

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

# PC Alamode

**TECH ISSUE**

[www.alamopc.org](http://www.alamopc.org)

May 2009

\$5.00

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**Exploring Microsoft Windows 7**  
page 26

**Preventative Computer Maintenance**  
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**Going 100% Digital with Genealogy**  
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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](mailto: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](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)

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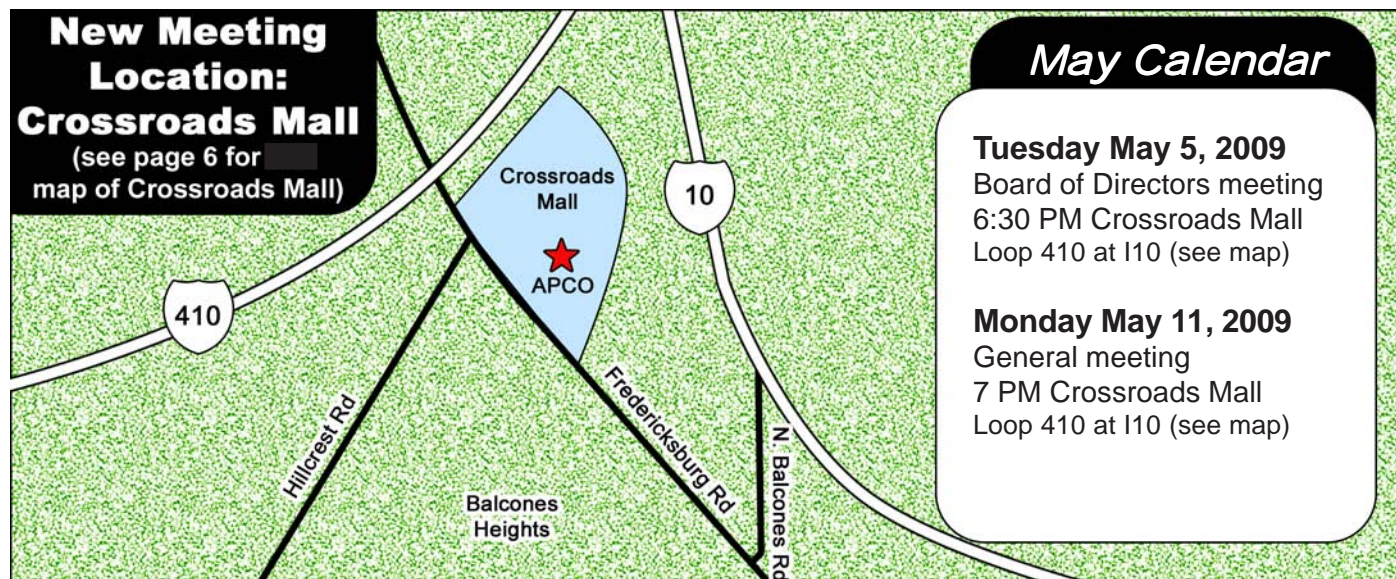
**Alamo PC Organization**  
**PO Box 65180**  
**San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

## Meetings

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

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

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



## May Calendar

**Tuesday May 5, 2009**  
Board of Directors meeting  
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

**Monday May 11, 2009**  
General meeting  
7 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)





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# PC Alamode

## (501 (C) (3))

### Featured this month

Computer speed, RAM and virtual memory  
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My Early (Mis)Adventures with Windows 7  
What I've Discovered About Windows 7 (A)  
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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](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)

**Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode**  
[editor@alamopc.org](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)

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Software Review: DesktopZoom  
Software Review: Dropbox

#### Ad rates effective January 2005

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
		Per insertion		
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Bus. card (3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37
*Consecutive months		**To be paid in advance		

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### Board of Directors

President	Bill Klutz	532-9122 (Home)	president@alamopc.org
Secretary	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	secretary@alamopc.org
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Marketing	TBD (Steve Tech)	675-2880 (Home)	marketing@alamopc.org
Communications	TBD		communications@alamopc.org

### Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

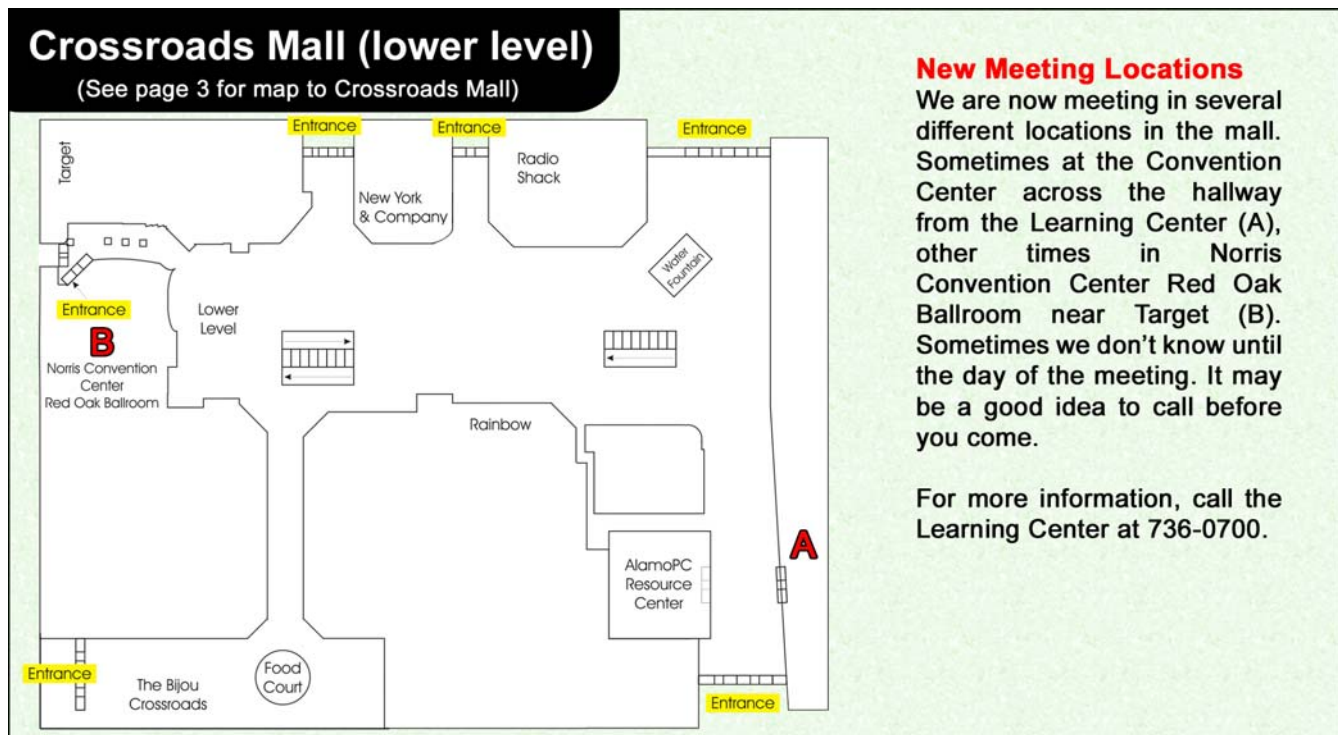
#### Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

FAX 736-0032

Learning Center Manager	Cary & Jean Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)	learncenter@alamopc.org
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Study Groups Coordinator	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
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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.

It's with great regret that I'm announcing the departure of two of Alamo PC's most valuable and long-time volunteers, Linda Bianchi and Shane Hicks, have decided to resign from their positions with the organization.

Linda has been the education director, registrar, and a selfless volunteer for many years. In that time, her hands have touched every member's name as she helped to keep things running smoothly at the former Learning Center. She's made my life easier every month for the past seven years by keeping track of all the changes in class schedules and offerings. Thank you, Linda.

Linda's health has made it difficult for her to keep up with all the responsibilities her post demands, but she continues to fill in until someone steps up to the plate. (Ahem! Volunteer needed, please!) Her warm smile, attention to detail and devotion will be greatly missed!

Shane has been a regular contributor to the PC Alamode for many years, much longer than I've been editor. He's the only writer who wrote two columns simultaneously - The Switcher column, in which he described his troubles and triumphs while moving from a Windows OS to a Mac, and PowerTalk, that covered problems he overcame in his business as a computer consultant.

This month will be Shane's last byline in the PC Alamode as he devotes his time to work and family. Shane's expertise and way with words while explaining complex topics will be missed more than I can say.

If they have touched you in some way (and I'm sure they did), I hope you will consider volunteering or writing an article. It doesn't have to be a 10-year commitment. A simple article explaining a problem you overcame would go a long way to helping others past similar troubles.

Best wishes to Shane and Linda.

## Joseph de Leon, Editor

<[editor@alamopc.org](mailto: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

## "May" - May Day, Mother's Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day

We have five things this month that should be of interest to most folks: 1st - Often called May Day, just might have more holidays than any other day of the year. It's a celebration of Spring. It's a day of political protests. It's a neo-pagan festival, a saint's feast day, and a day for organized labor (Labor Day in many countries). In many countries, it is also a national holiday; 7th - National Day Of Prayer: Created in 1952 by a joint resolution of Congress and signed into law by then President Harry S. Truman, as an annual observance to communicate with every individual the need for personal repentance and prayer, and the need to intercede for America and her leadership in the seven centers of power - Government, Military, Media, Business, Education, Church and Family; 10th - Mother's Day: A day set aside for each family member to honor his/her mother; 16th - Armed Forces Day: Simply a day to salute sharply to all of the men and women , in all branches of military service, who protect our country and each of us; 25th - Memorial Day (observed; 30th is day enacted): Today, it is celebrated at Arlington National Cemetery with a ceremony in which a small American flag is placed on each grave. Also, it is customary for the president or vice-president to give a speech honoring the contributions of the dead, and also lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Your browser may not support display of this image. Your browser may not support display of this image.

The April BOD meeting again only had three board members present. A presenter for the April General Meeting was addressed, but David Steward indicated he had not been able to secure one. He also indicated that he would work something up for those in attendance. It was also decided that we would hold the General Meeting at the new location to help conserve funds. Once again those board members present reviewed the latest financial information available for the organization, the declining membership, expenses associated with the move, ongoing expenses, etc., plus the best guess future of the Alamo PC Organization, the PC Alamo magazine, and other related things.

The April General Meeting was held at the new location (4888 Whirlwind, SAT 78233) and we had about 35 people present. David's presentation of Windows 7 Beta seemed to go well, as there was considerable discussion among those present and questions from several attendees, who were looking for comparison information with past versions of windows when a side-by-side list was done.

We are hopeful the May General Meeting will take place and be profitable to those attending. Suggested topic was "Identity Theft" and the associated new ways thieves are endeavoring to secure information. David Steward stated he would contact the appropriate agency or agencies to try and schedule a presenter.

Currently, we have a member who has agreed to try and fill the marketing duties for Alamo PC. However. We shouldn't expect any miracles, as 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](mailto:membership@alamopc.org) and Steven Tech will try to provide information requested.

With the declining number of individuals who are currently serving the organization in a board member capacity and who appear to be willing to continue serving, can only cause one to believe that the future of OUR organization appears to be uncertain.

I am hoping that we will have a presenter for the May General Meeting who can address Identity Theft, or a corporate presenter who can address forthcoming software or software upgrades. Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting. (The server is back online for the membership area, and our telephone is nor working at the new location.) On the day of the meeting (5/13), call 736-0700 for the most current information

*Continued on page 9*



on location and presenter. I can only hope that David Seward will have made the latest information available for a posting on the home page of the Alamo PC 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, and the phone is working at the new location, we are asking for volunteers who would be willing to handle phone calls coming to Alamo PC and answer any questions posed. We addressed this at the April General Meeting and will address it again at the next General Meeting.

We are still trying to improve member retention, but it has not been as successful as hoped - the total number of members continues to slowly decline. If you do not choose to renew, send a comment briefly giving an explanation as to "Why?" to [membership@alamopc.org](mailto:membership@alamopc.org), with a copy to me ([president@alamopc.org](mailto:president@alamopc.org), or privately to me - [wlklutzjr@juno.com](mailto: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.

## May Program

**Bill Klutz**

It is late April, and I have not been informed whether or not there will be a corporate level presenter for our May General Meeting. The meeting location will be confirmed at the May 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](http://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

## Don Robinson



**Computer Briefs**  
With S. Jack Lewtschuk

## Maintain Focus

To find out where your day went, RescueTime <[www.rescuetime.com](http://www.rescuetime.com)> logs the number of minutes that you have spent on every site and application when using your computer. You can then view the data in charts and graphs to spot the biggest focus breakers. You can quit your Web addiction by downloading Browser Timer(Windows) <[www.codejacked.com](http://www.codejacked.com)> to shut down your browser after a specified amount of surfing time. You can try Freedom (Mac <[www.wibiblio.org](http://www.wibiblio.org)> which temporarily kills your Internet connection altogether. In a pinch you can bring it back by restarting your computer. Once you've shut off the Net, cure your remaining addiction with Clutter Cloak (Windows) <[www.omcooke.me.uk](http://www.omcooke.me.uk)> or Think (Mac) <[www.freeversa.com](http://www.freeversa.com)>. Both sites cut distractions by covering everything on your screen in solid black except the window you're working in at the time. Enter the task you need to work on, and start the clock on Time Tracker <[www.formassembly.com](http://www.formassembly.com)>. The tool keeps you locked in by creating timed work/breakcycles. If you want to put a dollar value on your concentration, try Work Timer <[www.worktimer.com.uk](http://www.worktimer.com.uk)>, which shows a running tally of how much money you're owed for the time you have dedicated to a particular job. To mute the office chatter, ChatterBlocker <[www.chatterblocker.com](http://www.chatterblocker.com)> provides a mixture of ambient sounds, like rain, birdsong, and gentle chords into your cubicle to drown on the office noise.

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

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

#### *Rates for one student*

\$35 per hour  
\$300 for 10 hours

#### *Rates for two or three students*

\$20 per student per hour  
\$150 per student for 10 hours

Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours that fit **your** schedule at our modern facility in Crossroads Mall.

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

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Bare Bone Systems  
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Refurbished Systems, Monitors

### Location:

Live Oak Convention Center  
8101 Pat Booker Road  
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### Show Dates:

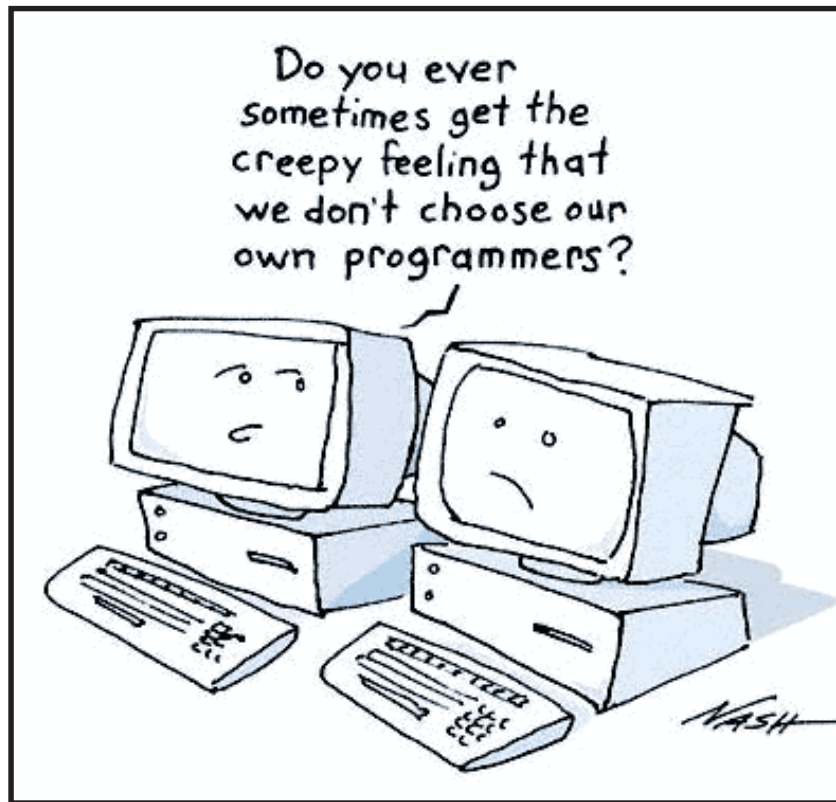
May 30th  
August 29th  
November 14th  
December 12th

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



# Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen







## ZoneAlarm vs. Windows Firewall

**Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)**

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

Check Point software released a Vista compatible version of their free ZoneAlarm firewall (<http://www.zonealarm.com>), an 18MB file. The benefit of Check Point's firewall is the control it gives you over which programs access to the Internet. Microsoft's firewall also gives you control of outbound communication, but it's disabled by default. Both block access unless you allow a program through.

One disadvantage of ZoneAlarm is that it gives a LOT of alerts. The intention is to mitigate the effects of malware, but there are legitimate programs that require Internet access. If you block one of these programs, it may not work and you might not know when ZoneAlarm is warning you about one of these.

If you intend to use Windows Firewall, turn on the outbound filtering. However, instead of using Microsoft's default interface, download the free Vista Firewall Control utility. It offers an interface similar to ZoneAlarm.

### Safari for Windows

Apple is now producing Safari for Windows.

Though Apple is famous for its "secure" OS, security issues are already appearing in Safari. The bugs cause system instability, denial of service, and remote code execution, where someone can gain control of your system from across the Internet.

To keep your surfing safe, continue to patch any browser you use. Avoid suspect sites. Be careful what links you click. You can also use some type of program that maintains a database of known malicious sites and warns you if you are directed there. Some of these tools, however, do not currently work with the Windows version of Safari.

### What speed do you need to stream video?

Users often want to know what speed is required to watch smooth video streams over the network. If the video is low-resolution, like YouTube videos or iTunes downloads, you can get away with 802.11g transfer rates (which average around 5Mbps). If you want commercial DVD quality (using MPEG-2 compression), you'll need 10Mbps. High-definition video can require a lot more: 19Mbps for 720p and 25Mbps for 1080i. If you want to stream HD wirelessly, you must have the latest 802.11n or a MIMO router.

If you watch your media remotely, you'll need a solid broadband connection. For acceptable results, you'll need around 600kbps upload speeds to view your media remotely. Local access speeds are best between 1Mbps and 2Mbps for full-screen viewing.

### Use your Wii to stream multi-media!

The convergence of the PC and entertainment devices is growing more solid each and every day. With larger hard drives and digital downloads readily available, the amount of digital media that a user may want to share across their home network is at an all-time high. If you own any of the latest console gaming systems, you can make this happen relatively easily.

*Continued on page 14*


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Nintendo's Wii can play .MP3 files and display photos stored on SD cards by default. If you add Red Kawa's FREE Wii Media Center X server software (<http://www.redkawa.com/mediacenters>), you can stream files to your Wii through the built-in wireless connection. This site also provides tools for converting video to the Wii's preferred .FLV (Flash) format.

There are also versions of similar software available for the Playstation 3. However, as of this writing, a firmware upgrade for the Playstation 3 allows the system to stream unprotected files from networked PCs using a DLNA media server, like Windows Media Player 11. If you have a PSP (Playstation Portable), you can even use the Remote Play feature to stream media from your home-based PC through your Internet connected PS3 to your PSP (connected to the Internet at a remote WiFi hot spot).

Microsoft's been eyeing the streaming media market for a long time. Its Media Center software integrates PCs with its own Xbox 360, syncing files automatically across the network. Microsoft even has plans to upgrade its Xbox Live Marketplace to provide high definition TV and movie downloads.

## Computer Briefs

With S. Jack Lewtschuk

# THE THIRD GENERATION OF USB

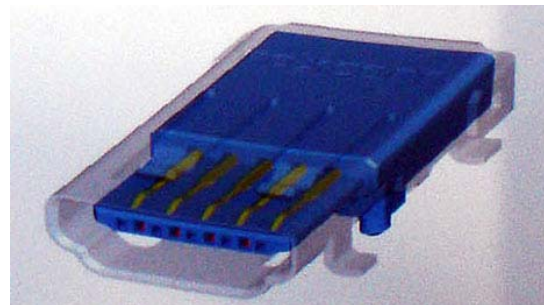
Many of you recall the old USB (Universal Serial Bus) 1.1. Its time passed when the much faster USB 2.0 was invented—it's the USB we all use now to connect our peripherals (mouses, printers, flash drives, etc.).

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](http://www.mbug.org), [Blacklion@royal.net](mailto:Blacklion@royal.net)



## Internet – Part XIV

### Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

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

If you would like to get off mailing lists, telemarketing calls, etc., these Web sites can of help. To get off direct marketer's mailing lists, fill out the form at: <[www.dmaconsumers.or/egi/offmailing](http://www.dmaconsumers.or/egi/offmailing)>. To get your name removed from unsolicited telemarketing calls, use the National Do Not Call Registry at: <[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)> or call 1-888-382-1222. To stop receiving credit card and insurance offers, visit: <[www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com)>. To curtail catalogs, go to <[www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org)>.

### Airport Wi-Fi Hotspots

Many public cafes, hotels, airports, etc., are now providing wireless Internet service. Some offer it up free, while others charge for the time it takes to check email. For tips from fellow travelers, go to [www.atlarge.com](http://www.atlarge.com), a site that hosts user reviews of Internet access at commercial airlines.

### Anonymouse

These days we're more concerned than ever about protecting our private information. Regarding the Internet, each site you visit can access information about your computer. Part of that information is your computer's IP address. This number uniquely identifies you on the Internet. Fortunately, there are sites that will help you protect your privacy. Anonymouse <[anonymouse.org](http://anonymouse.org)> is one such site. It lets you surf the Internet without revealing any of your information. With Anonymouse, there's nothing for you to install on your computer. You just visit the site and start surfing on it.

### Business Cards

In exchange for advertising on the back of your business cards, some printers offer free business cards that you create online using their templates. You can visit <[www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com)> to sign up for 250 free business cards, with advertising, for which you pay only a small shipping and processing fee.

### City Subway Directions

HopStop <[www.hopstop.com](http://www.hopstop.com)> provides door-to-door directions using a city's mass transit system. Enter a street corner and find the nearest train stop. HopStop only works with New York City, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. with a few more locations still in beta. If you plan on traveling to one of those cities, bookmark this site on your Web enabled mobile phone.

### Cuil Search Engine

There's a new search engine which is competing and may have more information than Google. It's called Cuil, [www.cuil.com](http://www.cuil.com). You now have another excellent search engine and resource to find information.

### Characters/Symbols

If you have need for a special character or symbol that isn't printed on your keyboard, then check out CopyPasteCharacter.com <[www.copypastecharacter.com](http://www.copypastecharacter.com)>. It is a simple Web page with more than 75 of these glyphs typed out. Just find what you want, copy it from the site, and paste it into your document.

### Cloud Computing

You may have heard about cloud computing. It's the latest technology trend. Many people don't understand cloud computing. But most of us have used cloud computing for years. The concept is simple. Programs and data are stored online, not on your computer. You can log in and begin working no matter where you are. Hotmail and Yahoo! Mail were early cloud-computing programs. E-mail is the most common type of cloud-computing program. But you can do other cool things in the cloud. For example, look at Writeboard. This site lets you create free Writeboards. These are basically word-processing documents. Writeboards can be shared with others for easy collaboration. Every edit is saved. That means you can roll back to an earlier version if needed. Of course, you can access your Writeboards from anywhere. For many, this is the real draw of cloud computing.

### Desktop Cleanup Applications

If you are interested in maintaining a clean desktop, then one of the following Web sites may help you in this task. DESKonTOP <[www.shuric.com/viewpage.php?page\\_id=2](http://www.shuric.com/viewpage.php?page_id=2)> will enable you to ring your desktop on top of those windows for fast access instead of minimizing them. 360desktop <[www.360desktop.com](http://www.360desktop.com)> provides a panoramic view that's several desktops in one for

*Continued on page 16*

more work and free space. RocketDock <[www.rocketdock.com](http://www.rocketdock.com)> mimics a Mac's Dock feature with a strip of icons that serves as a springboard for applications and other items.

### Energy Saving Web Sites

If you are looking for rebate programs that pay you to buy energy efficient products, look at <[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)>. The Department of Energy's site provides information on how to use energy more efficiently in your home. Then there is <[www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org)> which is a database of state incentives for using energy efficient product. Energy Federation Inc <[www.efi.org](http://www.efi.org)> sells energy efficient products. Energy Star <[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)> offers advice for buying energy efficient products and appliances in addition to cutting electrical and energy costs. The Tax Incentives Assistance Project <[www.energytaxincentives.org](http://www.energytaxincentives.org)> provides information on using federal income tax incentives for energy efficient products.

### File Converter

Here's a solution to a problem where a computer user receives a file from someone and wants to edit it. Short of purchasing software or finding a free converter online, go to Zamzar at [www.zamzar.com](http://www.zamzar.com). This site will convert files among a variety of formats. It handles music, video and documents. One feature is sure to draw attention. You can convert a PDF file to a Word document! That means you can edit PDF files sent to you. To get started, simply upload your file and choose the desired format. Then, enter your e-mail address and click Convert. A link to the new file will be mailed to you. You can convert files at Zamzar for free. However, you can only convert five files at once. The combined file sizes cannot exceed 100 megabytes. If you have larger files, you can sign up for a paid account.

### Free Conference Call

If you are preparing a business strategy session or planning a family reunion, set up a conference call by using a free call-in number from FreeConferenceCall.com <[www.freeconferencecall.com](http://www.freeconferencecall.com)>. Only one person needs to sign up on the site to get a dedicated phone number, an access code, a subscriber PIN, and instructions on using the service. Long-distance charges apply, of course, but otherwise this is about as free as it gets these days.

### Hotels

Choosing the right hotel zone can make the difference between a cheerful, convenient trip and one where you're stuck slogging to and from some distant hotel. Four times a year, Priceline announces its most popular hotel zones. For more information see <<http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/id-2720.html?cid=etipArticleLink?cid=articleFeature>>.

### How-to-do Videos

Howcast [www.howcast.com](http://www.howcast.com) offers thousands of original shorts providing easy-to-follow- steps on doing just about anything.

### Internet Blunders

There are several common mistakes a computer user can make which will ruin your computer or invite identity theft. They are: 1. Assuming your security software is protecting you. Is your anti-virus program up to date? 2. Accessing an account through an email line. If an email asks you to update your password account number or seeks other information, don't take the bait. 3. Using a single password for all online accounts. Always use different passwords which can not be easily figured out by some smart scammer. 4. Downloading free software You are inviting trouble because there is no way to know what might be imbedded in this software which will cause trouble with your computer. The best bet is to download reputable freeware from reputable sites such as SnapFiles.com and Download.com. 5. Thinking your computer shields you from all risks. Phishing scams are a major source of problems to computer users. 6. Clicking on a pop-up ad that says your computer is insecure. Close these screens immediately by clicking on the Red X at the top of the screen. 7. Shopping online the same way you do in stores. Online shopping requires special precautions.

### Internet Service Provider (ISP)

If you missed an article in the San Antonio News-Express in April 2008, it addressed the few rights for subscribers. When you signed up for an ISP you agreed to allow this service to read your email or keep you from visiting sites it deemed inappropriate. ISPs can block you from web sites and they have the right to read your emails and look at the sites you visit without a wiretap order. They can also shut you down for using the connection too much and creating traffic problems which can slow down your whole neighborhood because of the large volume of cable users. There is an up side to these rights. ISPs need to identify and stop subscribers who use their connections to send spam emails. These rights are a reminder to never draft an email which you might not want read by many other people.

### Internet Explorer 8 Beta

Microsoft has recently released a public version of the next Internet Explorer (IE). You probably should not download it if a novice computer user. According to "PC World Magazine, May '08, the beta version has many bugs in it!





## 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.

I talked last month about problems reading the internal memory in my digital picture frame. Since then, it's been an education trying to put it into service. The old adage, "you get what you pay for" must apply here. I received no help from "Smartparts" (the company) tech support. At first, the message was that the lines were busy, call back later, but never any luck. Now the message has changed to "No one is available to take your call." I tried their Web site's tech support, but with no response there either.

I used their Optipix™ software to process the pictures and load them into the digital frame's internal memory, but they went into that "eternal bit bin." I eventually got them into the picture frame's memory (no folder) and not on the SD Card I had added. I then copied them from the internal memory into a folder on the SD Card I plugged into the picture frame. So far, so good, but when I tried turning the frame on to display them, it was showing all the pictures I had on the SD Card, even from other folders I had previously put on it, but it retrieved nothing from the internal memory.

I can't seem to select a certain spot for retrieving the pictures. When I remove my SD Card, the frame runs all the pictures it can find in its internal memory, including the samples not in a folder. It seems like I should put each picture set into a separate SD Card by itself. A bit frustrating, but, oh well!

A friend purchased eight digital picture frames on line as gifts to his family, but two came through DOA and the Internet distributor would not replace them. First he deleted the sample pictures in the memory of one of them to set it up, but then could not load pictures. He spotted a small hole and tried a paper clip to see if it was a reset. All the sample pictures came back and he loaded his pictures again, and then deleted the samples. He also purchased more digital frames from another on-line merchant and two had problems, but he got those replaced. He said that with those, he could select the folder to get a slide show from. I checked the book for another friend's frame and it also lets you choose the retrieval source.

I had problems when I tried putting text captions on some of my pictures. At first, I thought it didn't find them; until later when I found it was running them last. Huh! How did that happen? The FAQ on their web site says "Most digital picture frames run the pictures in the order they are copied to the memory." Wow, it's getting complicated, but I guess I can do that. Oh well, hopefully it will eventually do "something" I would like. I'm suggesting that you ask lots of questions if you are buying a digital picture frame.

### \*Another New Toy!

I saw an ad for a HP color laser jet printer for \$199.99, but I've seen those ads before and was never happy with the price of the cartridges because new printers do not come with "full" cartridges. The sale was at Office Depot and I also shopped at a local computer shop that supports our user group and offered a Ricoh color laser jet for the same price. He printed the spec sheet and it came out on a machine that also featured duplex printing (both sides). It impressed me and it was \$379 for club members. I receive several newsletters in PDF format and can't live with reading that much on my screen. I've been printing them out by first printing the odd pages, and then reverse the page sequence to turn them over and print the even sides.

My present HP laser curls the paper a bit and even though I try to straighten them, sometimes that printer runs two pages through at once when printing the opposite side and ruins the page sequence. A duplex printer would sure simplify all that, so my choice was made. I went back to Office Depot and saw a HP printer with duplex capabilities for the same price, but after asking how the warranty worked, I returned to the other shop and purchased a Ricoh duplex printer from them.

Unpacking the machine when I got it home was a bit frustrating because trying to figure out the many protective tapes and metal stops to remove by looking at their pictorial brochure, and in which direction and sequence to do it, was confusing. I later found a PDF manual on the installation disk. I called their tech support number and a guy picked up the phone and proceeded to help me, also offering suggestions. He was based in Atlanta, Ga. and spoke excellent English. What great tech support! I called again later with the same quick response. Oh yes, the store salesman didn't tell me the new machine was an all-in-one multifunction printer. I noticed that when I unpacked it.

I printed some newsletters the other evening and watched that printer run them out while I just sat there, and in COLOR. The new printer is a treat, and so was the Ricoh tech support. I copied a color brochure today and that was simple, and a treat also.

### \*FACUG Spring Conference

My wife and I attended the FACUG/APCUG Conference and it was a nice weekend. There were about 140 attendees from several Florida user groups, but a few were from other states. There were less sponsoring vendors this year, but that void was filled with other interesting presentations such as “Cloud Computing,” “Doterati,” “Wikis,” “Twittering,” “Second Life” and “BarCamp.” I had never heard of BarCamp, but it is an intriguing event where you sign up to speak for fifteen minutes about “anything you want” and this “Unconference” concept is gaining popularity all over the world. Doterati is for people locally that work, study, speculate, ask, and answer questions about interactive marketing, media and technology. <<http://www.doterati.com>>. In just a year, they have 500 members and expanding. Watch the FACUG videos for more information.

A lot was packed into the weekend and it was nice to see friends, especially an attendee there from my hometown area in Michigan. Most of the sessions are available for viewing at <<http://www.facug.org/ConferenceSpring/conference-s.asp>>. Two presentations were by APCUG President Jay Ferron, one on Security, and another on Windows 7. If you skipped it, you missed an enjoyable conference.

### \*Government Discount

I wouldn't ordinarily include this, but a few readers work for the government and law enforcement agencies, and perhaps some others might qualify. ElcomSoft Co. Ltd., a leading provider of various password recovery solutions, announces the availability of a special discount. <<http://www.elcomsoft.com/special.html>> The new discount program enables government entities, military branches, criminal investigation and law enforcement agencies, and police and emergency services to order selected ElcomSoft password recovery products at a discount. The new 20% discount is in addition to any volume or bundle discounts already offered by ElcomSoft.

Check the URL above for products covered and information about ordering.

### \*Protection For Your Computer

I have not tried this and there's no discount, but the lifetime membership concept sounded OK for the column. I have edited their announcement to shorten it and we found no reviews on it.

South West eCommerce announced the availability of Spyware & Adware Remover 2009, a new version of the privacy protection software ensuring optimal system performance. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 delivers features to protect valuable data from getting corrupted or stolen, stop hackers and hinder ID theft.

Spyware can transmit secret personal information such as name, address, credit card number, social security number, driver's license number, and passwords. Spyware & Adware Remover provides users with protection from the widest range of threats, and prevents recurrence.

Spyware & Adware Remover helps find what's eating a computer's resources by detecting and eliminating malware and adware running in the background. It removes disturbances and blocks annoying pop-up ads. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 runs under Windows 98, XP, ME, 2000 and Vista. The one-time membership fee is \$29.90. Lifetime Membership includes unlimited downloads and support. Further information on the product, and its free evaluation copy, is available from <[www.webdefenders.net](http://www.webdefenders.net)>.



## Size does matter

### 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/>>

As CPU technology advances, PC display technology is not far behind. Innovations revolve around Home and workplace ergonomics. Saving space and energy, lowering radiation and providing for easy viewing are also concerns.

One of the most visible emerging display technologies that found its way into the mainstream last year was the Flat panel LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) monitor. Although LCD technology has been available for many years in digital watches and calculators, it started gaining popularity through laptop computers. Just like all computer hardware, the price of LCD monitors is falling quickly while features are improving. Compared to CRT (Cathode Ray Tube monitors), an LCD monitor contains fewer parts, uses less space and consumes less power.

The ability of LCD monitors to fit into small spaces is driving sales of this product. You will see the use of LCD's in places where space constraints would never allow the use of a CRT monitor.

Consumer marketing is a fast-growing segment. LCD monitors are being used for on-line, real-time information dissemination in malls, airports, banks and other public places. Because of their depth, LCD's can easily fit into the smallest of information kiosks.

The financial industry is one of the earliest adopters of LCD monitors. Financial consultants sometimes require at least three to four monitors on their desktops to track security prices and trading information. Using LCD monitors, they gain more desk space, and also save money by not having to expand office space as the workforce increases.

Hospitals are also using LCD monitors. Because LCD's are light, medical practitioners can wheel a system around and do real-time information processing of patient data. Unlike CRT monitors, which have an electron-emitting gun and a picture tube saturated with magnetic fields, LCD monitors are much more simplified. Labs are using LCD's for their emission- and interference-free features, making them ideal for delicate and sensitive testing environments.

A flat panel monitor consumes about one-third the power of a similarly sized CRT monitor. They use less power than a reading lamp! This makes it a popular choice for users who preach about environmental and energy savings. It's also a solution for systems where only alternate sources of power are available, such as ships, submarines and planes.

With prices falling 40 to 50 per cent over the past year, the next big boom in LCD's will be the corporate business environment. Using space- and power-saving displays can save office space and energy costs. In Europe and Japan, where space is always at a minimum, LCD monitors have long been an alternative to CRT displays. For the corporate user, power savings become significant when indirect costs such as lower cooling requirements due to decreased heat emission, and direct cost savings by consuming more than 50 per cent less energy than CRT monitors, are considered.

In 1997, prices fell from about six times that of a similarly sized CRT monitor, to as low as only twice the price. With more aggressive pricing, LCD displays will be seriously considered for more conventional applications in the years to come. However, LCD monitors will not be in direct competition with CRT monitors, as they will remain a popular choice for price-sensitive users. ?



## More to music than the iPod

### 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>

**T**here is more to music—and more to life—than the iPod. I think I can prove that statement with the words that follow. Please don't misunderstand me. I admire the iPod as a successful product—a success technically and financially—even though I don't have one. However . . .

I need to start my “proof” by saying that in previous articles that I have written for this newsletter, I made a claim to being an Old Analog Guy (as a reminder, the acronym = OAG and is pronounced “ogre”). It is with that persona that I bring this subject to your attention.

I just completed a catalog of nearly 300 old LP's that belonged to a family member who died last year. And when I say old, I mean some of those LP's have release dates more than 50 years old. Some of the recordings are much older than that. There are many memorable, and even historic, performances recorded on those albums.

A small part of that music has been re-released on CDs. But there is much of that music—almost all Jazz—that you will not currently find in any digital format. So put down your iPod (or one of its imitators) and please listen to what I have to say.

I decided to create a database for this catalog using Microsoft Access®. One significant issue, as you might expect, is just how much information to include in the database. This database is for family use—not for radio station or other broadcast use. I did, however, want to make a record (no pun intended) of whatever information was necessary to properly document the collection. The most significant decision was related to the track (song) names, sequence and times on each side of each LP. Clearly, if I needed to document that information, both the data entry task and complexity of the database were going to be much higher. If the average number of tracks per side is 4 (it is probably higher), and I wanted to include all that information, then I was faced with a data entry task of  $4 \times 2 \times 300 = 2400$  entries (plus all the other information I wanted to include).

“No big deal” you say—there are many much much larger databases in the world. You are correct. But remember, I am an OAG (please correctly pronounce that acronym). Therefore I was looking for an “easy” way to complete this task. Credit is due to Ken Campbell of radio station KRFC (more on that in a moment), a local public radio station, for a solution. Ken told me about an online music database called allmusic.com (<http://www.allmusic.com>) (yes, it is spelled with all lower case letters). It turns out there are many online music databases (a Google® search turned up more than 68,000, using the phrase “online music database”). The allmusic.com database was the best for my catalog project for the following reasons:

1. A successful search for an artist will provide an Overview, a Biography, a Discography (a list of all albums by the artist known to the database, with title, date and label), Songs, Credits, and Charts and Awards.
2. From the discography, one can click on an album and get information (usually) on the album tracks (including times), composer(s), recording date(s), release date, label, format (LP or CD), the label's catalog number, and, for some albums, a review of the album.
3. The search options include artist/group, album, song, classical work.
4. There is substantially more information about the Jazz genre than just a list of names and dates. For example, on the Jazz “home page,” there are a number of “Related Essays” on Jazz, including “A Brief History of Jazz.”

For a project such as the cataloging of an existing music collection, with LP's that are up to 50 years old, this database is the best choice by far of all of the databases examined or considered. It is the equivalent of an encyclopedia, and the functionality makes searching easy, with related data presented on a single page. The ability to link from a list of albums (discography) to a single album (or CD reissue) provides very efficient searching for a project of this type. That is not to say that it is error free. There are albums not included in the database—the web site makes no claim that it contains every album ever released. There are also tracks missing from some albums (or the track order in the database doesn't match the order on the disk). An album may be in the database, but not in the artist's discography. And, there are numerous problems with release and recording dates. Still, the “pros” far outweigh the “cons.”



There is a feature offered by this web site that is unique. Each page (any of the choices listed in item 1 above) has a “Corrections to this entry?” option, allowing the user to submit corrections. Those corrections are then researched for confirmation (if the web site statement is correct) before they are added to the database. That feature was used extensively during the research for this music cataloging project—although not every error or missing item was submitted.

For my project, the search by artist was the most effective. If an album was not listed in the artist’s discography, a search by album was the alternate choice. Although the database has many very early jazz albums, there were a few albums in the collection, both old and new—or at least “newer”—by well-known artists that were missing from the allmusic database. So, although not perfect, the allmusic database is an excellent research tool, and you don’t need the iTunes media player (or any other media player) to use it.

The database is not limited to research, however. You can listen to short sound bytes from some tracks, and there are links that allow you to buy selected tracks or albums (correction – CDs).

OK, so your iPod and the iTunes media player are great for listening to (and buying) current and even “relatively” old music. But the iTunes media player is not going to help you—to same extent as the allmusic database will—find classic old Jazz performances (and perhaps classic performances from other genres). And, you must have the iTunes media player installed on your computer before you can do any searching with it.

You may be wondering why I am talking about online databases and why I consider a good online database important to my “proof.” Yes, there is a relationship. But before I offer the conclusion, I have several comments on other databases.

Another online database used rarely was Gracenote®, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America. Gracenote is used “...for digital media recognition of CDs, digital music files, and streaming audio. With the most comprehensive database of music information in the world, the Gracenote Media Database contains information for more than 80 million tracks and 6 million CDs...” This database is normally linked to media players, such as Winamp®, to automatically identify music on a CD or from a download. It provides album title (and, in some cases, an image of the album cover), and track names—if you connect through a media player (or other audio/video equipment with the enabling software installed that is connected to the internet).

If you connect to Gracenote directly from a browser (<http://www.gracenote.com/>), the search options are artists, albums, tracks. A successful search on an artist returns a list of albums (a lot less than the allmusic database) released by that artist that are known to the database. It is important to note that the quantity information in the Gracenote advertisement makes an explicit reference to CDs. The album information is similar to that in the allmusic database, except that there are no track times. There are, however, links to the lyrics of some tracks—for those songs that have them. Also the “Buy” buttons are much more prevalent, and much more obvious in the Gracenote database, compared to the allmusic database.

Another online database examined briefly was Rhapsody®, <http://www.rhapsody.com/home.html>, a service provided by RealNetworks.com, better known for its Real® media player. The company claims to provide “Technology and services that help people enjoy digital entertainment whenever and wherever they want.”

Connect to the Rhapsody website and the first thing you will notice are the annoying animated ads. Get beyond that and the search options are artist, keyword, track, album, composer, video, lyrics, and playlist. If a search for an album is successful, you can, for most albums, get track information by clicking on the album image—but that track information (no times) is very probably going to be from a more current CD release, not from the original LP, depending on how old that original LP is and how popular the album was. However, there is nowhere near the same level of information available from this database, compared to the allmusic database. The Rhapsody database is organized for listening to (or buying) music that is already known to the user, either by song name or by artist (in my opinion). It is not an effective research tool for finding information on old LP’s.

It is not necessary to have the Real player installed in order to search the Rhapsody database.

Now listen up everyone! Here is my reason for talking about music databases:

There is some great old music out there! In all genres. Please don’t get so comfortable with your iPod that you ignore that music. Especially when you have a resource such as the allmusic online database to help you identify it, catalog it, find reviews on it and find some history of it.

I suspect that many of you reading this article (I hope there are many readers) have some of that “great old music” sitting on your shelves or in your cabinets. Or perhaps stored away somewhere. If so, “unstore” it. You will, I am certain, enjoy that music, especially with the added information available from the allmusic database.

And that is what I mean when I say “There Is More to Music than the iPod.”

# Tech issue

## Computer Speed, RAM and Virtual Memory

**Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**, a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL, [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org), [bwsail at yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com)

One of the more frequent questions raised is: "will adding more physical memory (RAM), speed up my computer"? The answer is a qualified "maybe". The first thing you need to be aware of are the built-in bottlenecks that can slow down your computer. Programs and data move through your computer at different speeds in different locations.

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The central processor (CPU) is usually the fastest data handler in the system. The hard drive is the slowest and everything else, including the RAM, is intermediate in data handling speed. The speed of processing data in RAM is measured in billionths of a second, or nanoseconds, and the speed of accessing data on the hard disk is measured in thousandths of a second, or milliseconds. So, ideally, you want all the processing to go from RAM to the CPU and back to RAM. Unfortunately, that's not always possible even if your system has the maximum amount of RAM installed.

Every computer running Windows, from several generations back, uses "virtual memory" in addition to RAM. The definition of "virtual memory" is based on redefining the address space to "trick" programs into thinking they are using large blocks of contiguous memory. Virtual memory is a space on the hard drive, frequently called a "swap file" or "page file". This is a block that is mapped for temporary storage of programs, data, and operating system essentials. This technique gives an application program the impression that it has contiguous working memory (address space), while in fact it may be physically fragmented.



Virtual memory was designed at a time when RAM was much more expensive than space on a hard drive. Even though RAM is now much less expensive, the latest versions of Windows (XP & Vista) still depend on virtual memory. In fact, much of the operating system kernel ends up in virtual memory. This kernel memory also controls the allocation of data to virtual memory. Consequently, it is not really possible to eliminate virtual memory when you are running Windows XP or Vista. If you do disable virtual memory, Windows becomes unstable.

In a 32 bit computer running Windows, the maximum memory that can be accessed by the CPU is 4 gigabytes (2<sup>32</sup>). It can not access addresses beyond 4 gigabytes (GB). (A gigabyte is a billion bytes.) Not every computer can accept 4 GB of RAM. Some older computers are limited to 512 megabytes (MB) and still run Windows XP quite successfully. However, if you have a newer computer whose motherboard can accept 4 GB of RAM, you may not be able to fully access all of that RAM. In some cases, RAM is shared with the graphics system. This is usually referred to as an "integrated graphics card". In such a case, up to 1 GB of your RAM may be used by the graphics leaving only 3 GB for the rest of the system. Then Windows takes 2 GB of space leaving only 1 GB for user space (programs and data). Even if some of this is placed in Virtual memory, the CPU still has only 4 GB of addresses. If you have a graphics card with its own memory, Windows will allocate 2 GB to kernel memory and 2 GB to user memory. Since some of the kernel memory will be in virtual memory, your total memory will be a combination of physical memory (RAM) and virtual memory (hard drive), but the total will not exceed 4 GB in a 32 bit computer. Remember, the 4 GB limit applies to the number of addresses that can be accessed by the CPU. Those addresses can be on the graphics card, the hard drive or in physical memory (RAM).

Windows sets up the memory system by dividing memory into pages. The most recently accessed pages are in RAM. Any pages that have not been referenced in a while are written to the file on the hard drive. According to Microsoft the paging file in a 32 bit system can be a maximum of 16 terabytes (one terabyte equals 1000 gigabytes). So the total virtual memory pagefile system can exceed the 4 GB limit by a considerable amount. However, no more than the 4 GB can be actively handled at time. The inactive pages are stored on the hard drive.

Virtual memory not only operates at the speed of the hard disk data access, it also requires special handling before it can be used by the CPU or sent to the video screen. Pages on the hard disk have to be read into RAM to be used. That also means that the space they will take in RAM must be vacated. If there was data there, it must be written to the hard drive, before the new pages can be read into RAM. This paging process must also be managed. Some memory is used just to keep track of which pages are in RAM and which are in virtual memory. This is the role of the Virtual Memory Manager. All of these processes of reading and writing to and from RAM require time. As a result, virtual memory use does slow the computer more than the amount that is just due to the slower speed of disk access.

Before you decide that you need 4 GB of RAM to solve your speed problem, you need to determine how much RAM your computer is designed to accept. Computers in today's market are sold with anywhere from 1- 4 GB of RAM. However, only a few

years ago, computers were designed to accept a maximum of 1 GB of RAM or less. So you need to check your owners manual to see what the maximum RAM is for your computer. Then, if you don't know how much is installed in your computer, bring up the the device manager window from the control panel. The first page will tell you how much physical memory you have in your system. You can also see the distribution of physical memory and virtual memory by bringing up the task manager (Ctrl-Alt-Del) and clicking on the Performance tab.

There are several other possible solutions to this problem. One is to look at your hard drive. If you have an older computer with an IDE drive, replacing it with a drive that has a SATA interface will speed up the data handling in virtual memory. Another change would be to purchase a graphics card with 256 – 512 MB of RAM and install it in place of the integrated video. That would release the RAM that was being shared with the video card.

The best, and most expensive, alternative for speeding up your computer is to replace your 32 bit computer with a 64 bit system. The 64 bit computers can access 16 exabytes of RAM (264). That is 16 million GB of RAM. Most of the 64 bit computers in todays market do limit physical RAM to anywhere from 8 to 256 terabytes. Not that we're getting into any really large numbers here, but the amount of RAM in a 64 bit machine is more than adequate to reduce virtual memory to a bare minimum. The catch is that 64 bit machines have other problems, especially with the limited availability of 64 bit software and drivers for peripheral devices. So before you decide to switch to 64 bit computing you need to check out whether or not drivers are available for your peripherals.

Finally, if your hard drive is heavily fragmented, this will also slow down data reading and writing. Simply defragmenting your drive will speed up the drive input and output. It may also improve the computer's boot time. As you can see, there are a number of things to consider if you need to speed up your computer.

*Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.*

## 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 you 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](http://www.mbug.org), [Blacklion@royal.net](mailto:Blacklion@royal.net)



# Computer Basics

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A computer is nothing but a bunch of wires and parts sitting in a box. Programming makes it work. Over the years computers have become smaller and more powerful, while programming became more sophisticated.

Years ago memory was expensive and the programming was relatively cheap. Now, memory is quite cheap. For many purposes the necessary programming either comes with the machine or can be purchased in a box or online.

For most people, a commonly available operating system and an office suite meet their needs. The operating system helps direct commands through the parts and wires, although there is a chip with some very low level programming on it that is part of the machine. The office suite has the programs or applications that allow business-type things to be done.

The most common operating systems are those in the Microsoft® Windows® line of products. These come with some useful applications and games. WordPad®, which comes with the Microsoft® Windows® operating systems, is sufficient for the word processing needs of many people who do not need a complicated office suite.

When you buy a computer, the operating system and its included applications are usually pre-loaded into the machine. Depending on the package that is purchased, other programs may come with the machine. There is likely to be a minimal office suite, such as Microsoft® Works®, a web browser and an e-mail program. These will be inexpensive, low end products, which may be adequate.

A business class office suite may cost a few hundred dollars depending upon what is included. A powerful database program will approximately double the cost of the office suite.

The required power and cost of the machine depends on how it will be used. Computer games with life-like graphics require powerful machines. Text only e-mail messaging can use inexpensive machines.

Many computers are connected together through something known as the Internet. Several services, such as the World Wide Web and e-mail, are delivered through the Internet. The Internet works through a complex addressing system so that messages can go where they are supposed to go. Any computer may or may not be connected to the Internet at any given time.

Connections to other than local computers, such as to the Internet, usually go through a commercial Internet Service Provider, or ISP, which connects to the Internet trunk lines. This connection could be through a school, government agency, business, or other organization instead. ISPs can be small neighborhood operations, large International concerns, or in between.

One should be a bit careful when using the Internet. While there is a lot of useful information available, there is also significant bad stuff. Attempts are made to scam people in various ways or to harm computers.

Hilton Kaufman serves as an Internet content provider and unit technical support person in the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Among his other duties, he designs interactive forms and assists people with the use of computer programs.

He is old enough to have seen room size computers that were programmed by inserting boards with plug in wiring. Yet he is familiar with much of the modern technology. For several years he has been writing articles for beginners on the use of computers, which have been published in computer user group newsletters.

# Driver Backup Programs

## Backup -- The Ware Essential to Your Computer

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As you are aware, drivers are small programs that associate your hardware with your operating system. It is particularly useful to have these programs if you have to re-install windows either from the manufacturer's restore disk or a new install of windows. It avoids the hassle of having to go to each manufacturer's website and download one-by-one drivers.

### **Driverback.bat**

This is a batch file from PCWorld magazine to backup all device drivers. Here are the directions from PCWorld:

Once it's on your system double click the file to create your backup.

The batch file copies the drivers (and a lot of extra files) to a folder called 'driverback inside My Documents. Use your CD authoring software to copy the contents of this folder to a CD.

To reinstall the drivers, use either Device Manager or Control Panel's Add Hardware applet to open Update Wizard. If the Wizard doesn't automatically look for drivers on the CD, point to the CD drive when asked for a location.

It can be downloaded at: <http://www.pcworld.com/49366>

### **DriverMax**

This is a wonderful easy to use sophisticated backup tool that allows you to either set up a login account to retrieve drivers or export them to a zip file that you would copy to a CD for later installation. Here is a description from the DriverMax website:

"DriverMax is a new tool that allows you to download the latest driver updates for your computer. No more searching for rare drivers on discs or on the web or inserting one installation CD after the other. Just create a free account, log in, and start downloading the updates that you need.

You can also export all your current drivers (or just the ones that work ok) to a folder or a compressed file. After reinstalling Windows you will have everything in one place! [Underlining added] Most of the situations when Windows is running slower are caused by faulty driver installations. Windows stores all versions of older drivers just in case

you want to go back; sometimes it messes up older versions with more recent ones. The Export Wizard will only export the drivers you select by copying the needed files to a folder or a compressed ZIP file. After reinstalling Windows all drivers will be back in

place in less than 5 minutes - sparing you of searching, inserting disc after disk and losing precious time. The Import Drivers wizard allows you to install all the drivers that you exported earlier. The entire operation might take up to 5-10 minutes.

Just one single computer restart will be required after all drivers are reinstalled!

Note: DriverMax only works on Windows Vista, Windows XP and Windows 2003 (all service packs). Driver downloads are \*only\* available for Windows Vista and Windows XP users."

It can be found at: <http://www.innovative-sol.com/drivermax/> Note: After starting the program, it does require free registration which is acquired from the above web site.

*Larry Cohen is a Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Nassau Community College and is a Member-At-Large of the ICON Executive Board.*

# Exploring Microsoft Windows 7 Beta 1, Part 1

## A Little Background on My Early (Mis)Adventures with Windows 7

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Probably most of you know Windows 7 is Microsoft's latest and greatest offering in terms of operating systems. A public beta download was made available on January 9th, intended for testing purposes. This beta version will stop working on August 1st.

The official final version is planned for introduction late this year or early next year (depending upon who is making the prediction; nobody knows for sure.) You may still be able to download the beta from this website:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-7/betadownload.aspx>

### BETA DOWNLOAD

A couple of days before Microsoft made available its public download of the next version of Windows, I downloaded a version available through MSDN (the Microsoft Developers Network), intending to install it as a virtual machine on my Windows Vista desktop computer. With my slo-o-o-ow DSL connection, I had to wait over 5 hours to get it loaded onto my hard drive. (It is about a 2.5 gigabyte file.)

### VIRTUAL PC INSTALLATION

Then I installed it as a virtual OS, using a copy of Microsoft's free program Virtual Pc 2007, that I have been using for the past two years to get access to and test other operating systems.

The installation process itself for Windows 7 took over two and half hours! Next, when I tried it out, the load was extremely unstable. I kept getting a popup message saying that Windows Search Indexer had stopped working; this message would appear just about every couple of minutes.

When trying out the new beta Internet Explorer 8 built into the operating system, it seems just about every web page I looked at would crash, and Internet Explorer would restart, and try to recover the web page. In addition, I couldn't download an anti-virus program so as to get rid of the security message popup from the taskbar complaining about no anti-virus program being present.

### STABILITY PROBLEM

What was wrong? I had previously read a number of articles about Windows 7 that raved about the unparalleled stability of the Windows 7 beta.



This didn't seem to be true in my case! I recalled that the computer had lost power during my 5 hour download about halfway through, when Florida Plunder and Loot (sorry, I mean Florida Power and Light, of course) had one of its all-too-frequent blackouts.

The download had appeared to resume okay when I restarted the computer, but maybe there was something wrong with the file when it completed. So I downloaded the public beta (another 5 hours of twiddling my thumbs and cursing) and then tried again.

Before I started installing the new load in Virtual PC 2007, I researched the problem I had with the previous load; by googling the net, I found the answer, on this web page:

<http://msdnrss.thecoderblogs.com/2009/01/11/installingthe-windows-7-beta-with-virtual-pc-2007-sp1/>

The problem was that I had used the initial version of Virtual PC 2007 (which worked perfectly well with all my other virtual OSes, including XP Home, XP Pro, and Vista Home Premium), but the above article said installing Windows 7 as a guest OS required the version with its Service Pack 1 built in. I was gratified to see that after I upgraded my version of VPC 2007, the installation of Windows 7 Beta went very smoothly and only took half an hour. All the crashes of Windows 7 disappeared, too.

## ABOUT MICROSOFT VIRTUAL PC 2007

Microsoft Virtual PC 2007 is a free download available from Microsoft; it is the first version of this program that is compatible with Windows Vista as well as Windows XP. An overview of its features is presented here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/virtualpc/overview.mspx>

Microsoft Virtual Pc 2007 Product Information

MS Virtual PC 2007 is available in both 32-bit and 64-bit versions, and works with Windows Vista Business, Enterprise, and Ultimate editions, as well as Windows Server 2003, Windows XP Professional, and Windows XP Tablet Edition.





(When you try to install VPC 2007 on a Vista Home Premium pc, it will give you a warning about not being compatible, but I have seen web pages on the internet from people who have said it works perfectly well with that version of Vista, and I also have a friend in our computer club who has done it successfully.)

With Virtual PC 2007, you have the program installed in your main OS (Operating System), called the "host OS", and as many virtual machines (each with possibly a different OS) as you can comfortably handle with your amount of memory and disk storage.

Each virtual machine is called a "guest OS." You can pause any guest OS virtual machine so that it doesn't use CPU cycles, and you can save and restore the configuration file at any time.

With the Virtual Machine Additions installed, you can copy and paste, and drag and drop between the host and guest OS.

Each guest OS will be able to handle any CD or DVD drive on the computer, and you can set it up to be able to access other hard drive partitions. The guest OS can also access the internet through a web browser. With the current version of VPC, the guest unfortunately cannot access any USB devices like printers, flash drives, or external USB drives. (It does handle keyboards and mice connected by USB, however.)

I decided two years ago I would download MS Virtual PC 2007 and try using it to choose between Vista and XP Pro. This is much more convenient than dual booting the two Windows versions, because they are run simultaneously on my computer, and only need to click on an icon in the Notification Area (formerly called the System Tray) of Vista, to switch to XP.

This allows instantaneous switching, rather than what multi-booting requires, which is to restart the computer and wait for the several minutes necessary to boot to another operating system.

The current version of Virtual PC 2007, with SP1, can be downloaded for free from here: <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=28C97D22-6EB8-4A09-A7F7-F6C7A1F000B5&displaylang=en>

## SOUND PROBLEM

My next problem was that the sound didn't work in the Windows 7 guest OS. I turned to my old friend Google and found this page:

[http://blogs.msdn.com/virtual\\_pc\\_guy/archive/2009/01/13/windows-7-on-virtual-pc-nwindows-7.aspx](http://blogs.msdn.com/virtual_pc_guy/archive/2009/01/13/windows-7-on-virtual-pc-nwindows-7.aspx)

A person calling himself Hermes had encountered my problem and found a solution which he detailed in a comment he posted in the Virtual PC Guy's weblog January 17. I tried his solution, and it worked.

## GRAPHICS PROBLEM

I was happily exploring the new features of Windows 7 for several days. Then...

A new problem developed from the fact that Microsoft hasn't upgraded its graphics driver for Virtual PC 2007 since introduction of the program two years ago. Of course, the guest operating system actually uses your host machine's real CRT, or LCD screen for display, but it emulates a driver for a graphics card described as S3 Trio 32/64 PCI with 8 MB Video RAM.

This is a very old graphics adaptor. It barely supports some of the "Aero" effects of Vista and Windows 7, and it doesn't support the requirements of Windows Media Center or Windows Media Player.

## VIRTUAL PC 2007 TO DUAL BOOT

I really wanted to explore those aspects of the new OS. So I decided I would quit using Windows 7 as a virtual machine and instead install it as a real operating system on another partition of my hard drive.

Since I had all my virtual machines stored already on a separate partition, and had previously backed them up to an external USB hard drive, I wiped this out and used my Windows 7 Beta installation DVD to install it there.

Then I could dual boot with Vista and Windows 7, which was nowhere near as convenient as running them simultaneously, but apparently was necessary in order to continue my investigations of the new OS.

Future articles regarding the Windows 7 Beta, will contain explanations of what I have discovered about Windows 7, including some screenshot illustrations.

# Exploring Microsoft Windows 7 Beta 1, Part 2

## What I've Discovered About Windows 7 (A)

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Let's start taking a look at the Windows 7 Beta in an organized travellog through all the main features, complete with screen captures. First, we take a look at the Desktop.

### THE DESKTOP

When you look at the Windows 7 Beta Desktop (Figure 1), you will not see many differences from Vista's.

One difference you will see immediately, is that there is a little message etched into the lower right hand corner of the screen reading: "Windows 7 For testing purposes only. Build 7000".

Also, there is a shortcut on the Windows 7 Desktop labeled "Send Feedback". This is your mechanism for telling Microsoft about what you like and dislike, what bugs you found, etc. It will only send the report to Microsoft if you have a Windows Live ID number. The facility for sending feedback is also present in every window you open, at the top right near the Minimize, Maximize and Close buttons.

As in Windows Vista, the Start button of Windows XP and previous versions of Windows has been replaced by a small round "orb", which only tells you it is related to "Start" if you hover the mouse over it for a second or two, and then a tooltip pops up briefly.

Microsoft decided to eliminate the famous Sidebar of Vista. You can still have "gadgets" located on your Desktop, but more about that later.

### THE TASKBAR

Let's take a look at the new Windows 7 Taskbar. Note that the icons are a bit larger and therefore the Taskbar is wider than what you may be used to from previous versions of Windows.

You can adjust these smaller by using Taskbar Properties, but then you may lose some of the neat "Aero" effects. When you first install Windows 7, you see icons for Internet Explorer, Windows Explorer and Windows Media Player.

### SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

For those who are wondering, these are what Microsoft says are the system requirements for Windows 7:

- a 1 GHz or faster processor (for both the 32-bit and 64-bit version)
- at least 1 GB of main memory (RAM)
- at least 16 GB of available disk space to install the operating system
- a graphics adaptor that supports DX9 graphics with at least 128 MB of memory (in order for Aero to work)
- a DVD-R/W drive

### MAIN IMPROVEMENTS

Windows 7 is essentially a much improved Windows Vista. It has these main improvements over Vista, among many others:

- easier home networking through a new facility called HomeGroups
- a much more capable Windows Backup tool
- a redesigned and more functional Taskbar
- a new concept for organizing files and folders called Libraries
- the ability to use Windows Instant Search over other pcs in a network
- improved support for multimedia using Windows Media Player and Windows Media Center
- a much friendlier version of Vista's User Account Control
- some new capabilities of the Aero interface, notably "Aero Peek" and "Aero Shake" and "Aero Snap"

This is similar to what was present on what was called the "Quick Launch Toolbar" in earlier Windows.

line at the right end of this group of icons separating them from the Taskbar proper. Does this mean the Quick Launch Toolbar is now gone in Windows 7? Yes, it does.

The entire Taskbar in Windows 7 is now a mixture of pseudo Quick Launch icons and the ordinary buttons present for running programs.

You can distinguish a button on the new Taskbar as being one for a running program by the fact that the button appears to have a square surrounding the icon. (Thus, the rightmost icon in the screenshot (Figure 2), which is for the built-in Snipping Tool, has a square around it because the program is running – that was what I used to take the screenshot.)

Also, if the button is a pseudo Quick Launch button, then you can right click it and select Unpin from Taskbar on the context menu to remove it. The screenshot below shows this right click menu for the Windows Explorer icon.

If you right click one of the pseudo Quick Launch icons on the Taskbar, you get what is called a "Jump Menu". The screenshot shows a Jump Menu for Windows Media Player.

All of the icons are moveable on the Taskbar. Just click and drag any icon left or right anywhere you want.

The next screenshot shows the "Notification Area" of the Windows 7 Taskbar. (This is what was called the "System Tray" prior to Windows XP.)

Notice that there are only a few icons present in the Windows 7 Notification Area. One is normally the "Action Center" icon, which will notify you of important actions you need to take, like downloading a Windows update or turning on the Windows Firewall.

All of the Notification Area icons can be individually adjusted to determine whether or not they appear there and whether or not notification messages will be displayed.

If there are hidden icons in the Notification Area, you will see a little upward pointing arrow on the left which when clicked gives you a display of the ones not shown. Notice that now the Taskbar is wide enough to show the date as well as the time at the right end in the Notification Area.

There are other properties of the new Taskbar, which will be described further in the Aero Effects section.



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# File Management

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We're now going to do some file operations on the special file we created for the exercise.

1. First, we're going to set up a new folder, and prepare to move testfile.txt into that folder. In the left hand listing, click once on the My Documents folder. Go to the menu at the top of the Explorer window, and click on FILE>NEW>FOLDER. Now you will see a new folder named "New Folder" directly below My Documents. It should be highlighted. If not, click once on it, and then click on the F2 key. This puts you in "edit" mode, and you can change the name of the folder. Change it to "Files for your name" (type in your name, without the quotes). After typing that in, hit the enter key. Now you have a new folder which is a personalized place for you to store your documents.

2. Next we're going to move the testfile.txt document to the new folder. One simple way to do this is to drag it from its present folder to its new home. Get the listing of all the folders on C: in the left hand window. Then double click on My Documents. The new folder we just created should be showing in the listing on the left, and also in the right hand section listing the contents of My Documents. Click on "testfile.txt" to select it, and then drag it onto the new folder which you just personalized with your name. The file has now been moved. To confirm that, double click on your new folder, and it should open and list the contents.

Depending upon what Windows version you are using, and what file manager you are using the dragging protocol may be slightly different. Generally in Windows, dragging moves the file, if you're dragging to any folder on the same drive. Dragging to a different drive, copies the file. And holding the CTRL key down while dragging, always copies the file, and using the Shift key always moves the files, irrespective of the target location. To be sure that you move or copy as you want to do, hold the SHIFT key down and drag to move, and the CTRL key down and drag to copy. This will work under any circumstance. Windows does give you a "hint" about this. If you drag and see a small + sign in next to the moving mouse cursor, the process you are doing is copying. If there's no + sign, then you are moving.

3. Next, we're going to copy this file to a floppy disk. Insert a floppy into the drive A. Left click on testfile.txt in the new folder to select it. Now, hold down the CTRL key while dragging the file to drive A. To confirm that you have copied to file, double click on drive A on the left hand listing of Explorer. It should show the file listed there. Then go back to the original folder for your documents, to see that it is still there also. If it is - you've succeeded. If your system does not have a floppy disk drive, or another hard drive, copy to a flash drive. If you have none, just skip this step

4. Since this isn't a file that you want to keep, let's delete it. Click on it once to select it on, wherever it was copied to. Then hit the delete key and OK. Repeat the process for the other location also.

NOTE: During these activities, you probably have noticed small "+" and "-" signs on certain of the listings in Windows Explorer (or any file manager). The "+" sign indicates that there are subfolders within the folder listed. To expand the listing to show them, click on the "+" sign. The "-" sign indicates that the folder has subfolders, and they are already shown. To collapse that listing, click on the "-" sign. Clicking toggles the situation back and forth. NOTE: Windows Explorer is not "Internet Explorer", so don't get confused here.

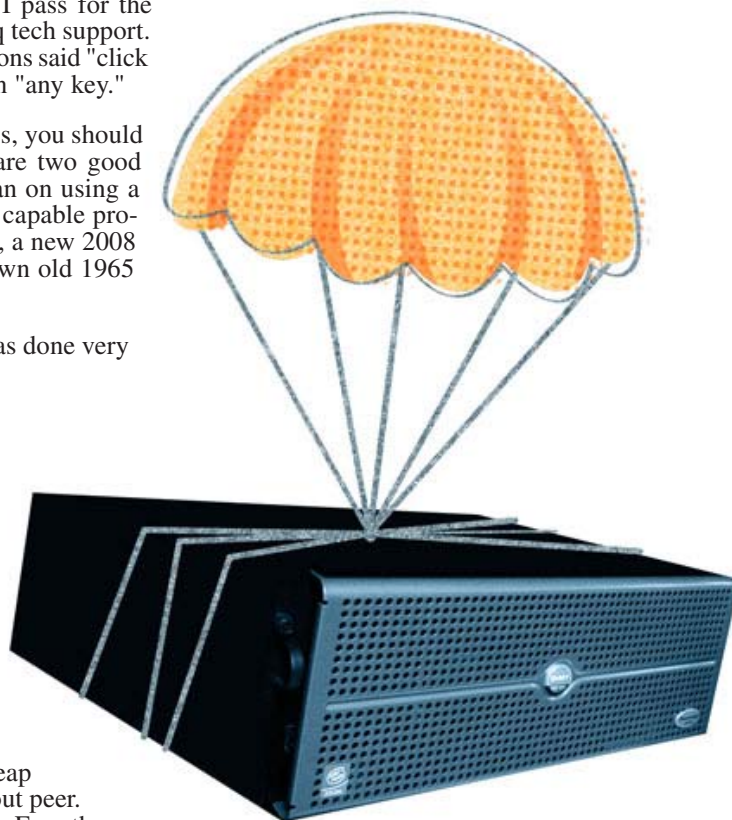
This is the end of the exercise on the beginning basics of file management. Obviously you can modify any of the procedures given to suit your specific needs. And, if you are now adept at all the steps, you've got a good start on things. As with most things in Windows, there are generally several ways to so things. Rather than confuse things, I'm keeping things as simple as I can.



If you had difficulty following the previous steps, it might be a good idea for you to consider one of the introductory Windows courses given by various organizations in our area. When someone asks me "what do you mean by 'click'?", I pass for the moment. It's like the person who called Compaq tech support. He couldn't find the "any key", when the instructions said "click on any key", he said his keyboard didn't have an "any key."

Now that you can handle file management basics, you should consider getting a better file manager. There are two good choices out there. As with all things, if you plan on using a file manager often now, you should use a more capable program. It's like a car. If you plan on driving a lot, a new 2008 Lexus is generally more fun than a stripped down old 1965 Chevy.

I was disappointed when I saw that Microsoft has done very little with Windows Explorer. Of all the good programs MS may have provided, Windows Explorer was not one. Not to worry though - all the things you've learned so far will carry over into any file manager. There are a variety of good and one GREAT file managers out there. Do a general Google search for "Windows file managers", and a bunch of hits will display. Some are add-ons to Windows Explorer, and others are standalone programs. If you want the finest file manager ever created for Windows, look at Opus 9 at <http://nudel.dopus.com/opus9/>. Be warned however, that this is not a cheap program. It costs about \$57 (US), but it is without peer. If you are an advanced user, this is the one to get. For others, there are lots of freeware and shareware programs. Review the Google search results to see what will fit you best, assuming you would like to work with something superior to Windows Explorer.



Another good (and free) choice is PowerDesk. You can get a free copy of version 7 of the program by downloading it from <http://www.snapfiles.com/get/powerdeskfree.html>. ZDNet should also have it available. If you like the program, you can purchase a registered version, with a few more features, and no nag screens.

With any of these file managers, or Windows Explorer, the best way to learn is to "browse around", and play with things. Click on various menu items, practice copying and moving files, and be inquisitive. And, REMEMBER, all the things you learn in these exercises apply to all the programs you'll be using on your Windows computer.

Computer learning can be likened to taking piano lessons - you can't learn to play if you don't practice. Maybe someday we'll be able to get a "chip" that we can plug into our brains to acquire all sorts of capabilities without the time consuming old-fashioned learning process. But for now, we have to rely on present techniques which take time and effort. But, in the long run, the effort is well worth it.

Learning to manage your files is a very important activity for all computer users to learn. So, how about getting started on that right now. Remember, you don't always have to be doing a formal lesson. Start exploring and investigate all the areas where you haven't been before. Instead of surfing the Internet, surf your own computer. You'll find lots of exciting things. And remember, any time you want to get help on something, just press the F1 key, and a help window should pop up.

This concludes the brief learning experience of file management. Remember, you've only scratched the surface here. This is similar to learning chess. Many people think that when they have learned to move the pieces, that they know how to play chess - but they are a long way from being a "chess player." The name of the game is practice. This lesson is just a start towards a better understanding of that marvelous machine you have at your fingertips.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site [www.brcs.org](http://www.brcs.org). This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose leaf notebook for future reference.



# Moving on to Vista – Part 14

**Neil Stahfest**, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group,  
Washington, [www.tapcug.org](http://www.tapcug.org), [ncstahfest@msn.com](mailto:ncstahfest@msn.com)

One of the features that I liked about previous versions of Windows was the \*Search” feature. Just click on the “Start” button”, Click on “Search” and enter the file name that you want to find. If you have multiple hard drives, you can specify which ones to search. Its easy and simple.

Vista is different. Vista has a totally new search feature that is in some ways easier to use, fast and very sophisticated. It doesn't just try to match file names. It looks inside files and reads and searches the contents of text files, your Windows Contacts and Calendar as well as any Microsoft Office files (documents, spreadsheets and PowerPoint files).

To do this Vista automatically maintains an index file which contains all this information for the file linked to your personal user folder. To keep the index file from becoming too large and to speed up the search process, it does not maintain a list of files located in your Windows system folder, contents of application file folders or on a local computer network (information usually only useful to computer programmers).

When you start searching for a file or word, it only has to check this index file to find what you want. The results are displayed almost as fast as you can type the search name.

To use the most basic features of Vista's search engine, click on the “Start” button. When the “Start Menu” appears, a “Start Search” box appears directly above the “Start Button”. As you start to type a folder or file name, a list of folders and files appears above the box. As you type more letters, the list of names becomes more specific. If you don't see what you are looking for, at the bottom of the list is an option to search for the file name on the Internet (assuming that you have an Internet connection of course). When you do this, the Internet search uses your default Internet search engine whether it be Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, etc.

The Search Results window does not show the name of every file match found. Using some form of artificial intelligence Vista limits itself to the 20 most likely matches. It shows them under file group headings such as “Programs”, “Files” and “Communications”.

An interesting aspect of this feature is that you can point and click on a program listed in the Search Results window and actually run it. Document or spreadsheet files can also be accessed this way. Printing at the file name activates the default file program, such as Microsoft Word.

Using this feature of Vista's search function moves it beyond just a way to locate files and folders. It becomes a way to quickly locate files and then take action to use them. To prepare this column I simply went to my desktop, clicked on the Start Button, entered “vista.rtf” in the Search Box and then clicked on the file name to open it with my word processing program. How simple is that! No need to open a series of folders to burrow down to my Vista column files.

In most cases, doing the above steps will locate the information you are looking for. But suppose it doesn't. Windows will tell you that the information can't be located and suggest that you use some of the advanced search features.

# Preventive Computer Maintenance

**Stuart Rabinowitz**, Editor-in-Chief, the PULP, newsletter of the Hartford User Group Exchange, CT, [www.huge.org](http://www.huge.org), [s.e.rabinowitz@att.net](mailto:s.e.rabinowitz@att.net)

**T**he single most important maintenance item that should be done on a regular basis is BACKUP YOUR DATA. What the schedule is depends on much data you can afford to lose. Try daily/weekly to an external hard drive and monthly to a CD/DVD, or use a backup application. Make sure that your software is updated; primarily the operating system and your primary browser.

Use utility software: get a sense of how your computer operates when it's operating correctly. For the Mac use 'Activity Monitor' or 'Tech Tools'. On the PC (in the control panel) administrative tools/performance. You can also check your internet connection speed at: <http://reviews.cnet.com/internet-speedtest/?tag=ont.int.band>

For the PC users--do regular spyware/virus scans. Make sure the definitions are up to date. Primarily for PC users--Defragment your hard drive (this may take a while). Mac users do not really need to do this since OS X (10.3 +) does it automatically.

Free up some space on your hard drive (PC users can use disk cleanup; Mac users can use CacheOutX). Clean out old files that you don't use, after you've backed them up. Uninstall those programs that you don't use. Apple recommends that you have at least 10% free, a bit more for PCs, this will improve virtual memory and may improve disk performance.

Clean the Hardware -- to clean the monitor and keyboard use a dry microfiber cloth (be sure the computer is turned off) and gently (don't press hard) wipe the monitor, unplug the keyboard and wipe. If there are hard to clean areas, spray the cloth lightly with a vinegar/water solution and then wipe. For an optical mouse wipe the bulb gently. You'll need to open a mechanical mouse to clean the rollers. Use a cotton swab with isopropyl alcohol.

If your computer case is easy to open (i.e. not an iMac or Mac Mini), then open it up (after shutting down and unplugging it) and use compressed air to blow out the dust. Do not use a vacuum since it may create a static charge that could damage the electronics. After closing the case you can clean out the fan in the back.

You'll also probably want to have the following tools:

Screwdrivers--standard, phillips, and torx in different sizes (especially the small ones)

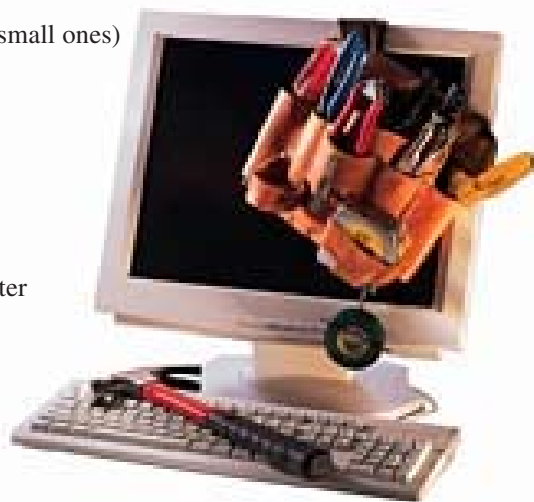
Nutdrivers--1/4" and 3/16"

Pliers, part grabbers, and tweezers

Compressed air

Microfiber cleaning cloths

Antistatic strap--especially if you want to put your hands inside the computer



# Windows XP Utilities

**Warner Mach**, Editor of the SEMCO DATA BUS,  
newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Computer  
Organization, <http://www.semco.org>, [machw@att.net](mailto:machw@att.net)

I have discovered that Windows XP is chock full of various utilities to solve various kinds of problems. Some of the utilities that I have occasion to use in recent months:

## (1) Windows Task Manager

You bring up the Windows Task Manager by holding down `cntl-alt-delete`. Some of the useful features are: (a) Go to the applications tab. This shows the running tasks and is useful for ending a task that refuses to go away. (b) Go to process tab. This shows all the miscellaneous tasks in the system and shows the CPU time that each is using. This can frequently be useful when you are not sure what the system is doing. (c) Go to performance tab. This shows the use of resources. Especially useful is the dynamic graph of CPU usage.

## (2) Event Viewer

The Event Viewer has a log of recent events, including events at power up and power down. This was of value to me when I was attempting to learn about certain messages that were appearing at power down time. Under the 'application' and 'system' tabs the logs are listed. To get more detailed information on a particular problem, double-click on the 'type' portion of a particular entry. This will give some keyword search hints that can be typed into Google. You bring up the Event Viewer by going to `start=>run` and typing 'Eventvwr.msc' into the box => OK.

## (3) System Configuration Utility

The tab that was useful to me was the 'startup' tab. These are tasks that automatically come up at startup. By unchecking groups of entries (and saying 'apply' and then rebooting) I was able to zero in on one particular entry that was causing a problem. You bring up the System Configuration Utility by going to `start=>run` and typing 'msconfig' into the box => OK.

## (4) Check Disk

This utility checks the space usage on the disk. It also checks the control block chains to be sure that they are correct. Go to `start=>all programs=>accessories=>command prompt` and type in 'chkdsk.' If the program detects bad command chains and you want to correct the situation then type in 'chkdsk /F' . This command may require a reboot during which it runs stand-alone.

## Useful Resources

There is a useful list of utilities, with examples and explanations at:

<<http://tinyurl.com/9um8or>>.

There is also information about the Microsoft '906569' update at:

<<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/906569>>.

This update "... adds the tools tab to the System Configuration Utilities in Windows XP Service pack 2." But even if you don't want to do this, there is a list of useful utilities with an explanation of their function.



# Going 100% Digital with Genealogy – or Any – Records

**Tom J. Thiel**, President, Lake-Sumter Computer Society,  
Florida, [www.lscs.us](http://www.lscs.us) , [tthiel5@comcast.net](mailto:tthiel5@comcast.net)

In April 2007, I offered a presentation with the same title as above our the Lake-Sumter Computer Society's Genealogy Special Interest Group. For a handout see: <http://www.lscs.us/presentations/070412%20Thiel%20Going%20100%25%20Digital%20Handout.pdf>

In my presentation -- which was based on an excellent article with a similar title by Dick Eastman in his outstanding Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter Plus Edition -- I extensively described the Xerox DocuMate 152 scanner that costs about \$500 with bundled software. This, of course, was the one Mr. Eastman had obtained and on which he based his fine article.

Well, for me at least and for many the roughly \$500 for the DocuMate 152 was a little bit on the pricey side and also it is more of a work group scanner with office document scanning as its primary design criteria.

One of the alternative scanners I found in my research for the presentation and also mentioned in my presentation was the Xerox DocuMate 510, flatbed scanner with an Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) rated at 10 pages per minute.

About a month ago I decided to obtain the DocuMate 510!

PC World has a very nice review of the Xerox 510 at the following web site; <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,114941-page,1/article.html> -- two paragraphs were extracted in the text below.

"If you need to turn a stack of paper documents into editable electronic text, using a scanner with optical character recognition software and an automatic document feeder attachment--like Xerox's new \$350 DocuMate 510--is a speedy alternative to typing."

"While the DocuMate 510 is a flatbed model--and therefore takes up more desk space than slimmer sheet-fed scanners--its removable lid allows you to scan pages from books or other bound volumes, including oversize originals. For any business or workgroup that needs an affordable document scanner, the DocuMate 510 is a solid choice." End Quote

I was able to find the 510 on the internet from a low of \$298 to a high of \$359. I paid \$312 from Buy.com; however, I found that the local Office Depot (Mount Dora, FL) has the DocuMate 510 for \$299, complete with bundled software.

And of special note, through June 30, 2007, Xerox is offering a \$50 mail in rebate.

So far I am totally pleased with my DocuMate 510!

Scanner assembly went effortlessly with the aid of a very well illustrated assembly schematic manual. Installation requires that the software be installed before connecting the 510 to your computer via the USB port.

The 510 came with ScanSoft PaperPort 9.0 which controls the scanner, TextBridge Pro 9.0 for Optical Character Recognition, and ArcSoft Photo Impressions editing software all on one CD-ROM. It also came with a 58-page installation and scanning manual done quite nicely in slick paper, and a 12-month warranty.

After the software was installed, the scanner components were connected to power and then I connected it to the computer with the USB cable. When I attempted to scan a document, however, I received an error message. By entering the error code into Google I was quickly able to determine that I had failed to adequately unlock the shipping lock slider switch.

After sliding the switch, the scanner worked perfectly. The sheet feeder works very well and even handles quite thin papers although hearing those go through the feeder may give one cause to worry a bit.

The ADF handles variable length paper from about 6 inches to up to 14-inch legal length papers -- all in the same stack in the ADF. And the fact that the scanner's cover may be easily removed to copy from books is also a plus for genealogists and for general home applications.

Mr. Eastman, and others, speaks at length on what these scanners and their software, collectively known as a Document Management System, will mean -- reducing the number of filing cabinets, safer storage and more rapid and complete retrieval.

All of these are, of course, quite true, but you should be aware that to convert all of your existing file cabinet's contents to digital information is not something you will be able to achieve quickly! Scanning all of your existing documents, whether your genealogy documentation or your credit card, banking or utility records, will take an appreciable amount of time and effort regardless of the scanner you employ.

At present I am scanning my bank statements, utility bills, medical Medicare and supplemental insurance statements, medical reports and lab analyses, credit cards and the like.

I have not yet begun to scan my Genealogy documents, but intend to -- this will be a daunting task; not the scanning but the organizing and assembling of the documents that I have to get them ready for scanning.

When you convert records to a document management system as I am doing with the 510, you need to decide what conversion scenario you will follow: scan all the documents that exist in your files or scan from the day you begin scanning forward.

I have decided to convert most of my documents starting from today forward (except of course for genealogy records). This is simply because it is easier to do this than to "empty the file cabinet first."

Unlike the DocuMate 152, which is a duplex scanner meaning that both the front and rear of a page are scanned simultaneously with the same pass of the paper through the scanner, the 510 is a simplex meaning that only one side is scanned at a time.

However, the PaperPort Deluxe 9 scanning software packaged with the scanner handles this situation very well. Simply load the stack of papers and scan the front side of all pages. PaperPort will then ask "scan the other side?" and if you wish to you simply turn the stack over and scan the reverse side. The software handles the pagination automatically.

The 510 is very simple to use; one of the more difficult aspects of using it is to remember to load the paper with the face up!

The PaperPort 9.0 software, originally offered by ScanSoft and now by Nuance, works very effectively. One item I would like improved is the default file name, which is "Day of week, Month, Day and Year.pdf." Other options are available but it appears that all use the current date in one form or another.

So far I have not extensively used the OCR capability as that is a slower scanning process.

Another very useful feature of the PaperPort software is that it is a printer and may be used to print any document directly to a pdf, including documents from the web.

Managing the scanned documents effectively can also be challenging. I created a file folder structure similar to my physical filing cabinet and that seems to work very well so far.

I scan a document or set of documents and then merely drag these and drop them in the appropriate folder. I then rename the file to usually "YYMMDD Plus a Few Descriptive Words" in front of the default file name.pdf. A medical record, for example, would contain the year, month and day of the medical service, the physician's name and procedure, followed by the default scan date. I find that using YYMMDD format for my records allows me to sort or otherwise keep a logical file and folder order sequence by date; to use the standard MMDDYY format will not sort logically.

If you are going to scan older records then you should spend some time in document preparation before beginning scanning. Ensuring that documents are in proper order, staples removed, corners straightened, etc., will speed up the scanning process.

And you must verify your copy before discarding the paper document! I am discarding most of the documents I have scanned so far.

All of my scanning to date has been black and white and at 300 dots per inch resolution, which in most cases has been adequate. This will result in a pdf file of perhaps 35KB per page.

If you decide to convert your paper files to 100% digital records, then you simply must practice excellent and very frequent backup procedures. Otherwise you will lose everything! I make a copy on an external drive after every session.

The choice is yours of course, but my advise is: "Go 100% Digital, and do it now!"

## Software Review

### DesktopZoom

Published by Little Gems

A review by Bonnie Snyder, member of P\*PCompAS (Pikes Peak Computer Application Society), CO, <http://ppcompas.apcug.org>, Bonniels21(at)gmail.com

One evening while surfing the Web, I stumbled across a free screen magnifier called DesktopZoom. I downloaded it and put it through its paces. And, I was quite impressed with it. There are those freeware programs that “you get what you pay for,” and then there are those that give you a whole lot more value. DesktopZoom is definitely in the latter category.

When you first load DesktopZoom, it comes up with a settings screen, with two tab areas; in the top area, the default is 3) Entire desktop and in the bottom tab area, the Mouse is the default tab. You can type in a numerical size for the mouse pointer and then select a shape and color for the mouse pointer. The “Big Mouse” option is selected by default (if you unselect it, you don’t get a mouse pointer at all ... not good). Other options on the Mouse tab include selecting a Crosshair, selecting a thin red Rectangle which helps you focus on the working area of your application (don’t use the Crosshair and the Rectangle together because the Rectangle won’t move if you do), and another default selection: Hide real mouse (recommended).

Moving from left to right on the tabs, the first tab is for Zoom. The Zoom selection area has two input boxes for the size of the magnification. Default is 3000/1000. You’ll have to fiddle around with the numbers to find the best for you. There are three checkboxes, the first is to hide the configuration screen when the program is running (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The second is for No screen changes when not zoomed (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The third is Stop zoom if mouse in right bottom corner (I checked it because I find it a convenient option).

The next lower tab is for Keys. These key combinations are for increasing or decreasing the magnification on the fly. By default, the Mouse Wheel option, a radio button, With Ctrl-key, in a combo box, is checked. There are three other key combinations you can select from. If you prefer to use the arrow keys instead of the mouse, you can select the Arrows radio button with Without Key selected in the combo box (there are three other key combinations to select from in the combo box). Finally, the Alt-Keys are selected

by default in a checkbox with six possible settings for on the fly changes (Zoom in and out; Zoom on or off; tracking and crosshair – each option has a character to press with the Alt-Key to accomplish its task).

The Mouse tab comes next (we’ve already covered that); then comes the Color tab. There are three checkboxes: the first is for Grey shades (it has a combo box/edit box with seven choices of shades of grey including an option to type in a number of your preference); the second is for Invert Colors, and the third (checked by default) is for Smoothing. You can have all three boxes checked if you wish. Finally, it has an edit box for Show original screen (you can type in a numeric percentage ... 0 is the default). This one makes me crazy ... what it does is show the original screen as a kind of background of the magnified screen. But, it was probably included because somebody needed that feature!

Then we move on to the Tracking tab. The first Tracking option has a combo box from which you can choose three tracking items: None, Caret, Caret + Menu; the default being Caret + Menu. Next addresses specifically Track MsWord Caret (checkbox checked by default). Then you get to select the Tracking delay time by typing a number in an edit box (30 is the default). Another check box comes next for allowing display of a

Thumbnail with your choice of ratio (in an edit box). The Thumbnail is similar to a histogram in an art program; it displays the entire screen in miniature in the bottom right area of the screen. Finally, there is a combo box for choosing View. The options in this combo box include Follow the mouse, Static – changes when hitting the border and Static – Jump to mouse. The default is Static – changes when hitting the border. You’ll just have to check these out yourself to see which works best for you. For the present, I am using the default. And then, the final lower tab is for Speech. I have noticed that people with low vision will experience visual fatigue with long documents to read. The addition of speech in DesktopZoom is an excellent option when the eyes are ready to give out (or put you to sleep). The Speech option picks up on any SAPI5.0 voices you might already have on your computer as well as any premium voices you have acquired. You can turn the speech on only when you want it and you can control volume and speed in this tab.

There is more, but I really ought to leave some of the mystery so you can enjoy setting the program up. DesktopZoom has many really good features. My biggest complaint is that it does slow down movement on the screen. Ah well, nothing is perfect. Give DesktopZoom a try if you feel the need for some screen enlargement to help you read your computer monitor. Just Google DesktopZoom and you’ll be taken to a site for download.

## Software Review

### Dropbox

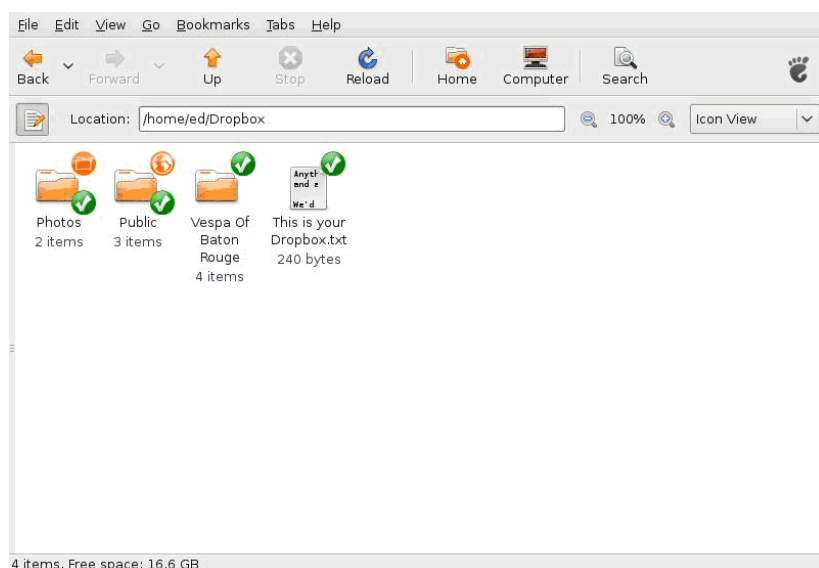
Published by Adobe

A review by Ed Richard, Leader of the Open Source SIG, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA,  
[www.clickers.org](http://www.clickers.org) / <http://cccclinuxsig.pbwiki.com>, [edslinuxbox@cox.net](mailto:edslinuxbox@cox.net)

So just exactly what is Dropbox, you might ask? Have you ever needed to sync files between two or more machines? Have you wanted to also have an off-site copy of those files? Have you needed to sync files between Windows, Linux and Macintosh machines?

Have you wanted to have a public photo album to share pictures with your friends and family? Have you needed a shared on-line file repository for collaborating with co-workers? Are you tired of carrying around a pocket full of thumb drives? Dropbox is all of these and even more. It is cross platform so it runs on Linux, Windows and Mac computers.

After installing the Dropbox application on one machine, you create an account and link that machine to the account. Then, any file that is placed in the My Dropbox folder (which in Windows lives inside the My Documents folder, and in Linux lives in your user folder, the Linux equivalent of My Documents) gets automatically synced with your Dropbox folder on all other linked machines. This is what my Dropbox looks like on my Ubuntu Linux machine:



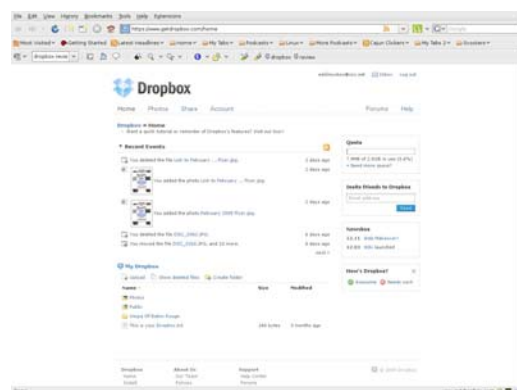
There is also a Public folder that is accessible to anyone and a web interface that allows you to access files on machines that don't have Dropbox installed. Here's what my Dropbox homepage looks like:

You can also access previous versions of files from the web interface. So if you foul up that file and need to go back to last week's version, you can.

To learn more about Dropbox go to: <https://www.getdropbox.com/screencast#screencast> and watch the video.


If you only have Dropbox installed on one machine, it becomes an off-site backup service. Dropbox uses Amazon's S3 service behind the scenes to house your data. So files placed in your Dropbox folder are automatically uploaded to the Dropbox servers. Should you delete them on your local machine or suffer data loss, they can easily be retrieved from the Dropbox servers by installing Dropbox on a replacement machine, or Directly from the Dropbox website.

Dropbox also supports shared folders that allow anyone you invite to the folder to have access to the files in that folder. This is a great way to collaborate and share files with coworkers. There's also a folder specifically configured to hold photos. Any images placed there are automatically turned into a photo album with a publicly accessible URL you can give out. Go here to see a photo album of pictures in my pictures folder: <http://tinyurl.com/cafvvh>





# ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					<b>1</b> Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR*	<b>2</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Board of Directors Crossroads Mall @ the Food Court 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> High Growth Stock Investing (adv) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>10</b>  Mother's Day.	<b>11</b> General Meeting @ 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	<b>12</b> Alamo Coders (DotNET - Web Development; Technology) 7 - 9 P.M.	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

MAY 2009

PRR = Pre-Registration Required

# The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

## 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>.

### Technical Content Ratings

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

# Help Numbers

Can you help a new member with a new computer? Are you proficient in software not listed? Can you help with a title currently showing only one volunteer? Call Linda Bianchi at 226-2460 or email her at <education@alamopc.org>.

**1** Look down the list for the software program you need help with; note the number in front of the title.

**2** Then look down the list to the right for the corresponding number for the person who may be able to help you.

Please observe the times given by the volunteers name to call for phone help.

## Step One

- 1 Computers for Beginners
- 2 Windows 98
- 3 Windows XP

### Microsoft Office

- 4 Word
- 5 Excel
- 6 PowerPoint
- 7 Publisher
- 8 WinFax Pro

### Corel Office

- 9 WordPerfect
- 10 CorelDraw
- 11 Quattro Pro
- 12 Paint Shop Pro

### Photoshop

- 13 Adobe Photoshop

### Internet and E-mail

- 14 Internet Basics / ISP Connection
- 15 Web Page Development
- 16 Internet Explorer
- 17 MS Outlook Express
- 18 Opera
- 19 Mozilla
- 20 Dreamweaver
- 21 .Net
- 22 Flash
- 23 RoadRunner

### Open Office

- 24 OpenOffice

### Financial

- 25 Quick Books
- 26 Quicken

### Auction Online

- 27 eBay

### Genealogy

- 28 Family Origins for Windows
- 29 Genealogy

### Communications / Management

- 30 Time&Chaos
- 31 Act
- 32 Goldmine

### Data Base

- 33 Access
- 34 AlphaFour
- 35 dBase
- 36 Paradox
- 37 MySQL

### Networking

- 38 Networking

### Other

- 39 Hardware / Setting Up A New PC
- 40 Maintenance and Security
- 41 Home Help

## Step Two


Expertise	Name	Phone	Availability	E-mail
(1, 5, 6, 3, 12, 23, 26, 38, 41)	John Bolton	658-3060	6pm-9pm M-F	
(1, 3, 14)	Joe Barth	696-5783	7pm-9pm Tu, Th, Sat	jbarth@swbell.net
(2, 3, 4, 16, 17, 23, 29, 38, 39, 40, 41)	Bruce Cramer	865-2933	9am-3pm M-F, Sat	service@pcpro4u.com
(3, 5)	Bill Eastridge	223-8743	10am-6pm M-F, Sat, Sun	
(4, 15, 17, 33)	Bill Hudson	490-6513	7pm-10 pm M-F, Sat, Sun	bhudson3@satx.rr.com
(4, 9, 14, 27 )	William Hudson	824-6910	3pm-8pm M-F, Sat	rwsh@earthlink.net
(19, 24, 30, 37)	Chris Montgomery	490-2415	7pm-9pm M-F / noon-6pm Sat, Sun	
(3, 16, 17)	Ted Ressler			catechist@gmail.com
(1, 3, 14, 16, 17, 40)	Don Robinson	497-3737	9am-5pm M-F, Sat, Sun	dl7266@swbell.net
(10)	Stephen Tech, Jr	675-2880	5:30pm-9pm M - F	stephentechjr@yahoo.com
(9)	Cynthia Thompson	655-1058	7pm-9pm M-F / 10am-4pm Sat, Sun	cynthom@satx.rr.com
(4)	Christel Villarreal			christel.villarreal@gmail.com

If you are unable to find help in the list above, consider contacting the desk staff volunteers at the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center. 736-0700 or 736-0080. 10am - 4pm M-F, Sat Remember these volunteers are all levels of expertise and some may not be able to answer your questions, but may be able to find someone who can.

# Classified Ads

E-mail your ad to the Editor, PC Alamode at: [editor@alamopc.org](mailto: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

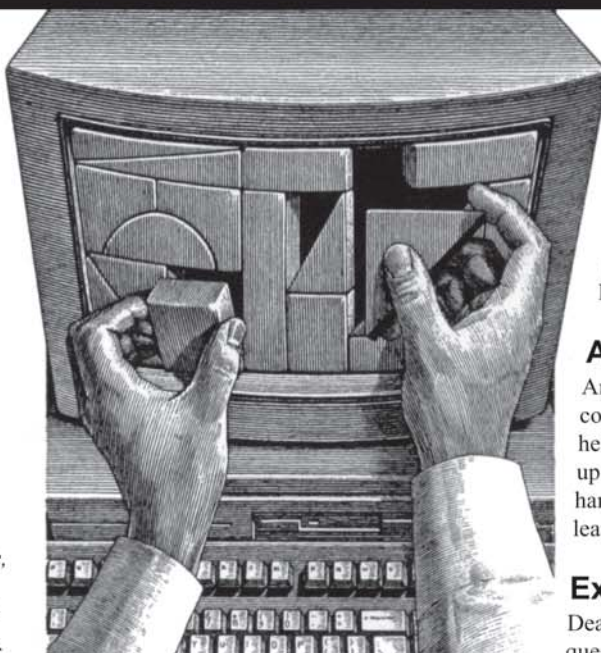
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

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

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



