David Steward

ADVERTISING

Joseph de Leon

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

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

Board of Directors

President	Bill Klutz	532-9122 (Home)	president@alamopc.org
Secretary	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	secretary@alamopc.org
Treasurer	Billy Samples	646-0047 (Home)	treasurer@alamopc.org
Education	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
Operations	Cary Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)	learncenter@alamopc.org
Marketing	TBD (Steve Tech)	675-2880 (Home)	marketing@alamopc.org
Communications	TBD		communications@alamopc.org

Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

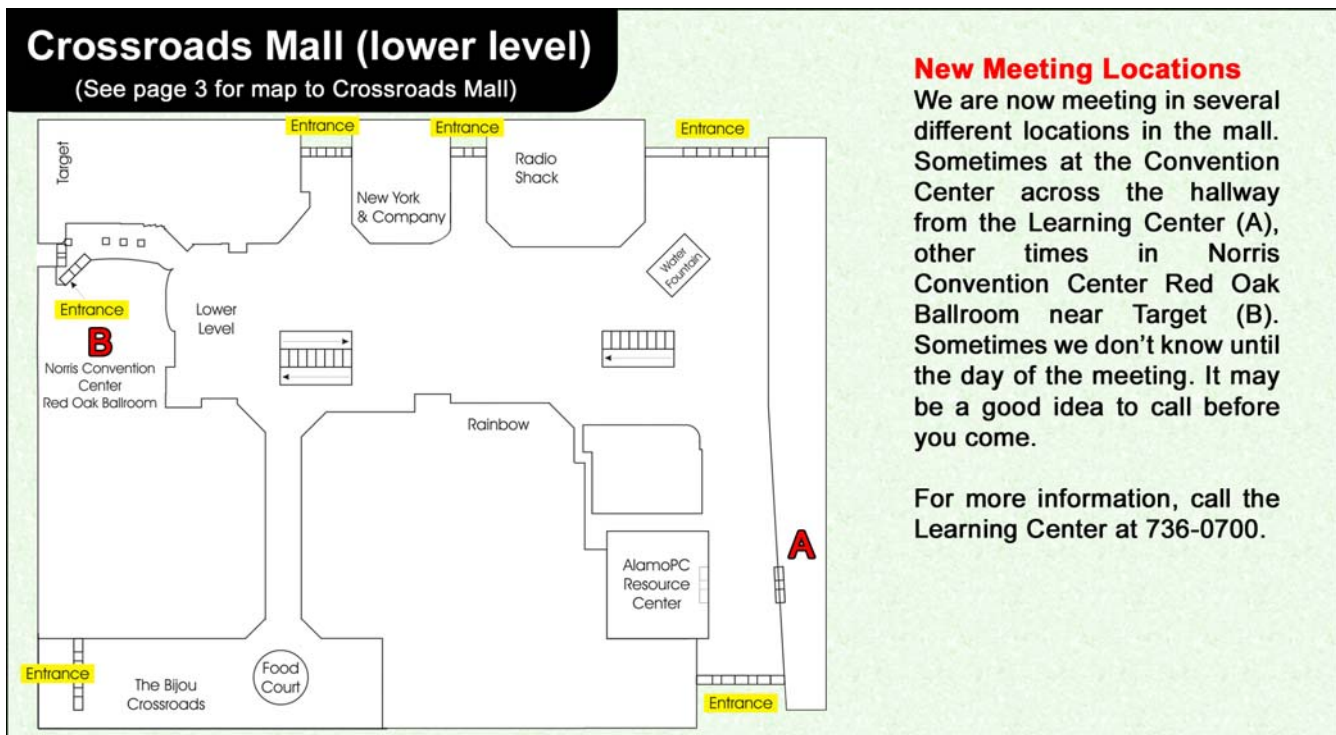
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

FAX 736-0032

Learning Center Manager	Cary & Jean Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)	learncenter@alamopc.org
Past President/Programs	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
Member Records	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)	membership@alamopc.org
Public Relations	Susan Ives	694-4582 (Home)	suives@texas.net
Product Review Coordinator	TBD (David Steward)	662-8606 (Home)	reviews@alamopc.org
Study Groups Coordinator	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
Special Projects	Joe Brazell	370-2207 (Office)	projects@alamopc.org
Registrar	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Registrar@alamopc.org
Webmaster	Mike Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Webmaster@alamopc.org
Lab/Network Administrator	Gary Grieve	492-5066 (Home)	netadmin@alamopc.org
Trade Shows	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)	stephentechnr@yahoo.com
APCUG Representative	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
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



Mirbit

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

In 'dragz', you can upload a photo and then add such things as decorative frames, funny objects, text, etc. to it to make it more fun. 'Cardz' allows you to choose from 100's of unique photographic cards that you can personalize, print or send as an electronic card.



TV Loop

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

Formerly just a popular Facebook app, TV Loop has gone indie and launched its own website — think of it as a hub of TV paradise mixed in with its own social network.

This month is dedicated to technical topics. Most of these articles are in the intermediate to advanced category, but those of you new to computers will benefit as well.

While we no longer can rely on the Learning Center, which closed in December, articles such as these will go a long way to distributing information about the latest computer news.

If you would like to see a topic covered or are interested in writing about a new product you tried or a solution you've come up with to a computer problem, please let me know. There are many members who would benefit from your experiences.

That's how most of the contributors to this issue have done. They came up with a solution to a common problem, documented it, then wrote about it. Now you can benefit from that knowledge too!

Hope the new year brings us all a better year than 2008. Best wishes and keep clicking that mouse!

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

Joseph has worked in the graphics industry for more than 10 years.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"January" - LC Closing, New Year, Martin Luther King Day

This month marks a few things of interest to many: 1st - End of the Old Year (2008) and the Alamo PC Learning Center at Crossroads Mall having ceased operation. (Officially December 31st was the day. It has been great, and many have been helped, but high rent declining membership, waning interest in the organization and shrinking finances forced the business decision by board members.) Also, first day of the New Year (2009), for those who use the same calendar as the US. It should also mark the end of the Holidays, the end of Parties, the end of left over food, the end of decorations, the end of sales (but maybe not since there was less than the expected participation by consumers in December), the end of feeling like you have been awake since just before Thanksgiving, the end of slow work weeks, and the end of all the other things that come with the last 35-40 days of any year; 15th - Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday; 19th - Martin Luther King, Jr Day observed.

In December, after looking at a number of locations (from north west thru north east, both inside and outside of Loop 410) which had rent pricing considerably more than was suitable for our current financial condition, we finally settled on space in late December. We secured a reasonably priced (\$175 per month) single office for our operations (phone lines, computers, etc.) and storage for the things we kept. It is unfortunately an upstairs office that is located at 4888 Whirlwind (78217), in northeast San Antonio (entering the business park, it is the first building on the corner with "Wilson Development" on the front and the address on the side).

The December BOD meeting had all six members present. A presenter for the monthly General Meeting was addressed, but the primary focus of the discussions was again on Alamo PC and the closing of the Learning Center in Crossroads Mall: the financial status of the organization, the ever declining membership, declining class participation, major expenses, etc., plus the future of the Alamo PC Organization. At the conclusion of the discussions, it was once again painfully reaffirmed that the Learning Center, and its associated expenses, was the largest drain on the organization's finances and the planned closing should continue. With that in mind, board members again agreed the Learning Center should continue to be staffed until mid December with work continuing to focus on terminating operations in the current location, by December 31st. (A location with donated, or very low rent, should be sought to house the office area, and the associated requirements and equipment. If sufficient donated space can be obtained, a down scaled Learning Center may be something to anticipated.) Monthly General Meetings should continue, if possible, but depending on how things develop in the coming months, a requirement for bi-monthly or quarterly meetings may be required. The PC Alamo magazine would continue in its present form, if possible, as options are discussed with the current editor. After that, depending on what can be worked out with the current editor (or a volunteer who may desire to take over that role), the PC Alamo magazine may very possibly continue in a scaled down mode, and perhaps different format. Membership fees are being addressed as well, and how best to be fair to current members who have extended past the end of this year. (If there is a clamoring for refunds from current members, then the organization may no longer be able to financially function and could suffer its demise very quickly.) These are only some of the more pressing issues the board is attempting to address, along with numerous other smaller things that must also be considered and perhaps added to the growing "To Do" list for the current BOD.

The approximate 35 who were present at the December General Meeting seemed to enjoy the presentation David Steward provided on Microsoft "gadgets," but it again affirmed that overall interest in the organization has waned severely. As I have pointed out in previous messages, this fact is confirmed by the ever declining membership and the fact we have not had a full compliment of board members (one or more vacancies) for the past three years.

An announcement regarding sales of equipment, furniture, etc. was posted in several location and sales ceased on December 19th. All Classes and Study Groups held at the Learning Center ceased meeting after November 15th, and it is hoped the individual Class or Group leaders will try to make arrangements to continue elsewhere. The Dr Is In Computer Diagnostic Clinic held it's last session on Friday November 14th and is currently not available as there is no place identified where it can meet..

Anyone having questions regarding the closure or other matters pertaining to the organization and future plans may refer them to membership@alamopc.org

The six individuals currently serving on the board committed to continue through the end of December. After that, there are no guarantees, and any continuation may only be on a month-by-month basis. But, with only six individuals who may be willing to continue serving, and one vacant position for the past few years, the future of OUR organization appears to be in serious jeopardy.

It is now very late in December, and I am hoping that we will have a corporate presenter for the January General Meeting (have not been so informed). Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the

Continued on page 9

General Meeting. On the day of the meeting (1/12), call 736-0700 for the most current information on location and presenter (if the phone has been connected at the new location by then). I can only hope that David Seward will have made the latest information available for the posting on the website.

Since almost all of our new members have been obtained from walk-in traffic at the Learning Center, that has been severely degraded by our move. Unless we have members helping to obtain new members, at some point in time funds will no longer be available to allow the Alamo PC Organization to continue.

Once things have settled down, we will ask for volunteers who would be willing to handle phone calls coming to Alamo PC and answer any questions posed.

We are still trying to improve member retention, but it has not been successful - the member number total continues to slowly decline. If you do not choose to renew, send a comment briefly explaining as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, with a copy to me (president@alamopc.org, or privately to me - 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 additional '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, and will impact those in the community desiring to learn about computers or improve their computer skills.

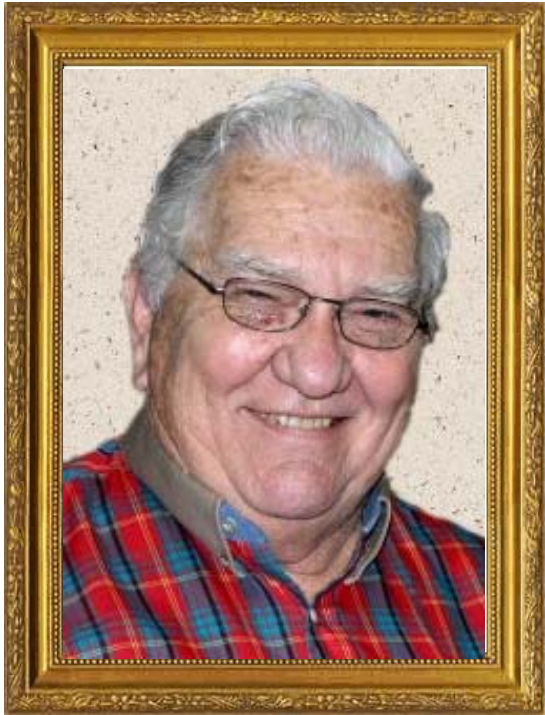
January Program

Bill Klutz

It is late December, and I have not been informed whether or not there will be a corporate level presenter for our January General Meeting. The meeting location (Norris Conference center, across from our former Learning Center location) will be confirmed at the January board meeting (regardless of the presenter identified). Since things can change at the last minute, check the Alamo PC web site (www.alamopc.org) for information on the presenter and meeting location. BUT, on the meeting day please call 736-0700 (hopefully the phone at the new location will be connected by then). Make plans now to come and bring some friends, as we hope to have an interesting presentation, and possibly "gifts."

Volunteer of the Month

Cary Hall



Computer Briefs

Member news

This year marks Lentz Computer Services' 20th year in business. Founded on December 18, 1989, LCS has been serving the technology needs of small businesses in the South Texas area ever since.

Technology has changed a lot since 1989 and Lentz Computer Services has kept up with it. Founder and Owner Larry Lentz has made it a point to maintain a high level of technical competency as evidenced by his many Microsoft certifications. Microsoft recognized not only his technical skills but his involvement and contribution to the technical community by awarding him Microsoft MVP (Most Valuable Professional) for Microsoft Dynamics CRM in 2006, 2007, and 2008. There are currently only 30 CRM MVPs world wide.

Lentz Computer Services has been specializing in Microsoft Small Business Server since its debut in 1997. LCS was the first Microsoft Small Business Specialist in South Texas. As a Microsoft Certified Partner, LCS holds the Networking Infrastructure Solutions competency. We also specialize in Microsoft Dynamics CRM (Customer Relations Management) and hold the Microsoft Business Solutions competency as well. Larry is an MCT (Microsoft Certified Trainer) and conducts training and consulting for Dynamics CRM nationwide. Larry's blog, Larry's Taco Talk, can be read at <http://ts2blogs.com/blogs/LarryLentz>.

For more information on Lentz Computer Services and how we might help your company, please contact us at Larry@LentzComputer.net or visit our web site at www.LentzComputer.net.

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

- ☞ Keyboarding/Typing
- ☞ Basic Computer Skills
- ☞ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

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Internet Services
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Shareware
Diagnostic Equipment
Cables & Connectors
Bare Bone Systems
Computer Related Books
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

Live Oak Convention Center
8101 Pat Booker Road
San Antonio, TX.

Show Dates:

January 24th
March 14th
May 30th
August 29th
November 14th
December 12th
more info at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Odds and Ends

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

Shane runs Windows Server 2008 on his iMac... so take that!
You can e-mail him at shane@vpwn.com.

Fighting SPAM by changing your name

A recent Cambridge University research study says that the amount of spam you receive is influenced by the letter that your e-mail address starts with. That might sound strange at first, but the results of their study actually make sense. The study consisted of tracking e-mail traffic through a certain ISP for a specific period of time, filtering out messages from known spammers and discounting addresses receiving too little e-mail to be considered active accounts. They determined that e-mail received by addresses beginning with the Letter A consisted of about 35% spam. Those beginning with the Letter Z, however, reported only 20%. But the study doesn't claim that spam is mitigated the further down in the alphabet your e-mail address is. Instead, it claims that spam sites focus on letters of the alphabet that are more common for e-mail account names. So, if you chose a starting letter that isn't commonly used by other e-mail accounts, the amount of spam you receive might decrease!

Phishers strike back!

You may think it's cute to provide bogus information on sites that you recognize as phishing for your information. But fighting back like that may not be worth your time. Recently, phishers have started using software that scans their forms for three things: if the form is completed entirely, if the word "phish" shows anywhere on the form, or if you use profanity. If they locate any one of these things, they employ botnets, large numbers of infected machines they control, to launch attacks against your system.

USB 3.0

USB 2.0 increased the transfer rate of USB from 12Mb/s to 480Mb/s. However, a new specification (USB 3.0) is in the works. While the cables and connectors based on this new specification will remain compatible with the older versions, users accessing their data with the new specification should see transfer rates approaching 10X that of USB 2.0. Devices based on this specification are expected to appear in early 2010.

Preparing your hard drive for resale or donation

It's an old wives' tale that you need to overwrite your hard drive seven times with random data in order to make the old data unrecoverable. In the labs of Maximum PC magazine, testers overwrote a hard drive just once, with all zeros, and then presented the disc to DriveSavers. The recovery experts were unable to get back any of the data. The easiest way to overwrite your disc is to download KillDisk from <http://www.killdisk.com> and select a single zeroes-only pass.

Improving hard drive performance

The use of write caching can improve the performance on SATA drives. This feature is disabled by default in Windows Vista because if your system loses power in the middle of a write operation, you can lose your data. However, if you're not afraid of losing power (i.e., your system is connected via an UPS or runs using a battery), you can enable this feature. Simply open Windows Explorer and right-click on the drive you wish to enhance the performance of. Select Properties, then the Hardware tab, then Properties again. Select the Policies tab and check both boxes beneath "Optimize for Performance." This process will only work on SATA drives, and you'll find these options grayed out otherwise.


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support@amcs-usa.com



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Sick Computer?

APC2008JUL

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Continued on page 14

Improve performance by moving your pagefile to a different drive

This is a common tip that's been around for years, but it's still useful. It just makes sense to have your OS and applications on a separate disc, so that Windows can write your temporary files without interrupting reads and writes to the OS and applications. In Windows Vista, click on Advanced System Settings in the System Control Panel. Select No Paging File on the drive with your OS and applications, then click set. Next, select the drive you wish to place the pagefile on. Click on Custom Size and enter the same minimum and maximum pagefile size. Then general rule of thumb is to use 1.5X the amount of RAM you have installed in your system. Once you've entered the desired numbers, hit set. You'll then need to reboot for the settings to take effect.

Customize your Windows desktop

If you're tired of the way Windows looks, try adding themes to your system. Sure, Windows comes with a few themes built-in, but none are as fancy as those available from third parties. One of the most popular programs is WindowBlinds, which works on both Windows XP and Vista. You can then select from their list of themes, grab some new ones from deviantART's website, or even use the programs tools to design your own.

Add an OS X style dock to Windows

A program called RocketDock allows Windows users the same functionality as the Mac OS X dock does. The application is lite, only requiring 12MB on the hard drive, and offers a series of configuration options and add-ons. You can find this application at <http://rocketdock.com>.

Monitor your hard drive's health

A program from LSoft Technologies, called Active Hard Disk Monitor, can help you keep track of the health of your hard drive. The free version uses SMART (Self-Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Technology) which is built-in to most hard drives to provide information on disk drive performance.

Early Windows 7 News

Due to the less than stellar reception of Windows Vista, Microsoft is pouring programming energy into the next release, known as Windows 7. Full details of the new features planned for this OS are not clear at this point, but Microsoft has the release date currently set for January of 2010. Rumor has it that the first official BETA releases will be available in early 2009.

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Computer Preventative Maintenance – Part XV

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.

To help prevent problems from dirty connections, cover the unused ports on your personal computer and all of its peripherals, such as USB ports, output, phone, Ethernet, and audio/video jacks with electrical tape. It is suggested that you use small pieces of red or orange electrical tape as this makes it easier to spot when probing hard to access panels on equipment. This tape is an effective barrier against dust and contaminants that can cause connectivity problems and it is easy to remove the tape. Another suggestion to keep your gear clean of dust/dirt by using a Swiffer Duster to dust off the quarter sized air intake on your laptop and other cables and connections.

Add or Remove Program

After removing a program using the Add or Remove Program Feature in Windows, do the following to ensure total removal. From the Start Menu, go to Search and click All Files or Folders. Enter a word or phrase in the text box related to the program you removed and then click Search. You can remove all remnants found by right-clicking the item and clicking Delete.

Computer Recycling

If you purchase a new computer and/or its peripherals and need to “recycle” the old machine and perhaps its monitor, printer, etc., here are several options in San Antonio: Best Buy Store- locations can be found at www.BestBuy.com; Consolidated Logistics- 7417 Reindeer Trail, 210-523-5550; Corona Vision- 411 N. Medina Street, 210-521-7812; Technology Recycling- 5500 Brewster St., 210-967-8500; and The Morsi Corp.- 5516 Business Park, 210-826-6774

Error Message Copy

If you have a computer problem and need to copy the error message pertaining to it to discuss with a computer technician, there is a way to reproduce the text. When you see a dialog box with an error message, make sure the dialog box is selected and press CTRL-C. Then open a text editor, such as Notepad or WordPad, or compose a new email message. Just press CTRL-V to paste the content of the error message into the document.

File Recovery

If you delete a file and then regret the action and need to recover it, this tip will help you with that task. First, though, step away from your computer. The more you do after the file is deleted, the greater the chance your computer may have overwritten the deleted file. As long as the file is still around, there are several software options you can use to scan for and recover it. For Windows users, the best bet is the simple Undelete Plus (www.undelete-plus.com) free software. On the Mac, there's Data Rescue II (www.prosofteng.com) which will cost you \$100. The second option is to hire professional data-recovery services for more heavy-duty retrieval, but these firms could cost you a pretty penny unless your file is worth that expense.

Internet Explorer (IE) 7 Phishing Filter

Microsoft's IE 7, preinstalled on Vista systems and available as a free download for WinXP, includes a Phishing Filter that helps ferret out suspected fakes. To make sure the filter is operating, click Tools and hover over Phishing Filter. If Turn On Automatic Website Checking is an option, click it. If it's not, the filter is already turned on. The Phishing Filter has three main elements. 1. IE maintains a list of sites known to be legitimate, which the browser checks as you load each site. If the site is on the approved list, the browser continues as normal. 2. IE will check sites not on its list to see if anything appears suspicious. If so, the Address bar will display a notification that the site is suspect. 3. If you grant approval for a site you visit which IE says is suspicious, IE will also check each site against a list that Microsoft maintains of known phishing sites. If it finds a match, you'll receive a warning and an option to continue or close the site. Even if you don't turn on Automatic Website Checking, you can check sites manually at any time. Whenever you come across a site that seems suspicious, open the Tools menu and select Check This Website from the Phishing Filter submenu.

Online Support Services

If you have computer problems and/or questions there are online support services that can be of assistance. They include: www.firedog.com; www.geekSquad.com; www.YourTechonline.com; www.FixFlash.com; and www.support.com. However, these services cost respectively: \$129; \$129; \$100; \$130; and \$39-99 for PC tune-ups. Several offer hourly, monthly

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or 24/7 services. If you think them too expensive, then there are free services online, too. They include: www.5starsupport.com; www.techguy.org; www.askmehelpdesk.com; and www.protonic.com.

Pixel Problems

LCDs sometimes have pixel problems. They are commonly called dead pixels. These problems actually fall into three categories: dead pixels, the red, blue, and green lights that make up a pixel are all permanently off; hot pixels, the RGB lights are always on, making a constant white spot; or stuck pixels, one or more of the sub-pixel colors are always on or off. Dead and hot pixels are usually manufacturing defects and are not easily user correctible. However, stuck pixels can often be massaged back to life by quickly flashing colors on and off. Go to www.KillDeadPixel.com and drag that shimmering animated image over the problem area. With luck this step will save you a service call.

Print Screen

If you have a need to provide a tech support representative a copy of a particular screen on your computer, take a screen shot. For this task you must first make sure that all of the windows you want to appear in your screen shot are opened and positioned appropriately on your computer. Now press the PRT SCN or PRINT SCREEN key, which is located in the vicinity of the BACKSPACE, HOME, and SCROLL LOCK keys on most keyboards. You will not notice anything happening on-screen when you press the PRINT SCREEN key. Now click the Start menu and Programs/All Programs and point to Accessories and then click Paint. When the Paint program loads on your machine, you press CTRL-V to paste the screen shot into the open, blank document. Next click File and Save As, select a location to which to save the screen shot, enter file name in the Save As field, and click the Save button. Finally send an email message to the tech support rep with the screen shot as an attachment.

Remote Assistance

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

Restore Point

If your computer is running slowly, in addition to running Defrag, eliminating unused files and programs, you can delete all but the most current Restore Points. Logon as Administrator, then go to the Start menu and click All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and choose Disk Cleanup. Click the Options tab and select Cleanup in the System Restore dialog box.

Spring Cleanup

Spring Cleanup should be accomplished as frequently as every week. The first step in Spring Cleanup is to run Disk Cleanup. To find it, right-click a drive icon in My Computer, choose Properties, and then click the Disk Cleanup button. You'll find it on the General tab. Next you might want to shrink the Recycle Bin. By default, the Recycle Bin automatically reserves 10% of the capacity for each of your drives. Unless you regularly delete very large files, right-click the Recycle Bin, select Properties, and adjust the slider bar leftward to lower the percentage of reserved space and reclaim some wasted space on your hard drive. Third, you can adjust System Restore's storage reserve. From the Start menu, right-click My Computer, select Properties, choose the System Restore tab, and then click Settings. Just as you did with the Recycle Bin, move the slider left to reduce the amount of space used by this program. Fourth, although a more complicated procedure, delete Update Backups. Whenever you install a WinXP Service Pack, a backup folder is saved that allows the update to be uninstalled in case it causes any problems. As your WinXP system accumulates updates over time, countless backup folders are created, and while each one is automatically compressed to save drive space, they can easily consume a lot of space. You'll find the update backup folders within your Windows directory but to see them, you'll first need to make sure that WinXP is configured to show hidden files. For this step, choose Tools and then Folder Options from an Explorer window, click the View tab, and make sure the Show Hidden Files And Folders option in the Advanced Settings section is selected. The backup folders will begin with the prefix \$NT, such as \$NTServicePack. The typical system can have hundreds of them, all of which are safe to delete. Finally, run your ScanDisk (error-checking) and Defrag programs. You will find them by right-clicking My Computer, select Properties, and the Tools tab. Be aware that major antivirus packages require paid subscriptions that aren't automatically canceled when you uninstall the software. For example, PC Tools' Spyware Doctor, which costs \$30, automatically charges you another \$30 every year thereafter. Buyers apparently are not asked if they wanted a yearly renewal. A growing number of programs, utilities, and even games charge yearly or monthly fees for software, updates, or support.



Copy and paste

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!

Copying and pasting are the lazy Webmaster's salvation. No, I'm not talking about stealing content. Everything on the Internet is copyrighted because it is saved permanently. If you write a poem or draw a picture and scribble it on a piece of paper, attach it to an e-mail, put in on a Web page or save it on a floppy, it's copyrighted. And so is the other guy's stuff. So don't go grabbing other people's intellectual property.

What I'm talking about is copying-and-pasting to save time and energy.

If your basic Windows skills have atrophied:

* Copy text by highlighting it (drag the mouse across it while clicking the left mouse button) and then pressing Ctrl+C. Or, all Windows programs have a menu bar at the top of the screen - you can select edit-copy.

* Paste text somewhere else - even into another program - by positioning your cursor where you want to drop the text and press Ctrl+V. That V is meant to represent a copy editor's caret, which means insert, but you can think of it as vomiting it back onto the screen if that makes life easier for you. Edit-paste also works.

I've found that some of my students don't realize that they can copy and paste between applications. The copy command places the copied data into RAM, random access memory. It's floating in computer memory, available to use in any program until you copy something else, which writes over it. You can copy something from your browser, for example, and then paste it into your HTML editor.

Yes, you can copy right off of the browser screen! If you want to be mean, you can prevent others from doing this to your site. Just put this line of code in the <BODY> tag:

```
<BODY ondragstart="return false" onselectstart="return false">
```

This is JavaScript, so it won't deter those who turn their scripting off or use browsers that don't support Java. People can also view the page source and get the marked up text. However, it does make it harder for people to "borrow" your text.

When I am creating links to other sites, I always, always copy and paste the URL from the address box to make sure I get it exactly right. O and 0 look alike. So do l and 1.

Copying and pasting text sometimes creates weird line breaks. If you are copying from e-mail you will get those >>> that indicate quoted text. I use a free utility called "the Cleaner" to get rid of both the line breaks and the >>>. You can download it from ronbrandon.com. You probably know that you can save most graphics from the Internet to your hard drive by right-clicking your mouse on the graphic and then choosing "save picture as. ." In Internet Explorer, make sure to add the file extension to the graphic when you save it. If you don't want people taking your graphics, you can disable the right-click with another JavaScript (put this anywhere on your page):

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript1.1">
<!-- Begin
function stopthief(ie) { var warning = "Right clicking this page is not allowed.";
if (navigator.appName == 'Netscape' && ie.which == 3) {
alert(warning);
return false;
} else
if (navigator.appName == 'Microsoft Internet Explorer' && event.button==2) {
alert(warning);
return false;
}
return true;
}
document.onmousedown = stopthief;
// End -->
</SCRIPT>
```

Continued on page 18

They will get a dialogue box that says, "Right clicking this page is not allowed." You can see where those words are in the script. Change them to something nastier if you prefer.

Background images, often seamless tiles, can also be copied and saved. Place the cursor somewhere on the background, but not over another image. Right-click your mouse, and from the dropdown menu select "save background as.."

View source:

You do know about view-source, don't you? This is the best tip I got when I was a new Webmaster. You can look at the source code for just about any HTML document by going to view-page source from the menu bar. This is a useful way of seeing how another Webmaster created a certain effect, or where a script originated, or even, sometimes, what program was used to create the page. You can copy code snippets directly from the source. Copying an entire design would be immoral, if not illegal.

Lorem ipsum:

When designing a site, I work on the structure first, then the colors and design, and add the content last. I do need text as a placeholder, however, to see how a site will look. Since the 16th century, the convention is to use "lorem ipsum," paragraphs of garbled Latin, as placeholders. It keeps me - and clients - from being distracted by specific words in sample content. I found a handy lorem ipsum generator on the Internet - it will create as much as you want. You can even select a specific word count, so if your content is always 650 or 900 words, you can get exactly that. It's at lipsum.com.

Copying and pasting is critical to everything I have talked about for the last six months. It's a minor skill, but one that you will use every day.

Computer Briefs With Pim Borman

Mixed bag of tips

I ACCIDENTALLY DELETED MY RECYCLE BIN IN VISTA - HOW DO I GET IT BACK?

Go to Control Panel and click on the Personalization options. Click Change desktop icons and you'll get this handy little dialog box: Click the Recycle Bin checkbox as highlighted above, click OK, and your Recycle Bin should reappear on the desktop.

PRINTING E-MAIL ADDRESSES IN OUTLOOK EXPRESS

Open OUTLOOK EXPRESS click on File, Export, Address Book, Select Text File (Comma Separated Values) and click the Export button.

Name the file, click Browse button to save in Desktop. and at the bottom line, SAVE it in Text File (*.txt), click Next, Deselect everything except NAME and Email Address then click Finish. Click on the Text File and Print it.

OUTLOOK EXPRESS ADDRESS BOOK BACK-UP

From Outlook Express, click on Tools/ Address Book, then File / Export / Address Book

Choose a storage location and give it a file name. Click save e-MAIL SHORTCUT /

RIGHT click on the Desktop and choose NEW then SHORTCUT.

In the Command line type `mailto:yourfriend@whatever.whatever`

For example `mailto:yourfriend@cfl.rr.com`

Then click Finish and you have a short-cut to your E-mail friend. Double click and your e-mail opens up ready to go.

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From the Deals Guy

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

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

My wife drives a 2003 GMC Sonoma pickup and while I could write a book about its shortcomings, she loves it. We bought an extended warranty on it, but for only five years or 50,000 miles because we didn't think we would own it more than five years. We noticed oil leaks on the garage floor and took it to the dealer for diagnosis. The five-year warranty recently ended, but the truck only has 60,000 easy miles on it. The service advisor told us it had three leaks and explained that one was an oil pan leak, another is oil leaking from the timing chain cover and the other was the rear transmission seal leaking.

I was surprised about so many leaks, but asked the price of repairs. He said that the oil pan could not be removed because of the front end cross member being too close so they must pull the engine for those repairs. The total bill for all the leaks would be a bit over \$1,700. I was astounded because I felt that 60,000 miles was premature for so many oil leaks.

I called GMC Customer Service, who has not been much help in the past with another ongoing problem, and explained the situation and disappointment with the reliability of the vehicle. The customer rep said he would take it up with the Zone Manager and get back with me. The dealership advisor said not to expect much these days. A few days later, the zone manager said they would be happy to help me and said they would pay for the gaskets and give me a 10% discount on the repair cost. I was stunned and told them where they could shove that help and that they had insulted my intelligence. After all, the gaskets would probably cost \$20 and most dealerships give senior citizens a 10% discount, so there was no help there and they said OK, sorry, goodbye. I would have been happy with 50% or something like that. No wonder GM is going bankrupt with that kind of product reliability and customer relations attitude.

My son used my GM discount to purchase a GMC Sierra pickup and has had his share of warranty problems with it. First was a problem with the brake rotors, which the dealer would not replace when they became warped at 2,500 miles. They resurfaced them and the problem came back. Later, when the vehicle was just out of warranty, the diesel engine's injector pump went out. Customer Service said they would repair it at no cost, but it took two weeks to get the parts and they would not pay for the rental vehicle (interestingly, a Toyota pickup) which had always been customary. There were other problems. The first GMC pickup before he purchased his present one had transmission problems that they couldn't seem to repair and he had an attorney force GM to refund his money under the Lemon Law. This will be his last GMC, just like us, or probably even a GM product, for that matter, and that's where my pension comes from.

*New Product From Diskeeper

Ms. Teal Thompson, Director of Public Relations, sent me the specifications and pricing (below) for Diskeeper 2009 (just released). Diskeeper has always been a superb product.

"New Features List:

"Improved Trialware: Trialware will now take an analysis of the volume(s) "before" and "after" initial installation. A comparison report is then generated, demonstrating improve conditions.

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David's Essential Domains

Website Hosting Starting at \$3.95/month!

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

Domain Names

.COMs starting at \$7.85!
FREE with every domain:

- 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>

“Improved InvisiTasking: The new, more assertive InvisiTasking now operate in competitive environments, in conjunction with always-on/idle-time tasks that run at lowest priority while still guaranteeing completely invisible, zero-overhead, operations.

“IPv6 (Internet Protocol version 6): Diskeeper 2009 now fully supports communication, such as remote management on native IP networks.

“Improved Free Space Consolidation: About 90% of the available free space will now be grouped into less than a dozen free segments. This will increase file write performance.

“About InvisiTasking

“Instead of the operating system scheduler allocating the entire computer system to each process, one at a time, InvisiTasking empowers the system to allocate resources (CPU, memory, disk, and work) allowing overlapping usage of separate resources, not reducing system overhead, but eliminating it altogether.

“InvisiTasking is what makes Diskeeper defrag in real time with zero overhead. Systems simply run fast, operate at peak and reliable, constantly. The drives are always optimally maintained.

“Diskeeper 2009 includes the new InvisiTasking 2.0! New functionality in InvisiTasking will allow it to be more assertive, while still guaranteeing completely invisible, zero-overhead, operation (Check their Web site for further information.)

“Diskeeper 2009 with HyperFast™ SSD optimization:

“The new Diskeeper 2009 is now available as a bundle with the new HyperFast SSD optimization product.

“HyperFast™: Solid State drives (SSDs) promise users a faster and better experience than conventional hard disk drives (HDD). However, Microsoft® Windows® is not optimized for NAND Flash as a principal storage device, such as with SSDs. The result is that, over time, customers of systems with SSDs will experience a very noticeable and dramatic deterioration (up to 80%), to the degree that their computers operate much slower than they would with a hard disk. The new HyperFast feature bundled with Diskeeper 2009 is specifically designed to eliminate performance degradation, and restore performance to like-new conditions.”

Special pricing only applies on multiple purchases.

Diskeeper 2009 Home:

ESD \$29.95

2-pack \$44.95

3-pack \$54.95

5-pack \$89.95

Diskeeper 2009 Professional:

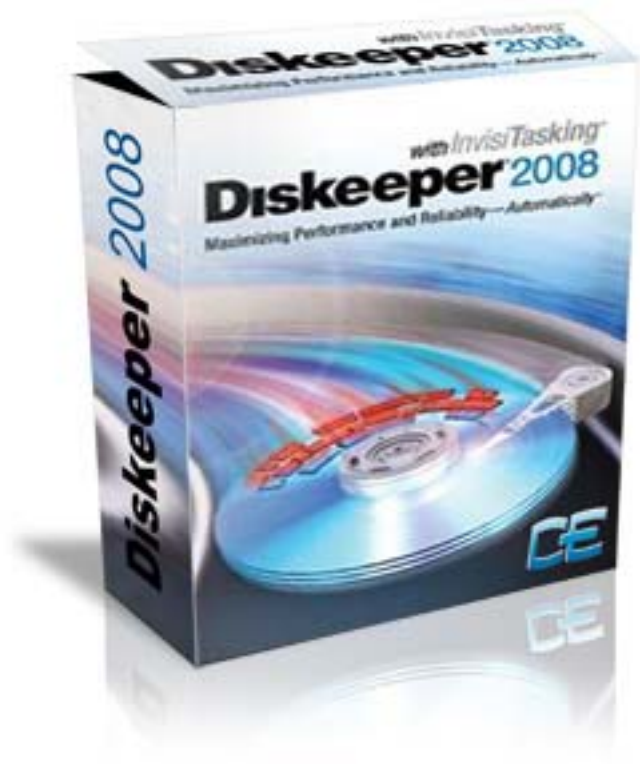
ESD \$59.95

2-pack \$89.95

3-pack \$149.95

5-pack \$269.75

Order through their online store at <<http://www.diskeeper.com/purchase/purchase.aspx>>.



***Want A DVD Creator? DealsGuy Note: I have not actually tried this product.**

ZC Software has released ZC DVD Creator Platinum V. 6.2.2, a new version of ZC DVD creator software that converts almost any video source to burn on a DVD directly without having to store it on a hard drive. ZC DVD Creator Platinum lets users customize their menu templates to match the user's style, giving the movie a polished look. The software will edit, author and burn all DVD formats ever known. With ZC DVD Creator Platinum, it is possible to easily create personal DVDs.

ZC DVD Creator Platinum supports all known video source formats, such as AVI, DIVX, XVID, RM, RMVB, MPEG, MPG, VCD, SVCD, WMV, ASF, ASX, SWF, MOV/DAT, FLV (Flash Video), 3GP (3gpp, 3gp, 3gp2), MP4 (mp4, mpeg4), Nullsoft Video (NSV), AVS, Decrypted DVD File (VOB), MKV, DV video, mts, and m2ts. Also, the user has new menu template themes that can easily customize the new Hollywood-style DVD menus. It's possible to trim and split-cut the videos, specify the DVD background Music and Images, edit the DVD Menu short description and playback preview the video file.

The video encoder guarantees the best DVD picture quality within one hour. If Nero is installed, the software automatically selects Nero as the default burning engine. ZC DVD Creator Platinum supports wide screens (16:9) as well as the usual TV screens (4:3). It also supports both NTSC and PAL TV systems. The advanced Dolby Digital audio will strengthen the movie with theater quality sound. The software includes automatic matching of a broad range of DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW burners. The user can burn a DVD Movie image file placed on a hard disc to a DVD Disk directly without storing them on a hard disc.



ZC DVD Creator Platinum has a friendly and easy to use interface that allows the user to create a DVD movie just by one click. The new version of ZC DVD Creator Platinum has an upgraded video clip edit feature.

Pricing and Availability

ZC DVD Creator Platinum is compatible with all versions of Windows. Ordering the software on a CD-ROM is \$15 USD extra for shipping.

Special offers are:

- ZC DVD Creator Platinum and ZC Video Converter at \$60 USD;
- ZC DVD Creator Platinum and QR Photo DVD Slideshow at \$60 USD;
- ZC DVD Ripper and ZC Video Converter at \$65 USD;

By purchasing ZC DVD Creator Platinum the user gets lifetime FREE Technical Support and FREE upgrades. For firsthand appraisal, a free trial version is available. The user has a 30-day money back guarantee.

Product page: <<http://www.videoxdvd.com/product.htm>>

Download link: <<http://www.videoxdvd.com/download.htm>>

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

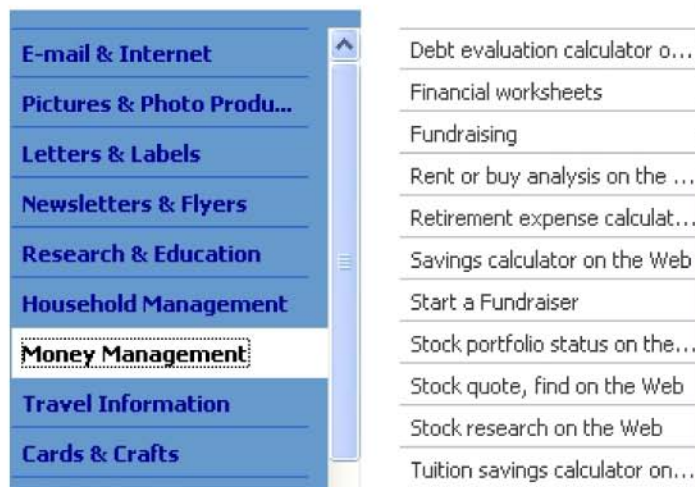
PC 101

Microsoft Works - Spreadsheets

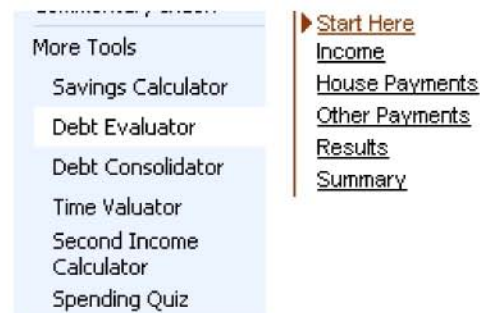
Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC User Group

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>

Next in the Tasks list is Money Management. I imagine all of us could make use of at least parts of this function. As you can see below, there is a wide range



of financially related subjects covered. First on the list is the Debt evaluation calculator online. Clicking on this item opens the MSN Money web site. The available resources



are shown at the left. As you can see there are a number of options in addition to the Debt Evaluator.

Clicking on Income opens a query as to your household monthly gross income. From there it progresses through various expense areas and finally comes up with an analysis of your situation. I don't know how helpful this might be. In my case I didn't agree with their answer, mainly because I may not have understood how to enter proper information. I also don't know how one's privacy may be protected when entering this type of information online. I saw no mention of this on the web page, but may have overlooked it.

Moving on to Financial Worksheets, you are offered once again, a choice of topics with appropriate format worksheets. The areas addressed are Car Loan

Worksheet, College Cash Flow, Conventional Mortgage Qualification, Investment Projections, Loan and Credit Planner, Monthly Home Budget, Personal Budget, Purchase Analysis, Standard Loan Analysis, and a Treasurer's Financial Report. Each of these is a template for a spreadsheet appropriate to that subject. As with previous tasks, when you begin working with a spreadsheet, you're provided a wizard to guide you in

Create a Spreadsheet with the Spreadsheet Wizard

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

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

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

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

Related topics

[About using templates and wizards](#)
[Start using the Spreadsheet](#)

"Save as" wherein you pick a desired location and name for the file. The template provides a suggested format with cells highlighted where entries are required.

I don't know how many of you are involved with Fundraising. This area includes a very comprehensive set of spreadsheet templates ranging from Action Items to Pledge Logs.

The Rent or buy analysis on the Web link is no longer active. Once again it takes you to MSN Money, but the specific analysis would have to be searched out since they have divided the page into two separate pages.

The Retirement expense calculator might prove helpful to those of you who are approaching that status. This is also on MSN Money, and is similar to the

Continued on page 23

Debt Evaluator we've already looked at.

"The retirement expenses calculator will help you determine how your annual living expenses are likely to change after retirement. While it is difficult to estimate exactly how much retirement life will cost, the following questions will highlight certain important expenses that you may not have considered when thinking about retirement."

If your interests run to Stock portfolio management, MSN Money offers to help out here as well. However, you should note that in this case you are required to establish an account with Microsoft. I went through the process up until agreeing to the terms. They refer to payment and charges, but I didn't see specifically which services might charge a fee. I did see a reference to various free trial periods, so apparently you wouldn't be obligated to sign up for fee services unless you choose to do so after a trial period. This is all part of the Microsoft Passport program.

Stock quotes are available without signing in as is Stock Research.

Google Inc. (GOOG)

GOOG quote		Real-time quotes	
After Hours: 352.56 -10.05 / -2.77% Vol. 505,876			
362.61 ▲ +3.84 +1.07%		GOOG Intraday Chart 	
Volume	15.22 Mil		
Avg Daily Volume	12.02 Mil		
Day's High	364.50		
Day's Low	353.14		
fyi Open	361.95	NASDAQ Exchange 5d 1m 3m 1y 3y 5y 10y Data Source: CSI 12:29 PM ET Quotes delayed 15 minutes	
Previous Close	358.77		
Bid	0.01		
Bid Size	100		
Ask	9,000.00		
Ask Size	100	Current Div. Yield	NA
52 Week High	475.11	Market Cap.	107.2 Bil
52 Week Low	172.57	Tot. Shares Out.	295.5 Mil
Instit. Ownership	51.0%	Forward P/E	41.60
fyi P/E	72.20	Sales	6.139 Bil
Earnings/Share	5.02	Return on Equity	16.70

Above is a quote result for Google on February 12th.

Research on the Yahoo Inc. produces a very com-

plete look at the company, although I am not qualified to judge the accuracy of their analysis. Here is the beginning paragraph on the Fundamentals page.

What does the company do?

Yahoo! Inc. together with its consolidated subsidiaries, is a global Internet brand. The Company provides Internet services that are essential and relevant to users and businesses through the provision of online properties (the Yahoo! Network) to Internet users and a range of tools and marketing solutions for businesses to market to that community of users. The Company is focused on extending the marketing platform and access to Internet users beyond the Yahoo! Network through the distribution network of third-party entities (affiliates) that have integrated the sponsored search offerings into their Websites. Many of the services are free to the users. It provides services that allow businesses to list information on properties on the Yahoo! Network. The offerings to users and businesses fall into three categories: Search and Marketplace; Information and Content, and Communications and Consumer Services.

They go on for some six pages where they look at Sales and Earnings; How fast they are growing; How profitable they are; How is their financial health?; How well has the stock performed over 3, 6 and 12 months; Where is the stock's support and resistance?; What is the best guess for the stock price in 1-2 years? What is the best guess for the stock if it were valued like its peers?

They go on to look at factors which will change an investor's opinion of the stock, with a list of five links to Yahoo activity such as company announcements, Filings with the SEC, Insider stock purchases and sells, Advisor FYI alerts, and their StockScouter rating.

Finally, they offer a tuition savings calculator to help you determine how much you must save to be able to put your children through college. Find out what you need to do to make sure you can cover the expense.

This pretty well covers the Money Management aspect of the Works Tasks list. Next in line will be Travel Information.

Last month I wound it up with a request for comments from any of you regarding the value of this article to you, and any suggestions you might have regarding how it might be improved. I haven't heard a peep from anyone, which makes me wonder if anyone actually reads it.

Please take a minute to send me an email with your comments. I need to know if I'm wasting my time.



Why?

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

I remember being told of a graduate philosophy course that had only one grade, the final exam. The teacher went to the blackboard and wrote only the word, Why? Two students handed in their exam books and left in about ten minutes. Most of the students wrote for the full three

hours because their entire grade was determined by this exam. There were two As. The first student, wrote "Because" and the second student wrote, "Why not?" Think of the courage these two students had to base their grade on one and two words respectively. However, I think for a

final exam the teacher should have been reprimanded..

The subject of why regarding computers has always fascinated me. Why do so many computer users buy systems and never learn the potential of their computer? The answer has to lie in education. The fastest growing area of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City is the Senior Net

Users Group who affiliated with our club several years ago.

SNUG is a nonprofit organization of computer-using seniors (55 and older). Their mission is to help seniors learn how to access technologies to enhance their lives and to share their knowledge and wisdom. While many computer education courses are very technical and theoretical, SNUG educates in a well-tested way that is designed to get seniors up to speed as fast as possible in exploring the total potential of their computers and getting the best return on their financial

investment. It is a fact that, in your computer life, you will have more software problems than hardware problems. A computer education does not cost but pays you in lower tech-support bills, and costly downtime. Remaining computer illiterate in a technical age is a serious mistake.

Join the Computer Club of Oklahoma City where our mission is computer literacy. All are welcome wherever they are on the computer learning curve.

Why do so many computer users not maintain their systems properly? Computer stores will tell you they are doing a booming business working on computers severely infected with spyware and viruses. Perhaps these computer users cannot afford commercial software alternatives to

protect their systems? Don't they know there are excellent spyware and virus programs online that are automatically upgradeable to protect their system at no cost?

One problem I notice is often in a family environment where there are multiple users on the same system. One member of the family must be designated to do weekly and monthly preventative maintenance if their family computer is going to remain operable. Weekly, run updated spyware

programs and virus programs and defrag your hard drive as needed. I like to use a trash cleaner and a registry cleaner also available as freeware. Once a month, do a disk check to make sure your hard drive is error free. Every three months I remove the cover of my computer, being sure that I am grounded to the case, and use compressed air to clean the micro dust accumulated which can cause your electronic components to run hotter and shorten their life.

Preventative maintenance on your automobile can keep you riding in the real world and on your computer surfing the virtual world.

"A word to the wise should be sufficient."



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All the help I can get

Elizabeth B. Wright , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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

Needless to say, most of us need help now and then. And sometimes we can use a lot of help. I have been reading Gene Owens' column, now appearing in the Daily Oklahoman under the title "Buck's English." It really has helped me with my grammar, something that tends to slip as we hear more television, read newspapers and encounter other sources of fractured English.

It is so easy to fall into the trap of corrupting words and sentences. If any of you are interested in refreshing your grammar and punctuation skills, I highly recommend this delightful column.

Many timeworn Anglo-Saxon words in our language are not directly related to computing. However, sometimes those same words come to mind when my computer is giving me problems. Recently, program removal seemed to be in order for freeing space on the D:\ hard drive. I had made a Drive Image backup of my C:\ drive prior to housecleaning. And ultimately needed to return to the imaged drive when things really started going haywire.

But even with the restored drive, the message shown in this graphic was still appearing when trying to double-click any .jpg file in the directory in order to open it. I tried really hard to find either the file mentioned in the message (eViewer.exe), or anything that would tell me what I needed to either restore or remove to get back to my original status. Matters were just made worse and I became resigned to dealing with it from now on. There were many references to the needed eViewer.exe file in the registry, but I could not find its source by trying to "locate" it on my hard drive.

It was a mystery when the file became something my computer expected to be available, but I suspect it was when some program was removed. After putting the problem on a mental back burner, I decided to do some more cleanup. Even though this seemed to be the root of my troubles, I plunged ahead. And lo and behold!, the error message magically disappeared. Will the wonders of computing never cease?

Many of us are using, for our print film, photo-finishing companies that offer a CD containing the images as part of their service. While the CD costs extra, it can save a lot of time later if you decide to print extra copies of the pictures. One of the programs offered on CDs by some finishers is the Kodak system. The auto-loading software on the CDs produced by this technology has a lot to offer for inexperienced users. One step in particular is quite useful.

The program automatically copies images to the hard disk and strips the "read only" attribute from them. They can then be manipulated by the program and re-saved to the hard disk using the same name. This is handy for rotating pictures that were taken by holding the camera in its vertical position. People who are just starting with digital manipulation of film images will find this feature very handy. I would never save an image with its original name after changing it in any way, but although that is a relatively simple technique, it remains too advanced for many people. Some of us print our own photos, but many of the places that handle film processing have public access printers that make prints from the CDs.

My hat is off once again to the professional Website builders. I downloaded a four page .pdf file the other day. It contained text plus graphics. It came across so fast on my dial-up modem that I thought it was not transferring. However, it was all there and when I looked at the file size after saving it to my hard disk, it turned out to be only 73k. I don't know how they did it, but would like to be able to pass along the procedure to those who send extremely large .pdf files to my poor little 56k modem.

If any of you are interested, the .pdf file was for the crocheted poncho pattern used to make the garment Martha Stewart wore home when released from stir. It was made for her by a fellow inmate as a going-home gift. The company that owns the pattern (and it is free, by the way) fielded thousands of phone calls requesting it, and I know of some people who were not able to get onto the website due to heavy traffic.

It is quite a good story as well as a really nice poncho, and the pattern company has a donation program to the penal facility set up when certain of their products are purchased. So whether you like M.S. or not, if you like to crochet this might just be the pattern for you.



Access: Performing a find function

James D. Duncan , Computer Club of Oklahoma City

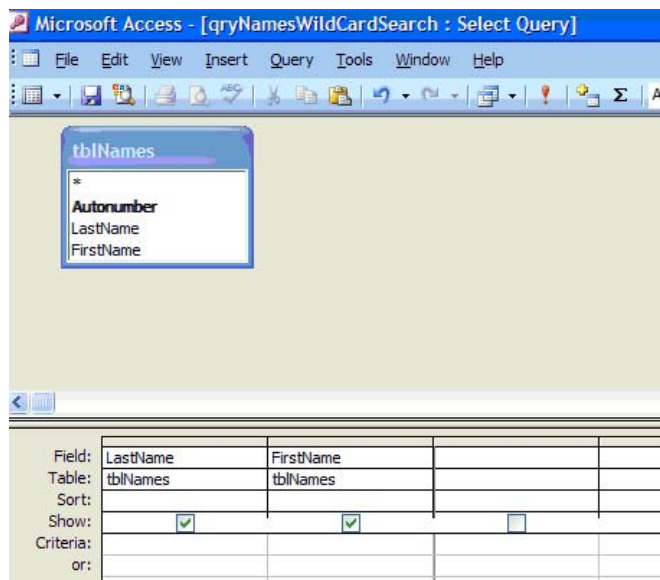
James is a member of the CCOKC and an expert in Access and Excel.

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

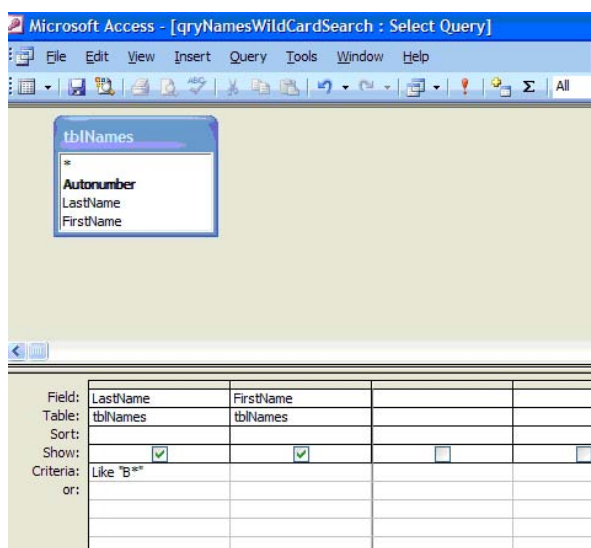
Now, Create a quick query using this table.



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.



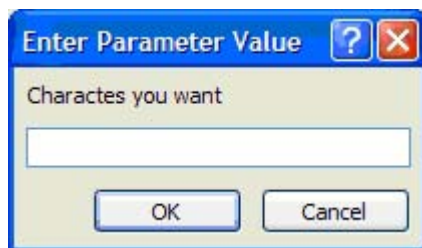
Run the data sheet view and we get a list of the Last names that begin with b.

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



Is repetition hazardous to health?

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/>>

Millions of Americans are suffering from back and neck pain for which they can't find a specific cause. Most of these cases are due to "repetitive stress" from occupational or personal equipment overuse. The human body was not meant to stay in one constrained position for prolonged periods of time. It requires regular motion and activity for normal circulation and to keep muscles relaxed and loose.

The result of prolonged static postural stress and strain is tired, fatigued muscles and eventually joint, nerve, or disc injury. The pain may start suddenly or gradually, but the problem was inevitably "brewing" for months, years or even decades! Your body is very resilient and a symptom can be the last thing to show up.

What types of symptoms or disorders are associated with repetitive stress?

- * Neck/shoulder tension
- * Muscle tightness and spasm
- * Headache
- * Tendonitis of the wrist & forearm
- * Carpal tunnel syndrome
- * Mid back or shoulder blade pain
- * Lower back pain
- * Sciatic pain

Ergonomic Checklist ?

Chair

- * Is your seat height adjustable?
- * Are your feet firmly on the floor?
- * Are hips at the same level as your knees?
- * Is there a good lumbar support?
- * Do you have arm rests?

Desk/Computer

- * Is your desk or keyboard at a height where your wrists are not bent?
- * are your elbows flexed 90 degrees?
- * are your shoulders relaxed, not "shrugged"?
- * Is the center of your monitor at nose level?
- * Is there glare on your computer screen?
- * Do you have a document holder?
- * Do you have a headset?

Proper Lifting & Bending

Repetitive lifting and bending can be dangerous if not performed correctly. The following rules will minimize the likelihood of a problem.

- * Lift with your back straight.
- * Avoid bending or twisting while lifting.
- * Keep the object as close to your chest as possible.
- * Keep things that need to be moved at waist level whenever possible.
- * Avoid lifting or bending first thing in the morning or if you have been sitting for a prolonged time.
- * Besides utilizing good technique, muscle strength and coordination is necessary to avoid injury. In particular, leg strength (such as from practicing squats) is necessary to avoid improper lifting mechanics.

The human body may take months, years or even decades to show symptoms from repetitive stress. This indicates that prevention is the most effective protection against this syndrome. Prevention should take place in the form of following all the ergonomic rules and getting regular spinal checkups by your Chiropractor.

Stress injuries cost real dollars

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/>>

A national study shows a computer work force of 18 million Americans at significant risk from repetitive stress injuries, including carpal tunnel syndrome and lower back injuries. Stress injuries cost real dollars; the personal pain is real and lost productivity is astounding.

Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome include numbness, burning, tingling and a prickly pin-like sensation over the palm surface of the hand, and into the thumb, forefinger, middle finger and half of the ring finger. Some individuals notice a shooting pain, which goes from the wrist up the arm, or down into the hand and fingers. With continued median nerve compression, an individual may begin to experience muscle weakness, making it difficult to open jars and hold objects with the affected hand. Eventually, the muscles of the hand served by the median nerve may begin to grow noticeably smaller (atrophy), especially the fleshy part of the thumb. {short description of image} Untreated, carpal tunnel syndrome may eventually result in permanent weakness, loss of sensation, or even paralysis of the thumb and fingers of the affected hand.

Poor CPU setup heads the list of safety problems discovered. 51 percent place keyboards too high-contributing to neck, shoulder and wrist strain which can as lead carpal tunnel syndrome causes.

The monitor is placed too low for 65 percent of workers, contributing to neck and shoulder stress, and 47.8 percent cradle the phone between the head and shoulder during phone calls instead of using a headset.

Extremely bright, high-glare offices are another recurrent finding. 53 percent {short description of image} experience monitor glare from office lights, sunlight or window glare.

More than half (51.2 percent) of respondents report they support the upper body by resting on their wrists when keyboarding, which can be especially unsafe over time.

A real problem is that 59.8 percent suffer from wrist discomfort during computer work. However, the good news is that this is down slightly from the 62.6 percent reported in the 1998 study.

The cost to business from carpal tunnel syndrome absenteeism frequently exceeds \$50,000 per employee when wrist surgery is required. The surgery is ineffective in many of the cases.

There are hidden costs-for example, when a valuable employee must be moved to a less keyboard-intensive job and a new employee found and trained to replace him. The key issue is that much of the costs absolutely could be avoided with simple changes in equipment placement and employee involvement in ergonomics. This is a case of an ounce of prevention being equal to a pound of cure.



Outlook & Xobni, a Good Match

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>

Xobni is Inbox spelled backwards, but there is nothing backward about this free plug-in module from www.xobni.com. The more email you receive, the more you will like and appreciate Xobni. The program works as a data mining machine for your stored emails. Without Xobni, the best you can do with Outlook is to organize your email by folders, messages, and dates. With Xobni, you can organize your email by people, email histories, and personal, social or business relationships.

You need Outlook 2003 or 2007 to use Xobni. Either XP or Vista will work fine with the program. The folks at Xobni are also working on versions for other email programs such as Gmail and Yahoo Mail. How long this will take is unknown. Downloading and installation is quick, easy, and seamless. The program requires some time to synchronize itself with Outlook. The amount of time will be determined by the size of the email data base you have accumulated. I had slightly over two thousand emails in eighteen different folders, and that took about ten minutes.

If you keep a lot of information on your contacts, it's difficult to extract that information in a way that can be useful with Outlook. All that changes once Xobni is installed. Changes begin with an attractive panel that sits on the right side of your Outlook screen and doesn't infringe or interfere with any of Outlook's standard functions. The panel interface slides open when you need it, and discretely closes when you don't.

You get two options within this panel. The first brings up a blank email which is nice. For you organizational types, the second option lets you send meeting requests. A real time saver is the simultaneous display of open time slots that Xobni drags from your Outlook calendar.

Your contact profiles display at the top of the Xobni panel with pictures if one is in the profile. That's followed by the phone number and a thread of any conversations you've had along with files you've exchanged. Specifics topics are quickly found with Xobni's search tool, and there is a handy slider that exposes or hides lines of email text. While it appears you could be getting bogged down in details, the material is organized so that navigating through the information is an easy, pleasant journey filled with discovery.

Skype's VoIP service integrates with PC, Xobni quite well. A mouse click on a phone number within a Xobni profile generates a SkypeOut call.

You can use Xobni for simple searches within Outlook, and Xobni searching is lightning fast in comparison. That's probably because it's integrated within Outlook rather than running on top of it like most third party applications. Xobni gives you more than express searching. It organizes social information logically with additional functions that Outlook simply can't match. How often have you given up searching with Outlook because the program lacks even the simplest logic for intelligent searching?

Instead of treating mail conversations, contacts and calendars as separate entities, Xobni weaves them together in a responsive, intuitive interface. It's hard to go wrong with this tool. Go to www.Xobni.com and get started.

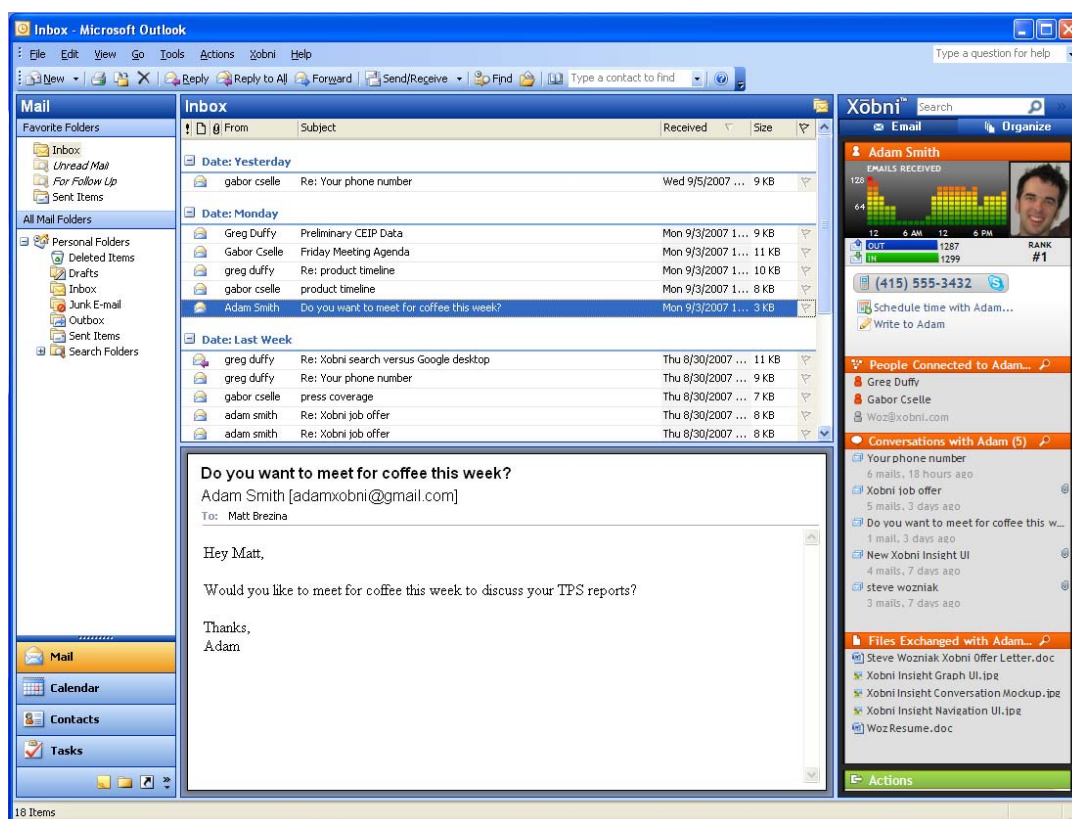


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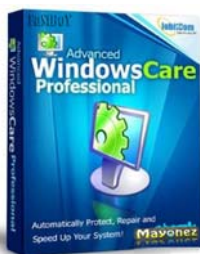
Tech issue

Advanced System Care Free V3 – Improve PC Performance

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

One of the most frequently asked questions on my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM, Mondays, 6-7pm) has to do with improving the performance of a sluggish computer. One of the utilities I most recommended was the free version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care – Personal Edition, version 2. Recently IObit released an upgraded and updated utility renamed Advanced System Care Free V3, which IObit claims has over 10,000 improvements and updates. Being a fan of system improvement utilities, I had to download and install this new version, replacing the older version 2 that I have been happily using for about the past 18 months.

Continued on page 33



WEBSITES:

<http://www.iobit.com>

<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>

Going to the IObit website at www.iobit.com, and downloading the new software was an easy experience, as I was given the choice of multiple download sites. I selected one of the Texas mirrors of MajorGeeks, a major download service, where the download counter of this new version indicates that over 1.5 million copies of this new version 3 have been downloaded from MajorGeeks alone. The download was about 7.6 megs in size, and downloaded remarkable fast for a download that size, to the credit of the bandwidth available at the Texas MajorGeeks website. Once downloaded, I clicked on the file to install it, and it recognized my older version 2, which it replaced. I was given the choice of language, and “skin” (background color scheme), and selected the white (really a soft light blue) as the easiest to read.

Once the install was complete, I chose to run the program. I was displayed a clean fresh graphical interface that on the left of the window gave the choices “Maintain Windows”, “Diagnose System”, “Utilities”, and “Home”. Whichever icon is selected opens the right half of the window. For my first test of the software, I chose to Maintain Windows. I was offered a check-box selection of “Spyware Removal”, “Registry Fix”, “Privacy Sweep”, and “Junk Files Clean”. I selected all of them and clicked on “Scan”. In just a few minutes, Advanced System Care Free V3 detected 20 items it labeled as spyware (all were tracking cookies), 66 correctable errors in my registry, 29 privacy issues, and 394 megs of junk files that could be deleted. I prefer to not blindly follow what is found, so I clicked on each of the findings to review what was found. After some minor tweaking, I decided to accept what was found, and clicked on the “Repair” icon. In just seconds, all of the corrections and deletions were carried out.

Selecting the “Diagnose System” icon, I was given the now familiar check boxes for “System Optimization”, “Security Defense”, “Disk Defragment”, and “Security Analyzer”. I checked all except Disk Defragment, as I had just recently defragged my hard drive using IObit’s free standing and excellent disk defragmentation utility, and wanted to save the time, despite IObit’s claim that the integral defragmentation utility is up to 10 times faster than some other competing products. System Optimization detected about two dozen “system bottlenecks” and corrected the system settings to improve performance. The Security Defense feature can immunize the computer against thousands of malicious websites, illicit tracking cookies, browser hijackers, dialers, and other malicious software. Security Analyzer examines running programs to detect and disable any malware that may be currently running on the computer.

The Utilities selection offers 20 distinct utilities to tune-up the computer and its applications; examine the security settings and backup critical system files and settings’ and “Admin Tools” which includes an uninstall utility, as well as my personal favorite, a startup manager to identify and control what programs startup when the computer is booted. By cleaning up the startup, the computer will run faster, boot quicker, and have fewer conflicts, because fewer programs will be automatically loaded. Under the Tune Up tab, I found that Firefox (my preferred browser) can be optimized for maximum performance.

The “Home” icon displays program version, database updates, most recent scan, user account (free or paid “Professional” account), and the cumulative results of the scans that had been performed. The center “Care” icon automatically runs the system optimization utilities, as a one-click performance improvement function.

As is to be expected, IObit has a comparison chart that compares the features of Advanced System Care Free V3 with its software competitors, both free and commercial. The features listed on the chart are “All-in-one secure, repair, clean, and optimize”, “Optimize and speed up PC and Internet”, “Complete registry care”, “Security features”, “1-click solution”, and “Price”. This software is compared to seven major competitors (1 free and six commercial), and comes out feature rich compared to the competition. To be fair, some of the products listed have features and capabilities not included with Advanced System Care Free V3, but comparing system utilities and clean up programs, this program compares very well.

It is inevitable that users will ask why IObit would give away software this powerful; the reason is that IObit clearly wants the satisfied user to upgrade to the Pro version, which has more features and capabilities, and is currently on sale online for \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95) directly from IObit. The Pro version has additional performance improving features, a deep registry scan that roots out many more useless registry entries (the Pro version detected over 3000 useless registry entries on my computer, compared to only 66 in the free version), additional tune-up features to both improve hardware performance and web speed, and free technical support.

The excellence of Advanced System Care Free V3 has been recognized in the media with several awards, including high ratings from ZDnet, Tucows, Softpedia, Download.com, PC World, PC Magazine, and other publications. Download.com claims that Advanced System Care Free V3 is its number one most downloaded system utility, with about 9.5 million downloads, even though it has only been available for the past several weeks.

For those wanting a powerful, and feature rich utility to improve computer performance, the free version of Advanced System Care Free V3 would be a very good choice. For those who want additional features and capability, the Pro version, currently on sale for \$19.95, would be a very good choice.

Build a 'Green' PC on a Budget

By Rob Limbaugh, President, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT, www.dacs.org, Relimbaugh@dacs.org

We're constantly bombarded by the subject of energy conservation—'green' this and 'green' that. I think that much of our problem is our 'disposable society'. On top of that it seems that most people tend to be 'green' only if it fits into their budget and lifestyle. It is a little difficult to rationalize spending \$25,000 on a solar array for a house that will take a decade to 'pay for itself'.

But, if you happen to be looking for another computer and you're willing to spend some spare time and effort, you can rescue good parts from a premature demise and save money at the same time. How? Read on!

Timing Is Everything

Around here we have 'transfer stations' to which local residents take their refuse and recyclables if they don't have curbside pickup or another service. The transfer station is somewhat of a presorting point before everything goes to a larger dump site.

What amazes me is that people seem to be willing to pay a few bucks to throw away things that could be recycled or disposed of for no cost—just a bit more effort. No matter. That works out well for me—I can shop!

I need more computer equipment like I need another hole in my head. What I always seem to lack are good motherboards to match up with the spare DVD drive here and spare hard drive there. On a recent trip to the dump I hit pay dirt! Someone had dropped off a bunch of computer equipment and I got there early enough in the day to have relatively fresh dibs!

Weeding Out Junk

Knowing that 'garbage' tends to be at dumps, I look for specific traits when considering a rescue of any would-be junk. Last thing I want to do is throw it away when I get home and you can't exactly test things at a transfer station. This is a good exercise in knowing your hardware as you can just take home the good stuff and leave everything else there. As luck would have it, I found a gutted case with a motherboard stripped of everything but the CPU and heat sink. Even the BIOS battery was gone! They did leave the power supply, though.



Continued on page 35

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Back to the Bench

So far my out-of-pocket expense is \$0.00 and I'd like to keep it that way! I take the guts home and blow them out with an air-compressor. The minimum needed to successfully power on a motherboard are a power supply, motherboard, CPU, fan, and memory. Unfortunately I didn't have any memory on hand for this motherboard, so now it's time to do some leg work and see if I should consider spending the money when I don't even know if the board works.

The motherboard, in this case, can be identified by a silkscreen of "PTGD1-LA" between the PCI slots. This cross-references to a board used in HP Pavilion Ax00 systems. This gives me access to motherboard details so I know what the connecting pins are, memory requirements, and other details necessary to do troubleshooting. Yippee, memory for this board is on sale right now—1GB for \$27!

Good, Bad, or Ugly?

In this situation I presume the components are good until proven faulty. Having all the dust blown off, I sniff around the motherboard. That's right... using my nose, I sniff around the motherboard. The power supply, too. Fried components have a burnt smell. All smells good.

Powering on a working system with the memory removed should get yield 'memory error' beep codes from the motherboard. I power everything on and get beep codes indicating bad memory. During this time I listen for fan noise out of the power supply and the CPU fan. Nothing that sounds like skateboard wheels on pavement. Things are looking good!

Many motherboards take CR2023 batteries for memory, including this one. I picked up a two-pack along with a 1GB stick of PC-3200 memory. So far I'm out about \$30 and still don't know if this will fire up completely—but odds are in my favor. Besides, if I needed PC-3200 and PC batteries today, I'd need them in the future for another find later.

Hot Dog!

With the memory seated and a battery added, I fired up the machine and the screen came up! Woo-Hoo! Looking really good now! And it's a P4!

I gathered up a spare SATA hard drive and DVD drive and connected them to the system. BIOS reported the devices. Turns out this is an Intel P4 3.0GHz CPU with Hyper-threading.

Wrapping It Up

Sure this isn't a screaming-fast brand new machine, but it has much potential and is still quite useful. Someday, the parts will wind up being recycled through the transfer station for good—but not today. For now, it has a new life. This board has integrated video, audio, and four SATA ports. It has IDE, USB, PCI Express, and legacy connections. It is also very quiet. This is not bad find at all! I will probably use this as the start of my network storage system.



Circuit Writer Version 6.4

by **Jim Scheef**, Director, Danbury Computer Society,
CT, www.dacs.org, jscheef@yahoo.com

It's Over – And So It Begins

As we all get used to the prospect of President Obama, some with trepidation, others with jubilation, the one thing we can be sure of is that change is coming. Trite as that sounds now, his presidency will be historic in more ways than we can possibly know right now. But how will it affect us, the computer-using public, is more important – well to us anyway. For instance, the White House will have its first CTO (chief technology officer) recognizing the role of technology and information systems in everything we do. Hopefully, the White House will no longer need to worry about losing emails as it seemed to be such a problem for the outgoing administration.

A Future in Chrome

Will Chrome steal the plating off Microsoft's shine? This topic could be more complex than why the Republicans lost the elections. Fortunately, there are far fewer pundits talking about it so I will point you to two eWeek articles that get into some depth. Google Chrome Could Nuke Microsoft From the Internet Market (tinyurl.com/6pkkue) (for web: <http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Application-Development/Google-Chrome-Could-Nuke-Microsoft-From-the-Internet-Market/>) and Google Chrome Keeps Pace with Web App Advances (tinyurl.com/64xjz4). [for web: <http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Search-Engines/A-Technical-Overview-of-Google-Chrome/>] The second is more technical and shows Flash crashing in a Yahoo webpage rendered in Chrome. With the 800-pound gorilla of Google pushing Chrome, it will become a player in how we interact with the web. Whether it will become Google's "web operating system", only time can tell.



Two Lists of Ten

Before we leave Chrome, here are 10 things to love (and hate) about Google Chrome from TechRepublic (<http://tinyurl.com/4z97lu>). (for web: <http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/10things/?p=422>) Read thru this article and perhaps you'll see why I think Chrome will be important – or at least a good browser.

The second list is 10 ways you might be breaking the law with your computer (<http://tinyurl.com/5f8r89>) from the same blog. (<http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/10things/?p=356>) This one shows how insidious the intellectual property laws have become with the inference that these laws need to become more rational and reflect the needs of consumers as well as owners.

Does Search Really Work?

Why is it that when I search for 'man bites mosquito', I get 400,000 hits for exactly the opposite? But, if I search for 'man bites grasshopper', the third and fifth items are articles about a man biting a dog? If first generation search was either simple word indexes built by web crawlers like Alta Vista or indexes built by hand like the initial Yahoo. Google brought in the second generation where search ranking is based on other criteria – like other links to the site or consistency of information within a site, etc.

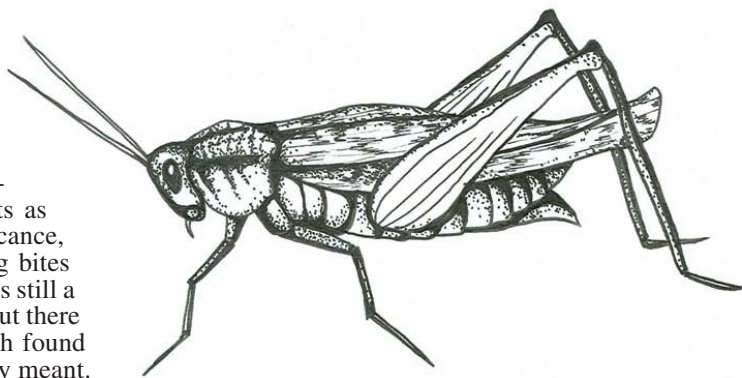
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"Watch out for him - he bites."

Continued on page 37

Some people, like those who design new search engines or who write articles about it (tinyurl.com/5qkyql), (for web: <http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Search-Engines/The-Only-Problem-With-Google-Yahoo-Microsoft-Search-is-That-Theyre-Awful/>) think the coming generation of search will be based on semantics and the “social graph”. Semantics, of course, involved the meanings of words and thus their order becomes significant. Current search treats your search arguments as keywords and the order you give them has little significance, hence the results to man bites dog are really for dog bites man (unless you search for the string in quotes which is still a different search). I started to use this as my example but there is a movie out called “Man Bites Dog” so that search found many references to the movie but none to what I really meant. So semantics sounds great, right?



Social graph refers to the Google Social Graph API (code.google.com/apis/socialgraph/). This application programming interface allows developers of web sites that rely on users to build content, to use links that people have already made public to create links between social sites like Facebook and Classmates, to pick a couple that you have probably heard of. At least that is what the article implies.

I had to do some searching to find this as the article doesn't really explain it. Searching for the string “social graphic” returned forty results out of 135,000. Using my eyeballs on these results I found a reference to a [gawker.com](http://gawker.com/tag/social-graphic/) article (gawker.com/tag/social-graphic/) about “Six Degrees Of Separation Between George W. Bush and Parker Posey.” We know who the first guy is and Parker Posey is some kind of musician or something (I don't really care but apparently everyone agrees that the relationship strains credibility). According to the diagram in the article, these two people are linked by two chains of six or less “degrees”. A diagram of social relationships is what does this and social web sites like LinkedIn and Facebook could be a source for such information – maybe. In the immortal words of the excellent motivational speaker Dr. Richard Byrne, “It will if it does, and it won't if it doesn't.” (Don't bother searching for Dr. Byrne as he passed away before the advent of the search engine.)

So why isn't search better? There is actually an incentive for current search engines to not get any better. If it takes you four or five tries to find what you want, Google or Yahoo get three or four additional opportunities to show you advertising. Remember, that's what pays for all this.

Computer Briefs

Cloud Computing

When did you first hear or see the term “cloud computing”? I'm usually the last to know anything, it seems, so I've only recently started noticing this term on the Internet. I did some research, and some say it's the greatest thing since sliced bread—but others think it isn't such a hot idea. In very simple terms, cloud computing is this: rather than having programs and files on your computer, you would store files online and also access applications (programs) online (think Google Docs or MS Office Live; think Flickr or Buzzword). Your computer really wouldn't need to have much on it, and you'd have to have an Internet connection in order to run applications or access your files. Not only individuals, but also companies would be doing this (and in fact, are doing it now). One of the major benefits is that a company (or an individual, for that matter) has the use of combined server resources they might not otherwise be able to afford “in house.”

The ever-vigilant Richard Stallman warns against the use of cloud computing: “Somebody is saying this is inevitable—and whenever you hear somebody saying that, it's very likely to be a set of businesses campaigning to make it true... One reason you should not use web applications to do your computing is that you lose control,” he said. “It's just as bad as using a proprietary program. Do your own computing on your own computer with your copy of a freedom-respecting program. If you use a proprietary program or somebody else's web server, you're defenseless. You're putty in the hands of whoever developed that software.” Food for thought.

by Sister Dorothy Robinson, Editor, OMUG News, The Olympia Microcomputer User Group, WA, www.oly mug.org, Newsletter@oly mug.org



Moving on to Vista – Part 11

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

One of Vista's disk management systems, that is new to me, is a dynamic disk and the ability to extend a volume. Suppose you have a volume or folder on your hard drive called Pictures for your photographs. If you run out of space on your hard drive, but you have space available on another hard drive installed on your PC, you can extend your Picture volume onto that drive to make it bigger. There are two limitations to this process. First, you cannot reverse the process. Second, once created you cannot remove the space you've used on the second disk to reduce the size of the volume. The only way you can do this is to create a new volume on one of your drives, copy all of the contents of the spanned volume to it and then delete the spanned volume. The other limitation is you cannot extend the Windows System volume.

I'm not really sure how I would use this feature. My inclination is to create new volumes and not try to span a volume across two hard drives. Perhaps when working with video files, which can consume enormous amounts of space, this might be a useful feature.

How often do you start an operation on your computer which opens a dialog box on the desktop that requires you to click on "OK"? So you move your mouse to put the pointer on the "OK" box and click on it. You probably do this many times in a day. Did you know that there is a setting to automatically move your mouse pointer to the OK button so that all you have to do is click on it? Here's how you can configure Windows Vista to do this.

First click on the "Start" button and then the "Control Panel". Under the "Hardware and Sound" entry in the "Control Panel" box, click on "Mouse". The "Mouse Properties" box will open. Click on "Pointer Options". Locate "Snap To" and click to create a check mark to activate "Automatically move pointer to the default button in a dialog box".

While you're looking at the "Pointer Options" box, consider the next option line, "Display pointer trails". If you occasionally have trouble locating the mouse pointer on the desktop, consider this option. Experiment with the length of the pointer trail setting. If you don't like it, turn it off.

On a slightly different topic, let's talk about shortcuts. Many application programs create a shortcut on your desktop when you install the program. They're a convenient way to start a program without have to go to the Start menu. There are other ways to use short-cuts too. Suppose you have a spreadsheet or genealogy file that you frequently update. Locate the file with Windows Explorer, right-click on the file name, scroll down the pop-up menu to where it says "Create Shortcut" and click on it. Now, before you close the Windows Explorer window, locate the new shortcut and drag it to your desktop. Because Windows (XP as well as Vista) associates application programs with certain type of files (i.e. Windows Excel with spreadsheets), when you click on the file shortcut the application will start and open the file.

But suppose you can't see your desktop icons and short-cuts because they're hidden by something else? Maybe your Internet browser or e-mail program is running and completely cover your desktop. Let's go back and look at the shortcut on your desktop. Right-click on it. In the windows that opens, notice the four tabs at the top. Click on the tab marked "Shortcut". In the middle of the Shortcut menu you'll find something marked "Shortcut key". You'll probably see "None" entered in the box next to it. Click on the box and press and hold down your Ctrl key. In the box you'll now see "Ctrl + Alt + ". While still holding down the Ctrl key, press the the key you want to use to access the shortcut. Now click on the Apply button and then the OK button. Your shortcut key is now set. Just press the three key combination to instantly access your spreadsheet or genealogy file.

Before we leave the topic of Shortcuts I'll just mention that when you open a Shortcut's properties window, the first tab is marked "General". If you click on "General", one of the first entries is "Type of File" and "Open with". If you click on the adjacent "Change" button, you'll see a list of possible application programs to access the file. You can select from this list or click on "Browse" to locate another program.

I'm hearing more rumors about Windows 7 but, at this point, they are still rumors. One thing seems certain, Windows 7 will have more in common with Windows Vista than Windows XP. Whatever you learn about Windows Vista should help you when you upgrade to the next version of Windows.

Computer Briefs

With Pim Borman

WinXP's Taskbar Address Bar

Many users overlook WinXP's ability to keep an open Address bar in the Taskbar. Right-click the Taskbar, select the Toolbars menu, and click Address. This will add an Address bar to your Taskbar that looks and acts like the Internet Explorer Address bar. If the full bar is not visible, just double-click Address to expand it. You can type in URLs to launch the browser directly into this destination. If you have several IE windows open, the Taskbar Address bar will control the window in the foreground.

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Continued on page 40

Stop Printing that Document

Sometimes you begin to print a document and then change your mind. How do you stop a print job? Because your program simply passes off its printing jobs to Windows, there is no obvious way to cancel printing. It can be done if you're crafty, however. Follow these steps:

Locate the printer icon located on the taskbar at the bottom-right of your screen. (Look near the current-time display.) This printer icon appears only when Windows is sending something to the printer. Depending on how much you're printing and how fast your printer is, you may not even see it at all. If you don't, you're out of luck and you may as well quit right now and eat some ice cream.

Double-click the little printer icon.

Click the name of your document "job" in the Print Manager's list.

Choose Document-->Cancel Printing.

You may be asked whether you really want to terminate the employee, er, print job. Click OK. If you're using a network printer, you may not be able to cancel the document. Oh well.

Choose Printer-->Close. You are zapped back to your program, ready for more editing action.

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Freebies!

by **Dave Bilcik**, a member of the STPCC (Southern Tier Personal Computing Club), New York, dlbilcik@yahoo.com

It's now after the Holiday Season! Home & hearth, good food and lots of presents, those banking and Wall Street executives should have a fine time this year (Santa Claus made a special ***bonus*** trip just for them... Ho-Ho-Ho!). Now, what are you going to do for the Holiday? Be creative and "Have Yourself A Freebie Little Christmas." People may thank you. Discover (again) why it is called Christmas and not "Santamas" (<http://www.e-sword.net/>). You might find that you really like the story.

You have technology at your fingertips so think about what is important to the special people in your life and give something meaningful to them. The best part; it doesn't have to cost much to be meaningful. CD-Rs cost less than a first-class stamp, the most expensive 8 1/2 x 11 photo-paper you can get is under \$1.00 per sheet while regular paper is under a penny. Put something on that paper or CD that interests the people you are interested in.

Pictures, sound, movies and even free software are all good candidates if it means something to your special person. Picasa (<http://picasa.google.com/>) will help you with your pictures and slide shows. Print up a nice 8x10 of that "creative" place where you hung the mistletoe for your significant other.

If you have a crafter on your list, print up a collection of cross-stitch or quilting patterns; one spot to try is <http://www.alitadesigns.com/index.php> another is <http://www.freepatterns.com/>. Grandma might be happy to get your custom x-stitch collection but don't send her your mistletoe picture by mistake. However, be ready for some "cute" overload when prospecting for freebies on the crafting sites.

If music or video is your passion then cdburnerxp (<http://cdburnerxp.se/>) will help you with either one. It is a full featured burner that will let you make a custom CD or DVD any time you wish. Like classical music? A site that will point you to lots of free music is <http://www.classiccat.net/index.htm>. Don't violate any copy-rights and fire up your CD/DVD drive. That custom-mix lute CD is right at your fingertips.

Don't forget your web-cam or digital camera with movie mode. Give a CD or DVD with a video message telling that special family member what they really mean to you. If you are lucky, they will avoid you completely at the next family reunion.

The fact that you are reading this shows you have exquisite taste and a level of computer literacy way above the average. Help those friends who are less fortunate by cleaning up their sluggish computers. Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition (<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>) when installed and run on their machine, will give them back the performance that they have been missing.

The software is free, it helps a friend, costs only a little of your time, and proves your computer kung fu is much stronger than theirs. Everybody wins!

Now that you have saved so much cash on creative, meaningful gifts for your friends and family, you can now reward yourself for all your efforts. Try <http://www.thinkgeek.com/> for loads of intriguing stuff. Check out the Ion USB Turntable that will help you turn your vinyl music collection into digital goodness... the turntable outputs files in either mp3 or WAV format.

If the good will, optimism and hope of the season gets to be too much, try <http://despair.com/> for a big steaming cup of cynicism. It will help you to get back to work after the holidays.

My personal email address is dlbilcik@yahoo.com if you want to send me comments, questions or cash. Please put "Freebies" somewhere on the subject line so I will have some idea about its contents. Tell me about your best free software experience or your best cookie (... ever!) and I will pass it on.

Music Tagging with ID3

by Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Computer Users Group, KY, www.bgamug.org, ml.moore@insightbb.com

MMP3 is a compressed music format that can be used to fit a track of music that would normally occupy hundreds of megabytes on a Compact Disc into four or five megabytes. While some of the data is lost in this compression, it is data that cannot normally be heard in the rendering of the music file. In compressing music files this way, we can fit more music onto our music appliances, such as iPods and other MP3 players.

While the process of compressing music files is interesting for techies, it is not something we normally have to concern ourselves with, because often the music files are already in MP3 format when we acquire them. Double-click on the MP3 file and PRESTO, the song plays.

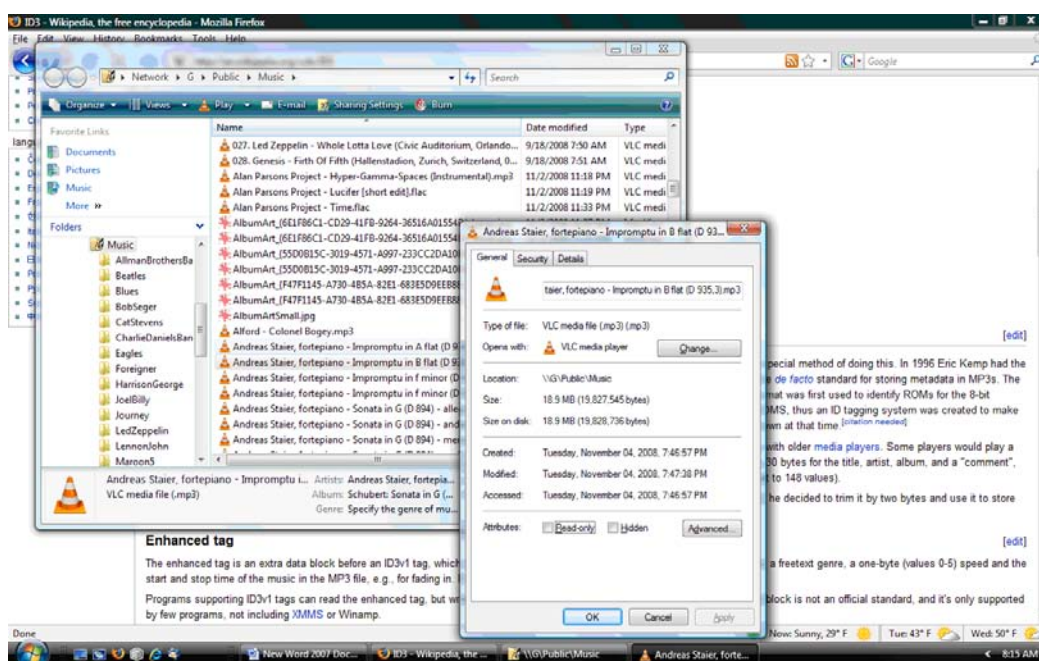
What is interesting and really required of digital music collectors is that we must keep our music organized. Since there are obviously many ways in which one can name a file of music, this is really not a very good way to keep a library organized, unless you have complete control over how a song is named.

Think of a given song. There are some obvious metrics on which the song could be organized. For starters, we have the name of the piece, the recording artist and label, the name of the band or orchestra, the genre of music, and so forth. There are dozens of less obvious metrics, such as the length of the song, when it was recorded – even who borrowed it from you and when!

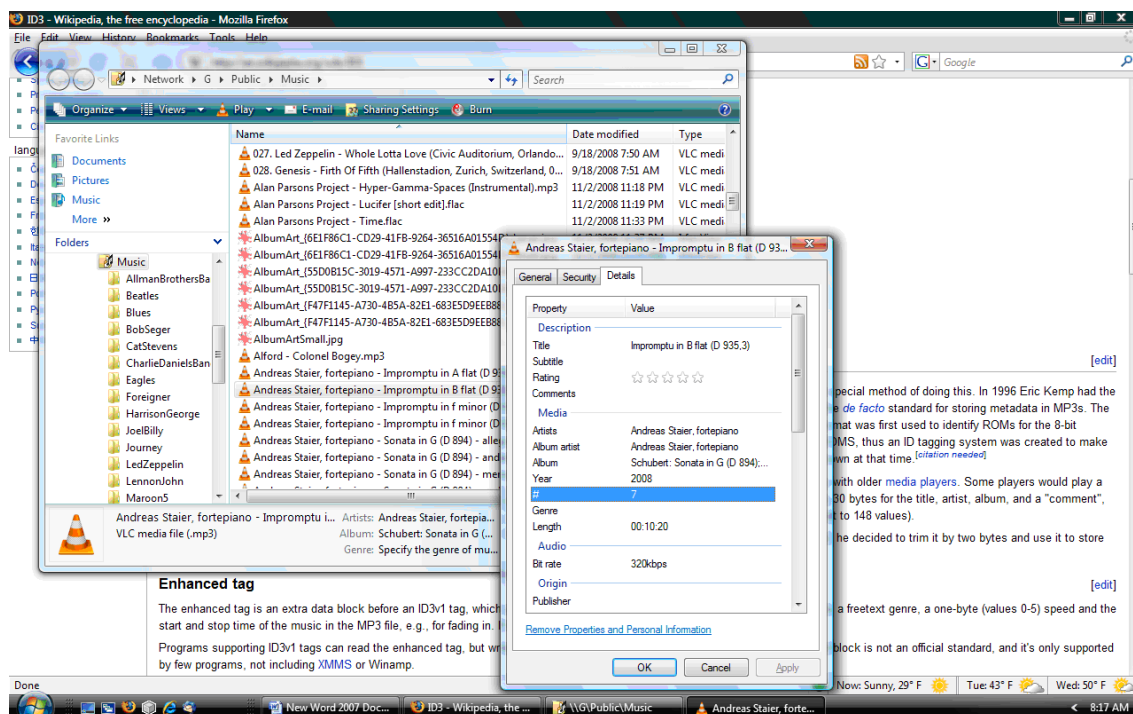
These little pieces of information about a given track are known as “meta-data” or “meta-information.” This set of information is literally, data about data, because the music file itself is a kind of digital data.

The music industry has adopted a standard, known as ID3 that provides for meta-information to be included with an MP3 file. You might think of ID3 as the wrapper that an MP3 file comes surrounded in.

To view and edit this information, Windows supports ID3 by allowing you to right-click on an MP3 file and see & change all of the meta-information. You can also see a limited set of the metadata about a song by simply hovering your mouse over a music file. Here I have right-clicked on a piano piece called Impromptu in B Flat, written by Franz Schubert. Remember when you right-click to get a context menu, it's a single right-click, not a double click.



That gives me the size in Megabytes of the file, its name and where and when it was stored. If I click on the Details tab, I get all of the rest of the meta-data, including the artist and composer:



There are various versions of ID3 that have little relationship to each other. For more detailed information about ID3, read this article in Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ID3>.

The good news is that most modern MP3 players, when encountering ID3, simply ignore it when playing back the music. So we have music data inside of an MP3 file that we hear, and ID3 data that we can see when we right-click on the file.

So, here we have a way in which you can see the meta-data about one particular song. But suppose I wanted to organize and manipulate a large number of songs – even to the extent of pulling this information out of the meta-data fields that we see and using it to construct a meaningful file name? After all, file names are the basis for how Windows stores files, so it would make sense that we might want our music files named in a very particular way. One of the standards I use is to organize music in folders that are named corresponding to the artist that recorded the song.

It turns out that there are many ID3 capturing and editing utility programs out on the internet (many of which actually cost money), and I'm going to mention just one of them: TagScanner.

In tech circles, the ID3 meta-data information that is imbedded at the end of a music file is known commonly as a "tag."

Who would enjoy sitting at their computer typing in album and artist information for each track? With the free TagScanner, you don't have to. This efficient and powerful tag editor lets you edit and collect meta-data automatically as well as by hand, both for individual files and file batches.

The automatic tagging feature is most impressive. Although it can hook up to online databases such as FreeDB, Gracenote, and Amazon like many other auto-tagging applications, it can also generate tags from file and folder names--something many others can't. It works in the opposite direction, too, generating filenames from tags. This is very important, because many files come to us virtually unusable from a sorting point of view, because their file names begin with, say, a catalog number that means nothing to our sorting scheme.

TagScanner has an elegant and orderly interface, and lets you preview filenames before applying changes. The only catch is that you'll need to spend some time learning the program's file- and tag-naming language. However, if you have thousands of music tracks crying out for organization, that's a small price to pay.

Get TagScanner (free) at: <http://www.xdlab.ru/en/>

Performing Better Searches

By Sharon Housley, VP, NotePage managing Marketing for FeedForAll, www.feedforall.com, Sharon@notepage.com

Performing and perfecting search engine results can save web surfers lots of time and energy. Understanding the nuances of searching allows researchers to immediately drill down and locate the information they are seeking, without having to wade through a myriad of irrelevant search results in the process. The increasing complexity of search engines has made understanding search engines a necessity for those who spend any amount of time online. The following search tips are standards that will work in most of the major search engines.

How To Find What You Are Looking For?

As the popularity of the Internet grows, more and more results are returned for even the most obscure search phrases. In order to save time, web surfers need to increase their search relevancy. It is advisable to use multiple search terms to produce better search results. Searchers should use specific words and phrases to find what they're are looking for, while filtering out irrelevant and unwanted results.

In searching, more usually means less. Using more keywords in a search will help qualify the search and make it more specific to what you are looking for. It is all about striking a balance; more search terms will reduce the number of search results, but those results will be more accurate. Remember that you can always refine the search further if there are too many results returned in the initial search.

Capitalization Is Irrelevant

The major search engines ignore capitalization. Upper case and lower case search phrases will deliver the same results.

Order Matters

Keep in mind that the order in which the terms are entered into the search box will affect the search results. The most important terms should appear first in the list of search words.

Word Stemming

Major search engines will provide results that use word stemming. Word stemming includes variants of the terms that were searched for. For example, searching on the term fish in a major search engine will generate organic search results that also contain the terms fishing, fishes, and fisher.

Exact

Using quotations around a search phrase will generate search results that contain only that specific search phrase, exactly as it was entered. For example, searching on the exact phrase "rocking horse" in a major search engine will only generate search results that contain the phrase rocking horse. The results will not include any results that contain "horse rocking" -- even though both terms appear, they do not appear in the proper order for an exact match.

Do Not Include

Adding a (-) negative/minus sign before a search term will filter the results so that they contain the first term but not the negated word. For example, entering the search phrase horses -rocking into a major search engine will return search results about horses but not about rocking horses.

Must Include

If you want search results that only include a specific word, just type a (+) plus sign in front of a search term. The results produced will always contain that term. For example, conducting a search horse + carousel will result in all search results that contain carousel, and may include horse as well.

Similar Words

Adding a (~) tilde character in front of a search word will generate search results that not only include the specified search term, but will also include all words considered to be related to the original search term. For example, using the search term ~soda will result in organic search engine results that not only include soda, but also include pepsi, pop, cola, coke, bottle, and soft drink.

Either Or

Adding an OR parameter between two search terms will result in search listings that include either the first or the second word in the search results. For example, searching on the terms soda OR bottle will generate search results that may contain both terms soda bottle or it will produce results that contain either soda or bottle but not both in the same search listings.

Advanced Searches And Segmented Searches

Many search engines allow you to specify the type of content you wish to search in. For example, you can often search just news articles, just blogs, or just images. If you are looking for a specific type of media, segmenting your search can be helpful. Searches can be conducted to locate webpages that contain a specific language, or a specific file type (ie. pdf, rss, etc). Simply use the search engine's advanced search option and select the content, language, file type, etc to filter your search results.

Search Meta Words

Meta keyword searches give search engines special instructions. When the meta search words are used, a specific type of search is conducted. Here are some of the most common meta search terms...

define: When define: is used at the beginning of a search word or phrase, the search engine results will be a definition of the word or phrase.

site: When site: is entered in the search box, followed by a domain, the search engine locates all documents within a specific domain and all of its subdomains. This is an easy way to get a rough idea of the number of pages indexed on a domain.

link: When link: is used and followed by a URL, the search results will include all the web pages that are indexed by the search engine which contain links to the specified URL.

inurl: When inurl: is used, followed by a keyword or phrase, the search results will include links to web pages that contain the specific keyword or phrase in the urls themselves.

intitle: When intitle: is searched on in conjunction with a keyword or phrase, the search engine locates search results that contain the specified keyword or phrase in the web page title.

Web surfers can save large amounts of time and energy by optimizing their search techniques with these helpful tips.

Sharon Housley manages marketing for FeedForAll <http://www.feedforall.com> software for creating, editing, publishing RSS feeds and podcasts. In addition Sharon manages marketing for RecordForAll <http://www.recordforall.com> audio recording and editing software.





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Surviving the Switch to Digital TV

By **Andy Marken**, Marken Communications,
www.markencom.com, andy@markencom.com

At the stroke of midnight on Feb. 17, 2009, the analog transmissions that have beamed free television over the air in the United States for over half a century will disappear for good. They will be replaced by digital signals, many of which are already broadcasting, in what will be the most significant change to television since the introduction of color.

The "digital switchover" brings with it higher image quality, better sound and a level of versatility and flexibility previously unattainable through free television.

It also brings with it a number of significant headaches, as confusion over exactly who will be affected is inspiring panic in viewers fearful of being left behind in a haze of snow and static as the rest of the country moves into the future. Many of those who will be affected know that the deadline is fast approaching, but are unsure of how to prepare for it. Thankfully, a solution is simple, easily attainable and won't cost you a dime.

There are two major reasons for the switch from analog TV broadcasts to digital TV. First, digital signals offer superior image quality and allow for the transmission of high-definition signals over the air. This means that a properly equipped HDTV can receive local high-definition broadcasts that will look about as good as what you'd get from cable or satellite television.

Second, switching from analog to digital frees up real estate on the broadcast spectrum for other uses, as digital signals are more efficient and take up less bandwidth. Telecommunications companies like Verizon and AT&T have spent nearly \$20 billion to secure the rights to the frequencies that were previously occupied by channels 52 through 69, in the hopes of using that airspace to improve their wireless communication networks.

What the digital switchover is actually doing is changing the language that TV broadcasters use to communicate with your television. Since 1941, televisions in the U.S. have utilized a set of broadcast standards laid out by the National Television System Committee. Big broadcast towers sent out information over the air using these NTSC standards and were picked up by the television antenna in your living room. Inside your TV, an NTSC tuner interpreted the information and properly displayed it on screen.

The digital switchover is introducing a new language, a new set of broadcast standards, this one designed by the Advanced Television Systems Committee. On Feb. 17, those broadcast towers are going to stop speaking NTSC permanently and start speaking ATSC. But unfortunately, your old television set doesn't know how to translate ATSC into moving pictures and sound. Just about all televisions manufactured and sold after Mar. 1, 2007 feature ATSC tuners, but if you purchased a television any earlier than that, chances are your TV won't be able to pick up over-the-air broadcasts once the switchover occurs.

The solution: A digital converter box, essentially an external ATSC tuner that sits on top of your existing television and is linked between your antenna and your TV. The ATSC signals are grabbed by the same antenna you've always used, then passed to the digital converter box that translates the ATSC signals into something your NTSC television can understand. They are easy to hook up and available at a wide variety of stores, including big box stores like Best Buy, Wal-Mart and Target, as well as online retailers.

Digital converter boxes cost between \$40 and \$70 on average, but since the digital switchover is being forced upon consumers, Congress has stepped up and created the "TV Converter Box Coupon Program." Under this initiative, each American household is entitled to two \$40 gift cards that can only be used to purchase a digital converter box. Individuals can apply at the official Web site for the DTV switch.

You can apply for coupons until Mar. 31, 2009; they expire 90 days after they are issued. You might want to apply for them sooner rather than later because the government has allocated a finite amount of funding.

Continued on page 47



TV viewers who pay for cable or satellite service need not worry. The digital switchover only applies to over-the-air broadcasts, so consumers who get their television directly from Comcast or DirecTV will not be affected at all, and service will continue uninterrupted and unchanged as the DTV deadline comes and goes.

There is, however, a subtler, unrelated analog-to-digital switchover taking place among cable companies, one that could affect subscribers. It has usually been possible to view a small number of basic cable channels by plugging the coaxial cable directly into a television set, bypassing a cable box entirely.

This was a quick and easy way to bring cable TV to many rooms in a home without renting multiple cable boxes. Unfortunately, this may not be possible in the near future. Cable companies like Comcast and Time Warner are slowly phasing out their analog cable services in favor of digital. By switching over, they free up more space on their cable networks that can be allocated to new high-definition channels and interactive services like "On Demand." The downside is that when all cable channels are converted to digital, renting a cable box will be required to see any channels at all.

Another point of confusion that retailers and manufacturers have been reluctant to clear up: consumers need not purchase an HDTV to weather the digital TV switchover.

In addition to the converter boxes, new standard-definition CRT televisions are still available, and they are required by law to include the necessary ATSC tuners.

While an HDTV will allow viewers to take advantage of digital TV's high-definition potential, it's important to know that there is a lower-cost option available as well.

With the emergence of free, digital, over-the-air television that includes HD transmissions, it will be interesting to see if Americans, the majority of whom now pay for their television service via cable or satellite, might see the benefit of switching back to the old rabbit ears. While the selection of over-the-air broadcasts will never be as comprehensive as pay services, that same glut of content is often cited as an annoyance--lots of channels that subscribers will never watch.

Of course, all this will depend on how smoothly the digital switchover goes, and whether or not people are actually able to see the improvements on their screen. With just a few short months to go, having the right knowledge to make it through is absolutely crucial.

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Why security precautions are necessary

By **Bob de Violini**, a member of the Channel Islands PCUG,
California, www.cipcug.org, rjddev@gmail.com

First off for the holidays, there's a story that illustrates just why you should always enable encryption on your wireless router (for those who use one) AND why you should be leery of any public computer for Web sites you need a password to access. A college student in Kentucky has been charged with identity theft, among other crimes, for planting malware on computers in his school's library. The malware was a keystroke logger that captured usernames and passwords for any pages fellow students logged into.

He then used this information to access their e-mail accounts and send out e-mails attempting to extort these same fellow students. He also used an unsecured wireless router to access these accounts, making it look as if someone else were actually sending the e-mails. The attempted extortion took the form of a threat to divulge personal information the thief had stolen from the compromised e-mail accounts. That leads me to our next item, WPA encryption.

As of the beginning of November, a pair of computer security researchers in Europe disclosed a technique they'd developed to partially hack WPA encryption used by a great number of wireless routers today. Before anyone thinks the sky is falling, rest assured it isn't.

Their hack involves only the traffic being sent from the router to a computer and only a small number of data packets can be cracked before the router resets its encryption. However, it is enough to be able to send just enough rogue data to a computer to compromise it with any number of known vulnerabilities.

Specifically, it involves the TKIP protocol that WPA and WPA2 are allowed to use. The specifics of just how this trick is accomplished have been made available to hackers in many areas of the Internet, so it's just a matter of time before it begins spreading. TKIP and AES encryption are selectable by the user in many wireless router configurations, and some have WPA with TKIP selected by default. I strongly recommend you check your wireless router's encryption configuration, and if it's set to use WPA with TKIP, you switch to WPA2 with AES if at all possible.

This is especially important if you use a wireless router to run a network for a business. I have my Linksys wireless router set to use WPA2 with AES encryption. AES is significantly harder to crack than the older TKIP protocol. One final note on this, however. For AES encryption to work, both the router and the network adapter in the computer must be able to use it. Some older hardware may not support AES encryption, so an upgrade may be needed. If you'd like some more information, please drop me a line at the email address at the top of this article, and I'll gladly send you a link or two.

Scare of the month department

Even though Halloween has already passed, we have the Scare of the Month Department chiming in with some news. There is a new phishing e-mail making the rounds disguised as a warning from the U.S. Federal Reserve.

The message bears the usual dire warning of a scam and contains links for readers to follow to get more information. However, there are a few clues that give the message away as a hoax, the biggest one being poor grammar.

The links in the e-mail lead unsuspecting readers to a fake site that will redirect them to a search page for porn, which

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will download a PDF file with malware to their computer. The malware comes in various forms, including one that attempts to make your computer a member of a botnet. A brief notice can be had here, courtesy of USCERT: <http://tinyurl.com/66lzv9>. The link does go to the US-CERT site; I just used TinyURL to shorten the URL's length.

Patches Galore Department

As I mentioned above, there have been some exploits on the loose for a bit for Adobe Acrobat, and the full program and the reader have been updated as a result. The latest versions are 8.1.3 and 9.0. Adobe has also updated its Flash player, standard fare in most browser installations, to version 10.0.12.36 to patch publicly reported vulnerabilities last month as well. Not to be outdone, Mozilla has also issued a patch for its Firefox browser and Thunderbird e-mail client.

These patches address several bugs that have been brought to light in the past month to month and a half. The latest iterations of Firefox are 2.0.0.18 and 3.0.0.4. The latest version of Thunderbird is 2.0.0.18. I have read reports of some problems with version 3.0.0.4 and 2.0.0.18 of Firefox, with most of the reports being about version 3.0.0.4. The solution for those having problems after upgrading to 3.0.0.4 has been to go back to 3.0.0.3.

I have updated my version to 2.0.0.18 and have had no problems. Some patches take longer than others to develop and test, however. One of the patches issued by Microsoft on November's Patch Tuesday took them seven years to develop and test. The bug it patched was first reported by a security researcher in March 2001. Microsoft claims that it tried patching it when it was first reported but wound up killing off most networking applications with the patches when they underwent testing. However, they didn't give up and finally found a way to patch the vulnerability earlier this year.

While we're speaking of Microsoft, it has announced plans to abandon its One Care concept of computer protection service and develop free anti malware applications for release in 2009. The new concept is code named "Morro." As usual, folks are coming down on both sides of pro and con when it comes to this development. Microsoft hasn't given a firm release date for the new software, but has said that One Care will come to an end on June 30.

Well, that's all for now. Here's wishing everyone a joyous Holiday season and a Happy New Year! Always practice safe computing by keeping your applications and your anti-malware applications fully up to date. Make sure to run your anti-malware scanner(s) once a week, even if they don't flag anything in between scans.



Windows 7 is coming soon

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

If you ask 100 people their impressions of the Microsoft Vista operating system, 95 of them will tell you that Vista is no good, even if they have never seen or used it.

It is obvious that public opinion of Vista is in the mud. Microsoft made some major blunders when they introduced Vista. There were not enough drivers ready, so many printers, scanners, and other peripherals were incompatible. There was no noticeable speed increase over Windows XP. Vista requires much additional memory and more hardware, so it was often impossible to upgrade current Windows XP computers.

Also, Microsoft did not woo the press as they did when they introduced Windows XP, so Vista got a lot of awful publicity. Vista is not a bad operating system, but Vista has gotten a bad name. Microsoft has lost the battle and they know it. So they are working on a new Windows operating system.

Microsoft hopes to make a clean break with previous Windows operating systems with this new version of Windows. They are especially distancing the new operating system from the "wicked" Vista operating system. This is obvious in the name they have chosen for the new OS. They are not using year names like Windows 2000. They are not using what they refer to as inspirational

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names, like XP or Vista. Instead, they will go back to their original numerical naming convention. There was a Windows 1, Windows 2, and Windows 3. Now there is to be a new operating system called "Windows 7".

If you have been following the versions of Windows as they have been introduced, you will find it difficult to comprehend that this next version is actually the seventh version of Windows, but Microsoft says that it is, so that is that. It's Windows 7.

More important than the name, however, is the fact that Microsoft cannot afford another misstep. They must make this operating system faster and better than Vista. Microsoft has already showed off Windows 7 at some developer's conferences and has made some announcements and promises.

Windows 7 will be built on the Vista base, so peripherals that work with Vista, which now includes most printers, scanners, and other devices, will also work with Windows 7.

Windows 7 will have a smaller storage footprint and will use less memory. This will allow it to run on the new small Netbooks that are now running Windows XP or Unix because Windows Vista cannot run on their small solid state drives.

Windows 7 will boot up and shut down faster. It will have improved battery life on laptops. It is also promised to have an easier-to-use interface and to be easier to network in a home environment.

Although Microsoft is officially targeting January 2010 for the launch of Windows 7, logic indicates that they will have Windows 7 ready for next year's holiday selling season.

This holiday season you'll find some great prices on computers running Microsoft Vista. If all goes well, when the holiday season rolls around in 2009, the stores will be filled with computers running the next version of Windows, Windows 7. Microsoft has made mistakes before, but I think they will do everything they possibly can to make Windows 7 a winner. So if you are looking to buy a new PC, this year will be a good time to buy, but, if you can wait, next year may be even better.

Computer Briefs

Copying Screen Information

Dick Carricato, member of the Tri County Computer User Group in Florida wrote a good article about copying pictures from your computer screen. Sometimes there are other things you may want to copy from your screen that may not lend themselves to the PrtScr method. This is especially true of lists in drop down boxes that require a scroll bar down the right side. PrtScr will only show the portion of the list that shows. For instance, I write a (almost) monthly newsletter on the web and usually include a bunch of pictures. I like to have a hard copy of the picture thumbnails at hand to remind me of things to say. This is always a scrolling window. Often I want a hardcopy of a menu, too.

I have found FastStone Capture to be a perfect answer to my needs. You can try it free by going to <http://www.faststone.org/>. Then, if you like it, as I do, you can purchase a lifetime license for \$19.95.

You can capture and annotate anything on the screen including windows, objects, menus, full screen, rectangular/freehand regions and scrolling windows/web pages. Editing tools include annotating, resizing, cropping, sharpening, watermarking, edge effects and many more. Of course, you can transfer the image to any editor of choice. You can either print the copy or save it in one of eight different formats. I choose JPEG. Further, you can choose the resolution of the saved image. I don't know if it actually improves the resolution or just resizes to more pixels.

Of course, it features a bunch of hot key combinations but, with my memory, this is not useful. Instead I rely on the small box of choices at the bottom right of my screen. I find it extremely useful and use it almost every day.

By Richard Kennon Member Amador Computer Users Group, Jackson, California,
<http://www.acug.net/>, drtrdguy@volcano.net

iPhone for Boomers

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

According to the data from the International Communications Union, the world now has more than 2 billion cell phone or mobile phone subscribers. While some business and high tech users are using their phones for email and the Internet, I venture to say that most of those 2 billion users are only using their cell phones to make calls and to text message. In fact, I am sure that many users don't know how to do much more than that, even though their phones are capable of much more.

The reason is that up until now, cell phones with their tiny buttons and complex menu systems have frustrated many average users. The recent introduction of a fast, stable, and more affordable iPhone is poised to change all of that.

While the twenty- and thirty-something's are flocking to the iPhone as the latest status symbol, the forty-, fifty-, and sixty-something's are acquiring iPhones because there are no tiny buttons and no complex menu systems. In fact, the large bright touch screen, big icons, and the on-screen keyboard make the iPhone extremely easy to use.

One button brings up the Home screen of icons. The screen is clear and uncluttered. The icons are all easily identifiable by their picture, so the iPhone experience is very visual. The four most used icons are placed on the bottom of the screen. By default, they are Phone, Mail, Safari (the Internet browser), and iPod. You can put whatever you use the most on the bottom row. You can also rearrange all the icons to suit your taste.

The way you rearrange the icons is indicative of the ease of use of the entire gadget. To rearrange the icons on the Home screen, you simply press any icon and hold your finger down until all the icons start to wiggle. Then you drag the icons from place to place. To put an icon on the second page of the Home screen, you simply drag it off the screen to the right. The second page will appear with the icon on it. To return to the first screen of the Home page, just drag your finger across the screen in a leftward motion. To stop the wiggling and confirm that you are done moving the icons around, you simply touch the Home button. You can't miss it because while other cell phones seem to have a million buttons, the Home button is the only button on the surface of the iPhone.

As you can tell by this explanation, the iPhone is also very tactile. You can move things around the screen with your finger. To make a web page larger, you simply flick your two fingers apart on the screen. Bring your fingers together and the webpage gets smaller. Double-tap the screen and the page fits the screen. To take a picture, you press the camera icon, aim the camera on the back of the iPhone and press the icon on the bottom of the screen. It is so intuitive that it is actually fun!

On top of that Apple has added a Apps store to its iTunes Online Store. They have over 500 applications that you can add to your iPhone. Many are free. Others cost \$1. Most of those which you have to pay for are under \$10. Some of these applications are just for fun, some are for productivity. For instance, if you download an application called Recorder, you can turn your iPhone into a voice recorder. But you can also choose an application that turns it into a light saber or one that lets you pop bubbles on the screen.

At \$199 for the 8GB model, the iPhone has a lot to like. To use it you must subscribe to AT&T for two years. That is not unusual for a cell phone service contract. You also have to have an additional data plan that costs \$30 a month. While this might seem costly, you get a lot for your money.

Not only is the iPhone intuitive, visual, and tactile, but it has access to the Internet and lets you send and receive email. It is like having a mini-computer in your hand. For many it will replace the laptop they drag along when traveling.

The iPhone is also a full-blown iPod that plays both music and video. Since it has its own speaker, you don't even need earbuds or headphones as you do with most other music players. Oh, and did I mention, it has the best audio quality of any cell phone I've ever used.

Am I hooked? You bet I am..... And the same thing will happen to many others who try the iPhone. It is poised to change the way we use cell phones.

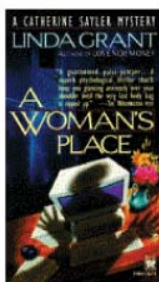


Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

A Woman's Place

By: Linda Grant,
Reviewed by Susan
Ives 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 minority. 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.

Monkeewrench

By: PJ Tracy, Reviewed
by Susan Ives Hardcover,
Putnam's, 2003,
\$23.95, 384 pages



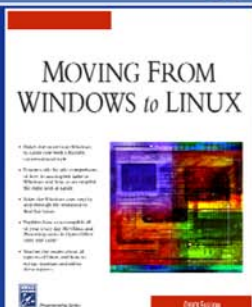
The staff of Monkeewrench software is devastated when three local murders follow the scenarios of the beta release of their new computer game, Serial Killer Detective. They are an oddball crew, college friends who had been traumatized by a friend's murder. In fear for their own lives, they changed their names, skipped town and developed a game where the killer is always caught. Initially hesitant to blow their cover by calling the St. Paul police, they come to the sober realization that there are 17 more scenarios available for download from their

Web site - and 17 more potential victims. The killer could be one of the beta testers, their old nemesis come back to haunt them - or one of the Monkeewrench crew themselves.

P.J. Tracy is the pseudonym of a mother-daughter writing team. This is their first book and it is a sure-fire winner. The plot was fast-paced, the ending a shocker, and the Monkeewrench crew crackled with tension and energy. The technical challenge of figuring out which beta testers have progressed far enough into the game to have knowledge of the fatal scenarios is a clever puzzle that database gurus will enjoy. Highly recommended.

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

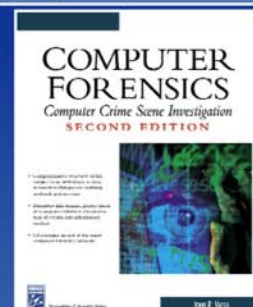
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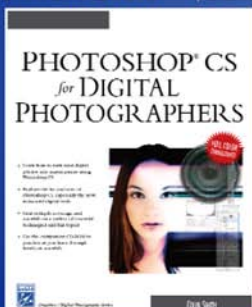
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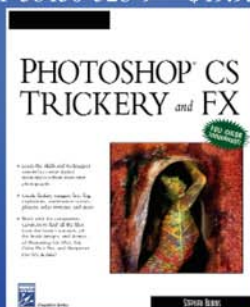
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Hardware Review

MagicJack

Published by MagicJack

Reviewed by Constance Brown, President, Canton Alliance Massillon Users Group, Ohio,
www.camug.org, constance@mystepco.com

Do any of you recall the poem by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet stating that no place on earth is more than 60 hours away? The authors were awed by the idea that distance was no longer measured in months but in hours. What would they think now that people have circled the world in spaceships and repaired orbiting space stations? On the other hand, my friends who boarded the plane last month found that it can take 60 hours and more to arrive at a destination in our own hemisphere -- if it happens to be Bolivia!

What does travel have to do with computers? Most trips begin with a call to a travel agent or visiting a travel web site to check prices and availability of flights. Then a flight is booked and paid online either by the purchaser or an agent. An e-ticket is sent to the traveler who then checks in via a computer terminal at the airport. Computerized controls are used to guide the plane.

Computers, computers everywhere. Great when they work. Annoying when they don't! They are here to stay and will be performing more and more of our communications. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could travel internationally and communicate with folk back home without paying those ridiculous international calling fees! How about staying in touch with friends who do not live in the USA? Guess what! You CAN!!

Several of us in CAMUG have phone service using VOIP (voice over Internet Protocol). Last week I ordered something immediately after hearing about it. I have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to test it and now I can hardly wait to share it. Perhaps some of you have seen the ads for the magicJack. What is it? Well, let me quote from PC Magazine online: "So simple it's almost perfect, the magicJack is the best home voice-over-IP gadget I've seen to date. Excellent call quality, a workable set of calling features, and an amazing price make this little box the VoIP wonder to beat."

Yes, in two minutes a little USB device about 2 inches by 1 inch by 5/8 inches that I plugged into the powered hub that I run through my USB port was giving me the capability of placing my calls via the Internet. I called Canada and Colorado, spending about 1/12 hours on the phone.

It worked well except when I looked up information on the internet at the same time.

I talked to customer service and they said I can connect to the powered hub that runs directly to my router. I will have to restart the modem, most likely. That means that I don't have to have the computer turned on to make calls, just like my current VoIP service. This is great.

What do I like about the magicJack?

- The price. The gadget is \$40, and that includes one year of service! The renewal service price is \$20! Not \$200. Just \$20. In fact, we paid \$60 for five years!

Plug in your handset



Plug into your computer



Continued on page 55

- The price. Calls are free to US & Canada and reasonable to other parts of the world. Bolivia ranges from 12-14 cents. Guatemala was a little less. I didn't check farther.
- The price. Register your magicJack with a US phone number and travel anywhere in the world. Place calls back to the US or Canada and the call is free! Purchase a magicJack and register it with a number in the USA, send it to your friends elsewhere in the world, and they can call to any place in the US or Canada for free -- almost. Remember, you receive one year of service with the device.
- Convenience. You can use the magicJack with any computer, not just the one you registered.
- Convenience. The magicJack is so small that it will travel extremely easily.
- Convenience. You can use the magicJack to place calls over Wi-Fi, cable, or DSL. Even light high speed is fine as it requires only 80 kbps of bandwidth.
- Services. You get all of them: voicemail delivered to you via email and also available by calling your number and entering your pass code, conference calling, 3-way calling, caller ID, do not disturb – have I forgotten anything?
- Quality. The quality compares with other VoIP services. The calls pass over a private network.
- Customer Service. Customer service was good, but busy. The online chat took a little time as the service person moved between customers. But it was good. He didn't have time to tell me about the Outlook add-on, so I am still waiting to discover what that is. Customer service apparently is improving, based on evaluations I read.

The US News and World Report had an interesting article online dated September 27 about the magicJack. Here is a part of it.

"The colorful and wealthy Borislow, who also raises, races, and wagers on racehorses, has launched magicJack fast out of the gate. The startup has sold more than 400,000 devices just six months after its official unveiling. It's selling about 7,000 a day, the company says, adding twice as many net new accounts over the period as Vonage, an Internet phoning pioneer. MagicJack's appeal is not only the price, which falls to just \$20 for a second year of calls, but sound quality that's consistently good. And it's flat simple to install and use."

Who is the inventor behind the magicJack? Dan Borislow. Here is information about him taken directly from the magicJack web site.

• Dan Borislow is the founder of YMAX Communications Corporation, a modern phone company with the largest competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) network in the U.S, and inventor of the magicJackTM.

• Borislow has been in the telecommunications industry for over twenty years and is recognized in the industry for pioneering the development of breakthrough technologies. He previously held the position of CEO and founder of publicly-held Tel-Save, Inc. At Tel-Save, Borislow revolutionized low-cost long-distance for more than four million America Online (AOL) customers. While with Tel-Save, he saved customers over 40% on their phone bills and also received the prestigious J.D. Power and Associates Award for Customer Satisfaction. After a brief attempt at retirement, Borislow returned to the telecom industry and invented the magicJack. By eliminating the expense of local and long distance phone charges - and saving the average customer around \$1000 a year - magicJack is positioned to be the fastest growing telecom company in the world; Borislow likes to call it .Telecom Revolution Part II..

• Borislow received his Bachelor of Arts degree and honorary doctorate degrees from Widener University. He is an avid soccer player, dedicated deep sea fisherman, enjoys watching sports and has a Thoroughbred Horse Breeding Business



Software Review

Roxio Creator 2009

Published by Sonic Solutions

By John Roy, President, TPCUG (The PC Users Group of CT), CT, www.tpcug-ct.org, johnroy1@comcast.net

Roxio, a division and brand of Sonic Solutions, continues as the premiere must have CD/DVD burning suite. This product is a collection of key applications bundled into an attractive launching interface. Key applications provided are CD/DVD burning tools, Audio, Photo, and Video tools, and more. The Roxio suite provides support applications necessary to effectively use your computer just like Microsoft Office suite provides key office software.

When I reviewed Easy Media Creator Version 10 earlier this year I was impressed with how clean the interface was for the multitude of applications within the suite. The latest version further simplifies the application selection process with the use of pleasing colors and descriptive icons. It also provides a direct link to online tutorials and other information. The only distraction from the clean interface is the “Learn More” window that connects to the Roxio website to promote the sale of additional products.

The application interface Home Page presents the core tasks for most users. The tasks include burning and labeling discs, ripping audio, copy and converting DVD video and backing up files. Selecting one of the primary applications will quickly open the application and you are ready to start. There was some initial confusion of how to return to the previous page because the new page did not have a cancel button. If you closed the page with the standard “x” selection it would close the whole product. After a short examination I realized that the left set of icons were still available to select and return to home or another application. Although further review disclosed inconsistencies in returning to the home page depending upon which application you opened. So some applications you must close using the “x” and others if you use the “x” you will close everything down and have to reopen the whole product. This area needs better consistency.

When you select an application group using the left icons (Data-copy, Video- Movies, Music-Audio, Photo, and Online) a clean screen opens up with sub grouping to further home in on your desired application. The Data-Copy screen provides three groupings of Create, Copy, and Backup. Each grouping contains subtasks to further refine your application selection. There are nine defined tasks associated with Data-Copy. The long time favorite Roxio Creator Classic is now disguised as “Burn Data Disc – Advanced” but it still opens the original application and still reflects the original name. It appears that this popular tool is still the same with a different entry skin. The application was always sound so the fact that it is still there in its original attire is not a problem other than the interface name.

The Video-Movies group, Music-Audio group, and Photo group all contain four subgroups (Import, Edit, Create, Enjoy) with eleven to sixteen subtasks each. The names are very generic which in my opinion keeps concepts familiar. Executing a generic name launches a familiar Roxio application.

In addition to the icon selections there are three pull down windows, File, Tools, and Help. The file and help selections are pretty standard. The Tools pull down provides a couple of ease of access clicks like ejecting and closing the drive tray, getting disc information and some alternate ways to jump to a few selected applications. There is an extensive Options choice to configure user defaults.

The latest Roxio Creator 2009 version does provide some new tools like the ability to capture High Definition (HD) video and burn it onto standard DVDs. There is now an Audiobook Creator that makes it easy to convert and enjoy books on iTunes, iPod, iPhone or other portable players. There is an audio beatmatching tool to produce studio like fades and mixes. I found the new SyncIt desktop gadget tool cool but short on instructions. It converts and sends digital media directly to your portable device. Since I don’t own a portable device I couldn’t appreciate its value. You can now share photos and slideshows on line including uploading directly to YouTube.

I tested this version of Roxio on my new Vista 64bit system with an AMD Quad-Core processor and 5 GB of memory. I didn’t experience any installation problems but it was disconcerting that some applications did not load crisp and fast as expected even though my system is clean and devoid of startup programs.

Okay, what is the bottom line on this latest version? If you don’t already own a Roxio suite then I highly recommend you give serious consideration to purchasing this since it will serve as a primary computer application suite. If you presently own Easy Media Creator version 9 or 10 and it meets your immediate requirements then you can afford to wait if the new features and enhancements are not important to you.

Software Review

Pro Presentations Taken Apart

Published by Code Dawn

by Gregory West, Editor for the Sarnia Computer Users' Group [SCUG], www.scug.ca,
prospector16@gmail.com

There is nothing worse than a bad presentation. We have all, at one time or another, have been forced to sit and watch a slide show presentation, praying it will improve with time. Unfortunately, the odds are against us. Sadly, these are professionals giving these presentations; so it must get better, right? Unfortunately, all-too-often these professional presentations go sour and chase instead of attract potential interests. What goes wrong? The answers are on each of the 274 pages of this book.

The introduction clearly points out that this book is not a manual for PowerPoint; it is a book is a “reference book” and it teaches the “why”. The format is a coffee-table design, laying flat for easy reference, with large vivid colour pictures and designs throughout. The book begins giving you a brief history of presentations and why presentations are an important part of companies who “spend millions of dollars on advertising, marketing, and PR to attract and retain customers” and they have a need to create effect presentations to get their message out to prospective clients.

You will find several interesting Case Studies that Durate has created to show how some companies create “World Class Presentations” in simply terms, and quite frankly very easy to create. For example, one Case Study shows how Mark Templeton used communication and story telling “and his innate ability to think visually” in order to make it pay off.


There is a lot of behind-the-scenes psychology in creating presentations and Durate is ubiquitous in providing ongoing information. From the concept of “Creating Ideas, Not Slides”, to “Thinking Like a Designer”, Durate shows how simple it really is to create professional presentations that promote interest using “Visual Elements” and “Creating Movement”. There is are amazing sections on colour psychology and text typesetting styles that go well beyond slide presentations that you may ever read twice as I did. I love the “Dissecting a Font” section where you learn the “personality” of various fonts and why they are used in various forms of presentations to make a point or grab your attention without you realizing it.

As you travel through this book you will look at a presentation with a new sense of vision. And if you have to do a presentation you will not make the mistakes that all-too-many professionals do each and every day throughout the world.

This book is a good read from cover to cover. It can be opened at any chapter where I guarantee you won't be able to put it back down. It is a great reference book to give you the insight and boost you may need to make your presentation work for you and your audience. I highly recommend this book to not only presenters but also viewers who just may become the best critics out there.

dvnation.com

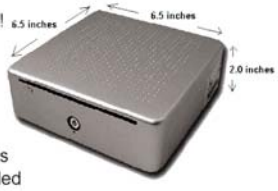
The miniPC: The smallest Windows / Linux PC ever
* small spaces * CAR COMPUTER * any room * point of sales machine *



POWER DVI / VGA S-video out (TV) LAN (internet) Firewire USB 2.0 USB 2.0 microphone stereo audio out

BASE MODEL FEATURES:

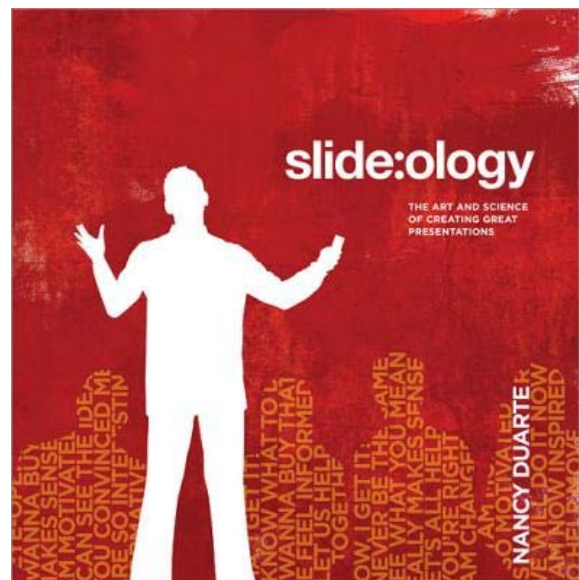
- * Window XP computer
- * dimensions: 6.5 in X 6.5 in X 2.5 in !!!!
- * 1.4 GHZ Pentium M (Celeron)
- * 512 GB RAM
- * 40 GB hard drive
- * DVD / CD-RW combo drive
- * 10/100/1000 (GIGABIT) LAN
- * 2 x USB, 1 X firewire (IEEE 1394) ports
- * DVI video output - VGA adapter included
- * TV output, S-video & 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



January 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Resource Center at Crossroad Mall is closed. We are still looking for a new place to hold classes! Happy New Year!	2	3
4	5	6 Board of Directors 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend).	7	8	9	10
11	12 General Meeting @ Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter: Please check web site	13 Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 6 - 8 P.M.	14	15	16	17
18	19 Martin Luther King Day	20	21	22	23	24 Learning Center Desk Staff Meeting 1 - 3 P.M. Bully Samples or Cary Hall will contact you
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AlamoPC Organization

The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

I have some news for you that is important! Please read the entire message.

Alamo PC Organization will be closing the Crossroads Mall Computer Learning Center by the end of December. This is NOT the entire organization, JUST the Learning Center. The reasons for closing are numerous including; falling membership, lack of students, volunteers, new members, and the high cost of maintaining this facility. (Rent, telephones, internet, insurance, and utilities just to name a few) An announcement regarding sales of equipment, furniture, etc. will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

All Classes and Study Groups held at the Learning Center will cease to meet after November 15th, unless the individual Class or Group leaders make arrangements to continue elsewhere. Alamo PC is continuing to look at options to maintain a Learning Center on a smaller scale elsewhere, If you can help please contact membership@alamopc.org

The High Growth Stock Investing Study Group will continue to meet and private tutoring will still be available.

The Dr Is In Computer Diagnostic Clinic will hold it's last session on Friday November 14th.

Questions, comments or helpful suggestions regarding the closure may be referred to membership@alamopc.org You ask the desk staff to pass comments along.

It has been a real honor and pleasure to work with all of you and I hope Alamo PC will find some means to continue classes and to let you know soon if that is a possibility.

Thanks,

Linda Bianchi

Director of Education

Alamo PC Organization

Alamo PC Coders

Alamo Coders is a FREE San Antonio area IT professionals Users Group that focus on the tools, technologies, and programming languages that help a software developer/architect/manager in today's industry. If you would like to learn more about software development or the tools that are involved in that process, or if you just want to learn more about what Alamo Coders has to offer the San Antonio area IT community, then please join our group.

More information about this group may be found at <http://www.alamocoders.net/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Time: 6:00:00 PM: Food, drink, meet & greet

6:30:00 PM: Presentation

7:30:00 PM: Q&A, meet & greet

Location: ALL meetings are held at New Horizons Learning Center, 8200 West IH 10, Suite 500, San Antonio, Texas 78230, (210) 308-8200.

Directions: New Horizons is located at 8200 West IH 10, Suite 500. From IH 10 West Exit Medical/Callaghan. Take the turnaround and remain on the access road. The New Horizons building is located on the right side pass Benihana. Turn right on Mid-Horizon Boulevard the parking garage is located on the right side. From IH 10 East exit Medical/Callaghan. Remain on the access road. The New Horizons building is located on the right side pass Benihana. Turn right on Mid-Horizon Boulevard the parking garage is located on the right side. Parking for New Horizons students is provided in the parking garage or on the parking area under the trees.

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 ★ - ★★★

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 Organization now offers members private or semi-private tutorials

☎
☎ Keyboarding/Typing
☎ Basic Computer Skills
☎ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour

\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour

\$150 per student for 10 hours

☎
Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours
that fit **your** schedule

**Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080**

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.

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 - \$120 ☐ 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 your 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.

