

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

# PC Alamode

WRITING AND WEB ISSUE

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

August 2009

\$5.00

**Writing inside and out**  
page 20

**Word Processing: Choices from A-Z**  
page 22

**Mozilla Firefox 3.5**  
page 32

**Review: Replay Converter 3.2**  
page 36

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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)

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

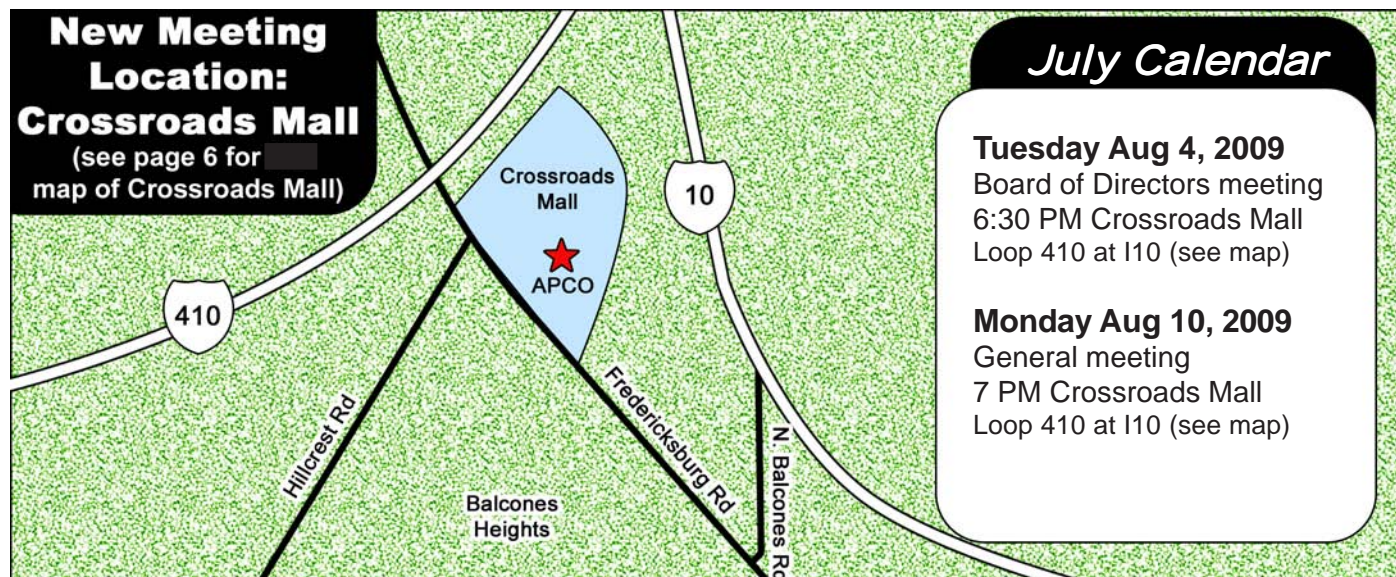
**Alamo PC Organization**  
**PO Box 65180**  
**San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

## Meetings

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

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

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



## July Calendar

**Tuesday Aug 4, 2009**  
Board of Directors meeting  
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

**Monday Aug 10, 2009**  
General meeting  
7 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



# Writing and Web issue

## departments

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

## columns

PowerTalk <i>Shane Hicks</i>	13
Windows Tips & Tricks <i>Bill Beverley</i>	15

## guest contributors

The Deals Guy <i>Bob Click</i>	17
Ergonomic Tips <i>John R. Chait D.C.</i>	19
Practicing the Blakc Art <i>Vinny La Bash</i>	20

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

# PC Alamode

## (501 (C) (3))

### Featured this month

#### Writing

Writing inside and out

Word Processing: Choices from A-Z

Microsoft Word Annoyances

#### Web

O'Reilly e-Book Bundles

Remote computing

Mozilla Firefox 3.5

20  
22  
25  
  
28  
30  
32

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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)

Software Review: Replay Converter 3.2  
Software Review: PowerDirector 7 Ultra

36  
38

#### Ad rates effective January 2005

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
		Per insertion		
Full pg. (7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " w x 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " h)	\$274	\$260	\$246	\$238
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Half pg. (3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " w x 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg.(3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " w x 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " h)	74	72	64	62
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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

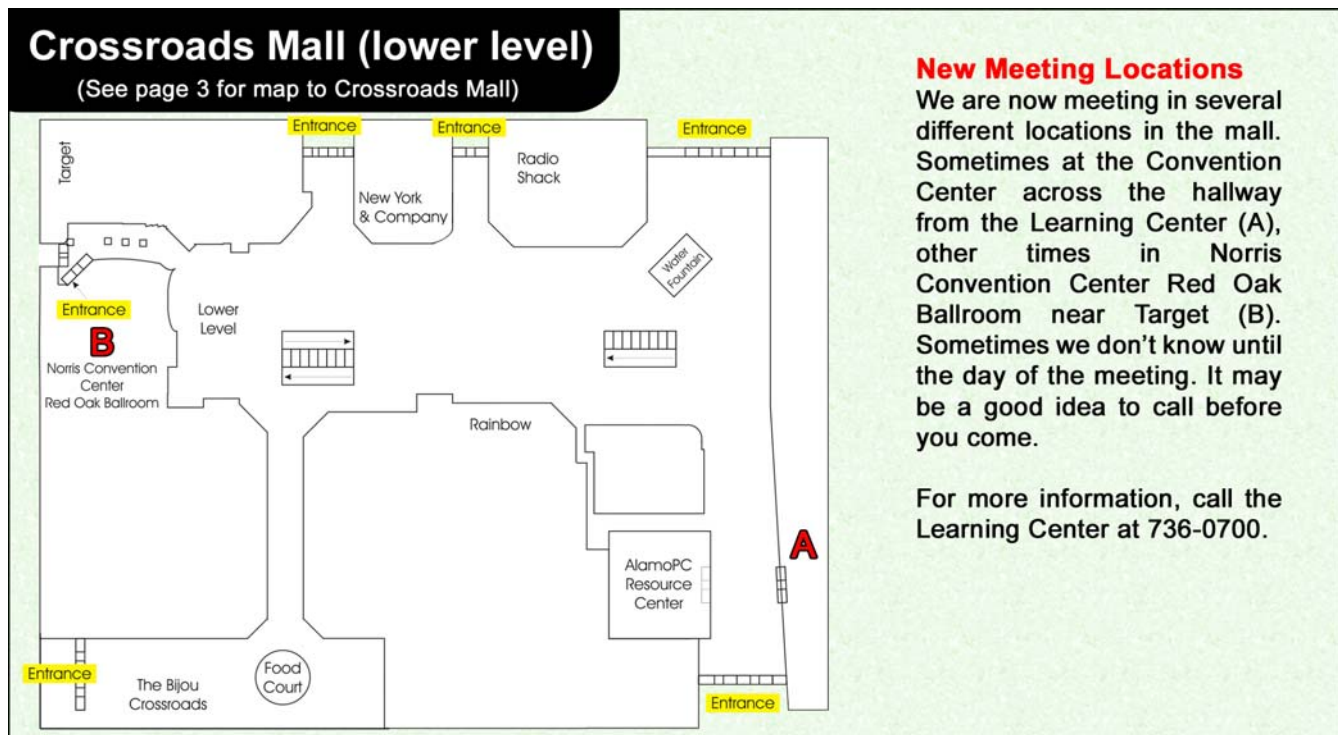
#### Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

FAX 736-0032

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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



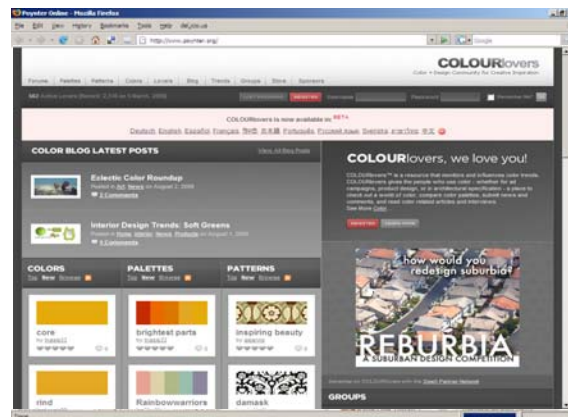
## PC Alamode Links List



### Awkward Family Photos

<<http://awkwardfamilyphotos.com/>>

Sometimes those precious moments just don't work out the way we hoped they would. Hope you don't see anyone you know on this silly Web site!



### Colour Lovers

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

Creative inspiration has never been easier or more accessible. Users at this forum share color combinations, palettes and ideas. Great for designers of any sort.

Every month, *PC Alamode* brings you a collection of informative articles, usually on a given theme. This month, I hope you will enjoy a split issue, which combines writing- and Web-related topics.

Those who like to write may enjoy an article on page 20 by Steve Bass that offers a few tips on how to bring the most out of any sort of writing. Everyone needs a good word processor, so John White (page 22) lists a few of the best programs that will help you get those words on the computer. Finally, Guy Hart-Davis offers some tips on page 25 for those who want to use Microsoft Word, but are tired of jumping through hoops and getting around the strange quirks.

For those who can't live without the Web, articles that cover O'Reilly's e-Book offerings, how to access computers by remote and the latest release of Mozilla Firefox should keep you busy.

Our reviews this month cover multimedia applications Replay Converter, a media conversion program, and PowerDirector, a powerful video-editing application.

**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

## "August" - A Devoid Month, Except As Noted Below

This month I don't find anything of note on the calendar, as it is the only month without a major federal holiday. However, the following are some things that might be of interest: National Back To School Month for many (Children would not consider that even worth mentioning, except it means "vacations and play time will come to an end), National Immunization and Psoriasis Awareness Month, and National goat Cheese Month. Also, the first full week is the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally (with many celebrities participating; the 5th - Full Moon: Period when the entire surface of the moon, that faces the sun, is illuminated (thought Statehood and made a some might want to enjoy it again); 6th -Beginning of the end of WW II (Hiroshima bombed); 21st - Hawaii became the 50th State of the USA in 1959 (in islands the third Friday has been designated Hawaii statehood Day and made a state holiday).

The July BOD meeting was apparently not held as I was out of town, which left less than the three board members required for an official meeting.

Because information about the July General Meeting, and the location, was not made available in a timely manner, only six individuals showed up at our current location (4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio) for the "presentation" that David Steward was to give. I am truly sorry that the information was not made available by him sooner, but I let after 30 minutes as only a general discussion appeared to be the order of things.

It is very late in July, and I have not been informed by David Steward that he has anything secured for the meeting. For June he stated he was "trying to get something worked out with a pre-recorded presentation by Corel.... If this does not work out, I will be using them for August." I am hopeful the July General Meeting will take place and be profitable to those attending. The meeting, unless otherwise noted on the web site will be at 4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio, regardless of the presenter identified. It is once again in David Steward hands, as he has stated he is "trying" to get something scheduled. We shall see!

Overall interest in User Groups is not what it use to be at either the corporate or membership level (and with not much in the way of monthly programs for Alamo PC, I can understand why). As I have pointed out in many previous messages, this fact is confirmed by the ever declining membership here (no new members since November 2008) plus the fact we have not had a full compliment of board members (at least one vacancy) for the past four years.

Anyone having questions regarding any area or matter pertaining to the Alamo PC organization, and future proposed plans may refer them to membership@alamopc.org, and Steven Tech will try to provide information relating to the request.

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, it can only cause me to believe that the future of OUR organization appears to be dimming.

I am hoping that we will have a presenter for the July General Meeting who can address something beneficial to those present. Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting. (The server should be online for the membership area, and our telephone is now working at our current location, although the answering machine may not always function properly.) 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 at the earliest time.

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.

We are still trying to improve member retention, but it has not been as successful as hoped (as mentioned, the total number of members continues to slowly decline and no new members since November 2008). If you do not choose to renew, send a comment briefly giving an explanation as to "Why?" to membership@alamopc.org, with a copy to me (president@alamopc.org, or privately to me - wklutzjr@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.



**Computer Briefs***With Pim Borman*

## How to have Windows remind you of pending updates

- Click Remind Me Later in the Automatic Updates dialog box before you download or install the update.
- In the Reminder dialog box, you can specify the amount of time Windows should wait before reminding you.
- If the reminder is for downloading, Windows reminds you only when you are connected to the Internet.

If the reminder is for installing, Windows reminds you according to the schedule that you specify.

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## August Program

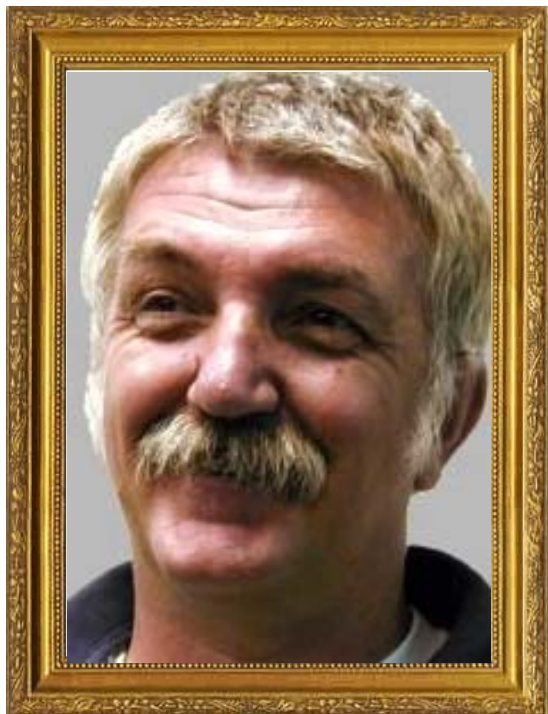
**Bill Klutz**

**I**t is very late in July, and I have not been informed by David Steward about anything regarding the August meeting. He indicated in June, "I am trying to get something worked out with a pre-recorded presentation by Corel, for July.... If this does not work out, I will be using them for August, but am trying to get it setup for July." Obviously it didn't happen for July.

So, unless I hear otherwise, the meeting location will be at our new location (4888 Whirlwind, SAT). 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. Make plans now to come and bring some friends, as we hope to have an interesting presentation.

# Volunteer of the Month

Stephen Tech, Jr.



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

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

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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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Cables & Connectors  
Bare Bone Systems  
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Refurbished Systems, Monitors

### Location:

Live Oak Convention Center  
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### Show Dates:

August 29th  
November 14th  
December 12th

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



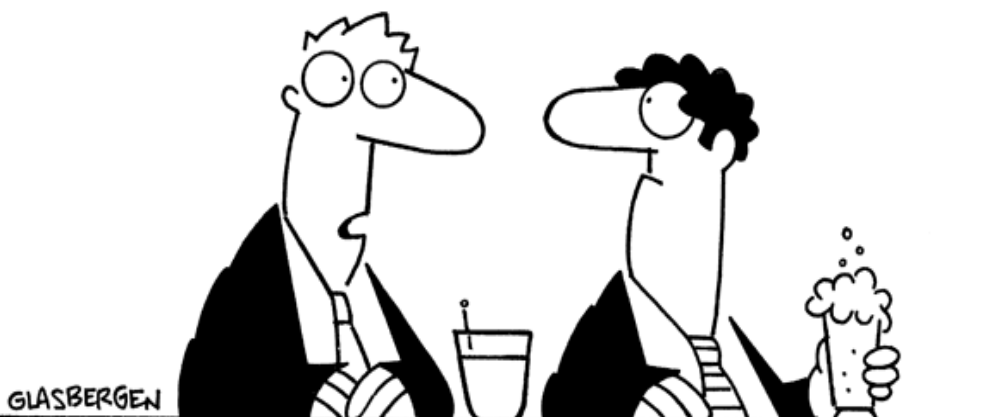


# Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



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[www.glasbergen.com](http://www.glasbergen.com)



**"While I was thinking outside of the box, someone changed the password and now I can't get back in!"**



## Windows Vista

### 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.

Many computer users think of Help and Support as a troubleshooting tool, which is true. However Vista's Help and Support is much more than a troubleshooter feature. You can select Windows Basics, Security and Maintenance, Windows Online Help, Table of Contents, and What's New. To learn more about your computer and how to use it, click Windows Basics. Click on any subtopic and it will take you to a new page brimming with information. The Table of Contents section complements Windows Basics in that it provides information on how to use Windows generically, from simple tasks such as navigating files and folders to working with photos and video to managing your hardware devices. The Help and Support windows in WinXP and Vista look very different, but they do mostly the same things. The primary difference is simply how the information is organized in those operating systems. Regardless of which Windows operating system you have on your computer, the Help and Support feature will help you solve many problems. When your tech support needs outstrip what Help and Support can offer, you can call "Smart Computing Magazine's" Tech Support service for assistance at 1-800-368-8304. However, you may have to be a subscriber to this publication to get that assistance.

### Time Zones

Vista usually displays your local time in the lower-right corner of the Desktop, but it can also be configured to simultaneously display the time for other locations, too. To set up Vista for multiple clocks, right-click the time, select Adjust Date/Time, and then click the Additional Clocks tab. Here you can create clocks for one or two extra time zones. Although Vista will still show only your local time in the System Tray, when you put the mouse cursor over the time display, the additional clocks will appear. Click on the time instead and you'll see actual round clocks.

### Vista Service Pack 1

Vista SP1 includes a number of bug fixes and support for new standards and hardware. Vista SP1 delivers well over 500 updates. XP SP3 includes a whopping 1,174 updates. Those numbers look out of sight, but you've already got most of the updates. Service packs include every previous update for the operating system. They do not include many new updates. This ensures you get caught up on all the important updates. But even with all those updates, you won't see a big change. These service packs do a lot of work under the hood. But they won't really affect how you interface with the computer. The updates fall into three categories – hardware support, usability and security. There are updates that don't fit neatly into those categories. But think of them as smoothing out Vista's rough edges. Some users that upgraded to Vista found that some devices didn't work. SP1 helps with device compatibility. It also lays the groundwork for devices you may not own yet. Vista will better identify and support Blu-ray Disc drives. SP1 also adds support for new Windows Media Center Extenders. SP1 fixes some issues with Vista's usability. The annoying User Account Control prompts have been reduced. The Windows Genuine Advantage kill switch is removed. Microsoft won't cripple non-genuine copies of Vista. Some users found long delays when logging on and resuming from hibernation. These wait times have been reduced.

The service pack also fixes a number of security holes. It includes every security update since the launch of Vista. It also improves some existing security features. For example, the BitLocker hard drive encryption has been strengthened. The release of Vista SP1 hasn't been blemish free. It accounts for most of the horror stories. But when you look at them, the stories aren't that horrific. There are ways to fix the most common problems. Many people simply aren't offered SP1. This can be pretty confusing. The service pack doesn't show up in Windows Update. And there isn't much explanation. Several things can cause this. But one accounts for a majority of people's problems. Vista SP1 conflicts with some hardware drivers. If Windows Update detects these drivers, you aren't offered SP1. The easy fix is to update those drivers. But which drivers are we talking about? Windows Update doesn't tell you. That information is buried in the Microsoft Knowledge Base. To find it, scroll down to Resolution. Then find "Method for Cause 5." Check for driver updates in Windows Update. These may be marked as Optional. If that doesn't resolve the problem, see the computer manufacturer's Web site. It may provide downloads for SP1 compatible drivers. Another problem has been performance issues after installing SP1. These too can be attributed to outdated hardware drivers. But they can also be caused by software—often security software. Be sure you have the latest versions of your firewall, antivirus and anti-spyware programs. Don't be scared away from SP1. The above problems are manageable. And for many people, the update goes off without a hitch. You may have no problems at all.

### Vista SP2

On Tuesday May 27, 2009 without announcement or fanfare, Microsoft made available stand-alone installers for Windows Vista Service Pack 2. It includes both 32-bit and 64-bit software versions. If you have automatic updates turned on for your computer, it will alert you that SP2 is available for download and installation. Initially, the release supports five languages: English, German,

*Continued on page 14*

Spanish, French and Japanese. In the future, Vista will be able to support for another 31 languages. SP2 does not contain Internet Explorer 8. Reports are that it is rather easy to install this SP and there were no problems during and after the installation.

### **Vista Ultimate:**

Windows Vista Ultimate is an edition of Windows Vista that combines all the features available in the other Vista editions. It's the most expensive edition, but it combines the mobility and business functions of Vista Business with the entertainment features of Vista Home Premium. Compared to XP, Ultimate offers improved security through User Account Control, Windows Defender, Internet Explorer 7's special protected mode, a redesigned Windows Security Center, and other Vista security features. Ultimate also offers instant search, performance improvements, Windows Aero, and other features. Ultimate is the most expensive edition, but it has the most features. It offers all the entertainment and general computing features of Vista Home Premium, plus all the business and mobility features of Vista Business. Some of the Vista entertainment applications are Windows Aero, Windows Media Center, Windows Photo Gallery, and Windows Media Player. Ultimate also offers Windows Meeting Space, Windows SideShow, Windows Calendar, other productivity and mobility applications, the ability to join a domain, and support for Group Policy, making it ideal for business use as well as entertainment and personal use. Although Vista Ultimate can run on a Vista Capable PC, you should consider buying a Vista Premium Ready PC instead. One Vista Ultimate feature, Windows Aero, won't run on Vista Capable PCs. Other Ultimate features such as Windows Media Center will perform better on higher-end computers that meet the Premium Ready requirements.

### **Vista Time Saver**

If you have a setting, such as the power options on your computer which is changed from time to time in Vista and want to reduce the steps to get there, then this tip is for you. Locate the desired setting, right-click the path in the Address Bar, and choose Copy Address. Now, go to the Desktop, right-click again in an open area, and choose Paste Shortcut. You will see an icon on the Desktop that eliminates the aforementioned hassle.

### **Vista like WinXP**

If you've worked with Windows XP and like its appearance, you can make Windows Vista look like Windows XP. To make Vista look like XP, start by changing the Start menu: Right-click the Start button, choose Properties. In the Properties box, select Classic Start menu, and click OK. Next, bring back the desktop: Right-click a blank part of the desktop and choose Personalize. Choose Theme and then choose Windows Classic from the Theme pull-down menu and then click OK. Finally, put the menus back on top of each folder: Open your Documents folder from the Start menu. Now click the Organize button, choose Folder and Search Options, and choose Use Windows Classic Folders and click OK.

### **Windows 7**

If discouraged by problems with Vista, you can wait for Windows 7 (Win7) which is now programmed to be released this fall. Speculation is that Win7 will have fewer new features and more improvements to Windows Vista, such as the difficult to use Bitlocker encryption. There may be a "hypervisor" or an overhaul of the user interface in Win7. The hypervisor is a thin operating system that manages virtual machines running on the system. A touch screen may also be in Win7. Microsoft plans to extend its desktop search feature to find files on Windows Server 2008 machines for Win7, too.

### **Windows Firewall**

Because Windows Firewall comes with Windows Vista, you don't need to install anything. It's configured to start working as soon as you turn on your computer for the first time. The default settings are only set to block most incoming connections. All outgoing connections are allowed, therefore you'll need to establish outgoing rules for your computer. Most users will be able to configure Windows Firewall with the Windows Firewall Control Panel. To get there, click Start and then Control Panel. Once in Control Panel, click Security and Windows Firewall. From this screen, you can turn Windows Firewall on or off, block or unblock programs from accessing the Internet and go to Windows Security Center. More advanced users may want to configure Windows Firewall through a Microsoft Management Console (MMC) snap-in called Windows Firewall with Advanced Security. To access the MMC, click Start and then Control Panel. Be sure to click Classic View in the left pane of the resulting window. Double-click Administrative Tools and then scroll down to Windows Firewall with Advanced Security and double-click it. If Vista asks permission to continue, click Continue. From the MMC, you can create and set parameters for inbound and outbound rules, customize network profiles, read through documentation on how different aspects of the firewall work, and further customize the firewall. Working through the MMC is a much more powerful way to customize Windows Firewall than through the Windows Firewall window, but typical users will find that they can accomplish most, if not all, of what they do with the latter option.

If you buy a new machine with Vista installed, you'll still need to transfer your data. You can use Microsoft's Easy Transfer to move files and settings from XP machines using a special USB cable. It does a good job of transferring settings and files, with the exception of Firefox data. Some people have run into glitches with Easy Transfer. They were easily resolved by shutting down the security programs on XP and restarting the Easy Transfer process. Unfortunately, the error messages provided no information about the problem. Windows Easy Transfer only works on XP and Windows 2000. If you have an earlier version of Windows, other programs are available. Once Vista is running, you should install security software. Both AVG and avast! antivirus programs will run on Vista, and they're free for your use. Windows Defender, the anti-spyware program, is already installed with Vista. Vista's firewall has also been greatly improved since XP.





## 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've been writing the DealGuy column for 14 years and have not missed a month, but its time I took a month off, so don't look for the column next month. I need a break and thanks in advance for the opportunity. I'm finding less and less to offer anyway so a break is probably in order.

A while back, I talked about the FACUG spring conference and the attendance of about 140, but I was unable to find out how many user groups were represented. I was able to take a look at the registration recently and it looks like they came from 39 user groups, but remember that there were also several APCUG officers there who listed their own users groups. I'm glad it was successful, but next year's FACUG conference will be really something to look forward to. I'm sure you will read about it, and it looks like the attendance for that one will set a record.

Thanks for your feedback about my comments pertaining to the special setup arrangements for the SAP Sapphire show. So far, readers said they understand the difficulty of taking pictures under such difficult conditions. I don't feel too bad because I have watched the official photographers for some shows get very frustrated trying to get good pictures of the booths they were supposed to photograph.

I'm working on an article about trade show setups, but here is something else to think about. When you walk through the entrance to a trade show, you probably don't pay much attention to that obscure security guard who stands in the background and is checking for badges as you walk by. You probably don't even consider that the person you are walking by sees much more than you realize. I can't say this about "all" the people checking badges, but it is mostly true of the more experienced guards you see. They usually look like they are casually checking for your badge, but here is what really happens with an experienced security guard:

They actually take a mental snapshot of your badge and automatically read the name on it to see if the name matches the gender of the person wearing it (is it a male name if the person is a male), some shows they may look for other traits; they read the year to make sure the person is not using a last year's badge, and they check for color codes that might be on it to allow certain people in only on certain days (sometimes the day of the week is there, but usually only a color bar on the bottom). For some shows there might be other info on the badge. A good guard can also spot a phony badge made with a computer pretty easily because they get used to seeing the right badge. Yes, people try all kinds of tricks to get in free because some shows have very high registration fees.

They also must be diplomatic when they run into a belligerent attendee who doesn't want to be bothered going to registration to obtain a proper badge. Some of them are ready to punch you when you stop them. As you can imagine, diplomacy is a good thing to master. They usually do all this for somewhere around eight or nine dollars per hour, depending on what city you work in.

Since I don't have very good vision, I try to avoid entrance door positions, although I don't mind working at loading docks where you mostly see the same people going in and out while working, and you get so you recognize them when you see them. Since most of those workers wear colored wristbands for ID, they hate to wear them on their arm so you must look on the wrists, a belt loop (with their shirt hanging over it), or other spots to find it. Often you must ask them to see it if it is not in plain sight. Some convention center employees don't like to wear badges, but again, you get to know them, rather than argue with them. I once worked an entrance to a pharmacist job interview area where I had to watch for an ampersand on the badge someplace. That was a tough one for me. One person somehow got an interview without paying the fee and we were all given the name to watch for; and one guard found that person, who was then interviewed by show management.

### \*Worried About A Web Site's Safety?

A popular warning product for dangerous Web sites is McAfee's "Site Advisor" <<http://www.siteadvisor.com>>. I've read a couple of reviews that were not all that complimentary, but have not tried it myself. Another one that I have not read about either way is Site Hound. When you get there, these products warn you if a Web site is safe to visit. Site Hound is offered by Fire Trust <<http://www.firetrust.com>>. There is a free version, and also a pay version with more features for \$29.95. They also offer MailWasher if you want spam protection and it is a popular product with a one time price. There used to be free updates for life, but it doesn't

*Continued on page 16*

look like that applies any more. Do your homework if you are interested in either of these. User group member discounts are available for Firetrust products through APCUG <<http://www.apcug.net>>. Your user group must be a member to have access to the Sharepoint page for that information.

**\*Ever Consider A Virtual Cover? (This is their announcement, but edited)**

Insofta Development has unveiled the newest version of Insofta Cover Commander, a tool providing the effective solution to quickly and easily create quality custom-designed three-dimensional virtual boxes for software, e-books, DVDs, manuals, CD-ROMs and screenshots. Version 3.1 delivers a host of improvements.

Enhancements in the latest version of Insofta Cover Commander include support for batch processing from the command line, providing a perfect solution for creating a large number of similar virtual boxes, books, and many more. This is essential for those who create covers and boxes for on-line shops, catalogs and other large projects. The program also allows saving animation in SWF, GIF and AVI format.

The program enables creation of sophisticated and modern cover designs with very few mouse clicks; streamlining workflow. The program allows comprehensive customization of background color and transparency, gradient, shadow and reflection; what's more, the settings can be saved and used later. All the features are delivered in multilingual user interface (English, German, French, Spanish, Japanese, Hungarian and Russian).

Insofta Cover Commander is compatible with Microsoft Windows 98, ME, NT, 2000, XP and Vista, and costs \$48.30 for a single license, entitling a user to 1 year of free updates. Further information on the product, as well as its free trial version, is available from <[www.insofta.com/cover-commander](http://www.insofta.com/cover-commander)>. User group members get a 20% discount by entering the code ICC-RRDJ-DUG in the proper space.

Direct download link: <[www.insofta.com/download/covercommandersetup.exe](http://www.insofta.com/download/covercommandersetup.exe)>

Company website: <[www.insofta.com](http://www.insofta.com)>

**\*Problems?**

A while back I mentioned the problem I had not being able to access the memory in my digital picture frame with either of my desktop machines, but I could with my new laptop. Nobody was able to tell me what was wrong, but Bob Balogh, a past president of the Boca Raton Computer Society <<http://www.brcs.org>>, sent me a suggestion for finding the answer <<http://www.blackviper.com/>> and I am sharing his advice with my readers who might have their own problems. I have not had the time to go there to research it yet, but hope to get it done soon. Bob's suggestion is below:

"The above is one of the best sites available for learning about your computer. The section on Windows Configurations, left hand side, is most helpful." Bob also writes a monthly help column, and has traveled to other user groups in his area to do presentations."

I always read Bob's column in their newsletter, Boca Bits, and here is something he recommended for their members. Bob likes to keep a monthly calendar on his desktop. This enables him to see the entire month at a glance. The one he suggests also has an array of other features that lets you enter events that are upcoming, etc. It is called Rainlendar Lite, and it's free at <<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/Rainlendar.html>>.





# The computer station

## 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/>>

**T**he importance of Computer Station design increases with the amount of time spent at the computer. As a general guide anyone who spends more than two hours a day in front of a PC should take special care to ensure the Computer Station is user friendly. Ideally the chair, terminal and keyboard height should all be fully adjustable.

When this is the case, the chair should be the first piece of furniture adjusted to fit the person operating their PC. Once the chair has been properly adjusted it should be used as a reference point for all further adjustments. With the feet firmly planted on the floor and the upper body in a neutral position, the monitor and keyboard position should then be adjusted. Finally additional computer accessories including mouse or trackball, wrist supports and copy holders should be correctly placed. If the work surface height is not adjustable, the chair should be fitted to the Computer Station and a footrest provided to support the feet if needed. Specific guidelines for these adjustments are outlined in the following sections.

### Chair

Computer users tend to spend most of their day seated. To provide comfortable support for each particular individual, the following features are important:

- \* Easily adjustable chair height from 17-21 inches.
- \* Seat pan large enough to provide support for thighs and buttocks, but not pressing the back of the knees
- \* Seat pan with a waterfall edge at the front to avoid pressure on underside of the lower thigh
- \* Easily adjustable seat pan tilt
- \* Easily adjustable back rest tilt and height providing lumbar support
- \* Easily adjustable arm height
- \* Sturdy base with five legs and casters
- \* Breathable material and dense foam that gives way no more than 1 inch.
- \* Many work surface heights are adjustable; in this case the chair is the first piece of furniture adapted to fit the user.

### Chair Adjustment

1. Stand in front of the chair. Adjust the height so that the highest point of the seat is just below the knee cap.
2. Sit so that the clearance between the front edge of the seat and the lower part of the legs just fits a clenched fist.
3. Adjust the angle and height of the backrest of the chair so that it supports the hollow in the lower back.
4. Adjust the seat pan tilt to a comfortable position.

A chair should be adjusted many times during the day. This will help to relieve muscle tension in specific muscle groups while loading others. If the work surface height is not adjustable, position the chair so that forearms are parallel to the floor, while keying. If necessary, provide a foot rest to support the legs and reduce strain on the lower back.

The monitor or screen of a computer should be positioned so that the top line of text is at eye level while seated. Distance from the eyes to the screen should be approximately arms length. Greater distances may contribute to poor posture, if the user leans forward to see the information on the screen. So adjust your computer font to be able to read it at arms length. In Windows XP, use your display properties appearance tab to make these adjustments. Set it for extra large fonts.

The monitor should be placed directly in front of the PC User, with a maximum of lateral angle of 30 degrees. Tilting the monitor so that the screen is vertical is also important as this position may reduce glare. These adjustments to the monitor help keep the neck in a more neutral position, minimize muscle fatigue and reduce glare.

*Continued on page 18*



## Keyboard

A Computer Station should accommodate the keyboard on a separate and adjustable surface. The keyboard holder should be long enough to accommodate a pointing device or mouse pad directly beside the keyboard and at the same height. It is important that both the keyboard and the keyboard holder be kept as flat as possible. This places the wrist in a more neutral position minimizing muscle strain.

The keyboard should be positioned at a height which allows the shoulders to be relaxed, the upper arm relaxed and close to vertical, the lower arm horizontal and the wrist straight.

## Pointing Devices

The main pointing device used for computer work is the mouse. Shoulder, forearm and wrist discomfort can be significantly reduced if the mouse is used optimally. Tips on proper usage of a mouse include:

1. Place mouse at the side of the keyboard and at the same level. Do not reach for it.
2. Use the armrest on the chair or rest your arm on another available support while using the mouse.
3. Reduce pressure on the wrist from the work surface; a mouse pad or rest may help.
4. Rest your finger on the button; do not hold it hovering above the mouse.
5. Keep the wrist straight; wrist angle should not exceed 20 degrees extended, nor be bent to either side.
6. Do not grip the mouse tightly.
7. Choose a mouse that fits your hand; many different sizes and shapes are available.
8. Set your mouse speed at about the middle range.
9. Reduce the time spent using the click and drag feature of the mouse as this puts strain on the forearm and hand. Software is available which will convert an extra mouse button to one which performs the click and drag function, or the double click function.

Newer computer furniture makes specific allowances for mouse position. Earlier computer furniture designs may require structural modification to accommodate the mouse or the selection of alternate pointing devices.

Alternatives to a mouse are increasing with the advancement of technology. Trackballs are a common alternative. They should have a minimum diameter of 3 inches. As well, gliding touch pads are available which are activated by the movements of the finger. Tablet pads (pen like substitutes) are also available. The advantages and disadvantages of these various input devices have not been well studied, and should be experimented with before purchase.

## Wrist Support

Foam pads placed in front of the keyboard known as wrist supports remove sharp, uncomfortable edges. Wrist supports tend, however, to be misused. Wrists should only be rested on the wrist support during pauses in keying and should not be rested on the wrist support while the user is typing.

## Copy holder

Copy holders are recommended for individuals who perform input tasks from a source document. Copy holders eliminate frequent neck movements caused from looking back and forth between screen and paper, as well as continuous refocusing of the eyes. To maximize the benefits of a copy holder, it should be at the same height as the monitor, and as close to the monitor as possible. (See figure)

## Bifocals

Bifocal wearers may tilt their head back to view the monitor through the lower portion of their glasses. In this case the monitor should be placed lower than previously recommended. The use of single focus glasses designed specifically for computer use may be the ideal solution for this situation.

Increased use of computers has caused a corresponding rise in health concerns directly related to their use. The most common health concerns are repetitive strain injuries, general muscle strain and discomfort and eye and vision problems. Computer Station design and proper PC practices can help to address these concerns.



## Upgrading your monitor

### 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>

**M**any more folks than I thought are getting the urge to watch high definition video on their personal computers. If high definition has you captivated, pay attention to the technologies known as HDMI and HDCP. HDMI or High Definition Media Interface is a technology that connects video receivers and DVD players to devices such as a television. It makes no difference to HDMI if your set is high definition or not. The technology handles both standard and high definition resolutions.

HDCP or High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection is a completely different animal. Intel developed the technology specifically to prevent distortion or any kind of electronic interference between source and receiver. For example, HDCP encrypts the digital content of anything that a device such as a DVD player might send through a Digital Visual Interface (DVI) to a television set, a projector or a computer monitor. The encryption used is not a form of copy protection, but a process designed to protect the integrity of the data. In other words, HDMI makes sure that what is sent is what's received.

It's important to understand that HDCP is content protection, not copy protection. It won't prevent you from pausing live programming or recording a program to view at a later time. Any content provider that did this would soon be at war with its customers.

As long as features such as "time-shifting" keep appearing, protecting copyright material becomes increasingly difficult. Copyrights are important because without them there is no protection for the artists, authors, and performers who create material or those who use them.

Your home equipment can implement any kind of copy protection, but a content provider might allow no copies whatsoever. Another provider might let you make a limited number of copies. Still another provider might put limitations on how the material is used. Many factors come into play. The mechanism for distribution, source, equipment design, and equipment configuration all have their unique effect. A content provider will usually insist on enforcing its own brand of copy protection.

HDCP makes its appearance at the DVI connection, the last link in the video chain. HDCP makes no decisions on any type of copy protection strategy, it merely protects the choice.

It may be a let down to find out that HDCP isn't an issue yet. However, it will become more important when high definition takes over. Expect all high definition DVD players to eventually use HDCP.

If you own a DVD player that isn't HDCP compliant, you will still be able to use it even if your TV isn't HDCP compliant. You just won't experience high definition quality images. HDCP will restrict playback to standard quality. This prevents pirates from getting perfect copies of movies or other digital content. Upgrades are definitely in most people's future.

Windows Vista will certainly support HDCP, as will upcoming versions of the Mac OS. What it comes down to is if you want to watch high definition content on your computer monitor, the monitor must be HDCP-compliant.

Almost any television set you buy today will use HDCP, but very few computer monitors are HDCP compliant. Do your research carefully. If you want to watch high definition on your monitor, it must be HDCP compliant.



# Writing and Web issue

## Writing inside and out

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

I have a comfy spot on both sides of the fence. I get the pleasure of writing for a magazine that's big enough for me not to worry that I'll say something dumb. PC World provide tons of background support—first, second, and technical editors, copy editors, fact checkers, and even attorneys.

*Continued on page 23*



At the other end of the spectrum are user group newsletters. Writing in PIBMUG is more freewheeling. I can write about any topic, something that strikes me on the spur of the moment. (PCW wants a four month stack of story topics.) And unlike PC World, I don't have anyone watching my language, fretting over (and often removing) my voice, and roping me into a set amount of space. PC World's Home Office column is roughly 650 words, less the "Where to Buy," the spot where I supply details so the reader can get in touch with the companies I write about.

The 650 limit is a killer. If you do any writing, you know it's more difficult to write short, especially if you have to cram in humor, content, product justification and examples, one or two links, and the essential takeaway. The rule—and you'll see this in practically all computing magazines—is giving the reader something to do after finishing the column. I got lucky when they asked me to do the Home Office online version.

All the leftover material from the print edition—and there's always plenty—found a new home.

One other thing you might take for granted in a user group newsletter is the size of the article. When I put the Prompt together, I choose from countless articles, worrying about content but not size. For instance, you'll find "The Plain Truth about Casual Software Piracy" on page six. It's long but compelling reading, and something you'd never see in a commercial magazine.

Many of you don't enjoy writing, yet need to do it for work. So I thought I'd supply a few tips, things that will help make you sound better in letters, e-mail, and reports. (BTW, you're right—this is the takeaway...)

**\*\* Talk into print:** When I write, I try to take what I imagine I'd say to you and put it into words. I do it by quickly typing what I think, trying not to filter anything. (Filtering—or editing—comes later when I look over what I wrote.)

**\*\* Write like you talk:** You've probably noticed that I use lots of contractions—for instance, you'll, we've, let's. It's pretty casual and the way I speak. My guess is many of you do the same. I can visualize Joe Bohannon saying, "well, sure, but I'm not going to do that." And that's the point—that's exactly how he sounds and it'd sound ideal in print. Get the idea?

**\*\* Write short sentences.** I think readers have an easier time digesting short chunks of info. They'll also be more inclined to read—and understand—what you say. If you can't do it, write longer sentences and later, when you review your work, divide the long sentences into two or three short ones.

**\*\* Write short paragraphs:** They're the toughest thing for me to plow through. One trick is to stop every five, six, or seven sentences, take a breath, and start another paragraph.

**\*\* Be active:** For the longest time I couldn't figure out passive from active voice. Once I had it, writing became easier. If no one's taking responsibility, it's passive. "Mistakes were made" is passive. "We all made a few mistakes," is an active voice. It's almost impossible to write in the passive voice if you follow the next bullet.

**\*\* Stay first:** I write from the first person. It's always my viewpoint (yeah, I know, it's always about me). And that's the tone you oughta consider using. The reason is I can visualize you when I write and you can see me while you're reading.



# Word Processing: Choices from A-Z

by **John White**, a member of the ICON PCUG, NY, From The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of ICON PC User Group, Inc., November 2008 Edition, [www.iconpcug.org](http://www.iconpcug.org), [editor@iconpcug.org](mailto:editor@iconpcug.org)

**B**esides the venerable Microsoft Word and WordPerfect, an array of word-processing applications—both cheap and free—is vast and growing rapidly. Some are freestanding singletons to install on the hard disk. Some serve in a suite of apps including a spreadsheet to run live via the Internet. Most online versions I viewed still manifest hurdles to leap before they reach maturity. Two installable versions of MS-Office alternatives, however, rival the Gates products in impressive ways.

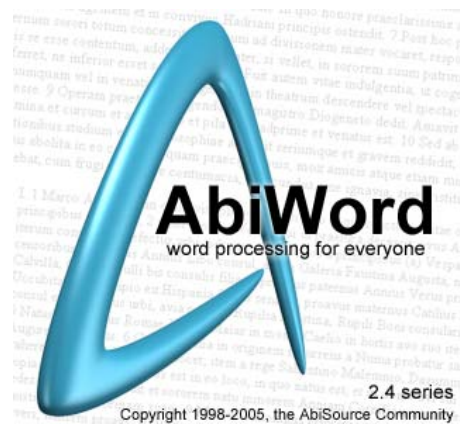
**Abiword:** Although Microsoft's "Wordpad" performs at least half of the writing tasks most of us do, Abiword is installed on my four Windows computers. It will do 98% of what I ask of a word wrangler. Placing a tiny icon on the Quick Launch menu just to the right of the Start button provides this fast-loading, capable program in easy reach. The native file format, .abw, works equally in Abi's versions for Linux and Mac OS X, but there is also an easy drop-down option to save in .doc, .rtf, .txt, .html, .xhtml, and other formats. Abi is a favorite alternate of some of ICON's leaders. [Free download: <http://www.abiword.com/>] The latest version is 2.6.2.

**Buzzword:** Adobe's offering, self-described as "The First Real Word Processor for the Web" even though it's not, requires [1] a sign-up and password [2] and says "We're sorry, JavaScript must be enabled in order to use Buzzword." I'm sorry, too. If a program requires JavaScript, ActiveX, Flash, or Internet Explorer, I can live without it. The world is dangerous enough without them, and my life is already too exciting. Ah, so little time and so many other choices! If someone is willing to deal with it, please try it and give us your reaction to Buzzword. [Free download required: <http://www.buzzword.com>]

**Flysuite:** This one promotes itself as an online alternative to Word and Excel that focuses on document collaboration. When I went to their Web site, my Comodo firewall filled the lower right quarter of the screen with warnings about "blocked URLs," an all time record. That sounded too much an attack of potential bad guys and I stopped right there. Any braver soul care to report on Flysuite? [Free: <http://www.flysuite.com>]

**Google Docs beta:** Anew offline version exists but in an even earlier beta stage: Despite my awe for the quality and variety of many offerings from Google, Docs beta online doesn't make the list. It seems to drive a middle lane between "lightweight" and "lame."

I see no reason to use it yet instead of Abiword or even Wordpad to create a new file. Any other users care to point out advantages too subtle for me to spot? To get there, enter your Gmail account name and password. Click on NEW>Document (or spreadsheet, presentation, or folder) and go to work. Don't look for rulers, tabs, or even clues about WordArt, mail merge or even clues how to send the document as an email or attachment. A limited selection of insertable "special characters" offers barebones Wingdings but not Monotype Sorts or any other favorite character sources. You can



*Continued on page 23*

insert other special characters if you know their Unicode numbers. Oddly enough, the insertable “Asian” character set includes angle brackets, printer dingbats, Western math symbols, plus cm, kg, km, and copyright (c). You may still have to wangle an “invitation” to Gmail if Google is still playing hard-to get with this powerful email/storage service. Free: <http://docs.google.com>.

**Microsoft Works:** Older versions required hop-skip-and-jump trips through menus to reach an otherwise inviting word processor with usable templates for home and school use. Works 8.5 came on my laptop a year ago, but some Vista machines reportedly include version 9 of Works employing a full version of MSWord although the MS Web site was somewhat vague about this. Version 8.5's word processor looks like Word Lite. It includes the ability to open its own .wps format and its .wpt templates (nice) as well as Word and other formats such as .rtf, .txt, .csv, and .html. Forget about .xml, .odf, or MS-Office 2007's own .docx. Works offers a friendly and capable database, a spreadsheet, calendar, and dictionary as well. Version 8.5 is under \$10 at <http://store.purplus.net/miwo85.html>

**Mindomo:** As a preliminary for individual or group writing, this program calling itself an “Online Mind Mapping Process” offers a free visual organizer to clarify and plan the writing process. Your turn: <http://www.mindomo.com/>

**Notepad:** The built-in Windows plain-text editor makes a type minimalist HTML editor with clean unformatted code. Not all users know there are font and word-wrap options available. To check it those capabilities, go to Start>Accessories>Notepad>Format.

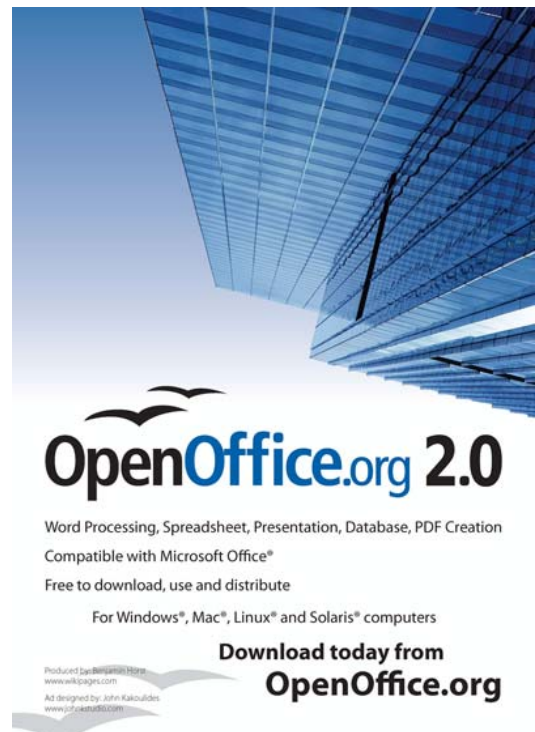
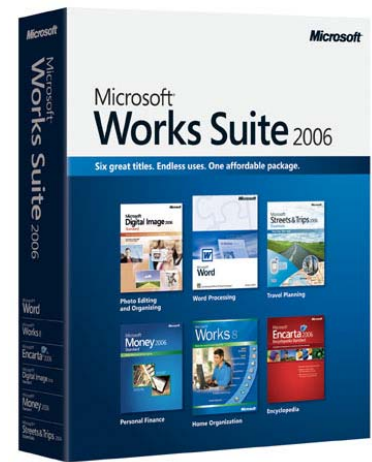
**OpenOffice Writer:** This article is being written with version 2.4. It retains a few minor quirks and inconveniences compared with MS-Word 2000, XP, or 2003 plus some decided advantages. For example, if the squiggly red line under correctly spelled terms (missing from its dictionaries) bothers you, UNclick the ABC button on the top of the screen—the one with a wavy red line. At any point, click its mate (ABC above a blue check mark) and manually check spelling. However, there is not button for the thesaurus. Call it up instead with Control-F7. You can also check in Czech or Nepali as well as more common tongues. The default language list supplies three flavors of English and three of German but none of French or Spanish. More 79 other language dictionaries are downloadable or under development. I switch between OpenOffice (“Writer” or “swriter.exe”) and Word, depending on the task.

OOW saves keystrokes by remembering recently typed words and inserting them in white letters amid blue bands after one types just a few of the word's letters. To accept its suggestion after starting a word, tap ENTER and keep typing. To ignore it instead, just type on. Users of Excel will recognize and appreciate this option. OpenOffice outdoes Word in WYSIWYG cropping of inserted pictures. For a long time OO has offered in the File menu “Export as PDF” as one choice at file-saving time. A menu button also offers the same feature. It rapidly creates and saves the file directly instead of sending it to a printer menu as Adobe's expensive version requires.

Logically enough, page formatting choices are found in the (TA-DA!!!) Format drop-down menu instead of the File menu. I especially like the “E-mail as Microsoft Word” button on my customized toolbar. I'll use that one in a few minutes to send this file to Ira.

Although a paid-for version with telephone help is available as StarOffice (from Sun Microsystems) for under \$70, this free version is supported by a worldwide community of volunteer programmers and forumdwellers. The suite includes equivalent programs for Excel and PowerPoint, a capable database, and a drawing program—all accessible from the File>New menu in OpenOffice Writer. In place of Microsoft Publisher in the

premium-priced MS-Office suite, the free open-source Scribus may be satisfactory [<http://www.scribus.net/>]. The native OOW file format, .odt, is widely employed around the world, conforming to the standard used in Europe and other ISO countries. This file type crosses platforms to work in Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X. OOW also opens and saves in .doc, .txt, .rtf, .xml, .html, plus several more formats including Microsoft's .psw [for Pocket Word]. I have had better success with OOW opening and editing older Word documents than with MS-Office 2007. [Free download to install: <http://www.openoffice.org/>]





**Thinkfree Online:** To me, it's "ThinkLoser." and forget the "free" part. This is/was supposedly a free online suite with an optional Premium version. Reputable media mentioned its limited beta offering was as early as December 2006 with cost estimates of \$5 to \$10 a month. Earlier this week (April 15) a Web search at Avant listed Broderbund as #1 among many download sources, but that link seized up both times I tried it. Reaching Broderbund by a different route, I found the installable (not "online?") Windows-only version for \$44.95.

After 20 minutes or more trying to download, register, and fire it up the free one elsewhere on the Web, after email verifications, etc., plus two more crashes—amid various notices about what to do if downloading and installing failed in a variety of ways—I admitted failure and uninstalled it. Just before giving up, I had semi-installed and managed to find a Thinkfree screen claiming this to be the best office suite on earth. If so, earth is in trouble besides just growing warmer. Other screens apparently accessed their word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software, but never revealed any way to actually create a file using any of those choices! Two teasers seemed promising at first—"Search" and collaboration.

Since I had not yet created a document, it was no surprise that searching for one proved to be a dead end. With nothing yet in production by me or anyone I know, its collaboration had even less utility. Next, I searched in "Templates," achieving my only Thinkfree success, sort of. I typed "letter" in the template search box and got five letter templates or something. The first didn't seem to be a letter template at all, but was a document about how to use Haitian expressions. The other four were in Asian languages using characters I cannot read. To be fair to Thinkfree, I've copied and pasted below their exact message and boldfacing. Since I never reached the "Sync Cache" folder they describe, I wish you better luck than mine if you care to try it. No date for the new version or demise of the older one was mentioned.

If you have purchased TF Premium, store the receipt with your Enron stock certificates. Microsoft needn't worry about this competitor. "We will be launching 'My Office' and providing a new version of ThinkFree Office. You will no longer be able to use the old version which is called 'ThinkFree Premium' as of that time. You will be using our new integrated ThinkFree Online service after installation. Please remove 'Sync Cache' folder before you proceed installing the new version of ThinkFree Office. Location and Instructions for removing the sync folder.

For Windows: C:\Documents and Settings\account\MyDocuments\TFSync

For Mac: /Users/account/Documents/TFSync

For Linux: /home/account/TFSync"

**Wordpad:** This little brother of MS-Word comes free with your Windows installation. It opens and saves in Unicode, .rtf, and the older MS-DOS .txt format but not Word's .doc. It comes with bolding, italics, and underlining of installed Windows fonts in colors, a horizontal ruler with adjustable margins and tabs, and a single bullet style but no numbering button or mail merge. It is a good emergency word processor if the missing features aren't needed for the project at hand. [Start>Accessories>Wordpad]

**WordPerfect X3:** One can pay the full "retail" price of several hundred dollars, but at <http://www.royaldiscount.com/corel.html> it is \$82.94. I prefer the "OEM" version for \$18.46 with free shipping for either version. The current X3 suite contains a powerful, customizable word processor compatible with MSOffice. Its Quattro Pro spreadsheet matches Excel quite nicely. A graphics drawing application and Presentations either its native mode or in PowerPoint mode. The word processor offers to work in MS-Word style, native WP X3 style, or older versions back to 5.1. All these apps play nicely with MS formats.

**Zoho:** I admit to saving the best for the last. Zoho wins my prize as winner among online word processors. All the integrated application elements of Zoho's suite employ similar enough interfaces and working styles so that users of Office version through 2003 will either recognize or master them quickly.

I wish Microsoft Office 2007 had been designed by Zoho. This suite connects many well presented applications in a style that handles like a nimble sports car instead of a ponderous "featuremobile." It displays obvious buttons and tools, export/publish options (including PDF), offline options (after one installs Google Gears), a stunning array of accessible and complementary features: spreadsheet, blogger, chat, notebook, planner, mail, database creator and reporter, conferencing, wiki editor, project manager, CRM and contact manager, plus others.

Even if "Help" seems a bit elusive, the buttons and menus provide intuitive answers better than traditional, encyclopedia-type help. I found no reference to mail merge, but the other word processing feature set is both complete and readily at hand. Spell check, tables, bulleted lists, tags as folders, comments, and collaboration features seems to be exceptionally friendly. I have just started using this impressive suite, so an in-depth evaluation will have to wait.

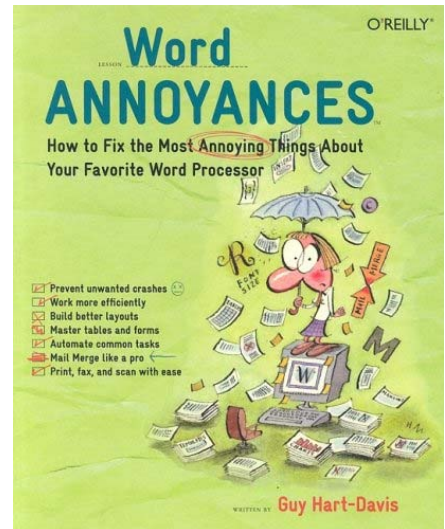
*About John White: John has taught word processing and spreadsheets for a dozen years at New Horizons (Manhattan), Dowling College, NY Tech, and BOCES.*





# Microsoft Word Annoyances

By Guy Hart-Davis, author of *Word Annoyances*



Word has tons of dumb, strange, weird, and annoying features, enough so that I was able to write a 200 page book on the topic. Here are a few of the most annoying...

## Save the Document? I Haven't Made Any Changes!

**THE ANNOYANCE:** All I did was open the document and print it. Why is Word asking me if I want to save changes when I close the document?

**THE FIX:** The document contains one or more fields that were updated automatically when the document was opened or when it was printed. Often, the field that changes is a date field that changes to the current date, so check that the printout contains the date you want it to have. For an older document of which you're printing a new copy, you probably will neither want the date to change nor save the changed version of the document. To prevent Word from updating the field when you print, choose Tools\*Options, click the Print tab, and uncheck the "Update links" box.

If you can't immediately identify the field, choose Tools\*Options, click the View tab, choose "Always" in the "Field shading" drop-down list, click the OK button, and then look for the shading in the document.

Another way to find the fields in a document is to search for ^d.

## Remove Personal Data from a Document

**THE ANNOYANCE:** Last month, an ex-colleague blew the whistle on a few corners our boss had been cutting. She dropped HR a document anonymously—but it turned out that her name was hidden in it somewhere. So now she's no longer working here.

**THE FIX:** In each document you save, Word stores your user name (as entered on the User Information tab of the Options dialog box) as well as other identifying information. Word 2003 and Word XP let you easily remove personal data from a document; Word 2000 does not, but you can choose File\*Properties and delete particular items of information manually.

Choose Tools\*Options, click the Security tab, and check the "Remove personal information from file properties on save" box. For security, you may also want to check the "Warn before printing, saving or sending a file that contains tracked changes or comments" box so that Word prevents you from saving or sending a file that contains text that may be hidden from you.

After choosing these options, you must save the document to make the options take effect.

## Word Asks You Whether to Save Changes to Normal.dot

**THE ANNOYANCE:** When I close Word, it asks me whether I want to save changes to Normal.dot. What is Normal.dot and why is it doing this to me? I haven't done anything to it.

**THE FIX:** You probably have done something to Normal.dot, but only inadvertently. Normal.dot, also called "the Normal template," is the default template on which Word bases documents unless you tell it to use another template. Beyond typical template items such as styles, page margins, and default font and paragraph settings, Normal.dot contains your formatted AutoCorrect entries and your AutoText entries.

It's also a convenient place to store VBA items such as macros and user forms. So if you've created a formatted AutoCorrect entry or an AutoText entry, or if you've changed your default font, page layout, or paragraph settings, you've changed Normal.dot. Similarly, if you've created or installed a VBA item, you may have changed Normal.dot. If Word prompts you to save it, click the Yes button.

If you're not aware of having made any such changes, it's possible that your computer has a macro virus that has made a change against your will. If so, you won't want to save changes to Normal.dot. Check your computer for viruses immediately.

If you want Word to save any changes to Normal.dot automatically without prompting you, choose Tools\*Options, click the Save tab, and uncheck the "Prompt to save Normal template" box.

### Copy Text without Formatting

**THE ANNOYANCE:** When I copy text from Word and paste it into another application, all kinds of extraneous formatting tags along for the ride. Then I have to reformat the text in the other application.

**THE FIX:** Two fixes.

First, see if the application into which you're pasting the text has a Paste Special command. In the resulting dialog box, select the option called Text Only or Text Without Formatting, and then click the OK button.

Second, if the application doesn't offer Paste Special, use Notepad to produce the same effect. Paste the text into Notepad, select it, copy it, and then paste it into the other application. This shuffle is ugly and clumsy, but it does remove the formatting, because Notepad doesn't support any formatting.

By the way, you might be tempted to use Word's own Paste Special command (Edit\*Paste Special) to paste the material back into the same document (or into a different document) as text, select it again, copy it again, and then paste it into its destination application. The problem with this approach is that when you paste the text back into Word, it picks up the formatting of the paragraph into which you paste it, so it will still contain formatting when you paste it into the destination application.

### Save Some Embarrassment: Create an Exclusion Dictionary

**THE ANNOYANCE:** [Gasp of horror!] I just handed out a document about Pubic Health in Cincinnati! Now, where's the Resume Wizard?

**THE FIX:** I The Resume Wizard is on the Other Documents tab of the Templates dialog box (in Word 2003 and Word XP) or the New dialog box (in Word 2000).

"Pubic" is spelled just fine, but you probably don't want to use it in most of your documents—and certainly not when you meant to type "public." So you need to tell Word that you want it to query instances of this word, even though the spelling is fine. To do so, you create an exclusion dictionary—a list of the terms that you want to exclude from Word's spelling dictionaries.

To create an exclusion dictionary:

First determine the name for the exclusion dictionary. It must have the same name as your main dictionary but with the .EXC (exclusion) extension instead of the .LEX (lexicon) extension. The name of the dictionary depends on the language you're using in Office.

For American English, the main dictionary file is named MSSP3EN.LEX, so the exclusion dictionary must be named MSSP3EN.EXC. If you're not sure which dictionary you're using, choose Start\*Search and search for MSSP3\*.LEX files. The last two or three letters indicate the language: MSSP3FR.LEX for French, MSSP3ES.LEX for Spanish, and so on.

(Two differences if you're using Office 97: 1. The dictionary file will be version 2 rather than version 3—for example, MSSP2EN.LEX rather than MSSP3EN.LEX, and your exclusion dictionary must use the same name (with the .EXC extension). 2. You save the exclusion dictionary in the same folder as the dictionary file rather than in your own Proof folder, so it applies to all users of the computer.)

1. In Word, choose Tools\*Options, click the Spelling & Grammar tab, and then click the Custom Dictionaries button (Dictionaries button in Word 2000) to display the Custom Dictionaries dialog box.

2. Click the New button to display the Create Custom Dictionary dialog box, type the appropriate name in the File Name text box inside double quotation marks (for example, "mssp3en.exc"), and click the Save button.

3. In the Custom Dictionaries dialog box, select the new dictionary and click the Modify button to open the dialog box for modifying the dictionary. Type each word and press Enter (or click the Add button). When you've finished adding words, click the OK button to close each of the three dialog boxes.

*Continued on page 27*

4. Restart Word to make it read your exclusion dictionary. Type one of the excluded words to double-check that the exclusion dictionary is working correctly.

One last thing: After you've added a word to an exclusion dictionary, you can't restore it to use by using the Add to Dictionary command during a spelling check: you must edit the exclusion dictionary and remove the word manually.

### Recover a Document After a Crash

**THE ANNOYANCE:** Word crashed again. Microsoft Office Application Recovery didn't do any good this time. And when I try to open the document, Word crashes again.

**THE FIX:** This doesn't sound good, but all isn't lost yet. Here's what you should do.

1. Open a Windows Explorer window to the folder that contains the document and make a couple of copies of it. The easiest way to create a copy is to Ctrl-drag the document within the folder, but Copy and Paste works fine too. These copies are insurance against your efforts to open the document turning out to trash it further. Leave the Windows Explorer window open.

2. Start Word again, choose File\*Open, select the document, click the drop-down arrow on the Open button, and choose "Open and Repair." If all goes well, Word fixes whatever is ailing the document and opens it. Choose File\*Save As and save the document under another name so that the entire document is written afresh. With the document still open, choose File\*Save As again, choose Rich Text Format in the "Save as Type" drop-down list, and save the document as a rich text file. Close the document, and copy the new document and the rich text document to a backup medium in case the problem returns.

3. If Word can't open the file, and Word is set to create backup copies of documents (if the "Always create backup copy" box on the Save tab of the Options dialog box is checked), try to open the backup file. In the Windows Explorer window, switch to Details view (View\*Details) and click the Name column heading to sort the files by name and double-click the backup file, which will be named "Backup of," the document's name, and the .wbk extension. If it opens, save it under a different name. For good measure, save it in Rich Text Format as well, as described in the previous step.

4. If Word isn't creating backup copies, look in the Windows Explorer window for a temporary file of the document. In Details view (View\*Details), click the Type column heading twice to produce a reverse sort by file type. This will put the "Word Temporary File" type near the top of the list. Identify the latest temporary file of your document by its date and file size (its file size will be nearly the same as that of your document file). Right-click the file, click "Open With," and choose the Word item (for example, Microsoft Office Word). If the document opens, save it under a different name. For good measure, save it in Rich Text Format as well, as described in step 2.

5. If you don't have a backup copy or a temporary file, try using WordPad to open the document that makes Word crash. In the Windows Explorer window, right-click the file, select Open With\*Choose Program, select WordPad, and click the OK button. WordPad understands only some of Word's formatting, so it has a better chance of not getting confused by errors in the document's formatting table. If WordPad can open the document, save it under a different file name. You'll have lost the formatting that WordPad can't read, but you should have the text of the document plus basic font formatting.

6. If WordPad can't open the document, and you're prepared to lose even the font formatting, use Word's "Recover text from any file" converter to recover the text. Choose File\*Open, select "Recover text from any file" in the "Files of type" drop-down list, select the document, and click the Open button. Save the resulting document under another file name. You'll need to manually remove extraneous information and odd characters from the document, and replace headers, footers, footnotes, and endnotes, which will appear as normal text paragraphs in the document.

7. If Word's "Recover text from any file" converter can't open the file, open it with Notepad instead. This is the last resort and will cost you all the formatting in the document, but you should be able to recover the text.

### Here are a few tips to help with the process:

\* Depending on how the document is formatted, you will probably need to replace box-like characters with paragraph marks, but this tends to be far preferable to recreating the document from scratch.

\* In the worst case, the text may contain corruption that you will need to remove manually.

\* Save the file under a new name from Notepad, and then open it in Word.

\* If you have another word processor installed on your computer, use it to open a damaged version of the document. Word processors such as Corel WordPerfect and OpenOffice.org include text converters that can read most Word features but are fairly tolerant of document corruption, bypassing it as being features they can't interpret. Again, you're likely to lose much formatting, but you may be able to recover most of the text.

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*Continued on page 29*



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# Remote Computing - Helping Another Computer User

By Joe Durham, Newsletter Co-editor, QCS,  
www.qcs.org, joseph85\_us@yahoo.com

Don Singleton dropped in on our club from cyberspace to share with us the exciting technology of remote computing. He is president of the Tulsa Computer Society, and also acts that APCUG coordinator and teacher for this emerging field of computers. Consider this scenario: someone calls you for computer help, they live across town or the river, it is perhaps a 30 minute drive or longer, you will usually have used up a good day's time in driving for a 30 minute house call. Now with remote computing software you can offer you knowledge and expertise right from your own home.

This technology has existed for a number of years. Our President, Judi McDowell, purchased Windows XP Pro when it was released because it has the Remote Desktop feature. She has used this for several years. Today however, remote computing has reached a critical mass of user awareness, and product development to become a very useful helping tool.

Don presented remotely five free programs that work on Windows XP and Vista machines that offers different levels of ability and access for helping other people over the Internet, and also to doing teaching presentations on the web: CrossLoop, Microsoft Shared View, IBM Lotus' Unyte Presentation software, and Adobe's ConnectNow interface. Our session began when Judi and Don connected via Skype to set up the voice portion of Don's seminar.

The first program was CrossLoop. Judi started it on her computer as did Don. A small interface appeared. Don invited her to view his computer. CrossLoop generates a unique code each time it is started that you pass to the invited guest. This code acts a security feature.

When the connection was made we could see Don's Outlook Express screen. He proceeded to display his file manager, and then his iGoogle homepage. He then demonstrated that Judi had control of his computer also, but asking her to activate various tab movements and settings on his desktop. The presenter has the ability to control this access. Don noted that in a large group setting it would make more sense to deactivate the mouse control access to keep the screen appearance orderly.

CrossLoop allows users to trade places. So Judi invited Don to view her screen and he plugged in an access code for this transfer. As a result the flexibility of this interface allows a helper to demonstrate things on their machine and then turn around and actually carry out those ideas on the other person's computer. It was remarkable that we could also see these transformations over the net from Tulsa and Rock Island.

Microsoft's Sharedview program was displayed. Several members in our club have begun experimenting with this presentation and remote access software. In this setting you use Skype for voice and Sharedview for desktop sharing. As in CrossLoop you view the other person's desktop. But this program has a few more features and is more geared toward

## Websites

**CrossLoop:** [crossloop.com/](http://crossloop.com/)

**Microsoft Sharedview:** [connect.microsoft.com/site/sitehome.aspx?SiteID=94](http://connect.microsoft.com/site/sitehome.aspx?SiteID=94)

**IBM Lotus Unyte:** [www.unyte.net/](http://www.unyte.net/)

**Adobe ConnectNow:** [www.adobe.com/acom/connectnow/](http://www.adobe.com/acom/connectnow/)

**LogMeIn:** [secure.logmein.com/home.asp?lang=en](http://secure.logmein.com/home.asp?lang=en)

*Continued on page 31*

presentations and collaboration sessions. Up to 15 people can share the view on the net. With Sharedview an email invitation is sent that contains a url link to click. The presenter will see the person asking to join and accepts the session. Unlike CrossLoop, by default Sharedview does not give the user access to the presenter's computer, all you see is their desktop. There are controls on the presenter's side which can allow you to control their desktop, but they must activate it. Once the presenter moves their mouse the control is severed.

IBM's Lotus Unyte software was the next remote client viewed. Judi and Don had some difficulties getting this particular software to work properly though they were able to use it fine in a test session. You use Skype for voice contact, and Unyte for desktop viewing remotely. An email invitation is issued as in Microsoft's Sharedview. Unyte has a paid version that has more features for \$30 per year.

Adobe has created a remote presentation interface called ConnectNow. The remote desktop functions are similar to the other software covered by Don. The singular difference exists in the way you add users to the remote session. Rooms of 3 people are organized. You can see each person's id within the room. So while ConnectNow has presentation features, it is more useful as a collaboration tool among like-minded workers.

The last software examined was LogMeIn. This free software is geared to remotely access unattended computers. It just so happened that Don's main desktop went blank, but he had another computer that he was building on the network and he seamlessly was able to log in to this computer remotely and demonstrate that he could run programs on it. The free version doesn't allow you to copy or print files. All of these programs are user friendly. It is remarkable that we could actually share in this process, the visual presentation was seamless in all five software packages. Don noted that remote sessions need a broadband access speed to work, either a cable or dsl connection. He noted that there is Linux and Mac development of these products so that is an available option.

If you are interested in helping a fellow computer user remotely take the time to download and try out these various alternatives. Don offered to answer any questions about them via email. He is sending a copy of his Power Point Presentation to our webmaster so that it can be posted for reference. Be sure to visit our club web page at: [www.qcs.org](http://www.qcs.org) for links and further information concerning this session. The QCS thanks Don for his fine presentation of this exciting field.



# Mozilla Releases Firefox 3.5

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist,  
The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Show Host

It is no secret to regular listeners of my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM 6-7pm Mondays) that I have been a longtime user of the Firefox browser. While Windows may come with Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) installed and an integral part of the operating system, I and millions of other computer users have chosen to use an alternative browser, such as Firefox, to provide features and security lacking in IE.

There has been an active war between browsers for market share for several years, led by IE with its deep pockets capable of carrying on its battle through the use of prodigious commercial advertisement, backed by the financial clout of Microsoft. Firefox, from an open source, non-profit organization, Mozilla, lacks the financial capital to compete in the commercial marketplace, but has developed a loyal and expanding user base based on its quality and features, rather than its advertising. Mozilla's Firefox has been successful at capturing an estimated one-fourth of the browser market from IE, and has spawned competition from other non-Microsoft competitors, such as Google's Chrome, Apple's Safari, Opera, and several other browsers, all of which offer features and benefits lacking in IE. While IE, Chrome, and Safari have substantial financial backing behind their respective promotions, Firefox is forced to compete based on its merits and performance, and not the dollars behind it. Due to the competitive nature of the browser business, and the fact that when Microsoft developed IE and announced that it would be a free browser, despite many millions of dollars in development costs, all of the other major browsers now currently available were also provided for free.

Firefox in its earlier versions has been around for several years, and attracted the interest of the computer press pundits who have recognized the superiority of Firefox over the 800 pound gorilla in the room, Microsoft's IE. What Firefox has lacked in financial capital, it has more than made up with its feisty adherence to innovation and performance. Recently, Mozilla released version 3.5 of Firefox, a substantial update and upgrade to the not-so-old 3.0 series of releases. Over five million copies were downloaded during the first 24 hours of its release. It is available as a free 7.7mb download from [getfirefox.com](http://getfirefox.com), and available for most contemporary operating systems including XP, Vista, Mac and Linux.

The new version 3.5 of Firefox has some dramatic improvements over the older versions of Firefox, many of which have increased the performance, features, and security advantages of Firefox over IE, and makes Firefox more competitive with the advanced features of its competing browsers. One notable improvement in 3.5 is its rendering speed, the time it takes to

## Faster, Safer, Smarter, Better

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### See How We Stack Up

We've told you about what makes Firefox great, but how do we compare against Internet Explorer? Check out our handy browser comparison chart to see for yourself.

		
Compatible with modern Web pages	✓	✓
A rapid response process to address online security threats	✓	
Thousands of free ways to personalize your online experience	✓	
Superior speed, stability and performance	✓	
Powered by a global community of volunteers with a mission to improve the Web	✓	



display web pages being downloaded. One example of dramatic speed improvement is in displaying web pages containing Java, a very common form of coding on web pages today. In comparison testing on an XP machine using different versions of Firefox, 3.5 was about twice as fast as version 3, and 10 times faster than version 2. In comparative tests performed by some of the leading computer magazines, Firefox was much faster than IE in loading a variety of web pages. To be fair, Safari and Chrome were also faster than IE 7 and 8 as well, with IE sometimes being very sluggish in loading and displaying websites by comparison. Firefox 3.5 has improved memory management which minimizes memory leakage, and also uses fewer system resources than IE, still another reason for improved performance.

Firefox 3.5 is very feature rich with security and conveniences that makes it a very attractive alternative to IE. One is the "Awesome Bar", also known as the address bar, where an intelligent wizard makes it easy to locate websites without typing or knowing the URL (internet address). Simply typing a keyword term in the address bar will cause Firefox to instantly reference the browsing history searching and then displaying web addresses with similar keywords, and then interactively searching the web for popular websites with that key word. The Awesome Bar is intelligent in that it learns about your surfing interests in order to make more relevant recommendations. Of course, if you know the web address, just simply type it in as always, but if you have been there before the auto complete feature will display your potential choices as fast as you can type. If a desired web address is displayed by the Awesome Bar, simply click on it to open the page.

Many of us have developed a large collection of favorites and bookmarks. Firefox 3.5 offers an improved version of its "Tags" feature where terms can be added to a bookmark for rapid sorting and display of appropriate links. For example, if I labeled the bookmark for THEEXAMINER.COM with the tag "news" (there is no limit on the number of tags that may be added to any bookmark), and typed "news" in the address bar, the Examiner link would be among the top placements instantly displayed in the address bar for immediate selection. Adding new links to the bookmark list is a simple one click operation; simply click on the star at the right side of the address bar to create a bookmark with the currently displayed website.

One cute feature in Firefox 3.5 that has been continued from the earlier versions is a built in spell checker. When filling in online forms, blogs, Tweets, webmail, or other forms of text, Firefox will check the spelling of words entered in real-time, and underline any misspelled words with a red dotted line. Simply right clicking on the word will display the correctly spelled recommendations, and another mouse click will replace the erroneous word with the correctly spelled term.

*Continued on page 34*

# When Are You at Risk?

An independent study shows that, in 2006, IE users were vulnerable to online threats 78% of the time. Firefox users? Only 2%.

Firefox



9  
days of risk

Internet Explorer



284  
days of risk

"At risk" defined as publicly available exploits with no patch. Source: "Internet Explorer users Unsafe for 284 Days in 2006"

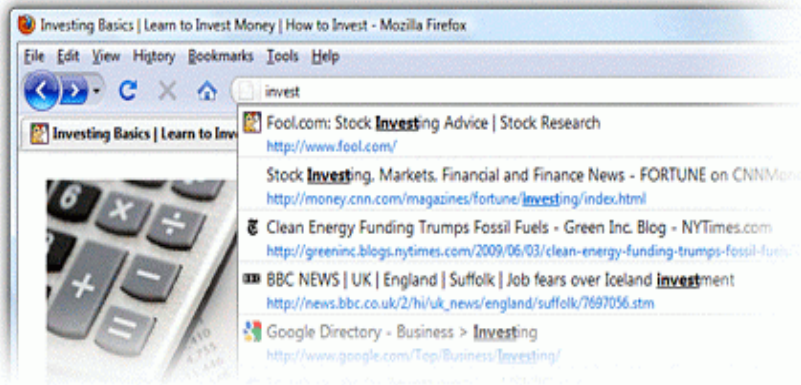
Brian Krebs, *Washington Post*, 1/4/2007

## Awesome Bar

**improved** A quick way to get to the sites you love—even the ones with addresses you only vaguely remember. Type in term into location bar (aka the Awesome Bar) and the autocomplete function includes possible matching sites from your browsing history, as well as sites you've bookmarked and tagged in a drop down.

For example, you could enter the tag: “investments” to find “[www.fool.com](http://www.fool.com)”.

The Awesome Bar learns as you use it—over time, it adapts to your preferences and offers better fitting matches. New enhancements for Firefox 3.5 give you greater control over the Awesome Bar, and include privacy settings.



Another useful feature is the tabbed browsing. While other browsers, including IE 8, have tabbed browsing, Firefox 3.5 tabs can be dragged and dropped wherever desired. I have been guilty of closing a tab, only finding later in the session that I want to go back to the now closed tab; Firefox saves closed tabs under the History menu as “Recently Closed Tabs”, where a mouse click reopens the closed tab. A similar benefit is the ability of Firefox to remember where you have been; when closing Firefox, the user is given the choice to remember the open tabs, and automatically reload them the next time Firefox is opened.

Since Firefox is not beholden to any other software company, there is no prejudice in the selection of search engines accessible from the integral search bar. In fact, there are literally hundreds of search options available, many with an integral smart search function that makes recommendations of search terms as they are being typed. The search selection does include not just the typical Google or Yahoo, but also hundreds of other domestic and foreign search engines as well as commercial resources. In addition to Google, Yahoo, and AllTheWeb (my personal favorite), I also have EBay, Amazon, and other shopping sites in my search list where products can be entered in the search box, and the results quickly displayed.

One interesting feature in 3.5, which can be easily selected or disabled at will, is “Location Aware Browsing” where capable websites will provide relevant local information such as restaurants or events based on the current geographical location of the computer. Firefox emphasizes that no personal information is disseminated when using this feature and it can be turned off at will.

One of the top selling points of this free product is the security of the browser. Integral with the browser is an anti-phishing feature which will prominently warn the user if he attempts to connect to a known phishing identity theft site. Firefox also protects against websites containing viruses, Trojans, and malware in their code. Since Firefox runs on top of the operating system, and not as a part of it, Firefox is inherently more secure than IE, and less vulnerable to attack. While no browser is absolutely secure, in penetration testing, Firefox has proven to be more secure than IE. If any serious security vulnerabilities are detected, Firefox is quick to release and distribute software updates, typically much faster than most competing browsers, and almost always faster than IE. Firefox offers an automatic update feature which can download updates as soon as they are released, keeping the browser up to date with the latest security fixes.

Firefox 3.5 is totally adequate as downloaded, and includes abundant features. For those who like to customize their browsing experience, Firefox has compiled a catalog of over 6000 plug-ins and add-ons. I use add-ons for a variety of purposes, including downloading and converting YouTube videos, color coding my tabs, and “IE Tabs” which will run IE only websites that require Active-X from inside Firefox, without loading IE.

I strongly recommend Firefox to everyone. It is easy to install, and will happily coexist with IE and other installed browsers, and not interfere with them. Firefox offers an option during installation to non-destructively copy and import favorites (bookmarks), cookies, passwords, and other information from IE, such that Firefox is ready to run and complete as soon as it is installed. If upgrading from an older version of Firefox, the newer version will perform some housekeeping tasks and install itself over the older version while maintaining all bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other information.

I use IE for less than 5% of my browsing tasks, choosing to use Firefox for almost all other web browsing. Other than the fact that it is already installed on Windows computers, I sometimes find it hard to understand why so many would still use such a slow, vulnerable, and insecure browser as IE, when a reasonably secure and fast browser such as Firefox is available for free. Go ahead and download Firefox right now ([getfirefox.com](http://getfirefox.com)). Play with it for a while, experimenting with its myriad of features unavailable on IE. If you like it, go ahead and make it your default browser (I did). If not, either keep it as a secondary browser, or uninstall it (Add/Remove Programs). Once you try Firefox 3.5, I really do not envision many of you wanting to uninstall it, but I can see many more of you choosing Firefox as your primary browser, rather than the cumbersome IE.



# Faster, Safer, Smarter, Better

[Performance](#)
[Security](#)
[Customization](#)
[New Features](#)
[Firefox vs. IE](#)

## The Fastest Firefox Yet

Things move quickly online, and we've beefed up the engine that runs Firefox to make sure you can keep up: Firefox 3.5 is more than twice as fast as Firefox 3, and ten times as fast as Firefox 2.\* As a result, Web applications like email, photo sites and your favorite social networks will feel snappier and more responsive.

[View all performance features.](#)

[Learn more about Firefox 3.5's performance upgrades.](#)

\* Based on the results of a SunSpider test of JavaScript performance on a Windows XP machine.

## Firefox Performance: Fast — Faster — *Fastest*

Results of a SunSpider test on a Windows XP machine

**Firefox 2**

**18,148 ms**
**Firefox 3**

**3,669 ms**
**Firefox 3.5**

**1,524 ms!**

## Top Features



### Awesome Bar

**improved** Find the sites you love in seconds (and without having to remember clunky URLs).

### Super Speed

**new** View Web pages way faster, using less of your computer's memory.

### One-Click Bookmarking

Bookmark, search and organize Web sites quickly and easily.

### Easy Customization

**improved** Thousands of add-ons give you the freedom to make your browser your own.

### Private Browsing

**new** Surf the Web without leaving a single trace.

### Anti-Phishing & Anti-Malware

**improved** Enjoy the most advanced protection against online bad guys.

### Tabs

**improved** Do more at once with tabs you can organize with the drag of a mouse.

### Password Manager

Remember site passwords without ever seeing a pop-up.

### Session Restore

**improved** Unexpected shutdown? Go back to exactly where you left off.

### Instant Web Site ID

Avoid online scams, unsafe transactions and forgeries with simple site identity.

## Software Review

Replay Converter 3.20

Published by Applian Technologies

A review by Gregory West, Editor, Sarnia Computer Users' Group, Canada, [www.scug.ca](http://www.scug.ca), [editor@scug.ca](mailto:editor@scug.ca)

First of all, I would like to state that this company offers excellent support. I use several of their programs and have had no problems. The programs do exactly as advertised. What do you do with a video once you have downloaded it?

If you need to convert video files, audio files, or Rip and Burn DVD's this program is a "must have". As stated, this program also "Works great with YouTube, FLV files, iPod/iPhone". As all Applian's software, it is easy to use, fast, and supports all major file formats.

With this program you are in complete control. You do not need to know about confusing encodings either. With just the click of a button you just pick the format you want and in no time the work is done. However, if you do want to go under the hood and make some adjustments you can "trigger an Option to change things like bit rate, frames per second, or other encoding parameters before a conversion runs" and edit like the pros.

Download Replay Converter supports the following video and audio formats:

### VIDEO

DVD (NTSC and PAL)

Windows Media Video (WMV)

Real Video (RM)

AVI

MPEG 4 - MPEG-1 - MPEG-2

Quick Time (MOV)

Flash Video (FLV)

Flash (SWF)

iPod/iPhone - 3GP (for Mobile Phones)

Play Station Portable MPEG 4 formats

### AUDIO

CD (Audio CD and Data CD)

MP3

WAV

AAC (M4A)

iPod/iPhone Audiobook (M4B/AAC) OGG

Windows Media Audio (WMA)

FLAC

Real Audio (RA)

Download Replay Converter is another amazing software program from Applian Technologies designed for anyone converting video and audio formats.





## Software Review

### PowerDirector 7 Ultra

Published by Cyberlink

A review by Terry Currier, Vice President & Editor, WINDOWS usERS, California, [www.windowsusers.org](http://www.windowsusers.org), [winnersug@aol.com](mailto:winnersug@aol.com)

I've used several video editing programs over the years, but I still like using CyberLink's PowerDirector. Yes, there are more powerful programs that can do more, but I feel that the PowerDirector's interface is just easier to work with, and it's faster. If I have not used it for a long period of time I can still figure things out without having to bring up Help.

They have a new Vista-like interface with PowerDirector 7. I like the new dark background, it's easier on the eyes than the previous bright white. One of the more interesting things CyberLink did was create a website (<http://directorzone.cyberlink.com/>) where users can share customized DVD menus, templates, frames, static and motion objects. There are hundreds for people to choose from. You can also search for and import media directly into your media library from Flickr or Freesound. It can work with video in either 16:9 or 4:3 aspect ratio.

PowerDirector 7 will allow you to import video from an HDD camcorder; the edited file can be burned to a disc or back to a hard disk drive camcorder. If you have the Ultra version you can import AVCHD format. I had no problem with taking in my Canon HF100 raw AVCHD and working directly on it. If you have a Blu-ray drive Ultra will also work with it.

The picture-in-picture (PiP) feature is something you may not think to use, but once you do you will realize how much fun it can be. I'm starting to import old VHS tapes of my kids. It was interesting to have the high school band practicing their marching in the main screen and have a PiP of the march in competition.

With the new PowerDirector 7 you can have up to six PiP. You can modify the size of the PiP, degree of transparency of the overlapping clip, as well as its position, motion and other properties using the PiP Designer. So for my grandson's birthday party I can put in the video I took and on the corners have the 200 still pictures showing in four PiP (he's really cute.)

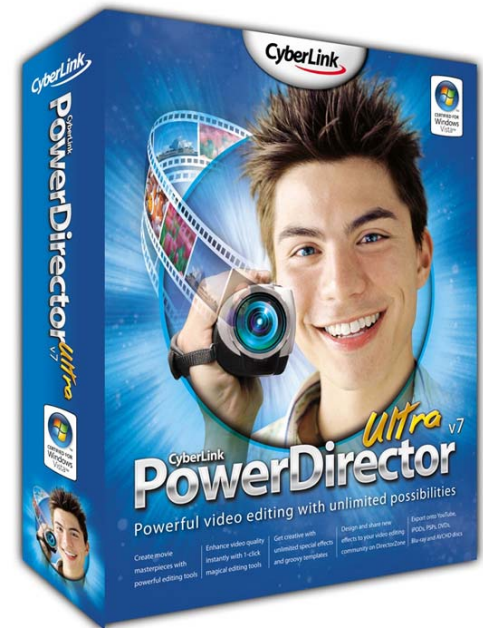
The Slideshow Designer has been enhanced with more styles to choose from. They say you can synchronize photos with the beat of the music and have full creative control over the design in slideshows. I did not do that, but I was really impressed with the Slideshow creation. Easy to do, add music to the background, pan and zoom in Magic Motion, or add a style. It will help you create soundtracks that fit perfectly within the length of a video clip or photo slideshow.

PhotoNow will let you edit images (stills.) You can resize, crop, rotate, remove red eye, adjust color, brightness and more. They show you the original and new image side by side so you can decide how it compares.

Magic Cut helps you fit a video clip to a specific time by automatically cutting out unnecessary portions and keeping only the best moments. The Magic Cut feature uses video technology to locate and keep the most interesting moments, while discarding sections of lesser importance. Great for the times when you have to get that 70 minutes of video down to 60. I did try it and thought it worked pretty good. You still want to check to make sure everything you need is in it.

In the Title Designer you can move the title to any part of the screen, change font, change the color, blur it, make it transparent (percentage), or change the gradient direction. As I said you can download many different DVD menus, or it is not that hard to create your own. One of my favorite things is to create a short video of up to 90 seconds and have it be the background for the DVD menu. When burning to a DVD in the past version they had a feature called Smart Fit which supposedly helped to make your video fit onto a DVD. Most of the time it would not work for me. Well, now in 7 they fixed it.

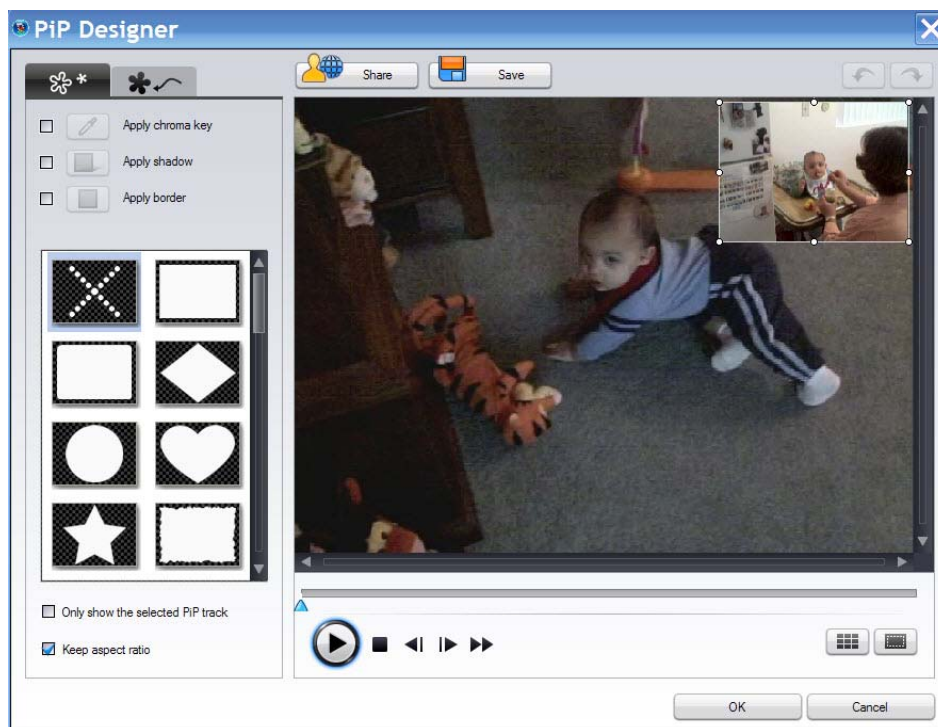
The Voice-Over Recording Room contains controls for recording a narration from a microphone while watching the video clip the voice-over it is destined to accompany. You can control the position and volume of the recording.



*Continued on page 38*

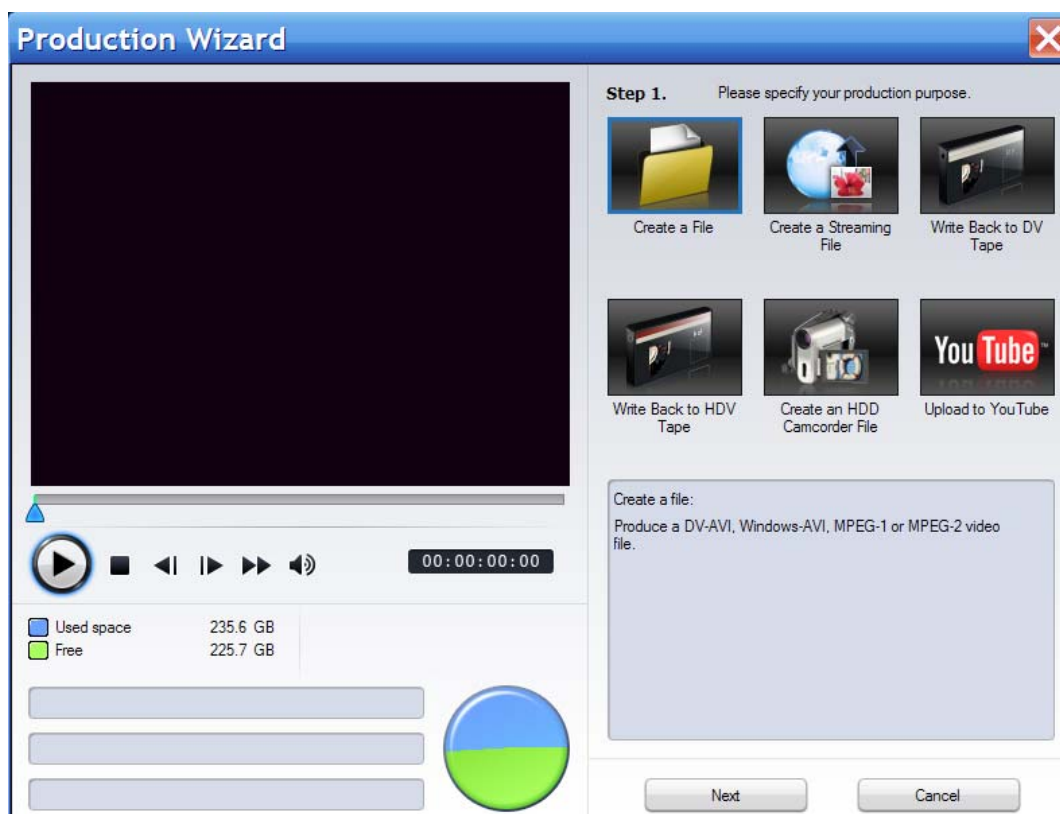
Magic Fix will help smooth shaky video and clarifies blurry footage (don't expect miracles on a bad video.) With the previous version using Magic Clean users could only apply one improvement method at a time - Lighting and Color Adjustment, White Balance and Backlight Compensation. With 7 you can apply all at the same time.

Is it perfect – well no video editing software is. When burning a DVD, the program default is to add background music that goes with the different templates. Excuse me, if I wanted it I would put it in. Also the template has the title put in as “My Videos” for each page you have. More chapters means you will have more buttons and therefore more pages. You can edit and put in whatever you want. If I put in Soccer 1993 on the first page I feel it should put that same title on all the pages. Instead I have to edit each page (and remove the background music from each) to change the title.



Besides burning the video to a DVD you can save the video you worked on to a good variety of choices. These include AVI, MPEG-1, 2 and 4, with full control over codec settings. Streaming options are WMV, RealVideo and QuickTime. If you want you can write your videos back to DV or HDV tape. The Production Wizard will link directly into your YouTube account, encoding and uploading straight to the Web.

PowerDirector Ultra is \$119.95 while the Deluxe version is \$69.95. If you do not have a camcorder that outputs to AVCHD or Blu-ray, you only need the Deluxe. You can download a 30 day trial version from the CyberLink website [www.cyberlink.com](http://www.cyberlink.com)



# August 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Board of Directors Crossroads Mall @ the Food Court 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> High Growth Stock Investing (adv) 8:30 - 8:30 P.M.	<b>7</b> Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR*	<b>8</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> General Meeting @ 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>					

# 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.



