

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TECH ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

April 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:

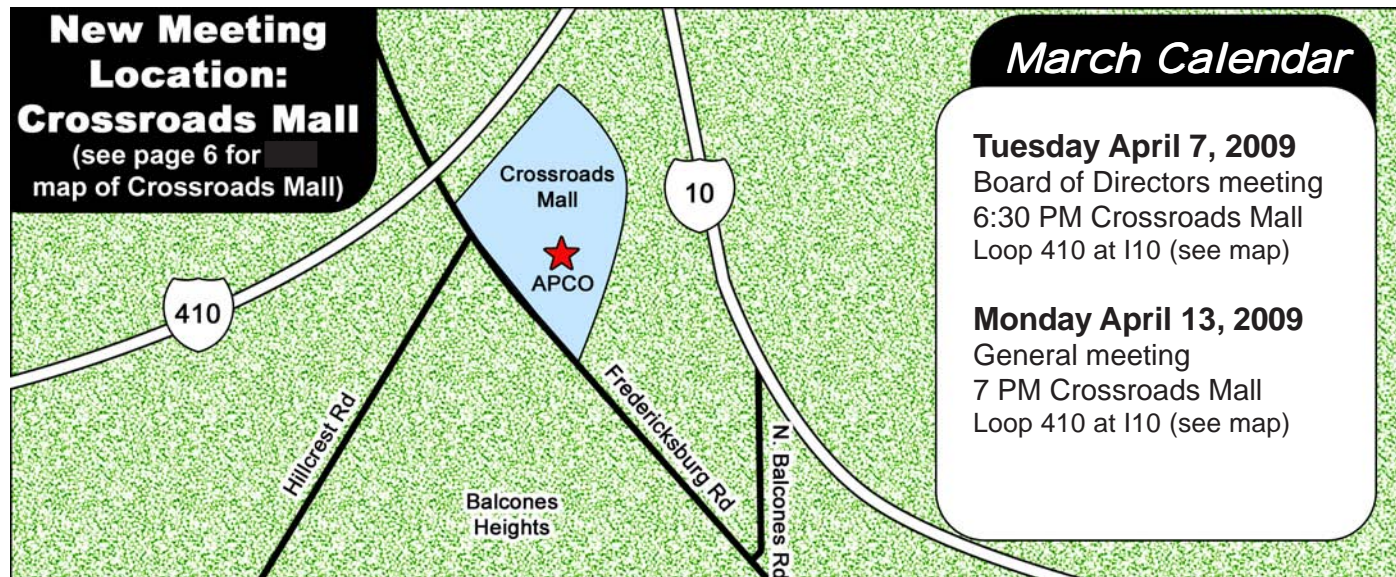
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



March Calendar

Tuesday April 7, 2009
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday April 13, 2009
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Web issue

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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

Featured this month

The global university
Online backup services
My PayPal account's been hacked
Computer and Internet tips and tricks
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Microsoft releases Internet Explorer 8
Google offers free medical record service
How to switch Internet browsers

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EDITOR
Joseph de Leon

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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Ad rates effective January 2005

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
		Per insertion		
Full pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	\$274	\$260	\$246	\$238
Half pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Half pg. (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37
*Consecutive months		**To be paid in advance		

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

product reviews

Hardware Review: Presto
Book Review: Adobe InDesign CS4
Hardware Review: Kindle 2

Board of Directors

President	Bill Klutz	532-9122 (Home)	president@alamopc.org
Secretary	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	secretary@alamopc.org
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Communications	TBD		communications@alamopc.org

Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

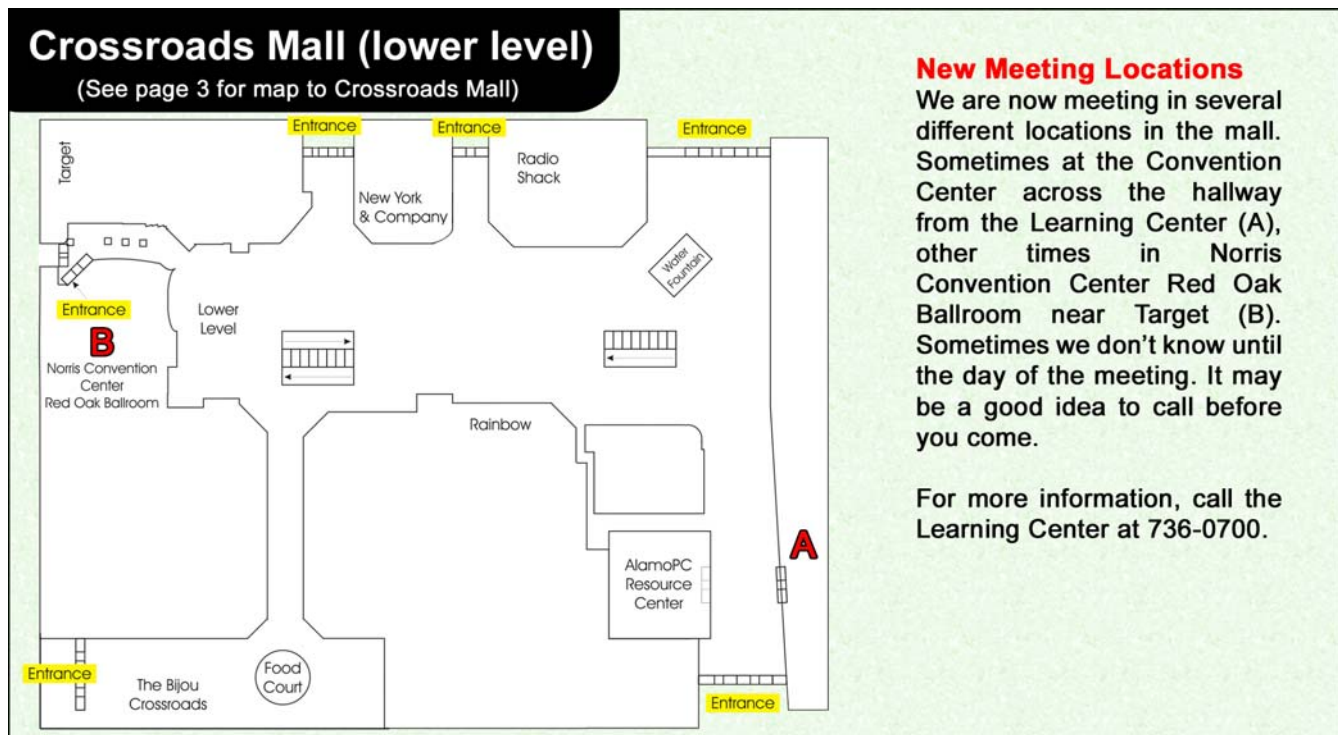
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

FAX 736-0032

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Webmaster	Mike Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Webmaster@alamopc.org
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APCUG Representative	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
Editor, PC Alamode Magazine	Joseph de Leon	unlisted	editor@alamopc.org

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



PC Alamode Links List



National Museum of African Art

<<http://africa.si.edu>>

The nation's foremost collection of art work of African art.



Connect: The Dots

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

Help recreate Georges Seurat's famous painting, "Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." Your personalized dot is a brushstroke filling in the image.

I've been working on reformatting the PC Alamode. This includes getting rid of some guest columnists who are no longer making regular contributions, but more importantly, it means putting together a format that is easy to print.

Over the past two years, many of you have suggested dropping large graphics and large areas of solid colors because it eats up a lot of ink when those articles are printed.

Large graphics and images are one of the big advantages to doing an electronic magazine. Rather than drop those properties, I have been coming up with a separate layout that is designed for printing on a desktop printer.

That means no large areas of a solid color, virtually no graphics and column. This will mean those of you who want to print an article or the whole magazine will be able to do so without fear of using up all of your ink.

If you have any suggestions or complaints, please let me know!

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

"April" - Fool's Day, Easter Days, Holocaust Day, Earth Day

This month only has several things that may be of interest to some folks: 1st - April Fool's Day: With all of the world, national (primarily Wall Street), state and local financial and real estate crisis management attention that has been bombarding the many communications outlets (TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc.), the Internet scams, and other things that we have been in contact with almost daily for the last 6-9 months, some of us don't need a special day to remind us that we may have already played the FOOL; 5th - Psalm Sunday: the continuing of a segment of religious days for many (started with Ash Wednesday, last month [2/6] and culminating with Easter Sunday). A moveable feast which always falls on the Sunday before Easter. The feast commemorates the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in the days before his Passion;

8th - Passover (begins at sundown): the beginning of a religious event for many throughout the world; 10th - Good Friday: the Friday before Easter (Easter always falls on a Sunday). It commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus at Calvary; 12th - Easter Sunday: celebrates the resurrection of Jesus; 22nd - Holocaust Remembrance Day (annual date can vary based on other Jewish days): After the horrors of the Holocaust (six million Jews were murdered during this tragedy, including the many families that were completely decimated) Jews wanted a day to memorialize those who suffered, those that fought, and those who died; 23rd - Earth Day - a day to help remind us that we should be taking care of the place where mankind lives, but we should personally make every day our own "Earth Day" and do what we can to contribute to the well-being of the very great planet Earth.

As previously mentioned in the last two columns, but primarily for those who are new to the organization, after looking at a number of locations (from north west thru north east, both inside and outside of Loop 410) with rent priced considerably more than was suitable for our then 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 Whirlwind side.).

The March BOD meeting only had three members present. A presenter for the March General Meeting was addressed, but David Steward was not present to indicated if he had been able to secure one. It was also indicated that he would be out of town until the weekend and may not be able to function as the backup. We were at the mercy of David Steward, until the weekend. We also reviewed again the financial status of the organization, the declining membership, major expenses, etc., plus the best guess future of the Alamo PC Organization, the PC Alamode magazine, and other related things.

We are hopeful the March General Meeting will take place and be profitable to those attending. However, David Steward has again not provided any information regarding a presenter for the meeting. It appears to reaffirmed that overall interest in User Groups is not what it use to be at either the corporate or membership level. 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 (at least one vacancy) for the past three years.

Anyone having questions regarding the Learning Center closure or other matters pertaining to the Alamo PC organization, and future proposed plans may refer them to membership@alamopc.org and Steven Tech will try to provide information requested.

The six individuals currently serving the organization in a board member capacity initially committed to continue through the end of December. After that, there was no guarantee, and any continuation is only be on a month-by-month basis. But, with only six individuals who appear to be willing to continue serving, and one vacant position for the past few years, the future of OUR organization appears to be uncertain.

I am hoping that we will have a corporate presenter for the April General Meeting. Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting. On the day of the meeting (4/13), call 736-0700

Continued on page 9

for the most current information on location and presenter. I can only hope that David Seward will have made the latest information available for the posting on the website.

Again, as previously mentioned, since almost all of our new members were previously obtained from walk-in traffic at the Learning Center, that luxury longer exists due to 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 operating.

As things have settled down a little, we are asking for volunteers who would be willing to handle phone calls coming to Alamo PC and answer any questions posed. We can address this at the next General Meeting.

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.

April Program

Bill Klutz

It is late March, and I have not been informed whether or not there will be a corporate level presenter for our April General Meeting. The meeting location will be confirmed at the March board meeting (regardless of the presenter identified). Since things can change at the last minute, please 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. Make plans now to come and bring some friends, as we hope to have an interesting presentation, and possibly "gifts."

Volunteer of the Month

Mike Bianchi



Computer Briefs

With S. Jack Lewtschuk

THE TINY MIRACLE

Have you ever received via e-mail, a URL like this:

[http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-q=Gang&getit=Go&sp-a=00062d45-sp00000000&sp-](http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-q=Gang&getit=Go&sp-a=00062d45-sp00000000&sp-advanced=1&sp-p=all&sp-w-control=1&sp-w=alike&sp-date-range=-1&sp-x=any&sp-c=100&sp-m=1&sp-s=0)

[advanced=1&sp-p=all&sp-w-control=1&sp-w=alike&sp-date-range=-1&sp-x=any&sp-c=100&sp-m=1&sp-s=0](http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-q=Gang&getit=Go&sp-a=00062d45-sp00000000&sp-advanced=1&sp-p=all&sp-w-control=1&sp-w=alike&sp-date-range=-1&sp-x=any&sp-c=100&sp-m=1&sp-s=0)

... with only the top line underlined and in blue?

And when you clicked on it you got an “error 404,” or did not get the website you expected?

That’s because the URL should have included all four lines. You need to copy the whole thing (all four lines), and paste it into your browser, making sure that you do not introduce any spaces. A few websites are configured so that their URLs don’t break, but not very many bother to do this.

I am guilty of sending long URLs via MBUG Listserv (see the back page to find out how to register). This has caused some of our members to be confused by the split URL. I appreciate the fact that recently someone took the time to remind me about a great solution for this problem. Years ago I knew about this but completely forgot (you can call it my “senior moment”).

One solution is Tiny URL or www.tinyurl.com. All you have to do is go to that URL and create a shortcut for future use. The instructions are simple:

1. Copy the giant URL.
2. Paste it in the slot provided by Tiny.
3. Click on the button provided.

And, like magic, the long four line URL becomes tiny, is automatically copied to your clipboard, and looks more like <http://tinyurl.com/52fuz2>. Surprised? Try it, you’ll like it, and it’s FREE! By the way, some time ago Tiny URL was reported to contain malware, however the manufacturer assures us that the problem has been rectified.

Also, another MBUG member suggests to try adding “< >” brackets to prevent URLs from falling apart.

Another program similar to Tiny URL is at www.webware.com/8301-1_109-9898698-2.html?tag=bl (or I could say: <http://tinyurl.com/57dqyk>)!

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

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Call or visit the Learning Center to register
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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:

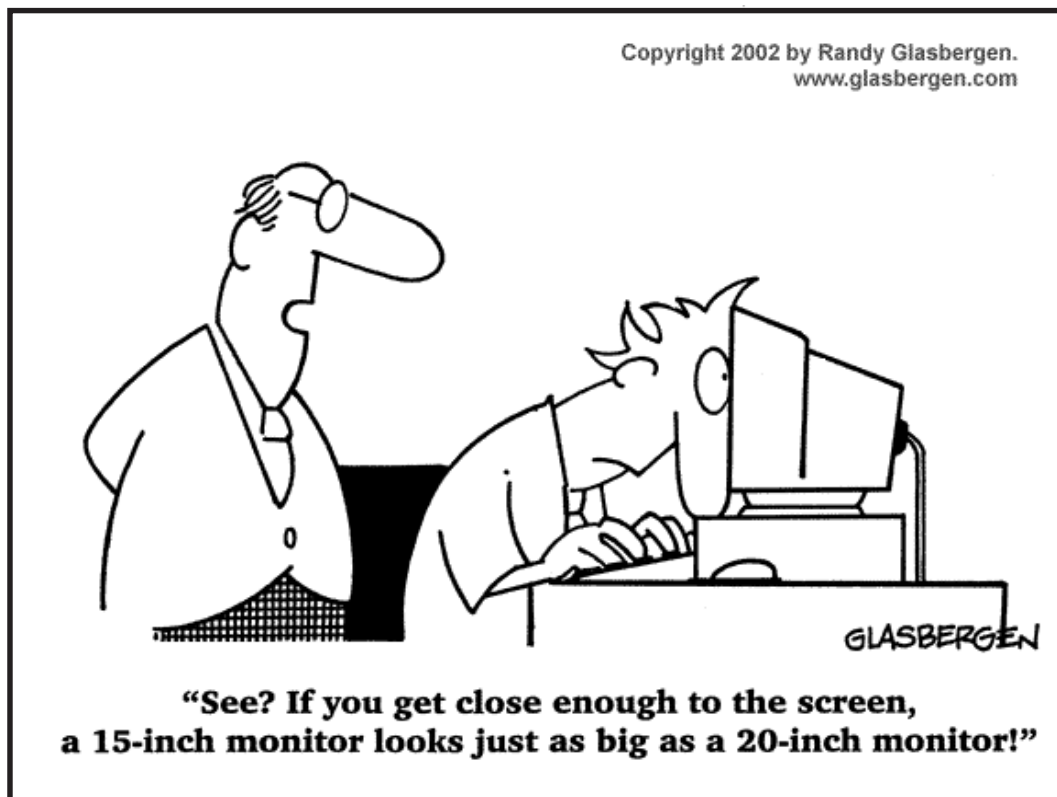
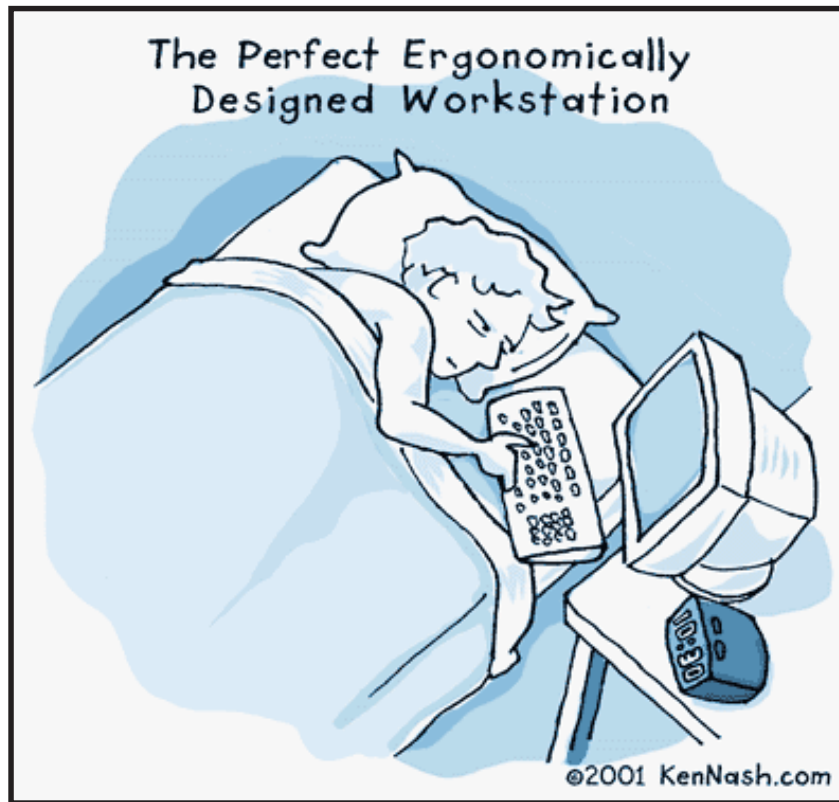
May 30th
August 29th
November 14th
December 12th

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



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Windows 7: First Install

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

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

IBM's Alternative to Microsoft

IBM, in conjunction with Virtual Bridges and Canonical, is offering a new virtual desktop package that promises to free users of all Microsoft applications. Virtual Bridge is providing the desktop client on top of an Ubuntu-based suite of applications on top of Canonical's OS. Proposed features include office, messaging, and collaboration tools which IBM claims could save companies between \$500 and \$800 on software licenses alone.

More information is available at <http://www.desktoplinux.com/news/NS3460383523.html>.

Wherefore Art Thou, AMD?

AMD is poised to release the Phenom II. After being severely trounced by Intel in their current iteration of processors, AMD has finally gone to the 45nm process, to produce a 3GHz processor with 8MB of cache. Unfortunately, AMD seems to be coming with too little too late. In initial benchmark tests of AMD's offerings, their processors still fail to compete even with Intel's mid-range Core i7 line of processors.

More information is available at http://www.maximumpc.com/article/features/meet_phenom_again.

LCD Panel Price Fixing

LG and Sharp both admitted to charges of working to keep the price of LCD panels artificially high. LG has been hit with nearly \$400 million in fines, while Sharp faces three counts of conspiracy for fixing prices of panels sold to DELL, Motorola, and Apple. A series of class action suits are also being filed against these companies on behalf of consumers affected by these unfair practices.

More information is available at http://news.cnet.com/8301-1001_3-10095219-92.html.

Netbooks

If you've been shopping for a portable computer lately, you've likely come across the latest craze in laptop computing: the Netbook.

What is a Netbook?

Well, they're small, affordable, and weigh in around three pounds. They're fully functional laptops, with up to 1GB of RAM and 8-to-10 inch screens. Some come with normal hard drives of up to 160GB, while others now have solid state drives, but the largest I've seen are 20GB at present. Most are equipped with USB, a webcam, built-in WiFi, a media reader for flash memory cards, and integrated speakers. Most don't have optical drives, but several have ExpressCard slots to allow for further expansion. They do not have the overall computing power of a standard laptop. Depending on the vendor, the processors are generally Intel Atom or Intel Celeron M, with a few models using a VIA solution. Due to the limitation of hard drive space and RAM, the Netbooks come loaded with either Windows XP or Linux for their operating system.

Continued on page 14


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Mac

What are they good for?

They're good for basic computing, like document creation or surfing the Internet. If you're not looking for lightning response, you can even use them for light editing of photos and video. Of course, you have to consider the size of the monitor on the unit you intend to use. Even the largest 10 inch model has a maximum resolution of 1024 x 600, and doesn't necessarily have the desired brightness for prolonged viewing of media. They also have smaller-than-standard keyboards and may cause problems if you do a lot of typing and aren't comfortable with the smaller size. The battery life can also be surprisingly short for such a small unit, averaging around three hours.

Is a Netbook right for you?

I haven't actually spent any quality time with one, so I can't give you my overall impression. I've used ultra-compact laptops in the past and been very pleased with them, when I've used them for that they were intended to be used for. So, remember the limitations that I've mentioned above. If a three pound laptop with basic multi-media and computing capability for nearly \$300.00 sounds good, go for it!

Computer Briefs

With S. Jack Lewtschuk

THE THIRD GENERATION OF USB

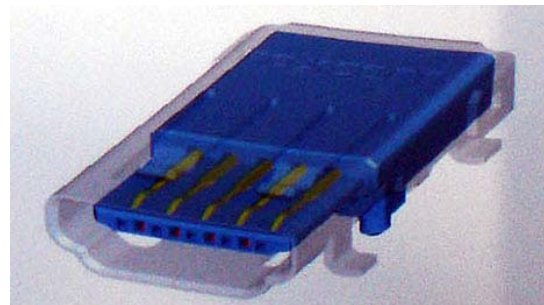
Many of you recall the old USB (Universal Serial Bus) 1.1. Its time passed when the much faster USB 2.0 was invented—it's the USB we all use now to connect our peripherals (mouses, printers, flash drives, etc.).

Last November we were given some good news:

Good news #1: by 2010 we will be able to buy USB 3.0.

Good news #2: it will be 10 times faster than USB 2.0 and it will feature improved power efficiency.

Good news #3: USB 3.0 will be backwards compatible with USB 2.0 and 1.1 devices, which means that we will have time to upgrade our peripheral devices when we are ready.



S. Jack Lewtschuk, President, Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer, CA, www.mbug.org, Blacklion@royal.net



WindowsVista – Part IX

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

If you have just purchased a new computer, here are some helpful tasks to make sure it performs well for you. First, make sure Windows Firewall is enabled. Windows Firewall is turned on by default, so double-check it by clicking Start, Control Panel. Double-click Windows Firewall. Then, click "Turn Windows Firewall on or off." If it's not on, enable it and click OK. If you have a wireless network, join it now. This is easy for Vista. Just click Start, Connect to, select your network and click Connect. Enter your network's security key when prompted. Second update Windows. Microsoft regularly because it patches holes in Windows.. To update Windows, click Start, All Programs, Windows Update, and click Check for updates. Then click "View available updates" and select the updates to install by clicking the appropriate check boxes. Optional updates are just that. All others should be installed. Click Install after selecting them. You may also need to reboot your computer. In the Windows Update box, click "Change settings," and select "Install updates automatically." Use the dropdown boxes to specify when the updates should be installed and click OK. Third, at this point, you'll need anti-virus and anti-spyware programs. If your computer is brand new, it probably came with antivirus.

That program must be updated regularly, to avoid infection, but it is not free. You'll get a trial period, perhaps 90 days. Then, if you want to keep it, you must buy a yearly subscription. There are a number of free antivirus programs on the Internet You can select from Avast!, AVG and PC Tools. You should only use one antivirus program. Otherwise, you will likely encounter software conflicts which will cause problems on your computer. Once you download the software, you'll need to update it. You should also schedule automatic updates in your antivirus software. Fourth, you need to protect your computer from spyware and adware. Adware will feed you ads. Spyware will gather information about you and send it to a server. The server will return customized ads to your machine. An anti-spyware program should protect you from both adware and spyware. You need at least two anti-spyware programs. Windows Defender is installed in Windows Vista. If you're using Windows XP, you can download and install it. Unlike antivirus programs, you won't encounter conflicts. You may also like SpywareBlaster, which keeps malware from installing. Another good one is Ad-Aware. Use it to scan your system weekly and let it run overnight. It takes about two hours. After you install your anti-spyware programs, update them. Then, schedule regular updates. There is probably some third-party software on your machine. These can also provide a route into your machine for hackers. Security updates are regularly issued, but you may not get the word so recommend that you install Secunia's Software Inspector. It will examine the software on your machine. Then, it checks for uninstalled updates, but it won't actually install the updates for you. You'll have to handle that yourself. Fourth, Windows Firewall isn't intuitive.

You may want to use a different one. If you are using 32-bit Windows, try ZoneAlarm. For 64-bit Windows, use Comodo Firewall. Both are free. Firewalls can conflict with each other. You must disable the Windows Firewall. Click Start, Control Panel. Double-click Windows Firewall and select "Turn Windows Firewall on or off," and then click Off and OK. You may not know if you have 32- or 64-bit Windows. To find out, click Start, Control Panel and double-click System. Look at System type in the System section. This will tell you if you have 32- or 64-bit Windows. Finally, you might want to use Firefox instead of Internet Explorer (IE). Internet Explorer has a much bigger market share and criminals are more apt to target it. Also, IE is an integral part of Windows, which gives criminals a potential route into Windows. But Firefox is just another program. It interfaces with Windows, but that's it.

Error Messages

If you receive an error message and have no idea as to its meaning, go to <www.smartcomputing.com> and then click the Tech Support Center link. It will provide you a link to a list of error messages. If you receive the SmartComputing Magazine, then this site will note articles that provide tips for sorting through this latest error message.

Free Antivirus Software

If you don't want to pay for your anti-virus software, look at both AVE Anti-Virus Free 8.0 <www.free.avg.com> and ThreatFire 3.5 <www.threatfire.com>. The former uses virus signatures to detect problems, while the latter uses behavior analysis. These programs won't conflict with one another. ThreatFire can be almost too effective. You should turn it off when installing any new software on your computer, otherwise it may see this new program as a threat.

Green Ribbon

If you see a green progress bar across the top of Windows Explorer on your Vista Operating System, it could mean that Explorer has crashed. To reset Explorer without restarting Windows, press Ctrl, Shift, Esc, choose the Processes tab, and click

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the Image name Column header to sort the list. Now select each instance of Explorer.exe in the list and click End Process to close it. You may lose your desktop along the way, but not to worry. From Task Manager's File menu, select New Task, type explorer, and click OK to restore your desktop. Unfortunately there are many reasons Explorer hangs or crashes. One fixable problem is Vista's thumbnail display. If you open a folder with a corrupt or empty video file, a garbled photo, or any media file that uses a defective driver, Explorer crashes while generating the thumbnail. To fix the problem rename the extension of troublesome files, for example, change myvideo.wmv to myvideo.wmv.broken. You can also stop the crashing by disabling thumbnails altogether. Open the Folder Options dialog in Control Panel, choose the View tab, select Always show icons, never thumbnails, and click OK.

Installing memory

First, unplug all the connections on the back of your computer. Then open the computer's case. Ground yourself by touching the computer's frame. Otherwise, static electricity could damage your computer. Find the motherboard. It's the large circuit board into which everything plugs. Locate the memory slots near the microprocessor. There will be two to four slots, about four inches long. At least one memory module will be installed, standing on its side. To install the RAM, pull back the retaining clips at the slot ends. The slot will have one or more raised pegs. These line up with notches in the stick of RAM. Push the memory firmly into the slot. You may have to push hard. When it's in properly, the retaining clips will snap into place. You may have several sticks of RAM with varying capacities. For example, your computer may have a 512MB module already installed. And you're installing two 1 GB sticks. When mixing capacities, you'll have to install them in specific slots. Always install the largest capacity module in the 0 bank (computers count from 0). The next largest goes in bank 1, and so on. The above example would look like this: 1 GB in bank 0, 1 GB in bank 1 and 512 MB in bank 2. That's it for installation. Now, just check to make sure it's working.

Check your new RAM

Your computer should recognize and start using the new RAM automatically. But you'll want to check to be sure. So, start up your computer. In Windows Vista, click Start, Control Panel. If necessary, click Classic View in the left panel. Double-click System. Find the "Memory (RAM)" label. You'll see the accessible RAM. In Windows XP, click Start, Control Panel. Double-click System and select the General tab. At the bottom of the window you'll find the accessible amount of RAM.

Recycling Computers and TVs

Should you have working and nonworking computers, monitors, printers, fax machines, keyboards, mice and power cords and old TVs which are no longer useful to you, call Technology Recycling in San Antonio at 210-967-5400. This firm will pick up your old equipment at your home free of charge.

Software/Operating System (OS) Problems

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

Startup Options

If your computer takes a long time to boot up, there are several options which can be taken to solve this problem. First one is to open the program that you don't want to start automatically when Windows boots. Check to see if the program provides an auto start option that you can disable. If there is no option available or deselecting it doesn't prevent the program from starting automatically, next check the Startup folder for those programs not needed on startup. Other options include removing unneeded scheduled tasks, removing items from the System Configuration Utility, and from the System Registry. Only try this last option if you're a very experienced computer user.

For Windows related computer problems, subscribe by mail to the <www.msnews.microsoft.com> newsgroup or check Microsoft's Knowledge Base at <support.microsoft.com>. Another source of computer repair help is with User Groups, such as the Alamo PC Users Group. A third source of help are free analyzers at <www.pcpitstop.com> which tests your hard drive, rates your PC's performance, and looks for spyware. If the analysis turns up problems you can't fix with your own knowledge and experience, you can pay to have them corrected. If your system is loaded with unused and temporary files, Ccleaner <www.ccleaner.com> will clean them up for you.



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.

Three months ago, I purchased a digital picture frame, but when I hooked it to my desktop machine via the USB cable, “My Computer” was unable to “see” the picture frame’s memory, which had software on it to install for processing my pictures automatically and sending them to the frame’s memory. I tried repeatedly and it might finally see it briefly, but once you clicked somewhere else, then back, it was gone. Windows Explorer didn’t work with this frame’s memory any better. I tried it on my other desktop computer with the same results.

Both of these computers have an Intel Pentium-4 3.06 Gigahertz motherboard. I adjusted the pictures with another software and put them on an SD flash card, inserted it in a memory slot on the picture frame, and it would run the picture slide show fine when standing alone. As I said, neither machine could see that frame’s memory, except for a brief glimpse occasionally. I returned the picture frame for a refund thinking it was defective, and the store manager agreed with me after I explained.

I bought another digital frame the other day, bigger and better. When I tried hooking it up to my desktop with the USB cable, I got the same results all over again. I was unable to “see” the digital picture frame’s memory with “My Computer” to install the software that came with it. I finally decided to download the software in question from their Web site and install it on my desktop. After that, I ran the software to access the pictures from the My Pictures folder, process them, then send them to the frame’s memory, but it gave me a message that it couldn’t find the memory. I couldn’t find it with Windows Explorer either, except briefly on rare occasion, then it would disappear, however, during that brief viewing, I did notice that there were actually three pictures that got loaded before getting the error message.

After several tries using different USB plugs on the computer, different USB cables and always the same response, I gave up and tried it on my other desktop, with no better luck. I have used many USB items on my desktop machines with no problems. I decided there was a coincidence here and tried hooking it up to my laptop, which has Vista on it. Both desktop machines use XP Professional. It works fine on my laptop and I am at a loss to figure out what’s wrong on the two desktop machines that work good otherwise. A knowledgeable friend worked with me on the phone one evening, with no luck. I am out of ideas.

***Want To Get Modern, Stable and Futuristic?**

Do you need a modern, stable and free user interface with 3D effects for Windows Mobile? Touch Shell is now available. MobilityFlow announced the release of Touch Shell Free, a modern user interface integrated with 3D effects for Windows Mobile. With the release of Touch Shell Free, MobilityFlow combines the full screen customizable user interface with a cutting edge 3D effect user interface, giving users the most advanced and intuitive Windows Mobile user interface available on the market today.

Touch Shell Free, with its ground-breaking functions, features and design offers much more than other user interfaces with 3D effects on the market today. Many of them are only available on very expensive high-end devices sold direct from the mobile carriers. MobilityFlow also has a Touch Shell Pro version of the application that offers additional functions and features.

I included this item because there is a free version, but according to the Web site there is also a 50% discount on the right side of their Web page for the Pro version, making it \$9.98. However, I don’t know how long that discounted price will last.

Touch Shell Website: <<http://www.touch-shell.com>>

***Tired Of Quicken or MS Money? Try This One**

Alzex announced Personal Finances 3.2, the newest version of a personal finance manager that will help users track income and expenses quickly and virtually automatically. With a glance at its reports and graphs, users will understand their earning and spending patterns, find areas of excessive expenditure and cut down unnecessary expenses. Personal Finances also provides future planning. Users can project expected spending and income, and know their exact financial situation at a future date.

The budgeting task is a snap. Running the program will open a simple, uncluttered interface that puts all the financial details, tools and options that matter most to you up front. First the user needs to start budgeting by setting up accounts, categories, and subcategories. Personal Finances allows for any number of accounts, so the user can set up accounts for your bank, credit card, and cash. Next, set up categories and subcategories. They will classify and sort income and expenses and help the user see this important data in a meaningful and detailed way through reports and graphs.

Next for budgeting is to enter transactions that can reflect income and expenses. Transactions can be one-time or scheduled, which makes Personal Finances handy for regularly occurring expenses, such as tax payments, electricity bills, Internet, etc. Transactions can be identified in a number of ways including categories, family members, and tags. Tags provide a way to differentiate between similar transactions that fall into the same category. Categorization by family members will show spending habits of each member of the family in reports.

Personal Finances offers a summary view of all transactions, reports by categories, family members and tags to see how much of the budget is allocated to each category or family member, and identify areas to cut spending if the budget comes out on the negative side. The user can generate reports that cover any period of time. Results can be printed out, or saved to one of the formats: HTML, CHM, or TXT.

With Personal Finances, one can have the convenience of the personal finance software without carrying around the laptop. When the user goes out of town, they can install Personal Finances onto a USB flash drive and keep track of all purchases. Simply plug the USB flash drive in to any computer, update transactions and unplug it. No traces are left behind on the host machine.

New to version 3.2 are 50 icons for accounts and 200 icons for categories. Now the user can see the summary for a month, confirmed and non-confirmed transactions, and can group transactions by name.

Personal Finances runs on Windows 98/NT/2000/XP/Vista and comes in two editions: Professional and Freeware. For more information about the products, visit <http://www.financesoftware.com>. You can download the 30-day trial version, an absolutely “free” version or the paid version. For the paid version, user group members are offered a 20% discount on the purchase of Personal Finances 3.2. The coupon code is pf43M5G. They failed to respond when I asked when the discount will end, but right now the discount code will still recalculate the price so I hope it’s still good when you read this.

Also, be aware that the description I included above is for the paid version, so do your homework if you want the free one and look at the comparison columns on their Web site. Several features in the paid version aren’t in the free version. Also, I’m not sure if it tracks securities, which MS Money and Quicken will do.

***Multiple items on the clipboard**

Gerry Gerstenberg of Broward Personal Computer Assn. Inc. wrote a review of Clipomatic in their C:\BPCA NEWS, the group’s newsletter. <http://www.bpca.com> Its an handy product that allows you to save up to 64 text items that it will hold in a cache, and you can retrieve them singularly when you need a particular one. They will be saved even when you shut your computer down, and be available again next time you start it up. She was happy with the performance and it is a free program that can be obtained at <http://www.mlin.net/Clipomatic.shtml>, but the author is open to donations, which I consider worthwhile if you like it. She said it’s not clear if Clipomatic is compatible with Vista, but it works with other Windows versions. Gerry’s review is in their august newsletter at <ftp://bpca.com/newsletter/2008/bpca0808.pdf>.

Computer Briefs *With S. Jack Lewtschuk*

CLEANING YOUR COMPUTER

During the summer you had your hands full cleaning your yard and patio. In the fall you winterized your home and prepared for the holidays. Now that all of that is over, it’s time to spring clean your computer. When was the last time you opened up your “box” and looked inside? Don’t tell me!

I found a very thorough guide explaining how to clean, what tools you need, why you should clean and yes, how often you should clean, courtesy of Computer Hope at www.computerhope.com/cleaning.htm#00.

Let me know what you found inside your box—I dare you! Is it still alive?

S. Jack Lewtschuk, President, Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer, CA, www.mbug.org, Blacklion@royal.net



It all begins with the chair

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

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

In the past the chair has been used to provide both sitting and working comfort for people who work at preset desk heights. This height, twenty-nine inches for PC desk height and twenty-six inches for typewriters, was determined years ago to go well with the physical requirements of the 'average' person.

Unfortunately, the result has been the necessity for shorter than average people to raise their chair height as they try to reach a comfortable position at a work surface which is too high for them.

Sitting back in the chair would then result in the person's legs hanging with their feet off the floor. The person may then experience pressure under the front of the thigh where it presses against the chair at an angle. The user is forced to sit forward in the chair to avoid discomfort because this is a sensitive part of the leg through which pass many nerve endings and veins.

In fact in any large office with fixed height desks, you will see a large number of shorter individuals, who are forced to sit forward on the chair, away from the support of the chair back. They might as well be sitting on stools.

Employees who are taller than the average person are also affected by the fixed height work surfaces. Though they would more comfortably sit in a higher chair, the work surface would then be too low, causing them to slump forward. So instead they lower their chairs, only to cause another dilemma. When the person sits back in their lowered chair, their knees will be higher than their behind when their feet are placed flat on the floor, causing all the weight to be on the back of the chair.

Every time this person sits back in his chair, the chair will tilt back. Then every time he wishes to work at his desk, he must move forward in the chair away from the support for his back.

As with the shorter than average individual, this will have an effect on their posture and can cause stress and strain. This can transfer into back pain, fatigue or aggravated tension. In fact; backache is the third most widespread illness in our population. The back pain that develops from the misalignment of the normal posture can be treated very successfully with chiropractic care. Talk to your Chiropractor to find out if there is anything that can be done to correct the ergonomic problem.

The proper means of adjusting a chair for sitting and working comfort is to stand facing the chair and adjust it to a height just below the kneecaps.

Then when you sit back in the chair your thighs will be parallel to the floor and your weight will be evenly distributed across the chair. While there are a regrettable number of chairs still being made with high and prominent arms that prevent the user from sitting properly positioned at their desk, the trend is towards chairs with recessed or sloping arms that do not cause this problem. These chairs are highly recommended.

Once people adjust their chairs to the comfort requirements of their heights, they then will be seated at differing heights relative to their work surfaces, typewriters or keyboards.

If these keys or surfaces are too high, then the users are forced to raise their arms. Many shorter individuals raise their arms from the shoulders, almost like having a constant "shrug". This uses muscles across the top of the shoulders and at the base of the neck, and it often takes very little time before discomfort is felt.

At a properly positioned work surface, keyboard or typewriter, the height of the surface or keys will be at elbow height, when the individual drops his arms to his side while sitting. At this height the person may work in an upright, yet comfortable sitting posture, with the forearms at right angles and parallel to the floor in a relaxed working position.

As you can see, chair positioning is the most important aspect when you consider proper PC use. The problem is your desk is not adjustable and is the limiting factor for your chair adjustment. Hopefully someone will design a desk with an adjustable height so the chair will do what it is supposed to do-support your posture.



Reinstalling Windows

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>

No matter how diligent you are at computer housecleaning and tuning your system, at some point you will need to reinstall Windows. One of the most infuriating things about the process occurs after the installation when you realize you have forgotten something important like exporting your Favorites folder. Several weeks ago I reinstalled Vista on my laptop and almost forgot to do something elementary. So perhaps it's time to review the basics.

There are many reasons to reinstall windows. Perhaps the registry has gotten corrupted or it could be an accumulation of little things that are driving you nuts. Whatever is annoying you, a clean install is always the best option. Before doing anything, careful planning will keep you out of trouble.

The detailed procedures outlined here apply specifically to Vista, but the general concepts apply to any version of Windows and even other operating systems. There are three main areas to a reinstall. You need proper preparation, the install itself, and the aftermath to clean up any mess you may have inadvertently created. That means you don't schedule a reinstall the night before any deadlines.

Start by documenting any critical login identifications and passwords. If you pay bills online, access financial information, eBay, PayPal or anything else important to you., now is the time to write it all down. Some folks use a password protected spreadsheet file. Others use some kind of encrypted application to store the data. I prefer good old reliable pen and paper stored in a safe place, not taped to my monitor.

Do you have your Windows product key available? You need it to reinstall Vista. Are there any other applications you will reinstall that require product keys, like Microsoft Office? Gather them all, including any drivers you may need to reinstall hardware, like a printer or mobile smart phone.

A clean install requires that you backup your data files. This is especially important if you're planning to reformat your hard drive. Backup email contacts, calendar entries, and anything you consider important. Don't forget anything special you may have saved on your desktop. That's an easy one to overlook.

Have you installed new hardware recently? Any new devices, except physical memory, require some kind of driver software to work properly. You can get the most up-to-date drivers by visiting the manufacturer's web site and downloading them. Go to the Device Manager for a list of installed hardware or use Belarc Advisor for a more detailed description.

Do some housecleaning. Search your drive for files that are obsolete or otherwise unnecessary. It's amazing how much digital detritus can accumulate over time. Perform a full deep virus scan so your new setup can get off to a clean start. Use Disk Cleanup if you want to reduce the number of unnecessary files on your hard disk to free up disk space and help your computer run faster. It removes temporary files, empties the Recycle Bin, and deletes a variety of system files and other items that you no longer need.

Back up the My Documents folder and any sub-folders that may exist. Backup Links if you use Internet Explorer; Bookmarks if you use Mozilla Firefox. If you're not sure you've backed up everything you need, back up the entire disk. If you've forgotten anything, your data can be recovered.

By now you should have:

- Documented all logins and passwords
- Backed up all important data including My Documents and any sub-folders
- Have all product keys and activation codes handy
- Backed up your email contact list, and calendar entries
- Backed up Favorites, Links, Bookmarks, etc.
- Collected Driver disks

Check everything at least twice to make sure you haven't overlooked anything essential and you're ready to go. Insert your Windows disk and reinstall the operating system.

After the process is complete, there is still work to do. Use Windows Update to retrieve and install the latest service packs, security updates, and any necessary patches. After bringing your operating system up-to-date, turn your attention to applications and device drivers.

If you reinstalled Vista from the manufacturer's installation or system restore disks, drivers for the original software and hardware that came with the system are likely to be either no longer relevant or out-of-date. You may need to visit several manufacturers' web sites to download and install the most recent drivers. This is part of proper preparation, but if you neglected this step it's not a fatal mistake.

Restore any data you backed up earlier, reconfigure network settings if applicable, and tweak the system to suit your personal preferences. Create a system restore point, and do an image backup of your entire system in case you need to reinstall again.

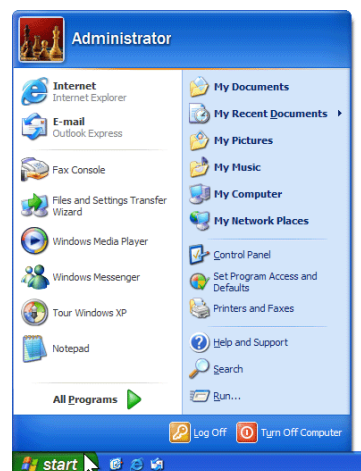
Don't fool yourself. Reinstalling the operating system, applications, drivers and such is never as simple or as easy as it should be. If you plan carefully however, it doesn't need to be stressful.

Computer Briefs

With S. Jack Lewtschuk

ARE YOU THE ADMIN?

If you need to quickly tell if you are currently logged onto a PC as a Local Administrator of the Windows server, right click on the "Start" button. If you see "Open All Users" rather than just "Open," the account is in the Local Administrators group.



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Web issue

The Global University

Use Google to Locate Free Online Textbooks

By **Mike Moore**, BGAMUG, www.bgamug.org, ml.moore@insightbb.com

With new textbooks costing upwards of \$100, and some publishers devising web-based content requiring the use of new texts every year, student advocates and concerned administrators have been considering ways of moderating this cost, while at the same time making textbooks available online or on electronic books such as the Amazon Kindle, and providing incentives for publishers to use creative licensing for their intellectual property.

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The open source mantra that we have written about so often in these pages is now being applied to textbooks and other intellectual property in an effort to support students, control wasteful revisions and stop killing so many trees.

For the purposes of this article, we will refer to any electronic format for a textbook as an “E-text.”

Some of what I’m about to show you may surprise you, and you may wonder how it can be that these valuable multimedia materials are just lying around out there on the internet. Trust me, we are not going to be hacking any university computers, and if anything about a Google search can be said to be illegal, well, then I guess we’re all in a bit of trouble. Either that, or Google is!

For those E-texts that have gone open-source (that is, are in one way or another unencumbered by copyright), the university will usually put them on a public web site, and for those of you familiar with search engines, that makes them fair game for you and I!

I am fond of saying that Google indexes only the WorldWide Web, but in this case, the WWW is exactly where we want to go. By way of caution though, I will say that just because we find something lying around on the internet, does not mean it’s free for any use at all. The user/reader is at least partly responsible for respecting copyrights, particularly if you intend to redistribute or use that material in any other way beside your own personal enjoyment. For an excellent copyright primer that is targeted toward teens, see <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/copyrightmystery/>.

Even a relatively small university such as our own WKU has a truly massive web presence, and in order to filter out everything but E-texts, we need a flexible search engine that has the power to filter results based on file types.

Google more than fills the bill.

Some of you may remember a while back we hosted a presentation featuring Google’s keyword filters. For example, adding the filter filetype:pdf to your Google search will return only results in the form of Adobe’s Public Document Format, which is often the format of choice for E-texts. Conversely, if you want to look at all results except for PDF files, you can add the negative sign in front, like this:

-filetype:pdf.

Since we did that presentation, Google has allowed additional file types that they never previously filtered for, such as filetype:mp3 or filetype:avi, which find, respectively, compressed music or speech and video files. These file types, along with mp4, are often what you might find on a professor’s web site containing interesting lectures or other course material.

It might seem logical to restrict your search for E-texts to scholarly sites, such as colleges and universities. We can do exactly that by using the site:.edu filter. You can even expand this to include only one particular college site by issuing, for example, site:wku.edu along with any additional keywords we want to search for. This would search the Western Kentucky University website for articles matching our keywords. The Google search returned using site:wku.edu lecture gives the following:

There is one additional search filter in Google’s bag of tricks that will help you find more E-texts and multimedia lectures than using the filetype filter alone, and that is the intitle:“index.of” filter. Intitle looks for the specified keyword after the colon, in a web page title. Looking for the keyword “index.of” allows you to hunt down information-rich index pages, which can be thought of as the best place to go for E-texts and recorded lectures on university web sites because, as the name implies, they are like a table of contents.

As an example, let’s Google using these keywords:

site:.edu intitle:“index.of” (mp3|mp4|avi) lecture

The vertical bar symbol between those file types is called the pipe symbol—it is over your backslash key, which is itself located just north of your Enter key. The pipe symbol, in this context, means to search for “index.of” entries that have either mp3, mp4, or avi in their text. This search yields the following—the first of only 48 links (image on next page).

It's not really that surprising that using the MP3|MP4|AVI filter only finds 48 links—after all, there is considerably more concern about copyright issues when looking at file types that might be used to contain music, movies and the like. Just for the heck of it, though, I tried this search:

Intitle:"index.of" mp3 beatles

The resulting search was impressive at finding mp3 files of the Fab Four's recordings, but the webmasters behind the pages it found were equally impressive at not letting you play the files without paying for the privilege, and since most of this music is copyrighted, that is only as it should be.

Even so, using the intitle:"index.of" filter is extremely effective at locating E-texts, particularly when combined with the site:.edu filter to only search university and college sites.

So your best bet on Google to find general E-texts is:

intitle:"index.of" _____

And just fill in the blank with whatever subject you're interested in. I used intitle:"index.of" caves and got 315,000 hits, the very first of which was a really cool teaching site (<http://erg.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/teachers-packets/exploringcaves/pdfindex.html>) about caves from the US Geological Survey.

I wish I could give you an idea of what intitle:"index.of" is actually filtering for. If you can imagine the internet functionally layered, like a Broadway production; got that picture? Okay, searching the WWW with Google using plain old normal keywords with none of the fancy filters we've talked about here—will lead you to find hits on what's going on about the stage and the actor's names and so forth. Now Intitle:"index.of" comes looking, and isn't interested in the play, the credentials of the performers, the lighting—nothing on the stage. That little but critical filter ignores all of that stuff, but instead searches behind the scenes, finding hits at the level of the executive producer, the writer of the screen play, and where they all went to school. That analogy is reaching a bit, but suffice it to say that specialized filters yield specialized results.

Please share your E-text searching successes!

Computer Briefs
With S. Jack Lewtschuk

WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

While two credit cards might act and look alike, levels of consumer protection that each type of credit card provides can be different. Under federal law, if someone steals your credit card you're only responsible to pay the first \$50 of unauthorized charges. However, if you notify the credit card issuer before a thief is able to make any charges, you may be free from all liability. If the credit card is not physically present when an unauthorized or fraudulent purchase is made (such as over the Internet), you're also free from liability for those charges.

MasterCard and Visa offer zero-liability protection where you don't have to pay any charges if someone uses your credit card to make an unauthorized purchase. Many credit cards offer additional benefits and supply a yearly summary of your spending. A debit card is a direct key to your bank account. The protection offered for debit card fraud is similar to credit cards but with a few exceptions. For example, your liability under federal law is limited to \$50, the same as for a credit card, but only if you notify the issuer within two business days of discovering the card's loss or theft. Your liability for debit card fraud can jump up to \$500 if you don't report the loss or theft within that time.

Debit cards provide a direct pass to your bank account. You may also face cash flow problems and bounced-check fees when thieves clean out your bank accounts. If you are the type of person who gives a passing glance to your monthly bank statement, you could be totally liable for any fraudulent debit card charges if you wait 60 days or more from the time your statement is mailed. Visa and MasterCard zero-liability protection applies to your debit card with them but only for transactions that do not involve the use of your PIN (personal identification number).

Additional protection against fraudulent use of your credit or debit cards may be available through your homeowner's or renter's insurance. Check your policy or with your agent for more information about your coverage.

You should avoid using your debit card for any online purchase or for things which are expensive. Why? The main reason is that it is much easier to dispute a charge when you use your credit card. If the gold-plated, limited-edition, hip-swinging Elvis wall clock arrives broken, your credit card company will remove the charge until the problem is resolved. With your debit card you are stuck dealing with the merchant directly to resolve any problems with a purchase. Don't fall for rumors about not signing your cards—all banks insist that you are much safer signing your cards immediately upon receiving them. Just to make sure that you have all the necessary information should you become a victim of stolen or lost cards and other important documents:

1. Empty your wallet.
2. Place all your credit/debit cards and important documents on your scanner or copying machine.
3. Make copies of your cards, front and back.
4. Place the copy in a safe place: a safety deposit box, fire safe, or even your refrigerator is better than a desk drawer (in case of fire, the chances for survival of contents in your refrigerator are pretty good).
5. Check your wallet periodically. Thieves often steal just one credit card to make sure that you don't notice it's gone. By the time you notice, it's too late.

S. Jack Lewtschuk, President, Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer, CA, www.mbug.org, Blacklion@royal.net

Online Backup Services

There Are Pros & Cons But They Are Up & Coming

**Written by Ira Brickman, President, ICON PC User Group, Inc.,
New York, www.iconpcug.org, president@iconpcug.org**

The changing face of how we use our computers includes the latest concept: using programs and services directly from the Internet. Many of us, for example, have found it more convenient to access our email using a Web browser (a.k.a. “Webmail”) instead of a dedicated client like Outlook Express. The Internet’s evermore ubiquitous nature means that receiving email is as simple as finding an available computer with browser software. Backing up your hard drive using an online service is one of the up and coming online services.

The advantages are:

- No need to buy backup software or purchase external USB drives or optical media to backup to.
- Not storing backups where the computer is located secures against fire, theft, and other risks.
- Like Webmail, the backups are available from any computer with an Internet connection & a browser.

As good as that sounds, some of the other considerations are:

- There are some costs usually involved.
- Backup privacy and security is dependent on a third party and transmitting your data over the Internet adds privacy and security risks.
- You become dependent the backup service staying in business. If not, you are out of luck.
- It takes a lot longer to backup or restore than using a local hard drive.
- There is no imaging which means you are not backing up a picture of your hard drive, including your operating system installation. Rather you are backing up folders and files.

All in all, the pros certainly make trying online backup worthwhile. The cons, however, mean you have to judge how private the files are and how large your backups will be. And the risk of a service folding means you should be wary of using smaller, totally free backup services for anything very critical to you.

There are some well-known, reliable services which can be free to use, within certain limitations. Or for a small monthly fee, you can get all the pros and limit your risks.

If you want to use an online backup services, there are three commercial services you can explore and consider to start with. They are: Amazon S3/Jungle Disk, Mozy,

and Carbonite. All three have similarities:

- They require that you download and install a desktop client to configure backups, manage restores.
- Once your first backup is created, the client program then works in the background to backup of new and altered files.
- All three encrypt your data before transmission and store it in encrypted form on remote servers.
- None require you to restore from the original computer.

You can also restore your data to a different computer.

If you search the Web, you will find an abundance of reviews about each of these services. There is much that has been positively written about Jungle Disk and Amazon's Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3). The S3 service is part of a package of Amazon services meant to be accessed through third party software. Jungle Disk is

the leading program to do that. It "mounts" the online storage so that it seamlessly appears as another drive in your Windows Explorer. Jungle Disk can schedule automatic backups, but the mounted drive means you can drag and drop to manually backup files and folders. And it allows for incremental backups.

This last is important because there are costs involved. Amazon currently charges 10 cents per Gigabyte per month for storage and another 17 cents per GB for the data transfer. Incremental backups mean the transfer costs are kept to a minimum after your initial backup.

JungleDisk costs \$20 after a 30-day free trial. Amazon S3: <http://tinyurl.com/qx87a>

Jungle Disk: <http://www.jungledisk.com>

Mozy, at <http://mozy.com/>, on the other hand, can be free if you use the "MozyHome" alternative, limited to 2Gb of storage. But for \$4.95 per month, Mozy offers unlimited backup of a single home computer. Though not as convenient as Jungle Disk, the MozyHome software makes backing up easy and has many backup options..

Carbonite, <http://www.carbonite.com/>, offers a yearly subscription for unlimited backup of a hard drive, starting at \$49.95 per year, with lower costs for upfront payment of multi-year subscriptions. This makes it a little less expensive than Mozy per year. The Carbonite software might be a little easier to use than Mozy. Some reviewers found Carbonite to be slower and the Carbonite Web site does contain a caution about speed.

With costs potentially less than the upfront cost of a hard drive, these backup services are at least worth a look for their convenience for computer users.

Computer Briefs

With S. Jack Lewtschuk

What Programs are Installed?

Here's an easy way to get a list of all the Microsoft programs that are installed on your computer:

Click Start | Help and Support.

In the left column of the Help and Support window, under Pick a Help Topic, click Windows basics.

In the left pane, click to expand Core Windows tasks.

Click Searching for information.

In the right pane, under Pick a task, click Get information about your computer.

In the right pane, under What do you want to do?, click View a list of Microsoft software installed on this computer.

The list can be copied and pasted into another document.

S. Jack Lewtschuk, President, Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer, CA, www.mbug.org, Blacklion@royal.net

My PayPal Account's Been Hacked

Written by **Steve Bass**, a former Contributing Editor with PC World, a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG.

The e-mail from PayPal said I'd sent \$400 to a gaming firm in Germany. It's a dopey phishing expedition, I thought, and authentic-looking, for sure, but nothing to worry about.

The trouble was that when I logged on to PayPal, I really did have a \$400 withdrawal. It was clear that someone had my password.

Quick Password Tips

Here are the three essential things you need to know about password security:

-- Use a password generator, a program that will create a long, complicated password.

-- Don't ever use dictionary words, even if you stick in symbols, like bill\$gate\$. They're very easy to break using simple hacker programs. (LOL -- Thanks, Rod.)

-- Use a different password for every important site. Using the same password on every site, especially critical ones, such as banking, is risky. Imagine using your one password on an unsavory, and possibly unscrupulous site. With that golden password, and a few guesses on your login name -- stevebass, steve_bass, sbass -- and they're in like Flynn.

Who's Got My Password?

I contacted PayPal (888/221-1161), supplied the details, and they opened up a case. My account is frozen and I don't doubt PayPal will credit me for the loss. (As I started editing this newsletter, PayPal reversed the charges.) PayPal is investigating, but I don't think they'll ever find out how someone got into my account, though it was clear the person had my password. The rep said I probably fell for a well-crafted e-mail spoof.

That's a blow to my ego. I see myself as suspicious -- verging on paranoid -- when it comes to phishing e-mails. What better prize than bragging rights to hacking a PC World guy, right? So I'm as vigilant as my dog is when I try to get her to take a pill wrapped in peanut butter. (Hey, you can't fool me, pal, she probably thinks...)

If an e-mail -- suspicious or not -- refers to any of my important accounts and provides a link to click, I ignore the offer. It's safer to manually type the URL into my browser's address field. And yes, I'll cover phishing hassles -- and ways to guard against it -- in a future newsletter.

Password: z24x680uBS4!44

I'm also careful with my passwords and, at least until now, thought they were super stealthy. For example, on PayPal I used four numbers, a symbol, and three letters. According to Microsoft's Password Checker, my standard password pattern -- 1600%wtf -- is strong. But it could be better.

Microsoft says that the most effective passwords are 14 characters and have a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and a symbol or two. For example, z24x680uBS4!44 is strong enough for them to call it "best."

Steve Bass is the author of **PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer**, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices. snipurl.com/annoy2

Test your passwords on Microsoft's site and see how well they stand up. Then browse Microsoft's excellent Strong passwords: How to create and use them. I promise you'll learn something. <http://tinyurl.com/2e7tmw>

Use Microsoft's Password checker to test your password's strength. You might be surprised.

<http://tinyurl.com/ypc3dc>

Generating Strong Passwords

Creating a strong password is easy, provided you don't try to think one up on your own. There are dozens of Web sites that'll create passwords, but I don't use any of them. The last thing I'll do is trust someone online watching me create new passwords. Instead, download Password Generator, a freebie, and crank out all sorts of 14-character passwords.

<http://tinyurl.com/4j8e8>

Keeping Track of Your Passwords

I just looked and counted roughly 220 sites I use that require a password.

Some site passwords, however, are immaterial. For instance, I use a simple-to-remember word for spots I rarely visit, places such as newspapers that force you to register and log in just to read articles, or tech sites with forum messages.

However, ever since the PayPal fiasco, I've changed every significant password on my system to a 14-digit gorilla.

Remembering all those passwords is a PITA, so you ought to consider using a password management tool. There are lots available. Many people like KeePass, a freebie; others swear by LargeSoft's \$30 Password Manager. I anticipate easily 100 e-mails -- no make that 200 -- kvetching that I haven't mentioned your favorite. But as far as I'm concerned, RoboForm is the best one around, and I've used it since it was first introduced.

RoboForm, The Master at Passwords

RoboForm is a \$30 program with more features for password management, privacy, and password identification than any other program I know. You provide RoboForm with all the vitals you might need to complete a site's form--name, address, phone numbers, and even credit card numbers. When you click the Fill Forms button, the program does just that. I've created multiple identities, each with different info. For instance, I have one with MasterCard info, another with VISA accounts. I have another identify I call "anonymous" that I use to fill in forms on sites that I'll never visit again.

Enter data into RoboForm's Identity card and fill in online forms.

Click a Web site from the RoboForm Passcard screen, and RoboForm transports your Web browser to the site, logging you in if necessary. Need an industrial-strength password? RoboForm will generate one for you. And don't worry about security: RoboForm is itself password-protected. The program will also safely send an encrypted password through e-mail to another RoboForm user. (I was recently discussing with my wife the fact that neither of us can function without it.)

BTW, RoboForm foils keyloggers (programs that watch keystrokes) because instead of typing, RoboForm inserts characters into form fields.

Here's a summary of RoboForm's features (<http://www.roboform.com/features.html>), a comprehensive FAQ (<http://www.roboform.com/faq.html>) with answers to your most technical RoboForm questions and a way to compare the free and Pro versions (<http://www.roboform.com/why-pro.html>).

If you need portability, RoboForm2Go gives you the same protection when you carry your passwords on a flash drive and use it outside the office. Both the RoboForm program and your password files reside on a USB key, so you can take them from one computer to another. The tool costs \$40, but if you buy it at the same time you get RoboForm, the price drops to \$20. If you dig around, you'll occasionally find discounts. (Google RoboForm discount.)

Siber Systems offers a 30-day trial of both products. They work in all versions of Windows and support IE and Firefox, but not Google Chrome, Opera, or a few other browsers. Take a look at the compatibility list. <http://www.roboform.com/browsers.html>

There's lots more to say about password management, but I'm almost out of space. So while you're hot on the topic, read Bitmill's smart series of Password Security 101 articles.

They're less basic than you might imagine. <http://www.thebitmill.com/articles/>

Computer & Internet Tips and Tricks

Written by Gregory West, Editor, Sarnia Computer Users' Group, Canada, www.scug.ca, editor@scug.ca

As Editor for the Sarnia Computer Users' Group, I do a lot of online research for interesting websites and also free software. I am also fortunate to have people who send me their online gems. Here I share some of these amazing finds with you.

Remember: The programs you are about to see are FREE and legal and for you to download and use. Try out programs, or simply take a sneak peek at what they can do for you; the choice is yours. So, happy clicking and email me with what you think about these programs: editor@scug.ca

Gimme Back Those Deleted or Lost Files - File Recovery Program

Website: www.recuva.com

Runs on Microsoft Windows 98, 2000, 2003, XP and Vista

We have all done it. You have too, come on, admit it. Yes when you accidentally delete a file from your computer, the Recycle Bin, digital camera memory card, USB stick, or even songs from your MP3 player, this program will help you to recover those lost files. It is a good program to have on your computer for those times when you least expect it and you DELETE in error.

ATTENTION ALL eBay USERS – A Must Have eBay Desktop Application

Website: <http://desktop.ebay.com>

Runs on Windows XP/Vista or MacOS X 10.4/10.5

This desktop application puts you in total control of your eBay bargaining with an eagleeye live gatekeeper of your bid or bidders. Never miss an eBay bargain again.

This is WEB 3.0 at its best. "EBay's slick new app does more than simply recreate the auction site on the desktop -- it makes the whole experience thoroughly interactive and much more engaging" (wired.com).

Catch Thieves in the Act, Live and Recorded Video Security System Using Your Webcam

Website: www.yawcam.com

Works on Windows 2000/XP/Vista

This security webcam software for windows is simple and easy to use and includes most of the usual security camera features such as: Video streaming, Image snapshots, motion detection, and Online Web Forum for help.

The software program is very easy to work with and after a short time you can set your webcam to catch a thief stealing your stuff. The video or pictures are sent immediately to the Internet (where you designate for safe keeping). The program senses motion in a room. You can have the program set so that it will record a video of the thief in action, or email you a photo, or upload (FTP) the live video to a website.

Real nice to be able to hand over a full video of the thieves in your house. If you are away, say in Florida, you can easily email the Police the video or photo of the live crime scene with full video and photos of the bad guys.

Windows Live Family Safety

Website Download: get.live.com

Website Information: <http://tinyurl.com/24k8fo>

We are all worried about young children using the Internet these days. This program puts you in control of your computer and Internet browsing experience. You are in charge of your children's online Internet surfing habits. You can also monitor Windows Live Messenger contacts and block who they talk to online. As well, you can also block Internet websites too. This is a must have for any family with a computer connected to the Internet.

NOTE: "Windows Live Family Safety is a Web service that's free to people who use Microsoft Windows XP. If you use Windows Vista—the operating system installed on many new computers—you can use the built-in family safety tools." (Microsoft.com)

Connect to your Home Computer While Away with Logmein

Website: www.logmein.com

While away from home, wouldn't it be nice to access files and programs from your home

computer. Now you can. You can easily connect to your PC with a software program called logmein. This program is also used by large corporations to connect to offsite PCs. This program will also allow a friend to fix your computer even though they are thousands of miles from your PC. It is easy to set up and easy to operate. Give it a test drive...You will love it.



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Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue Service

How To Send An Email Message To Any Cell Phone

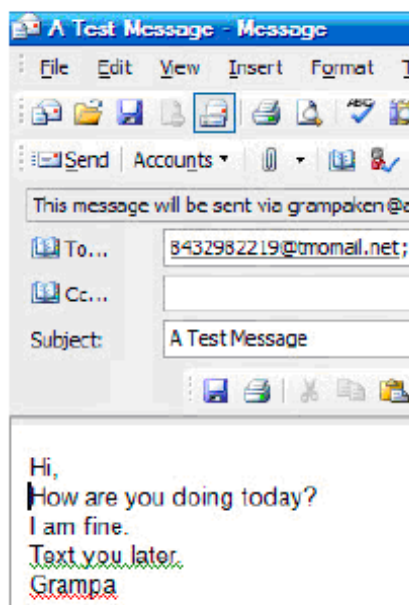
Written by Ken Peters, Product Review / Special Interests, Hilton Head Island Computer Club, SC, www.hhicc.org, product.review@hhicc.org

Impress your kids, grandkids and friends with your ability to text. Send a text message to their cell phone by email from your computer. Most cell phones have the ability to send and receive short text messages. This is called short message service (SMS) or text paging. This service can take email

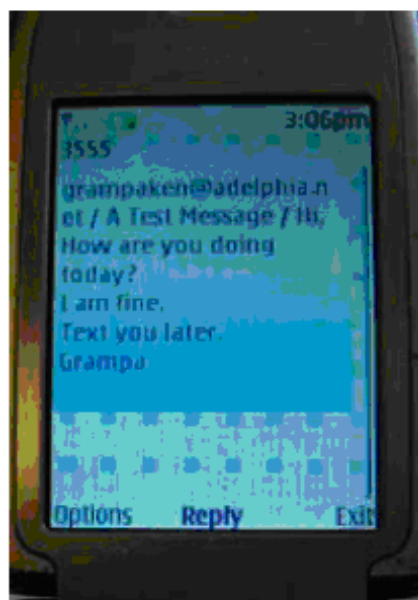
sent over the internet and deliver them to a cell phone as a text message. Each carrier has its own email address extension i.e. @tmomail.net for T Mobile carrier.

The two things you need to know to send a message are the person's cell phone number and their carrier's email extension. So to send to a T Mobile phone, enter the phone number and add the extension - 8433216549@tmomail.net

The message will look similar to this.



The email message



Appears on cell phone

Some of the common cell phone emails are:

Alltel AT&T (formerly Cingular)

10-digit phone number@message.alltel.com 10-digit phone number@txt.att.net

Example: 2125551212@message.alltel.com Example: 2125551212@txt.att.net

Boost Mobile Nextel (now part of Sprint Nextel)

10-digit phone number@myboostmobile.com 10-digit telephone number@messag

Example: 2125551212@myboostmobile.com ing.nextel.com

Example: 7035551234@messaging.

nextel.com

T-Mobile Verizon

10-digit phone number@tmomail.net 10-digit phone number@vtext.com

Example: 4251234567@tmomail.net Example: 5552223333@vtext.com

Virgin Mobile USA US Cellular

10-digit phone number@vmobl.com 10digitphonenumber@email.uscc.net

Example: 2622341256r@vmobl.com Example: 2125551212@ email.uscc.net

Sprint PCS (now Sprint Nextel)

10-digit phone number@messaging.sprintpcs.com

Example: 2125551234@messaging.sprintpcs.com

If you can't find the email address for the carrier, check the carrier's website (Links above) or call their customer service.

The one receiving the message may be charged 10 to 15 cents per message unless they have a plan that includes text messaging. Your kids and grandkids most probably do have a text plan. There is a 160 character limit per message including the email address and the subject line. Some carriers will split the message into two messages if it is longer.

The person receiving the email text message can reply to you from their phone and sometime later you'll receive their reply in your email inbox. If you don't like texting from a cell phone or hate trying to type a message with those small phone keys, give this a try. It's fun.

Microsoft Releases Internet Explorer 8

Written by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;
Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio
Talk Show Host, Iwilsker@apcug.net

Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE 8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1mb download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE 8, and was impressed by its features and speed, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE 8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE 8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE 8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at www.microsoft.com/ie to download IE 8. Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE 8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE 8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, and scan my computer for malware prior to the installation of IE 8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE 8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and select default search engines. IE 8 imported my selections from IE 7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE 7 defaults and use them in IE 8, which I did. The final

Internet Explorer 8: Home page

Making your web even better...Faster, Easier, Safer

Windows Internet Explorer 8

Download now

For Windows XP

United States
Other locales and versions

- Tour Internet Explorer 8.
- Why you should download Internet Explorer 8.
- Get the facts on browser performance.

Information for:
IT Pros | Developers | Business | Partners

View any site with ease

Now you can quickly display websites that were designed for older browsers. If you're looking at a page and the text or images aren't lined up right, just use the new

Visual search suggestions from Wikipedia

window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to import bookmarks (favorites) and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE 8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE 8 did indeed load faster than IE 7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE 8 is more feature rich than IE 7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE 8 that offers improved possibilities is “Accelerators” which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE 8 that may be of interest to many users is “Web Slices”, where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the “slice” to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices, the relevant web slice will be highlighted. Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

IE 8 offers a “Smart Address Bar” which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar. The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE 8 solves that problem with its enhanced zoom feature, “Improved Zoom”. This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW – ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE 8 offers a feature, “InPrivate” that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information while online. When selected, InPrivate deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and requiring a reloading of the browser. IE 8 offers “Automatic Crash Recovery” where if the content in a tab crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE 8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE 8 includes a “SmartScreen Filter” which incorporates anti-phishing tools to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal information. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users’ computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is “domain highlighting” which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website.

Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE 8. Users of other browsers should give IE 8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE 8 far more than I ever used IE 7.

Google Offers Free Medical Records Service

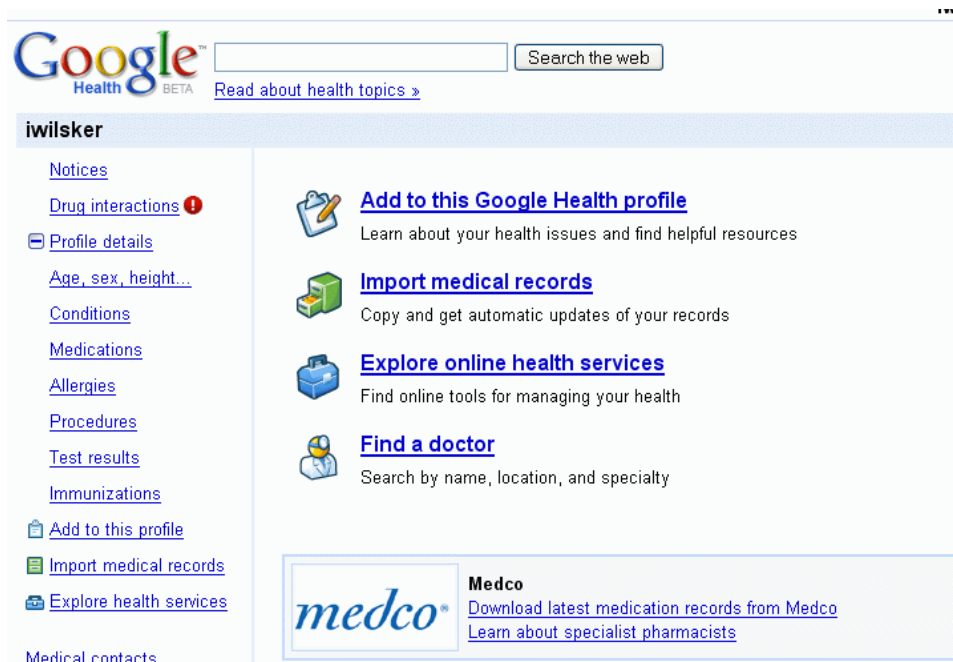
By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio & TV Show Host, Iwilsker@apcug.net

Google recently opened for free public access the beta version of its “Google Health” service at www.google.com/health. This service offers users access to a comprehensive user created database where the user can selectively store medical records. In addition to the storage of personal medical records, Google Health also allows for the importation of medical and prescription records from a variety of services, and the voluntary exportation of medical records to several diagnostic services. Google Health allows user approved physicians, hospitals, pharmacists, and other healthcare services to access the medical records.

To open a free account at Google Health requires registration; users with existing Google accounts may use their existing usernames and passwords for access. Once registered, opening the website at google.com/health offers the users an intuitive menu. The primary links in the center column of the page are:

“Add to this Google Health profile (Learn about your health issues and find helpful resources)”; “Import medical records (Copy and get automatic updates of your records)”; “Explore online health services (Find online tools for managing your health)”; and “Find a doctor (Search by name, location, and specialty)”. On the left column of the opening page are hyperlinks to personal profile information, and the right column displays a profile summary.

Clicking on “Add to this Google Health profile” opens a menu with the headings “Conditions”, “Medications”, “Allergies”, “Procedures”, “Test results”, and “Immunizations”. Under “Conditions” a condition or symptom can be entered in the search box, or the user can click on any condition in a lengthy alphabetical list to “Add” that condition to the user’s profile. Many of the conditions have a “Reference” link that will provide more information on the condition, as well as any symptoms and



Continued on page 36

treatments. The “Medications” heading allows the users to enter both prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins and minerals, as well as herbal products. The search box displays selections as the product name is typed, or an alphabetical directory can be accessed. “Allergies”, “Procedures”, “Test results”, and “Immunizations” are entered in the same manner as “Medications” and “Conditions”, with a search box or alphabetical menu.

The main page selection “Import medical records” allows the user to securely import medical and prescription records from a variety of sources, including clinics, laboratories, and pharmacies. Included on the currently short list of such resources are Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Cleveland Clinic, CVS Minute Clinics, Quest Diagnostics, Medco, RX America, Longs Drugs, and Walgreen’s. It is clear in reading about the service that this small listing is in its infancy, as Google Health is trying to sign up additional partners. To experiment with importing data, I clicked on the link for the prescription manager Medco, which is utilized by my health insurance plan. Clicking on the “Link to profile” icon under the Medco listing opened the secure Medco website where I had to enter the username and password I use at Medco. Seconds after approving the transfer of my prescription history, it appeared on my Google Health profile under “Medications”. The information transferred to Google Health by Medco was not just the prescriptions I ordered from Medco, but also recent prescriptions I filled at local pharmacies where insurance was claimed. Medco can automatically update my profile as new prescriptions are entered and filled. Items filled at local pharmacies under their respective \$4 or \$5 generic program, where no insurance was filled, did not appear on the Medco list.

The menu item “Explore online health services” opens a list of over a dozen services that offer online personal health services. These health services which can be linked to Google Health and utilize the information provided to Google Health (but only with the express consent of the user!) include such well known services as the Cleveland Clinic, the American Heart Association “Heart Attack Risk Calculator”, “MyCareTeam- Diabetes” diabetes management system (requires monthly or annual subscription), and several other services. While several of these personalized services are free, others are fee based. Most of the services listed require some form of registration in order to utilize those services and integrate them with the users’ Google health information.

The “Find a doctor” link opens a simple pair of search boxes, the first (left) of which is a directory of specialties, and the second box (on the right) is where the user can enter a zip code, city, or other information in order to generate a listing of physicians, chiropractors, and specialists that meet the selected criteria. The listings provided included physician or practice name, address, and phone number, as well as links to the practice website (if any), driving directions from Google Maps, and a link to “Save to medical contacts”.

The screenshot shows the Google Health BETA web interface. At the top is the Google logo with 'Health BETA' and a search bar. Below the logo is a link 'Read about health topics »'. On the left is a sidebar with the user's name 'iwilsker' and a list of links: Notices, Drug interactions (with a red exclamation mark icon), Profile details, Age, sex, height..., Conditions, Medications, Allergies, Procedures, Test results, Immunizations, and a section 'Add to this profile' containing 'Import medical records' and 'Explore health services'. At the bottom of the sidebar is 'Medical contacts'. The main content area is titled 'Add to this profile' and has tabs for 'Conditions', 'Medications' (which is selected), 'Allergies', 'Procedures', 'Test results', and 'Immunizations'. Under the 'Medications' tab, there is a text input field labeled 'Enter a medication:' with a '+ Add' button. Below this is an example: 'Example: ibuprofen'. A horizontal line with 'OR' in the center separates this from an alphabetical index: 'A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 0-9'. Below the index is a scrollable list of medications, each with an 'Add' button to its right. The visible medications are: 'A Thru Z High Potency, By mouth', 'A Thru Z Select, By mouth', 'A& D Barrier, To skin', 'A& D Emollient, To skin', 'A& D Zinc Oxide Cream, To skin', 'A& D, To skin', 'A&D-AloeVera-M Benzethon-W.Pet, To skin', 'A-200 Lice Killing, To skin', and 'A-200 Lice Treatment, To skin'.

Once information is entered, a personal profile is created, and several analyses are made by Google Health. One that may be critically important shows up in the left column on the main page with the label “Drug Interactions” with a red exclamation point if there is a potentially dangerous interaction between prescription and non prescription drugs, vitamins, and herbals. On my personal page there is one advisory about a synergetic effect between two of my medications that says “Discuss with your doctor soon” (this effect is desirable in my case), and another interaction between three of my non-prescription medications that is labeled with a red icon “Requires immediate attention” (I already checked, and it is OK in my case).

In its privacy statement (www.google.com/health/html/privacy.html), Google Health explains the confidentiality of the information entered, and how it will not be released or shared with any third party without the express consent of the user. By my personal choice, I would be willing to allow my personal physician (if he participated), as well as any specialists or hospitals that I visit, to access my information. It could be a great time saver to allow them to access my medical records online, rather than me having to complete hand written forms at each office I visit. Because of its inherent completeness, this online “Personal Health Record” (PHR) can also be a life saver by providing healthcare establishments instant access to medical histories, medications, and allergies. By having a voluntary service, such as Google Health, Microsoft’s upcoming competing service “HealthVault”, or “Revolution Health” (bankrolled by AOL’s co-founder Steve Case), which can be securely accessed by health care providers, it becomes easy to create and maintain an accurate health profile for both the benefit of the user and healthcare providers approved for access by the user.

It should be noted that there are always security and privacy risks of posting sensitive information, such as health records, online. It is quite conceivable that hackers could penetrate the security of any establishment or server that contains or has access to sensitive personal information. While I know that they are not perfect, I basically trust Google Health with my information.

While there are many other “PHR” systems and services in use, often administered by corporations for their employees, others are offered by health insurance companies, as well as some regional PHR services, Google Health has the reputation and distribution (as well as the deep pockets) to create and securely maintain such a system, and sign up participating partners who are willing to allow the sharing of medical records.

I knowingly volunteered to post my medical records on Google Health. I hope the project succeeds, and more local physicians, pharmacies, labs, and hospitals partner with the service. As more healthcare providers transition to purely digital medical records, it will become easier to securely share this vital information.

Computer Briefs

With S. Jack Lewtschuk

Inkjet Printer Care

If you are leaving for the summer months, take care of your printer before you leave. Printers should not sit for months with the ink cartridges left installed in the printer. Consult your printer manual for proper removal.

Even if you just installed a new cartridge, you will need to remove it. Wrap the cartridge tightly, with either or a combination of Saran wrap, aluminum foil, and a resealable plastic bag. Remove as much air as possible from the packaging. Store in the vegetable compartment of your refrigerator. The vegetable compartment has some moisture which will help keep the cartridge from drying out.

There is no guarantee that the cartridges will not dry out and therefore be unusable. However, taking precautions before you leave may save you the cost of purchasing a new cartridge.

S. Jack Lewtschuk, President, Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer, CA, www.mbug.org, Blacklion@royal.net

How To Switch Internet Browsers

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

Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. For example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

Hardware Review

Presto

Published by Magic Word

A review by Gabe Goldberg, Computers and Publishing, Inc., Tiplet@gabegold.com

If you've ever wondered how to bring email to the techno-phobe in your life, the answer isn't Abracadabra, it's Presto.

If you're reading this online, you own or have access to a computer. But you likely have friends or relatives -- perhaps elderly, budget-restricted, technophobic -- who don't. So they're not in close touch and can't share online family or community activities.

Presto <<http://www.presto.com>> is a combination color inkjet printer and paid Web-based service which allows people without computers to receive email, including attachments.

Setting it up is simple: after purchasing the device, someone with just a bit of tech savvy creates the account, picks an email address (such as gabeg99@presto.com), and lists people allowed to send email to the address. At specified times of day, the printer dials a toll-free telephone number, downloads accumulated email, and prints it.

With only two controls -- Volume and Stop -- it's easy to operate. It plugs directly into a telephone jack and doesn't need a separate phone line or jack or even a splitter, since an existing telephone or accessory (answering machine or Caller ID device) can plug into it, daisy-chain style.

Presto is ideal for letting seniors receive email from children, grandchildren, friends, former colleagues, military buddies, etc. And it's useful when businesses request customer email addresses to conduct or simplify transactions. It handles pictures and many attachment formats nicely, printing them as if it was a FAX machine. So it allows

sharing any online or computer content as PDF files such as maps and directions, travel itineraries, Web pages, spreadsheets with financial or family contact information.

Simple steps authorize new people to send email, and when ink runs low, the printer is smart enough to either alert the person who set up the account or automatically order new cartridges.

After failing for a dozen years to excite my in-laws about email -- they steadfastly resisted being online -- my retired Navy father-in-law fell in love with a Presto I loaned him, discovering that it let him hear from his old Navy buddies around the world. And receiving color pictures of the grandchildren sealed the deal.

The printer costs \$150 or less (always comparison shop online!) and the service costs \$12.50/month with yearly subscription. The only thing missing is the printer downloading paper and ink through the phone line -- but that would need real magic!

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provides weekly computer tips.



Book Review

Adobe InDesign CS4 “one-on-one”

Published by Adobe

A review by Gregory West, Editor, Sarnia Computer Users' Group, Canada

Usually, when desktop publishing is mentioned people tense up, and rightly so. The programs are so hard to learn. But all that has now changed with a long-awaited book.

We have all dreamed of being able to produce an award winning document, from a single page newsletter to that 100 plus page glossy magazine. Now we can using this book and the training DVD. You will be amazed how easy it is to learn this desktop publishing program while you follow along, both with the 12 lessons in this book, and with the DVD that is included, free with the book.

Deke McClelland, a 20 year award-winning veteran in the publishing business, and author of 80 books on computer graphics is the best there is. McClelland is the first InDesign book author and has held this distinction ever since. The book is designed for both PC and Mac. The DVD training video is by “lynda.com is an “award winning

provider of educational materials, including Hands-On Training™ instructional books, the Online Training Library®, CD- and DVD-based video training, and events for creative designers, instructors, students, and hobbyists” (www.lynda.com).

Many of the “high-end” desktop publishing programs are extremely intensive and hard to master. Deke McClelland and David Futato have produced a full training class, with their “so-easyto-follow” book. The title is in part: “one-on-one” - they score high points on this concept of training all the way; training sessions that would normally cost you a lot of money.

The book holds the training concept of: read lesson – watch video - do exercises. There are 12 self-paced lessons in this book that follow along with the 4 hour DVD training video that comes free with the book. At the end of each chapter there are quizzes to make sure you are on the right path. The colour graphics in the book are large and easy to see and study. Sidebar notations are everywhere, to keep you on track. If you are slightly familiar with desktop publishing, this book and DVD allows for you to pick topics of your choice to zero in on your specialized training.

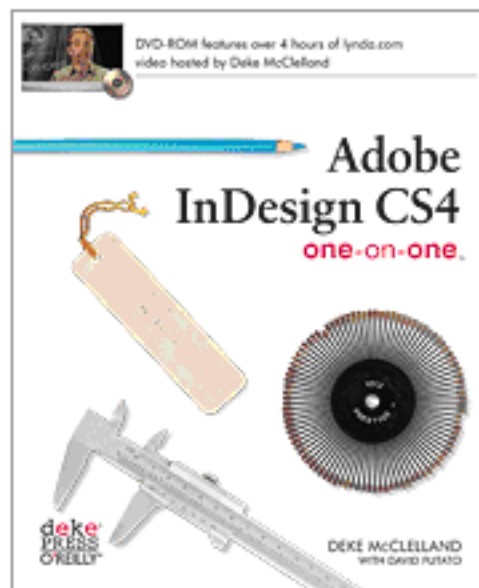
I would suggest your very first move, after skimming through the book is to insert the

training DVD that comes with the book. The first video sets you up with folders and colour sequencing so that your computer is maximized to allow you to view all your needed files for InDesign. If you have some of the other programs from Adobe Suite such as Photoshop, this will also sync up those programs as well. Next step is to view the second introductory video wherein author, Deke McClelland, explains how this course is setup and how to maximize the lessons, both in the book and on the DVD.

McClelland advises to start in the book and read the introduction to the lesson, then play the DVD to watch the “companion video”. All you do here is, as McClelland says, “sit back and relax”, as the videos are extremely well done. When you're finished the video section, you then return to the book to “work your way through the step-by-step

exercises”. You can do the overview to make sure you are getting it with a quiz that follows each lesson.

This book is a must have for any editor who works with a single page newsletter, or a hundred page glossy magazine. I highly recommend this book.



Hardware Review

Kindle2

Published by Amazon

Review by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

Every now and then a revolutionary new product comes along at a time when it is most needed. So it is with the just released Kindle2 wireless reading device, fondly called an e-book reader.

Up to now, electronic book readers have been very slow in taking off. Sony has had a book reading device for several years. Last year Amazon came out with the first version of the Kindle, which was impressive and fairly popular, but had a few drawbacks.

Now, however, the time for these devices may have finally come. At 8" x 5.3" the Kindle2 is about the size of a paperback. At about 1/3" thick, it thin but strong. In this second iteration, Amazon has corrected the design flaws of the original Kindle. It is now easy to use. The e-ink technology allows you to read the words on the Kindle just as you would read a book, with no eye strain or glare. You can adjust the size of the text to your liking. To turn the page you simply press a button. The reader even lets you read several books at once, always returning you to just where you left off. You can look up any word with the built-in dictionary. You can underline words and add your own notes to the pages. This Kindle will even read the text of most books to you. So if you are engrossed in a book on the Kindle and need to pick up the kids, you can take the Kindle along and have it read to you in the car.




The best part of the Kindle, however, is the reading material and how it is delivered. The Kindle2 can hold more than 1,500 books. You can choose from over 240,000 books in the Kindle's Amazon store. Most of the books are priced at \$9.99. You can also subscribe to newspapers and magazines on the Kindle. The books, newspapers, and magazines are downloaded directly to the device over a free cellular network. I drove down a rural highway in North Carolina and downloaded a book and was reading it in less than five minutes. Better yet would be sitting on a beach and downloading a romance novel. In any case, the Kindle is ultimately useable. The biggest drawback for the Kindle right now is the price. At \$359, the Kindle is pretty expensive.

But if you are ready to watch the ebook market explode, stick around for awhile. The Kindle2 has appeared on the horizon just as the economy is slumping. There are many hard-hit business sectors, but the newspaper and magazine industry is already showing signs of cracking. CNN reports that many major newspapers are struggling including the San Francisco Chronicle, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and the Miami Herald. Certainly online versions of newspapers and magazines are an alternative, but up to this point very few newspapers or magazines have been able to support themselves with online subscriptions and/or advertising.

As the print industry is looking for ways to cut costs, ebook readers may be an answer. If there were no print costs, perhaps large newspapers would be able to provide e-book readers to subscribers as part of the subscription costs or at least at a highly reduced rate. If the electronic device were done well enough, it could mimic the printed version and be filled with ads just like the print newspapers and magazines. Normally I would expect that this type of transition would take a few years, but the economic woes may put a rush on this type of move. The Hearst Corp., one of the largest publishers, is already planning to launch its own wireless e-book reader. Most are speculating that this would be a device with a larger screen that would more closely imitate the newspaper and magazine reading experience. Hearst, who is a mega-publisher, would be in a great position to create the liaisons needed to make this type of device and its content work. Fortune reports that the Hearst device will be available sometime this year.

There is no doubt that we live in a world that is changing because of technology and this type of technology may be in your hands sooner than you think.

April 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 	2 High Growth Stock Investing (adv) 8:30 - 8:30 P.M.	3 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR*	4 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
5	6 Board of Directors Crossroads Mall @ the Food Court 8:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	7	8	9	10	11 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
12	13 General Meeting @ 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	14 Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	15	16	17	18 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
26	27	28	29	30		

AlamoPC Organización

The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

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.

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.

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: ★

MCSE Advanced Study Group

The MCSE Advanced Study Group is designed for those who already have their MCSE certification.

Since space is limited and the subject matter is advanced, membership is restricted. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

Tuition fee: Cost of any books and registered tests.

When: Every Saturday morning from 8:30 am to 12 pm

Where: Communities in School, 1616 E. Commerce

Study Group Leader: Larry Lentz, (210) 826-8188

Small Business Server Study Group (SBS)

This is a forum for discussion and presentation of topics related to Microsoft's Small Business Server. The target audience includes, computer consultants, small business owners, and network administrators. The meetings begin with a "Taco Social" from 8 to 8:30 am followed by our presentation. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

When: First Friday of the month from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Where: Flexware, 10444 Gulfdale (about block off Isom)

Contact: Larry Lentz for information and registration. Phone (210) 826-8188. Visit the group web site at <http://www.LentzComputer.net/SBS>.

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.

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 -\$25

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

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

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

