

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

# PC Alamode

**TECH ISSUE: SECURITY**

www.alamopc.org  
September 2009  
\$5.00

**Clean up your room/desktop**  
page 20

**If your computer gets wet... what?**  
page 28

**The computer as crime scene**  
page 33

**Review: Adobe Photoshop Elements 7  
Classroom In a Book**  
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:

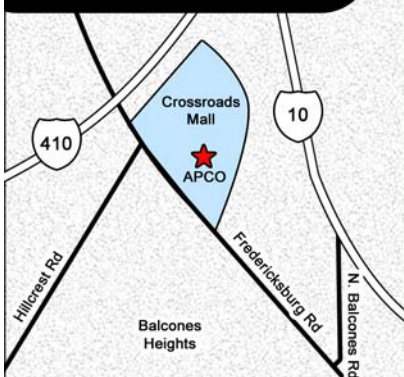
**Alamo PC Organization**  
**PO Box 65180**  
**San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

## Meetings

**Monthly program meetings** are normally held the second Monday of the month. Meetings are held at 4888 Whirlwind Drive, located near the intersection of Loop 410 and IH-35 North 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 in the food court 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.

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



**General Meeting Location:**  
**4888 Whirlwind**



## Sept. Calendar

**Tuesday Sept. 8, 2009**  
Board of Directors meeting  
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I-10 (see map)

**Monday Sept. 14, 2009**  
General meeting  
7 PM 4888 Whirlwind  
Loop 410 at I-35 (see map)

# Tech issue: security

## departments

PC Alamode Links List	7
Enter <i>Joseph de Leon</i>	7
President's Message <i>Bill Klutz</i>	8
September 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

Clean up your room/desktop Part I  
Clean up your room/desktop Part II  
Cleaning inside your PC  
If your computer gets wet... what?  
PPC locking HDMI cable  
Install those updates  
The computer as crime scene  
Emergency tool: mobile phone

20  
23  
26  
28  
30  
31  
33  
35

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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)

### product reviews

Book Review: Adobe Photoshop Elements 7 CIB  
Software Review: FastStone Image Viewer 3.9

36  
37

Rate frequency.	Ad rates effective January 2005			
	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
Half pg. (7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> " w x 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " h)	144	138	130	121
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Quarter pg.(3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " w x 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37
*Consecutive months		**To be paid in advance		

### Board of Directors

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

### Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

#### Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

FAX 736-0032

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

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

### Crossroads Mall (lower level)

(See page 3 for map to Crossroads Mall)

The map shows the layout of the lower level of Crossroads Mall. At the top left is Target. Below it is the Norris Convention Center Red Oak Ballroom, marked with a red 'B' and an entrance. To the right of Target is New York & Company, then Radio Shack, and a Water Fountain. Further right is the Rainbow area. At the bottom left is The Bijou Crossroads, marked with an entrance. Next to it is a Food Court. To the right of the Food Court is the Former AlamoPC Resource Center, marked with a red 'A' and an entrance. Several other entrances are marked with yellow labels throughout the mall.

### Alternate Meeting Location

We may meet in several different locations in the mall. Sometimes at the Convention across the hall from our former Learning Center (A) or in the Norris Convention Center (B) near Target. Sometimes we don't know until the day of the meeting. It would be a good idea to check the website (alamopc.org) or call (736-0700) before you come.

For more information call 532-9122

### Regular Meeting Location

4888 Whirlwind Drive  
See page 3

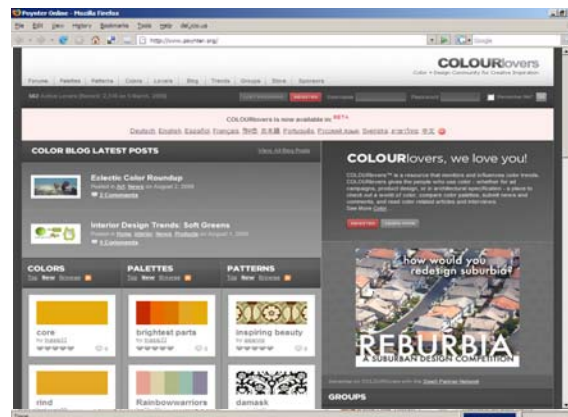
# PC Alamode Links List



## 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.

This month's issue is dedicated to security, which can come in a variety of flavors. Computers bogged down by excessive files. A cup of water near a computer. An out-of-date computer. All of these are possible threats to a computer.

A two-part article starting on page 20 about keeping a computer clean starts the September issue. Ron Hirsch compares a dirty computer with a filth room. Both can be maintained with diligent, regular cleaning.

Gary Bentley writes about how to clean the inside of your computer on page 26. Not the bits and bytes. The stuff inside the case: hard drive, cables, RAM and all those other gadgets.

My favorite article this month is on page 28, "The Computer as Crime Scene." Give it a read and you just might feel like a crime fighter on the edge of technology.

Please keep your computer up to date. It's a simple way to keep that marvel of technology running smooth. Also, not everyone knows how useful a mobile phone can be during an emergency. Read all about it on page 35.

**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

## "September" - Labor, Patriot Day, Grandparents, and More

This month marks several things of interest to many: 7th - Labor Day, celebrated the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. (O also signifies that summer and vacations are pretty much over, work resumes for parents at their job site and children have resumed school); 11th - Patriot Day is observed in honor of the individuals who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks against the United States, which occurred on September 11, 2001.

Americans should display their flags at Half-Staff. 13th - Grandparents Day (another commercialized day for individuals whom we should remember much more often throughout the year); 17th - Constitution Day (or Citizenship Day) is an American federal observance that recognizes the ratification of the United States Constitution and those who have become U.S. citizens. It is observed on September 17, the day the U.S. Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution in 1787. The law establishing the holiday was created in 2004 and mandates that all publicly funded educational institutions provide educational programming on the history of the American Constitution on that day.; 19th thru nightfall 20th (Note: all Jewish Holidays begin the evening preceding the date listed.) - In Hebrew, Rosh Hashanah means, literally, "head of the year" or "first of the year." Rosh Hashanah is commonly known as the Jewish New Year. No work is permitted on Rosh Hashanah. Much of the day is spent in synagogue.; 21st - The United Nations' International Day of Peace (established by a U.N. resolution in 1982) is a global holiday when individuals, communities, nations and governments highlight efforts to end conflict and promote peace.; 22nd - Autumn equinox (At the times when the Sun is crossing the celestial equator day and night are of nearly equal length at all latitudes and so we call these dates the equinoxes. In March, as the Sun is moving northwards along the equator, this is called the vernal equinox and in September as the Sun is moving southwards we refer to it as the autumnal equinox. Also, the leaves begin to change colors and start to fall); 25th - Native American Day (4th Friday in September) seeks to recognize individuals who are descended from individuals who were living on this land before America became a country.; 28th (Note: all Jewish Holidays begin the evening preceding the date listed.) - Yom Kippur is probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year. The name "Yom Kippur" means "Day of Atonement," and that pretty much explains what the holiday is. Yom Kippur is a complete Sabbath - no work can be performed on that day and it is well-known that you are supposed to refrain from eating and drinking (even water) on that day. It is a complete, 25-hour fast, beginning before sunset on the evening before Yom Kippur and ending after nightfall on the day of Yom Kippur.

The August BOD meeting was held with only three members present. A presenter for the August General Meeting was addressed, but David Steward indicated he had not been able to secure one. He indicated that he would "come up with something." Once again those board members present reviewed the latest financial information available for the organization, the declining membership, (no new members since November '08), expenses associated with the continuing monthly operation of Alamo PC, plus the best guess future of the Organization, the PC Alamode magazine, and other related things.

Because information about the August General Meeting, was not made available in a timely manner, only twelve individuals showed up at our current location (4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio) for the "presentation" that David Steward was going to give.

It is very late in August, and once again I have not been informed by David Steward about anything regarding the September General Meeting (14th). I can only hope he has worked on the statement made in for the June meeting - "trying to get something worked out with a pre-recorded presentation by Corel...." I am hopeful the September General Meeting will take place and be profitable to those attending. The meeting, unless otherwise noted on the web site, will be at our current office location (4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio), regardless of the presenter obtained. 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 at the corporate and membership level continues to wain. (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](mailto: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 September 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. 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 no 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. If you do not choose to renew, send a comment briefly giving an explanation as to "Why?" to [membership@alamopc.org](mailto:membership@alamopc.org), with a copy to me ([president@alamopc.org](mailto:president@alamopc.org), or privately to me - [wkklutzjr@juno.com](mailto:wkklutzjr@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.

## September Program

Bill Klutz

It is very late in August, and I have not been informed by David Steward about anything regarding the September meeting. He indicated in June, "I am trying to get something worked out with a pre-recorded presentation by Corel, for July..." Obviously it didn't happen for July of August. So, unless I hear otherwise, the meeting location will be at our current office 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 always, we hope to have an interesting presentation, but it might be just David again.

# Volunteer of the Month

## Bill Klutz



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

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

#### *Rates for one student*

\$35 per hour  
\$300 for 10 hours

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

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

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

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

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.

## What you can find at the show:

New Complete Systems  
New Hardware  
Newest Software Titles  
Printers, Monitors, Scanners  
Ink-Jet Recharge Kits  
Imaging Devices  
Internet Services  
Used Hardware  
Multimedia Upgrades  
Shareware  
Diagnostic Equipment  
Cables & Connectors  
Bare Bone Systems  
Computer Related Books  
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

### Location:

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

### Show Dates:

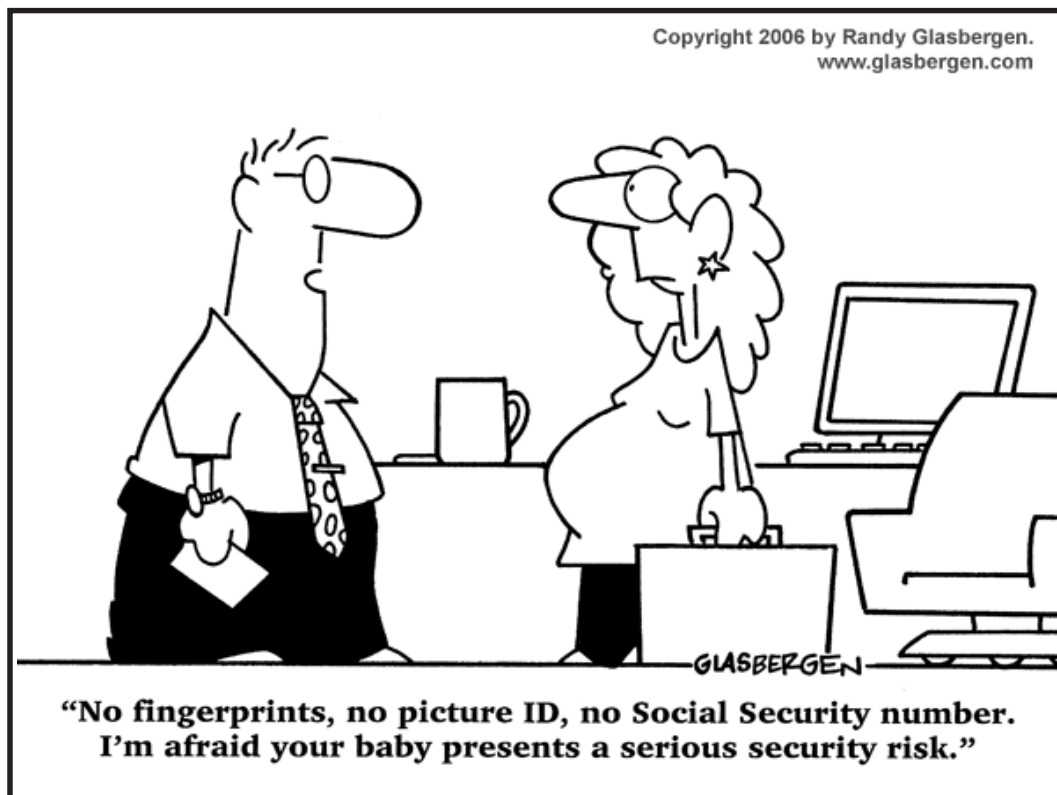
November 14th  
December 12th

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



# Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen







## Windows Icons

### 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.

#### Aha-soft ArtIcons

If you replace some of your Windows desktop icons with some other ones but are unhappy with their appearance, you can touch them up or make your own icons with Aha-soft's ArtIcons <[www.articonspro.com](http://www.articonspro.com)> software program. Articons collects copies of Windows' icons and creates icon libraries.

#### Control Panel Icons Hiding

To hide icons in Win98, you will have to do a search in Windows Explorer for files ending in .cpl. They should be in Windows\System folder. Move the files that you want to hide into a new folder. When you do this, it will remove the icons from Control Panel. Remember where you put them because you will need to go to your secret location to access the icons. This method won't work in WinXP. It restores missing icons to Control Panel when it boots up. But you can hide the icons. If you use WinXP, click Start, Run, enter gpedit.msc, and click OK. Now you will be into the Group Policy window. On the left, navigate to Local Computer Policy\User Configuration\Administrative Templates\Control Panel. In the right panel, double-click "Hide specified Control Panel applets." On the Setting tab, select Enabled and click Show. Enter the name of the icon you want to hide, use the name as it appears in Control Panel's Classic View, and click OK twice. If you change your mind later, use the Remove button to return the icon to Control Panel. You can also make the Control Panel unavailable by going to the Group Policy window, as before, double-clicking "Prohibit access to the Control Panel," and clicking Enabled and OK. That will make Control Panel unavailable until you undo the process.

#### Control Panel Icon Removal

To remove almost any icon from the Control Panel, open TweakUI in Control Panel, and choose Control Panel category. Uncheck any entries you would prefer were not displayed in the Control Panel. Click OK when you're done. Your changes will take effect immediately in the Control Panel folder, but you may need to log out and log back in to see the change in the Control Panel menu in the Start Menu.

#### Control Panel Shortcuts

You can create a shortcut to an individual Control Panel icon as an easy way to provide quick access to commonly used settings. First open any view of the Control Panel. Next drag any item onto your desktop or into an open folder window. Windows will complain that it can't copy or move the item. Confirm that you'll settle for a shortcut. Lastly double-click on the shortcut to quickly access the specific Control Panel icon.

#### Desktop Icon Access

If you frequently run multiple programs and would like quick access to the icons that reside on the Desktop, WinXP includes a feature to address this issue. You must right-click a blank part of the Taskbar and click Toolbars and Desktop. You'll now see the word "Desktop" on your Taskbar. Click the arrows to the right of the word "Desktop" to access your Desktop icons directly. Follow the same steps if you would like to disable this feature.

#### Desktop Icon Clutter

If your Win98 computer suffers from desktop icon clutter, you should try reducing the size of your desktop icons by right-clicking on the Desktop and selecting Properties, Appearance. In WinXP, click Advanced, choose Icon from the drop down list, select a smaller size to the right of the drop down list, and finally click OK. You can also change the icon's horizontal and vertical spacing. Another option is to put your seldom used icons in one folder with a shortcut to the desktop.

#### Favorite Icon

Using Internet Explorer (IE), some sites include icons that appear automatically when you add them to your Favorites menu. You can make one of these an icon also appear in your Address bar. After the page has loaded, drag the generic IE icon in the Address bar directly to the right and drop it after the end of the address. The site's custom icon will now appear in the Address bar. If you navigate to this site later, the icon will reappear until you delete the Temporary Internet Files. These special icons break up the monotony of the Favorites menu. They also help you locate specific sites. These icons are stored in your Temporary Internet Files folder. They will disappear from both the Address bar and the Favorites menu when you clear that folder. To restore the icon in the Favorites menu, you can remove the page from your Favorites and add it again. Or, you can use the free utility <[www.pcmag.com/utilities](http://www.pcmag.com/utilities)> to make the Favorites menu icons permanent.

*Continued on page 14*

## Folder Icons

WinXP includes more than 200 icons that can be used instead of the standard yellow folder. To change them in XP you must first go to Windows Explorer (Start, All Programs, Accessories, Windows Explorer). Now Right-click on the folder you want to change, click Properties, and select the Customize tab. At the bottom of the window, click the Change Icon button. It will present you with more than 200 icons. When you find one you like, click it, OK, and then click Apply and OK again. You also can place pictures within the folder icons. However, you can only use Thumbnails view (click View, Thumbnails). The picture must already be on your hard drive. You can scan the picture in or download it from the Internet or a camera. Save it as a JPEG (.jpg). To place a picture within an icon, go to the Customize tab as before and click Choose Picture. At the top of the Window, navigate to the picture on the hard drive, and click it and click Open and then click Apply, OK. Custom icons also can be designed in Paint, which is part of Windows

(Start, All Programs, Accessories, Paint), and click Image, Attributes. Height and width should be set to 32 pixels. After your design is drawn, you should click File, Save As. Next save it to any folder on the hard drive. Users of Win98/ME/2000 can use software to change icons. Here are some free programs:

<IcoFolder: <http://camtech2000.net/Pages/IcoFolder.html>> and <ActivIcons: [http://www.cursorarts.com/ca\\_aifw.html](http://www.cursorarts.com/ca_aifw.html)>.

## IconForge

If you like the little icons that show up in your Internet Explorer Favorites menu, which are called favicons, you can create them with the IconForge software found at <[www.find.pcworld.com/37181](http://www.find.pcworld.com/37181)>. With it you can craft icons for frequently used documents or programs, saved Web pages, cursors, custom applications, etc. IconForge lets you design or reduce a larger graphic to the iconic essentials.. You can also compose icons in various sizes and image depths.

## Icon Layout

When you temporarily change your desktop to a lower resolution while using Safe mode, WinXP/2000/Me/98 can change the positioning of your desktop icons. A free download at <[www.penineoneone.com/tweaks/layout.zip](http://www.penineoneone.com/tweaks/layout.zip)> will enable you to save and later restore your icon layout. Download Layout.zip and unzip it to extract two files. Now move Layout.dll to the Windows\System32 folder. Double-click on Layout.reg to add it to the Registry. Right-clicking on almost any of the standard desktop icons and you'll see two new items: Save Desktop Icon Layout and Restore Desktop Icon Layout. Choose the former whenever you change the layout and the latter when you need to restore it.

## Icon Removal

If you have icons on your desktop and seemingly can't remove them, they are probably read only. Right-click the icons, click Properties, and on the General tab, clear the Read-only box at the bottom. You should also attempt to delete the icon programs by clicking Start, Control Panel, and double-click Add or Remove Programs. Now look for the programs in the list and click each in turn and click Remove or Change/Remove. If that doesn't work, try running Ad-aware. That is a free program similar to Spy Sweeper at the following web site. Before running Ad-aware, first update it: <<http://www.komando.com/bestshareware.asp>>. If still no luck, remove the programs manually. They should be listed in Windows Explorer (Start, All Programs, Accessories, Windows Explorer). Next look under C:\Program Files and search for the program names. Delete the folders in the left pane. These will go into Recycle Bin. They can be retrieved if you accidentally delete good programs. If you fail to find the programs, right-click the icons on the desktop. If the icons have arrows in them, they are shortcuts. Click Properties. The path to each program should be listed on the Shortcut tab, in the Target box. Also check MSConfig. Any startups for these programs should be disabled. MSConfig is most easily edited by WinPatrol, a free program. You can get it at: <<http://www.winpatrol.com/>>. Unfortunately, these programs may have hidden files that cause the programs to be downloaded again. You may well be able to block that with a custom HOSTS file. You can get a HOSTS file, along with instructions for using it, at: <<http://www.mvps.org/winhelp2002/hosts.htm>>. Let's talk a little about how such programs get onto your computer. An invitation to download them can arrive via spam. Or you could get a pop-up offering them. Either way, they should be refused.

## Icon Removal Message

If you get a message that there are unused icons on your desktop and you want to eliminate seeing it, right-click an empty area of the desktop. Click Properties and select the Desktop tab. Click Customize Desktop. Clear the box next to "Run Desktop Cleanup Wizard every 60 days." Click OK, OK. The Cleanup Wizard removes icons that aren't seeing much service. You'll be given a list of icons that are rarely or never used. You can deselect them if you want to keep them. When you remove icons, the Cleanup Wizard creates a desktop folder. The old icons go there. So you remove a few icons from the desktop, then add a folder. To restore an icon, double-click the folder. Drag the icon you want onto the desktop. You can just delete individual icons by clicking the icon once, and press the Del key.

## Internet Explorer (IE) Icons

If you use the Links bar in IE, you may like to change the icons to something more meaningful or more attractive. To do this, right-click the link you want to change and choose Properties. When the dialog opens, click Change Icon. Now, click Browse and locate a suitable new icon. You'll find some free to use icons at <<http://www.website-designs.com/icon01.htm>>..



## 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.

**W**e worked the Cisco show <<http://www.cisco-live.com/>> and they had over 700 computers setup. Classrooms were everywhere and, in spite of tight security, it was said that 26 laptops disappeared one night. Security certainly got tighter after that. There were attendees from many countries.

Last month I mentioned the Web site "Second Life" and its great popularity. I'm told that other companies have countered with similar products. Here is a quote from Mike Ungerman who helped Hewie Poplock with the presentation: "Following the review of virtual 'universes' like Second Life, I came across several other alternatives that offer much the same capabilities. Google has started Lively <<http://www.lively.com/popular>>, a 3-D, avatar based, chatting world. It's still pretty rough, but is billed to eventually offer much the same capability as Second Life.

"For those with gaming consoles, either the X-Box 360 or PS3, 3-D avatar based interaction is being offered in the next several months. X-Box Live is Microsoft's system <<http://tinyurl.com/5awgjx>> and Playstation Home is Sony's offering <<http://tinyurl.com/6xckoc>>"

#### \*How's Your Registry?

WiseCleaner has released Wise Registry Cleaner v. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1, a pair of affordable Windows applications that stabilize your computer, and make it run more quickly. Wise Registry Cleaner speeds up the user's computer by cleaning the Windows Registry. The Registry is at the heart of every Windows computer. Each time users install new software, information is added to the Registry. Few uninstall programs remove this information properly or completely. Therefore, over time, as users install and uninstall software, the Registry accumulates junk lines and pointers, and the computer's performance suffers.

Wise Registry Cleaner identifies and safely removes the useless information that has accumulated. In addition to scanning and cleaning the Windows Registry, the program optimizes the PC. If the user accidentally makes a mistake during a tune-up, they can undo all changes with a single click. The latest version of Wise Registry Cleaner includes a useful feature: "System Optimization Tool." Using this tool, users can easily tune up their PC in minutes without being a PC expert! [DealsGuy note: Optimize Your PC appears to only be in the Pro version.]

Wise Disk Cleaner is an intuitive, fast, and easy-to-use application that frees up disk space by deleting files no longer used by any software. In addition to the temporary files, log files, and backup files that accumulate over time, the program can identify more than 50 additional types of unnecessary files that users can safely remove. Instead of sending deleted files to the recycle bin, the program can compress these files and save them to a special directory, allowing users to restore files in the future if they find that they really need them. The latest version of Wise Disk Cleaner contains additional advanced customization options that let users fine-tune cleanup operations. [DealsGuy Note: Move To Location and Advanced Options appear to only be in the Pro version.]

Both applications are designed to be used in tandem, allowing users to streamline their Windows Registry and optimize their hard drive. Whether you are a business user who values a stable and brisk computer, a parent who needs to clean up after the software that their children install and uninstall on the family computer, or a computer consultant who needs applications that will keep their customers' PCs running optimally, Wise

Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner have the tools that you need.

Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner also offer support for more than twenty languages. It's easy to add additional language support into Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner. The User Interface messages are loaded from resource files for all supported languages. This means that you can add a resource file that contains messages in your own language.

Please note that there are FREE versions of both Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner. You can choose to pay for the PRO version, or only use the free version if preferred. Wise Registry Cleaner V. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1 run under Windows 98/Me/NT/2000/XP/XP-x64/2003/Vista/Vista-x64/2008 Server, and cost \$19.95 (US) each. As a bundle, users can buy both programs for \$32.95. Everybody can visit <<http://www.wisecleaner.com/>> to purchase the software securely online,

*Continued on page 16*

or to download free trial versions. Users can also download free versions of each program without the advanced options and system optimization tool.

**\*If You Don't Understand, Try This**

LingvoSoft <<http://www.lingvosoft.com>> announced the release of an all-new language learning system for Pocket PC that makes speaking any language simple, fast and enjoyable. Putting everything you need in the palm of your hand, LingvoSoft Language Teacher 2008 makes communicating in a new language easier than ever before. Providing every beginner with the tools necessary to start speaking another language immediately, your success is virtually guaranteed.

With intuitive and efficiently arranged sections that teach the alphabet, words, phrases, and dialogs you will soon have the skills you need to start speaking accurately and comprehensibly. With the advanced voice output and speech recognition built-into the Language Teacher you will always get the pronunciation right the first time, something new learners absolutely depend on. Loads of practice tests and evaluations provide the help new students need to start mastering any language immediately. The price is \$149.95, but a 25% discount is available on any LingvoSoft software title. Simply enter your personal gift certificate code "MY8UZPF7M4" in the 'Add Gift' field of the shopping cart and click the "Add Gift" button <<http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Language-Teacher/>>.

**\*This Should Help You Copy** [DealsGuy Note: Be sure to thoroughly read the FAQs on their Web site so you more fully understand the capability of the product.]

DVD neXt COPY released version V2.9.9.1 of DVD neXt COPY, a new and improved version that has the best quality of any DVD Copy software available. DVD neXt COPY triggers the quality king and jumps over the magical quality hurdle of the legendary DVDSHrink. Until now the "old" DVDSHrink possessed the best quality of any DVD copy program available. It was impossible for any competitors to reach this high level of quality and speed. As of now, DVD neXt COPY has broken through this barrier, and provides better quality and faster burns than DVDSHrink (High Quality Mode).

DVD neXt COPY now provides the highest quality of any DVD copy software available. Our extensive quality check was performed on the majority of the latest DVD movies with excellent results. We have compiled test report on two special movies that are often used as quality reference movies, because they are very complicated to recompress. You can see our results in this test report: <[http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/quality\\_measurement.pdf](http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/quality_measurement.pdf)>.

During this special promotional period, everyone can receive 20% off DVD next COPY Xpress, Standard and Pro. Just enter the word "SAVE20" in the coupon field during purchase, to receive your 20% discount. Prices are as follows: XPress \$49.99, Standard \$69.99, Pro \$89.99. The license is good for two computers but does require activation. Read more information about the new DVD neXt COPY at <<http://www.dvdnextcopy.com>> Watch the online DVD neXt COPY flash tutorials at <<http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/tutorials.aspx>>.

Release Date 6/24/09

V2.9.9.1

Improved Quality Engine

Improved Software Compatibility Mode

Added Pre-scan Preview Function

Updated Resources to V2.9.9.1

Product page link: <<http://www.dvdnextcopy.com/overview.aspx>>

**\*What's That Key?**

Everybody knows Windows has a product key used to install it. If you needed it for some reason, do you remember where you put it? It also ends up embedded in your registry so maybe you could edit your registry if necessary to retrieve it, but that's living dangerously. The Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder V2.0.1 is a freeware utility that will go in and get it for you. It has options to copy the key to your clipboard, save it to a text file or print it for your records. It works on a wide family of Windows operating systems.

It also has support for multiple installations of Office, and the ability to change the Windows XP, 98 and ME installation key. It's at <<http://magicaljellybean.com/keyfinder/>>. Also offered is a neat popup dictionary that is freeware. I read about these long ago in Tim Hoke's freeware column in PC Alamo, newsletter for Alamo PC Organization <<http://www.alamopc.org/index.shtml>>.





## Positioning Your Monitor

### 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/>>

**M**ake sure that any paper documents that you are reading are placed as close to the computer monitor as possible and that these are at a similar angle - use a document holder where possible. The computer monitor should be placed as follows:

Directly in front of you and facing you, not angled to the left or right. This helps to eliminate too much neck twisting. Also, whatever the user is working with, encourage them to use the screen scroll bars to ensure that what is being viewed most is in the center of the monitor rather than at the top or bottom of the screen.

Center the monitor on the user so that the body and neck are not twisted when looking at the screen. However, if you are working with a large monitor and spend most of your time working with software like MSWord, which defaults to creating left aligned new pages, and you do not want to have to drag these to more central locations, try aligning yourself to a point about 1/3rd of the distance across the monitor from the left side.

Put the monitor at a comfortable height that doesn't make the user tilt their head up to see it or bend their neck down to see it. When you are seated comfortably, a user's eyes should be in line with the middle of the screen. Sit back in your chair at an angle of around 100-110 degrees (i.e. slight recline) and hold your right arm out horizontally, your middle finger should almost touch the center of the screen. From that starting position you can then make minor changes to screen height and angle to suit. If the monitor is too low, you will flex your neck forwards and will end up with neck, shoulder, or mid back pain.

Bifocals and progressive lens - even if you wear bifocals or progressive lens, if you sit back in your chair in a reclined posture (with you back at around 110 degrees) that is recommended for good low back health, rather than sitting erect at 90 degrees, and if you slightly tilt the monitor backwards and place this at a comfortable height you should be able to see the screen without tilting your head back or craning your neck forwards. Postural problems with bifocals can occur if you are hunched forwards. The problem with low monitors is that they cause neck flexion and suffer more from glare. Recent studies have shown that the best position for a computer monitor is for the center of the screen to be at around 17.5 degrees below eye level. Try to align your eyes with the top of the viewing area of the screen, and this should put the center about right geometrically.

Viewing distance - the monitor should be at a comfortable horizontal distance for viewing, which usually is around an arms length (sit back in your chair and raise your arm and your fingers should touch the screen). At this distance you should be able to see the viewing area of the monitor without making head movements. If text looks too small then either use a larger font or magnify the screen image in the software rather than sitting closer to the monitor.

Screen quality - use a good quality computer screen. Make sure that the text characters on your screen look sharp, and that they are a comfortable size (you can change the screen resolution to find a comfortable and clear character size). If you can see the screen flickering out of the corner of your eye you should try increasing the refresh rate of your monitor (with a PC you can change monitor resolution and refresh rates using the Monitor control panel in your Settings folder). You can also consider using a good quality glass anti-glare filter or an LCD display (like a laptop screen).

Eye checkup - there are natural changes in vision that occur as people age. It's a good idea to periodically have your eyes checked by a qualified professional.

If any screen adjustments feel uncomfortable then change them until the arrangement feels more comfortable or seek further professional help.





## Vista Task Scheduler

### Vinny La Bash , Sarasota PC User Group

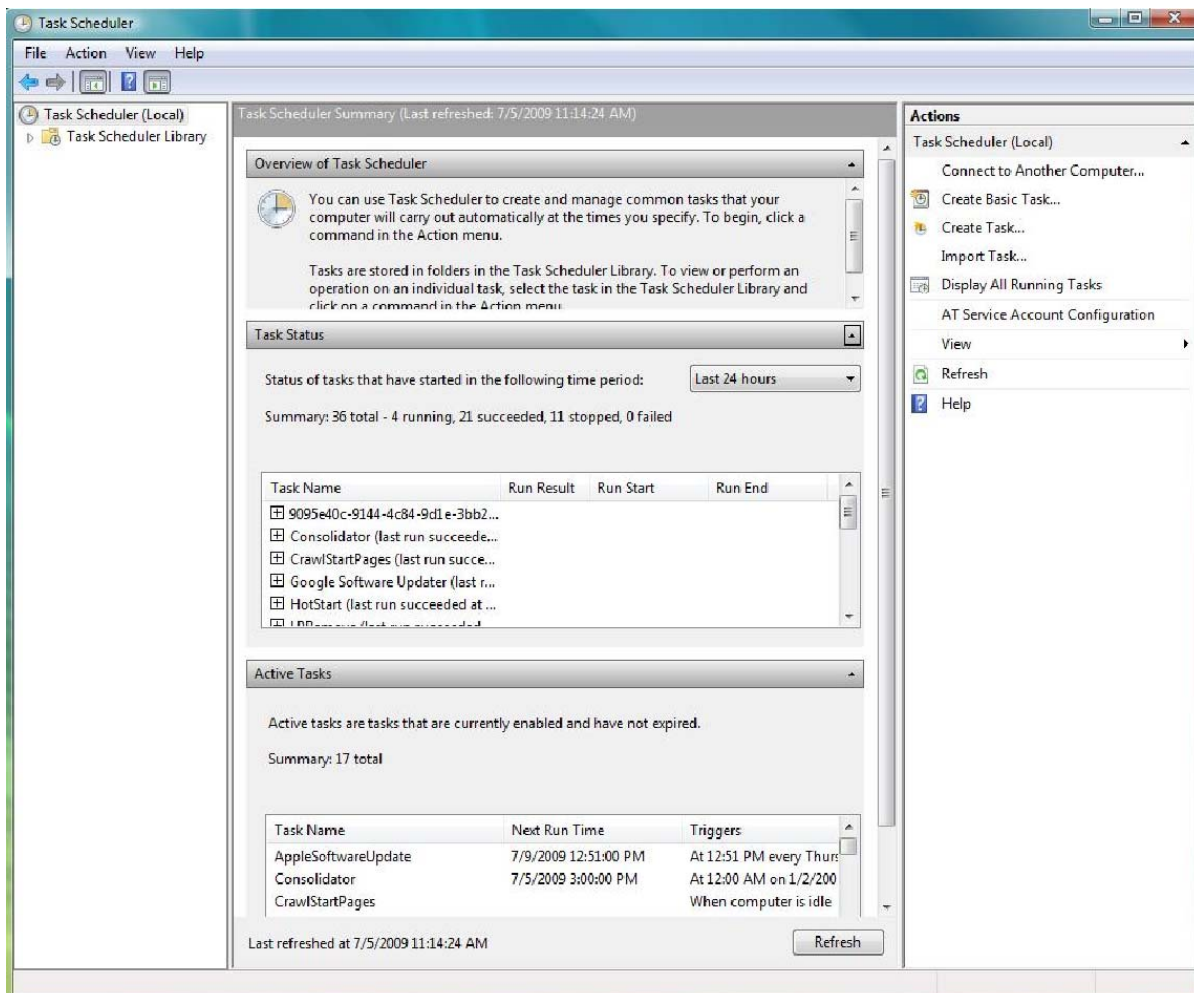
Vinny (SPCUG President in 1996-97-98) is a retired IBM'er and teaches computer part time at the Sarasota Vocational Technical Institute. <labash@spcug.org>

Windows draws its share of critics, but one thing the wizards of Redmond did right was to redesign the XP Task Scheduler for Vista. There were no radical revisions, simply a combination of small changes that made a big difference. The tool is easy to access, easy to use, easy to modify if necessary, and easy to tell it to go away when you don't need it anymore.

Why would you want to use it? If your computer activity includes doing anything on a regular basis, whether it is daily, weekly, monthly or some other time variant, Task Scheduler could be useful. For example, I need to remember to take medication usually at a time when I'm busy doing something else. Task Scheduler throws a message in my face reminding me to pop my pill at the appropriate time. If I'm not at home, my smart phone relays the message. But at home or elsewhere, it's Vista Task Scheduler that gets the message to me. Of course, when I leave the house I have to remember to bring my medicine with me, but that's a tale for another article.

I'm seriously thinking of creating a computer game for senior citizens called "The Hereafter". It starts out with the player walking into a room and wondering "What am I here after?" Task Scheduler will play a big part in this.

*Continued on page 19*



Let's say you use the calculator a lot and you would like it to start up whenever you turn on your computer. Here's how to set it up:

1. Click on the Start Orb.
2. Click on Control Panel.
3. Click on System and Maintenance
4. In the Administrative Tools section, click on Schedule tasks. (You may have to scroll down).
5. At some point you may be asked to supply an Administrative Password. Provide it and continue.

You will now see a dialog box with a very intimidating appearance. It doesn't bite and won't tell anyone if you stayed up past your bed time.

Let's examine it briefly to understand what's going on in the dialog box before we proceed. In the left pane, the top item which is marked (local) tells us that what we see in the middle pane are Task Scheduler items assigned to the machine you are currently using.

If your machine is not part of a network it has no other significance. The middle pane is divided into three parts:

**Overview of Task Scheduler:** Overview is a brief description of what you can do with the tool and where the tasks are stored. The folder labeled Task Scheduler Library can be expanded to display the Console Tree. Ignore this for now.

**Task Status:** This section covers four time periods. Tasks that have run in the last hour, 24 hours, 7 days or 30 days. It tells you how many tasks have started during the period, how many are currently running, how many are complete, how many are stopped for one reason or another, and how many have failed. Obviously, this section is used for troubleshooting.

**Active Tasks:** This section tells you what Task Scheduler is doing right now. Let's leave it at that.

The right pane is the section we came to play in. For our purposes there is no important difference between Create Basic Task and Create Task.

1. Click on Create Basic Task.
2. The Create Basic Task Wizard opens.
3. Type the name of your task. You could try something original like Start Calculator. Create a description if you want. Then click the Next button at the bottom left of the dialog box.
4. Tell the Wizard when you want the task to start. You have several choices. For this exercise choose Daily. Again, click on the Next button when you're done.
5. Tell the Wizard what day you want the calculator to make its first automated appearance on your desktop.
6. Now tell it what time of the day to start. Be careful you don't choose a time when you're sleeping. Click Next.
7. The Action box makes its appearance. You aren't sending an email; neither do you want to display a message. Start a program is the correct choice. Click Next.
8. Type calc.exe in the Action text box. Click Next.
9. Check the Summary dialog box to make sure that everything is the way you want it.
10. Click Finish, and you're done.

There are two important concepts at work when you run tasks using the Task Scheduler. The first is the trigger, the event that causes a task to run. The second is the action, the work that is carried out when the task is triggered.

There are three main actions associated with running a task: sending an e-mail, running a program, and displaying a message. Many actions can trigger a task. Among the most common actions are starting the computer, the computer entering an idle state, the occurrence of a specific time and date or the computer performing some specific function. Think about how you use your computer and you can probably find a productive use for the Task Scheduler.

# Tech issue: security

## Clean Up Your Room/ Desktop - Part I

Written by **Ron Hirsch**, Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL, [www.brscs.org](http://www.brscs.org), [ronhirsch1439@comcast.com](mailto:ronhirsch1439@comcast.com)

So, does that line ring any bells? If you're a youngster, you've heard your elders tell you to clean up your room very often. And if you're not a youngster, then you use the line yourself on your kids or grandchildren. Well, I have no young kids around anymore, but I often use that line (with a slight change.) I'm constantly telling people to "Clean up your desktop," with "desktop" being their computer screen after the machine has booted up, and before any programs are run.

*Continued on page 23*



There are some desktop differences between the different Windows versions. And, some companies such as Dell and Compaq very often install a “special” arrangement on the desktop, mostly to keep their name in front of you. Also, there are programs which generate their own desktop arrangement. But, they all generally respond to the procedures presented below. Once you become an expert in this area, you’ll have no problems with the finer points and variations.

Since most of you are using Windows XP, and since I use XP on all my machines, all the activities discussed are based on XP. I have not used Vista, but I would assume it's the same there. One thing I do remember however, is that in Windows 95, desktop icons did not automatically line up in rows and columns. In XP, when you move an icon, it automatically snaps to the nearest position which keeps the rows and columns aligned.

The average computer user, even those who should know better, generally have disaster zones for the desktops. There are icons all over the place, not in any order and not lined up. And, there are many, that when I ask what they are, I'm told "I don't know." And, when I ask to have Windows Explorer or Notepad opened, there's usually a lot of scrambling, to find out where the icon is located.

Many programs, when installed, will place an icon on your desktop. Sometimes they ask you during the install if you want this - and sometimes they don't ask. There is always a tendency for software companies to grab real estate so that they can prominently keep themselves in front of you. Some newer computers running Windows XP/VISTA may even start off with almost nothing on the desktop. If you want to go back to a more conventional appearing desktop, right click on the desktop, and view the various options you have. There is probably a choice to revert to an "old-fashioned" desktop, which I personally prefer. Most people keep their medications in a medicine cabinet, canned goods in the pantry, garden tools in the garage, etc. But when it comes to their computer, they are as disorganized as is humanly possible. They feel intimidated by their computers, and don't wish to antagonize it. So, the thrust of this article is to go back to real basics again, and give you some information on organizing and cleaning up your desktop. If you're already super organized, you can skip this article, accept my apologies, and move on. But 99 out of 100 of you probably don't qualify to get the gold star for desktop organization. Once you do the tasks presented, you'll probably wonder why you didn't do it sooner. It not only is much easier to work with a good functional desktop, it looks prettier also, and will impress those who see it.

## WHY HAVE ICONS ON THE DESKTOP?

Most users are familiar with the primary way to run a program. Click on **START>PROGRAMS**, and one can navigate to all the programs that are installed on the machine. But, most users generally have several programs that they use often. Having an icon for these programs on the desktop makes it easier to access that program. Just double click on that icon, and the program opens.

## WHY SHOULD I BOTHER?

Let's take an extreme analogy. How would you like to have a dictionary where the words were randomly listed, not in any order? It would take lots of time to look up a word. By organizing things, and getting important icons at your fingertips, you can make your life much easier. And, your friends will be asking you to help them, when they see your desktop. Consider the desktop as a presentation area for icons that you often use. Count the icons on your desktop that you really use, and those you don't use. Then list the icons that you use which are not readily available on the desktop and you have to do lots of clicking to reach. You will see why it's a good idea to improve things. Now let's get down to business and fix things up.



## OPERATING ON ICONS

The following activities are easy to perform on icons, wherever they may be. There are a few icons that Microsoft does put in places where they take control away from you - you can't readily rename them, or move them off the desktop, although you can always reposition them on the desktop. You may discover some of these in your travels. When you do, you'll just have to skip those icons. While they can be operated on using special protocols, that's outside of the scope of activities for these lessons.

## WHAT IS AN ICON

An icon is a representation of a program, or file, or just about anything you want. The icons on your desktop are usually shortcuts to running a program, be it a word processor, spreadsheet,



*Continued on page 22*

Internet connection, etc. All icons have properties, which define the nature of the icon, and details of what it does when used. Right clicking on an

icon will bring up a window with the bottom item in the list being "properties." Left click on "properties," and you'll get a window with lots of information about the icon. Try it, and browse around to get a feel for things. The more familiar you become with things on your computer, the more comfortable you'll feel using them.

### MOVE AN ICON

Left click on and drag an icon and you can move it manually anywhere you want on your desktop, or into another open folder. The ability to drag an icon around is tied into the choice that was made on how icons are positioned. Before you can engage in changing locations et al on your desktop, you must first check to see how things are

set. Right click on the desktop and in XP you will bring up a small box with a list of items in it. The contents of this box will vary, depending upon which version of Windows you are using. The top item is "arrange icons by," and it has a little arrowhead to the left. Click on that arrowhead, and you'll see a variety of items related to arranging icons. Some of these may be checked. The best way to learn what does what is to play around with the checking and unchecking. After a few trials, you will get a good feel for what they all do.

### COPY AN ICON

Copying an icon is similar to moving an icon. As with the standard Windows protocol, do exactly as you would to move, but hold down the CTRL key while you are doing the click and drag operation. If you copy it into the same area, you'll probably see a (2) following the text in the copy. You can't have two icons in the same place, with the same name. So, Windows adds the "(2)" for you. If you move it to another folder, the "(2)" will stay, but you can edit the text as you'd like. See "Rename an Icon" below. Dragging an icon to any folder on your desktop will move the icon into that folder.

### DELETE AN ICON

Click once on an icon to highlight it, and then hit the Delete key. Remember, the icons here are generally shortcut icons with the little curly arrow on the lower left corner. Deleting these does not delete anything from your system except the shortcut icon. No programs or data will be deleted, just the icon.

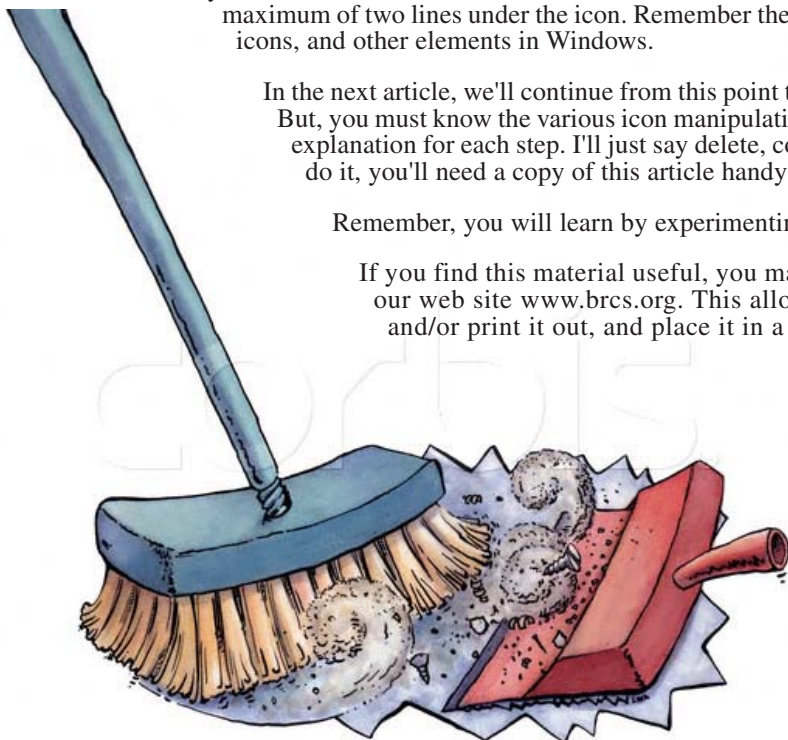
### RENAME AN ICON

Click once an icon and then hit the F2 key. This puts you in "edit" mode, and you can type a new name by using the keyboard. If you type in a very long name, all the text you entered may not display when the icon is not selected. But, when you click once on the icon, the extra lines of text should be visible. In general, try to keep the text to a maximum of two lines under the icon. Remember the F2 key. It is the "edit" key for folder names, filenames, icons, and other elements in Windows.

In the next article, we'll continue from this point to get a more streamlined desktop for you to work with. But, you must know the various icon manipulation procedures presented above. I won't be repeating the explanation for each step. I'll just say delete, copy, move, (etc.) the icon. So if you've forgotten how to do it, you'll need a copy of this article handy to remind you.

Remember, you will learn by experimenting and exploring - so don't be afraid to do so.

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



# Clean Up Your Room/ Desktop - Part II

Written by Ron Hirsch, Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL, [www.brcs.org](http://www.brcs.org),  
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In the previous article, we started on managing your icons. In this issue, we'll be continuing the saga of the icons. When you have completed the exercises below and learned the various activities involved, you will be on the road to becoming an "expert" to your friends. You can then play the role of teacher rather than student.

Currently, there are many different Windows versions in use so the material which follows may bring up a slightly different listing of choices on your machine, when one right-clicks on the desktop. With all these varying situations, it is very difficult to present the many fine points exactly.

In general, the differences will be obvious by simple inspection. When they are not, the most direct approach is just to experiment to see what is produced when a choice is made. Generally, all such choices are reversible. In the process, you will get to better understand what is happening. To me, the aspect of experimenting is usually the best approach to understanding and learning.

Remember what I have been preaching for years in my articles. As you become more conversant with using your computer, you will gain more confidence in expanding your horizons with the most amazing machine that mankind has produced. But, it is only a "machine," and you should be in charge of it, even though Microsoft tends to try and make it in charge of you. You are the boss, and the sooner you let your computer know that, the sooner you will stop feeling intimidated by it.

## DESKTOP

In the latest Window's XP and Vista, MS has made a lot of changes, including the default desktop displayed.

I personally don't like it, but that's a matter of my taste. However, MS did leave the door open to go back to the older style of desktop, which you may prefer. If you right click on the desktop, there should be a choice to have a classic Windows desktop. Try selecting this and see which you'd rather have. You can always revert back to the new style if you choose.

## ARRANGE THE ICONS

Right click on an empty space on the desktop and a menu will come up. The first item on the XP listing is "Arrange Icons by." Put the focus on "Arrange Icons by," and you will get a list with lots of choices on how you want them arranged.

If you have carefully positioned all your desktop icons in the various areas where you want them and you use the "Arrange" feature, they will all line up like soldiers, starting at the upper left part of your screen. Then you will have to manually reposition them to where they were before you started. Again, this is a good area in which to experiment.

## AUTO ARRANGE

In the window that pops up when you click on "Arrange Icons by", you will see an entry named "Auto Arrange." If you check this, your icons will always stay arranged, but not in any groups that you have established.

They will all line up like soldiers and stay that way even if you move them. They will jump right back into line. I personally don't like using this. But, you can try it to see if you'd like it. "Auto arrange" is the equivalent of constantly invoking the "Arrange" command.

## ALIGN TO GRID

I personally use the "Align to Grid," which auto aligns all icons so that rows and columns are straight. With this checked, sometimes when you move an icon, it snaps to a different point on the grid.

It will always snap to the nearest point. When this happens, just click and drag it to where you want.

*Continued on page 24*



In the early days of XP when one had temporarily booted into safe mode, and then returned to normal mode, the desktop layout was totally garbled up. Microsoft apparently improved things in recent times, the original desktop layout does return now.

## ICON ARRANGING UTILITIES

There are also a variety of simple programs available free on the Internet to save and then restore your desktop layout. This can come in handy when something/someone has messed up your desktop layout. The one I used is called "iconlayout.zip" but the page for this appears to be gone now. This link appears to have a similar free program at ZDNET.

<http://downloads.zdnet.com/abstract.aspx?kw=Save+desktop+icon+layout&docid=185169>

What these utilities generally do is add two items into the dropdown list when you right-click on your desktop - "Save desktop icon layout" and "Restore desktop icon Layout." Browse around for something similar, if you'd like to have this handy utility, or try this ZDNET link.

## CHANGING ICONS

Except for a few Icons, of which Windows is very possessive, the icon images that display for the shortcuts on your desktop can be changed to suit your desires. When you right click on an icon, and select properties from the window which shows, a small window will come up; near the bottom right of that window is a button marked "Change Icon." If you click on it, another window will open, with other Windows-supplied icons which are available. The selection is somewhat limited, but there is a "Browse" button.

If you have any icon library files on your computer, click on the "browse", and navigate around to find these libraries. When you find one, double click on it, and a whole bunch of icons will appear, find one you like, then double click on it, click OK, then when you close the window, you'll have a new icon for that shortcut.

## ICON LIBRARIES

If you'd like to get some icon libraries, one of the best places to go is [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com). Once you get there, just navigate around to their download area, and then do a search for "icons." You should get lots of results. These are generally free files and there are lots available, so have fun.

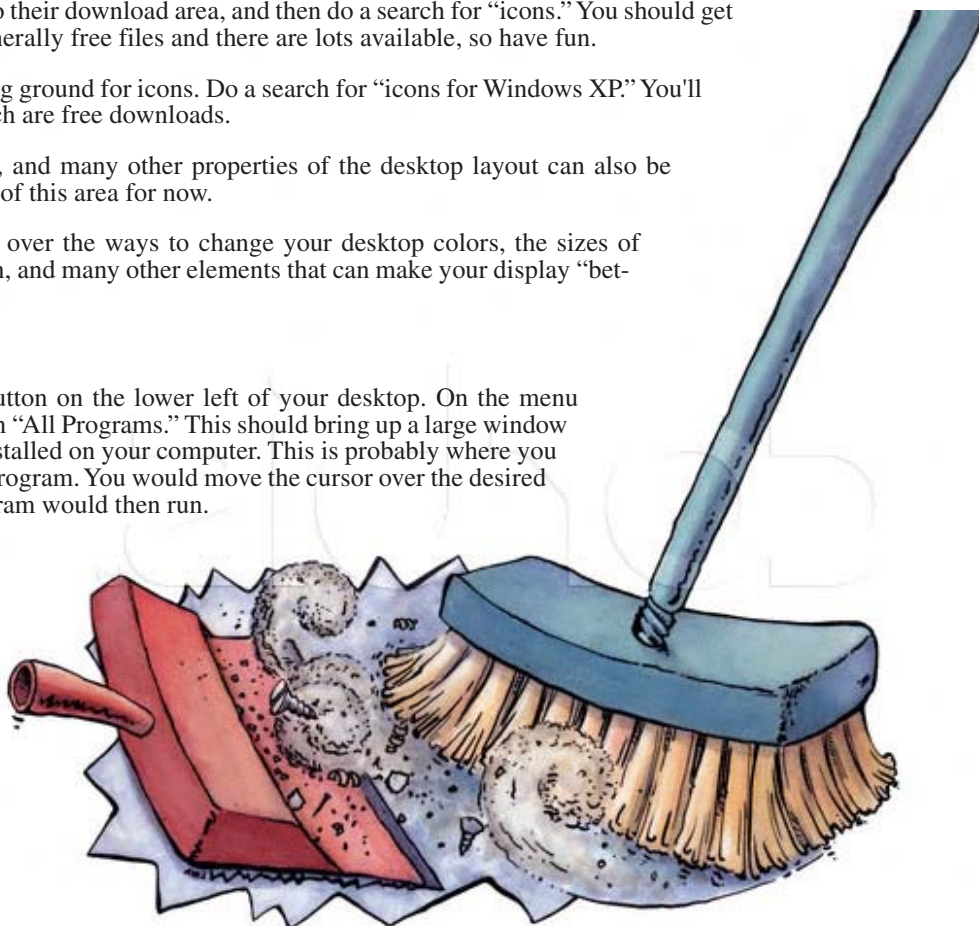
Google is also a good hunting ground for icons. Do a search for "icons for Windows XP." You'll get lots of hits, most of which are free downloads.

The spacing of icons, color, and many other properties of the desktop layout can also be changed. But, that's outside of this area for now.

In a future article, we'll go over the ways to change your desktop colors, the sizes of things, the display resolution, and many other elements that can make your display "better", and easier to use.

## STARTING PROGRAMS

Left click on the START button on the lower left of your desktop. On the menu which comes up, left click on "All Programs." This should bring up a large window that lists all the programs installed on your computer. This is probably where you have been to run a specific program. You would move the cursor over the desired program and click; the program would then run.





Some of these items are links to start the program, and others are folders, which you must click to display the links that are within the folder. How about making copies of the startup links for the programs you use often. Doing this is simple. Put your cursor on a program shortcut, and then right click.

There should be a listed item "Create Shortcut." Clicking on this will create another shortcut, with a (2) showing that it is the a duplicate of the original shortcut. Then, drag this onto the desktop. You can now edit the name to remove the (2), or make it any name you would like.

## CONCLUSION

At this point, take a break, and make sure that you are now well versed in the icon activities presented above. It would also be a good idea to play with the capabilities you have just learned, in preparation for the next venture. This will be a major step for many of you, as we'll be making new folders, adding icons to the desktop, and storing all the icons we don't need in a folder which we'll call "Icons in Storage."

Next month, we'll pick up where we left off, and go through a variety of procedures that you should understand relative to controlling and manipulating windows. We'll also "play" with icons, setting up a storage folder for the excess icons that are presently on display. And, we'll go through the process of getting some new icons on the desktop to save searching for them when we want to use them.

Remember, if you learn a little bit each day, your new skills will make using your computer much easier.

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

## Computer Briefs With Pim Borman

### Customize the start menu

The Start menu gets more real estate in XP than in previous versions, and it's more customizable. To make the Start menu display only the applications you want, rather than the default determined by Microsoft:

- Right-click in an empty section of the Start menu's left column.
- Select Properties > Start Menu > Customize. Here you'll find a list of your most frequently used programs. (XP keeps track of what you use and what you don't, then updates this list dynamically).

Don't want your boss to know that Pinball, Solitaire and Quake all make your list?

Go to the General tab, click Clear List, and set the counter to zero.

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# Cleaning Inside your PC

Written by Gary Bentley, Editor, SouthWest International Personal Computer Club, [www.swipcc.org](http://www.swipcc.org), [bentley.gary@gmail.com](mailto:bentley.gary@gmail.com)

When I worked for GTE Lenkurt (subsequently GTE Network Systems) in El Paso 1978 – 1982 as a technologist and supervisor of electrical performance quality assurance for their telecommunications equipment produced at that location we were required to be very cognizant of the risk of damage to integrated circuits posed by static electricity.

Even static charges that produce no visible spark are sufficient to destroy, or worse, cause subsequent intermittent failure of high impedance inputs on many PC's (non catastrophic damage is more pernicious because it may permit equipment to pass performance testing and fail later in the field, also, intermittent hardware failures are difficult to troubleshoot because you have to be observing the device while it is in failure mode).

All personnel were required to wear grounded wrist straps and work on grounded conducting pads when handling integrated circuit boards. Unfortunately, the plastic tip of a household or automobile portable vacuum cleaner does not conduct electricity and so can build up a significant static electric charge when there are large volumes of air-borne dust particles swirling within and without the plastic vacuum cleaner nozzle (think of rubbing a balloon on your head and recall the immediate build up of electric charge).

There are various brands of canned dust removing gas with a form of difluoroethane gas that is static free. Combining blowing the dust away with that gas and using a cloth dampened with a dust remover will assure that you do not subject the integrated circuits of your computer to static electricity. Make sure to wipe or blow clean the openings

in the case for cooling fans (to assure your system does not overheat). Do not blow the dust remover into a fan in such a way as to spin the fan, or else hold the fan while you spray it as you may create an induced electrical current back into the motherboard (remember that a motor can be a generator).

You may get away with using a vacuum cleaner some of the time, or may think you have until you observe strange intermittent failures down the road (strange crashes, blue screen of death, corrupt files or boot failures). Such failures would require you to replace CPU, memory, motherboard, video graphics card, or power supply (and the failure of any of these components may have corrupted the hard drive and all your data) or simply junk the PC (since the cost of replacement and repair may equal the cost of a new PC tower).

If you unplug the computer prior to cleaning it, remember that the computer will no longer be grounded. So, if you are wearing a grounded wrist strap you should keep one hand on a metal portion of the PC case to maintain a ground path for static charges (or ground the case with a clip to your ground



*Continued on page 27*

pad). Note of warning: If you still have an old CRT monitor, stay out of that monitor case as there are lethal voltages that remain in the CRT even when it is unplugged, a CRT being rather like a huge capacitor (unless you have been trained how to drain the CRT without electrocuting yourself).

If you must use a vacuum cleaner on your PC, use one specially designed for cleaning electronic devices containing static sensitive components. If folks tell you that standard vacuum cleaners, even small hand held devices, pose no actual danger to your PC, ask yourself why 3M Company, for example, sells a Service Vacuum (3M Service Vacuum and 3M Vacuum in a Tool Case) that keeps the motor portion (with high electromagnetic fields that could damage data on a hard drive) in the carrying case and permits the service technician to vacuum the inside of the PC or other electronic device with a long hose with static dissipative attachments (dusting brush, crevice nozzle, needle nose nozzle) "to prevent static buildup" for use "involving static sensitive electronic components such as circuit boards" (quoted from 3M Service Vacuum and Vacuum in a Tool Case Operating Instruction manual).

Paraphrasing Clint Eastwood in Dirty Harry, if you intend to use your home vacuum cleaner (portable or otherwise) inside your PC case you gotta ask yourself, "Do you feel lucky, well, do 'ya?"

*Mr. Bentley studied electrical engineering at the University of Texas, began working in the electronics industry in 1978 with GTE Network Systems (Lenkurt), then software engineering with various startups in the 1980's, designing and implementing, among other things, pre-Internet email communications systems multitasking on Intel platforms and MSDOS PC's. 1984 - 1986. Gary now provides Information Technology consulting services in the El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico areas. Gary has edited and contributed articles to the award-winning Southwest International Personal Computer Club monthly magazine, "Throughput", since December, 2003.*

## Why clean your PC

According to IBM, the worlds largest computer company, if all the dust and contaminants were removed from the inside of all computers, less than 1% would fail in a given year.

Your computer's worst enemy is the cooling fan on the back which is always drawing in dust, dirt and airborne contaminants into the computer's delicate circuitry.

Just like your vehicle, regular computer cleaning will save you money, and increase profits by prolonging your computer's life, and reducing the number of expensive repairs that result from overheating motherboards.

Less down time, and trouble-free operation also means increased employee productivity.

Other benefits include brighter newer looking computers and office equipment (image is important!), and a cleaner healthier working environment (less employee illness).



# If Your Computer Gets Wet...What?

Written by **Bob Schwartz**, a member of HAL-PC, Texas, [www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org), [bobx@hal-pc.org](mailto:bobx@hal-pc.org)

**W**hat to do if something wet spills on your electronic device or it falls into wet whatever? The following is not guaranteed but represents years of experience. Quick, unplug it! Unless there is a likely shock hazard. Look up the instructions (best to do this when you buy it). Find out if there is any prohibition against using ALCOHOL. Alcohol can dissolve some materials.

There are generally two items to have handy. One is distilled water to first wash off and dilute any spill, especially anything that might be conductive. The second is alcohol, 90+% isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol. Ethyl alcohol or ethanol – 90% - will work too. Alcohol has an affinity for water. Rinsing the item first with the distilled water and then with alcohol will dilute, pick up water, carry it away, and evaporate quickly. The higher percent alcohol 90% vs 50% have a greater affinity for water.

Time is important. You do not want water to soak into an otherwise insulating medium, especially water that contains something conductive like salt. It will leave a conductive residue that will short out portions of the device. That is why you want to rinse first with distilled water to carry away any conductive residue and then the alcohol to remove the water film. Most tap water has dissolved minerals that remain after the water evaporates, hence the distilled water to rinse these away.

After, and I repeat AFTER, the above cleaning, you can use very modest heat to help dry out the item. You can use a hair dryer at some distance. Make sure you don't heat the item any hotter than is comfortable to hold. Some plastic materials deform at relatively low temperatures.

Remember the order: (1) rinse with distilled water (2) rinse with alcohol (3) warm gently with hair dryer or warming oven.

For items immersed in flood waters, the above approach can be tried but the outlook is not promising. Generally the conductive flood waters have had time to soak into the various insulating materials and are almost impossible to remove. Still, it may be worth a try, especially if you have the time and possible success is worth the effort. Distilled water and alcohol are not very expensive. Most circuit boards are coated with varnish to resist moisture. In this case, wash repeatedly with distilled water. Use a soft brush to remove any remaining film such as mud. Then, the alcohol followed by the dryer. Using the dryer prematurely can "set" the offending material to the point that it may be almost unremovable. So save it for the very last step after you are sure things are clean. Your efforts may save part if not all of the equipment.

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





**Computer Briefs***With Pim Borman*

## Familiar icons on desktop

It's the case of the missing icons. Many of you may be wondering where all the icons from your desktop are in Windows XP? You can place at least My Computer, My

Network Places and My Documents on the desktop.

- Right-click on the desktop and then click Properties.
- Click the Desktop tab and then click on Customize Desktop.

Put a check mark in the box next to My Document, My Computer, My Network Places or Internet Explorer, to add those familiar icons to your desktop.

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*Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue Service*

# PPC Locking HDMI Cable

by **Bob Clyne**, Member-at-Large, SEMCO (Southeastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc.), SEMCO Data Bus,  
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For those of you not familiar with it, HDMI is the current cable standard for carrying digital audio and video signals between pieces of equipment such as TV sets, DVD players, Blu-Ray players, AV receivers etc. Some computers also have a HDMI output so that you can feed the audio and video from the computer to your TV set. HDMI combines both the audio and video signals in one multi-conductor cable, which makes it much more convenient than other types of connections that use separate cables for audio and video. If you would like more information about HDMI, visit <http://www.hdmi.org>.

One of the few problems with HDMI cables is that they are prone to fall out of the sockets. PPC <http://www.ppc-online.com> has a solution to that problem with the PPC Locking HDMI cable.

The cable comes in the ubiquitous heavy plastic blister pack. Manufacturers love this packaging, but consumers hate it. The advantage of this packaging is that it makes the product visible while protecting the contents from damage or tampering. The disadvantage of this packaging is that it is extremely consumer resistant. Getting the product out of the package requires a sturdy cutting implement. A knife will work, but there is considerable risk of injuring yourself or damaging the product due to the force required. A sturdy pair of scissors will also work and gives your hand considerable exercise in the process.

The cable is a HDMI Category II cable, which means that it can carry the highest definition signals for which there is a current standard. It is capable of handling not only 1080p signals but also 1440p. The cable has both foil and braided shielding to shield the signal from outside interference. The cable appears well made, with a braided outer covering on the cable and a plastic covering over the connectors. The cable is quite flexible.

The locking connectors are what sets the PPC cable apart. The connectors just push onto the HDMI sockets on your equipment. No special sockets or adapters are needed. You may hear a slight click when it seats. Once seated in the socket, the cable is quite resistant to being pulled out. I did not test to see just how much strain they could take, but I pulled fairly hard on the connector and it remained firmly seated in the socket. I think the amount of tension that I applied would be more than would be encountered in normal use.

To remove the cable, you press on the tab on the side of the connector while pulling it out. I found that with some sockets, quite a bit of pressure was required on the release button but you, presumably, won't be removing your HDMI cables every day. One possible problem that I can foresee is if you had a series of HDMI connectors closely spaced in a row, you might not be able to get your fingers between them to press the release button. In this case, you would have to start removing them at one end until you got to the one you wanted to remove. But this is a small price to pay for not having to re-plug cables that have fallen out. There is also the danger that a cable pulling out while live could cause electronic damage to your equipment.

PPC Locking HDMI Cables are available in 3', 6', and 9' lengths for \$48.99, \$59.99, and \$72.99 respectively directly from PPC at <http://connect2ppc.myshopify.com/products/locking-hdmi-jumper-1> and you may find them for lower prices from resellers.



# Install Those Updates

By Marjie Tucker, Newsletter Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, Georgia, [www.mcug.org](http://www.mcug.org), [mcug@dnet.net](mailto:mcug@dnet.net)

**A**re you taking every precaution to safeguard the data on your computer? If you answer "yes" because you have turned on the Windows Firewall and use anti-virus and anti-spyware software, that's great. However, you may be forgetting something very important - installing software updates.

Software usually contains bugs that are not found until the general public uses it. Because of this, all companies including Microsoft and Apple periodically make updates available to fix the bugs that have appeared. Many viruses and worms are written specifically to take advantage of holes that appear in operating systems and other programs. If you don't install the latest updates to your computer, those holes will remain and your data will be vulnerable to the malware.

Both Windows XP and Windows Vista have the ability to automatically download the most important updates as they are posted. To ensure that this is happening on your computer use the Control Panel to go to the Windows Security Center and make certain that the Automatic Updates are turned on. If Automatic Updating shows a green On color, then the updates will be downloaded. If the function for Automatic Updates is disabled, use the setting available to turn it on.

When the updates have been downloaded to your computer you are notified of their presence. This usually occurs with a small golden icon in the lower right-hand corner of your taskbar that reads "Updates are ready for your computer." If you click on the icon and give permission, the update will install immediately, usually in the background so you can continue working. After it is installed you may be asked to give permission for your computer to reboot.

However, if you tell the computer not to install this update, the message that it is available may stay on your computer permanently, as it waits for you to click that it can now be installed. If you see the gold icon on your taskbar, check to see if you have updates waiting right now so you can protect your computer.

## There May Be Additional Updates

Sometimes there are optional updates available that won't be downloaded automatically. For that reason it's a good idea to check the Microsoft Update website periodically. The easiest way to check is to use the link you can find on your Start Menu.

That link will take you directly to the Microsoft Update site where you can choose between the Express or Custom method of installing available updates. Custom is preferable so you can determine if there are any updates you don't want to install.

Click on the Custom button and then wait while the Microsoft site compares your computer's software against the Microsoft database. Eventually you will see a list of updates that are missing from your computer. Any High-Priority (important for security) updates will already be selected to be downloaded. However, you need to look at the Optional Updates to choose the ones you want to include. Click on Software,

Optional and choose all that are shown. You should need all of these. If any Hardware, Optional updates are shown, you should be a little choosier. If your hardware is working properly, you may want to skip these driver updates. But if you are suffering any hardware problems, these updates may solve your problems.



*Continued on page 32*

After you have chosen the updates you want to download, click on Install Updates at the top of the screen and the download will begin. This may take quite a bit of time, depending on the number and size of the updates being downloaded. This would actually be a good time to take a coffee break or make that important telephone call.

You can view a list of the updates you have installed on your computer at the Add or Remove Programs location on your Control Panel. At the top of the screen you will see a small box labeled "Show Updates." Click in that box and all your Microsoft updates will be displayed.

This screen is very useful if you encounter difficulty after installing an update or service pack. You can always find the update and uninstall it through this screen.

You can also easily see if your computer contains the latest Windows Service Packs by looking at the Properties of My Computer. Right-click over the My Computer icon and choose Properties. The most recently installed Service Pack will be listed on this screen.

### **Don't Forget Your Anti-MalWare Programs**

Of course, it's also critical to constantly update your anti-malware programs. Viruses, worms, and spyware are constantly being developed and these protection programs work hard to provide fixes. When possible, also set these programs for automatic updates and regularly perform a manual update just to make certain that you don't miss any patches or new program features.

### **And, Remember Your Other Software**

We've spent most of our time talking about Microsoft software. Your other programs, such as Adobe Reader and Java also receive regular updates. Look at the settings for those to be sure they are updating automatically. This is especially important if you have any difficulty while working with a program. The solution may be as simple as installing the latest patch.

### **Apple Software Updates**

Apple also frequently releases updates that you can download and install. To check your Mac for patches, use the Apple menu and choose Software Updates.

You can also set your Mac to get Automatic Updates by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Choose View and Software Update. One of the choices is Automatic and you can also choose a time for the computer to check the Apple website.

### **Stay Secure**

Remember to set your operating system and programs for Automatic Updates, install those updates, and periodically check the websites manually to ensure that you have all the latest patches. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help protect your data.





# The Computer as Crime Scene

Written by **Michael Gemignani**, a member of HAL-PC, Texas,  
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When most folks think of criminal activity, the computer is not the first thing that comes to mind. But computers are arguably one of the most powerful instruments of crime in history. A poor sucker who robs a bank may get a few thousand dollars. He will almost invariably be caught and may wind up spending decades in jail. But a cybercriminal who causes billions of dollars in damage (witness the conficker worm), or who manages to steal millions of dollars electronically, may not even get caught and, if caught, is not liable to spend a much time in prison as the low tech robber.

Computers offer the opportunity for theft and vandalism on an unprecedented scale. Some feel that the next world war may not be fought by soldiers with guns and bombs but by hackers who try to destroy a nation's power, utility, economic and communication capabilities.

However, we do not have to think in terms of grandiose acts or international plots for a computer to be associated with criminal activity. The fact is that even seemingly innocent activity can get a user in trouble with the law.

Suppose, for example, that pornography, or worse, child pornography, was found on your computer. Many companies will fire an employee if they find pornography on a computer that the employee uses at, or for, work. If child pornography is found, the computer user is subject to harsh criminal penalties. But one need not even download pictures to be subject to prosecution.

The relevant federal statutes are sections 2252A and 2256 et seq. of chapter 110 of Part I of Title 18, which is the United States Criminal Code. Child pornography basically involves the depiction of someone under age 18 engaging in sexually explicit activity.

*Continued on page 34*



It is not required that someone actually have downloaded child pornography. The law applies if someone attempts to violate the provisions against possessing child pornography. Thus, if the FBI were to establish a decoy website that purports to provide child pornography, as some allege has already happened, someone clicking on the website could trigger an investigation and possible prosecution. Lest you think such language is overly broad and therefore unconstitutional, be aware that the Supreme Court of the United States has already ruled the statutes to be constitutional in their entirety as written.

I am not by any means defending the loathsome trade in child pornography. Nor do I seek to defend those who deliberately seek out child pornography. However, as is well-known to those who do not exercise appropriate caution, malware can play all sorts of tricks on a computer, including downloading images that the user would ordinarily avoid completely, usually without the user's knowledge. If a worker is provided a computer by his or her employer, the computer may already have illicit files stored on the hard drive and the new user may be none the wiser.

What of it, you might ask? Surely the police would understand that it was not the current user but, rather, the previous user or malicious software that downloaded the illegal files. But suppose such files were found on your own computer. How would you prove that you were not the one who downloaded them? If child pornography were found on your hard drive, how could you convince someone that you were not the one who put it there? Indeed, if someone at work wanted to get you fired and the person had the requisite expertise, he could put incriminating files on your hard drive and then let it be known to your superiors that he had observed you downloading pornography on the job.

The saving grace in all this, if there is one, is that one is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Hence you would not be required to prove that you did not download the files. Rather, the police would be required to prove that you did, and this might be quite difficult, particularly if your computer were found to be riddled with malware, or it could be shown that someone had hacked into your machine, or that your machine had been used by others.

Even if the charges were dropped, or never even filed, because they could not prove that you downloaded the illicit files or even knew about them, you would still suffer unimaginable emotional trauma, legal expenses, and the probable loss of your job. Moreover, the failure to prosecute would not be the same as exoneration. You would still be under the cloud of having the material found on your machine. Mere pornography can get you fired. Child pornography can get you five to twenty years in prison.

Detective stories often feature someone poisoning another's food or attempts to frame someone for a crime. Now we have the added possibility of poisoned computers destroying lives or being used to frame others for crimes they did not commit. Hope it does not happen to you.

*The Rev. Dr. Michael Gemignani, an attorney and Episcopal priest, is also a former professor of computer science who has written extensively on legal issues related to computers. Although he is now retired, he enjoys writing and speaking about computer law and security.*



# The emergency tool in the palm of your hand: **Your Mobile Phone**

## UNLOCK YOUR CAR FROM MILES AWAY

You've locked your keys in your car and you are at least an hour from your house. Does your car have remote keyless entry? Your cell phone will open your car for you.

You will still need someone at home to find your spare keys. The deal is they don't have to drive out to you if you have your cell phone handy. Call someone at home on their cell phone from your cell phone. Hold your cell phone about a foot from your car door and have the person at your home press the unlock button, holding it near the mobile phone on their end. Your car will unlock. Distance is no object. You could be hundreds of miles away, and if you can reach someone who has the other 'remote' for your car, you can unlock the doors (or the trunk).

## EMERGENCY 112

The Emergency Number worldwide (outside the US) for Mobile is 112. It will work even when you find yourself out of your mobile network's coverage area. Dial 112 in an emergency and the mobile will search any existing network in your area to establish the emergency number for you. This number, 112, can be dialed even if the keypad is locked! I'd tell you to try it but give the emergency operator a break and wait until you really need it to try the number.

## HIDDEN BATTERY POWER

Your cell phone holds a secret. You will only discover it when your cell battery is very low. Press the keys \*3370# to activate your cell's reserve battery power. Your cell phone will restart with the reserve and will show a 50% increase in battery. This reserve will get charged when you charge your cell phone next time.

## DISABLE A STOLEN MOBILE PHONE

Once again you left your cell phone behind. This time you don't have to worry that someone else is stealing all your data. That is if you move quick enough before they act. You will need your cell phone's serial number to do this. To get your cell phone's serial number key in the following digits on your phone: \*#06#. A 15-digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe.

If your phone gets stolen, you can phone your service provider and give them this code. They will then be able to block your handset so even if the thief changes the SIM card, your phone will be totally useless. You probably won't get your phone back, but at least you know that whoever stole it can't use/sell it either. If everybody does this, there would be no point in people stealing mobile phones.

## SO MANY TIPS SO LITTLE VALUE

If you have been trying these tips as you read them you would know that, for the most part, they are not true. That is because they are from an email I have repeatedly received from friends and family. The email is a bunch of junk (mostly) and possibly contained a virus or spyware at some time (my IT person/ geek -- otherwise known as my husband) has my computer with all sorts of virus protection and anti-spyware to protect my computer so the information may have been pulled and forwarded in a clean email but it is still mostly junk.

A good parameter to follow with deciding whether to forward email you receive is if it sounds too good to be true it probably is not true. In which case, the best way of stopping the email is not forwarding it on again. If you are not sure about something you received you can always check at [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com). You can also Google the topic and will probably come up with a bunch of sites that will help. This email I found at an urban legends website. I don't normally read these web sites (who has the time) but I do check out the things I receive before I become part of the junk and spam mail problem.

## FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT CHECKED YET

1. Unlocking your car: FALSE Cell phones and car key remote locks work on different frequencies..
2. Emergency 112: MOSTLY FALSE It works pretty much only in Europe. Stay with 911 here.
3. Hidden Battery Power: FALSE For some Nokia phones this code this code will enhance voice quality but at the cost of battery power loss.
4. Disable stolen cell: NOT ALWAYS & WHY BOTHER On some phones this will cause your account information to be displayed but your provider already has this information. Just call them tell them the phone was stolen.
5. FREE411 TRUE But The only part that may not be true is that McDonald's may not be the sponsor when you call. The sponsor varies regularly and so far I do not recall having McDonald's as a sponsor when I have used it.

So the next time you feel the need to send on your words of wisdom, be sure they ring true. Happy emailing.

## Book Review

Adobe Photoshop Elements 7, Classroom in a Book

Published by Adobe

A review by Willis Irons, a member of the Tucson Computer Society, AZ,  
www.aztcs.org, wbirons@earthlink.net

**T**his book is part of the official training series from Adobe graphics and publishing software developed by Adobe product experts. Eleven lessons in this book are made up of a series of self-paced projects that give a hands on experience using Photoshop Elements 7. An included CD contains all the image files used in this book.

The book covers the basics of learning Adobe Photoshop Elements and provides countless tips and techniques to help become more productive with the program. Each lesson has clear explanations and step-by-step instructions. The book contains approximately 370 pages allowing in-depth study of many topics.

The approach is definitely from a technical how-to-do-it. Very little mention is made about using a camera for recording a scene or composing an ideal visual photograph. Encouragement is given to starting with the best conditions possible.

I began using Elements during the earliest versions and was using version 7 prior to receiving the book, so I felt that I was reasonably proficient. However I decided that I would not skip even one step of any lesson.

That was a good decision. I continually was introduced to a new or more efficient technique, a time saving automated workflow or working with multiple files in batches.

For example, the Organizer is much more complex than I had been aware of. The suggestion is made to work with multiple catalogs, each with a separate project to provide a more efficient workflow. Catalogs can then be combined. The search portion is much more sophisticated than I had discovered. A wonderful new option for me was to discover the method for capturing frames from digital video. Do you know that you can import whole pages or just selected images from a PDF document?

One lengthy lesson is devoted to creating projects. The slide show editor is very adequate for most creations. Many options are available for an appealing show. While assembling a complex photo montage from a blank screen the subject of layers is introduced. The artwork library is also introduced and explained. Several methods of sharing are discussed including Online Album. This service can also be used for backup of all photo files.

The lesson about adjusting color in images is in depth. The three Edit modes are demonstrated and explained. Each has advantages. Guided edit, Quick Fix and Full edit were each used with the same files for comparison. Applying multiple Smart Paint adjustments to a drab sky was illuminating.

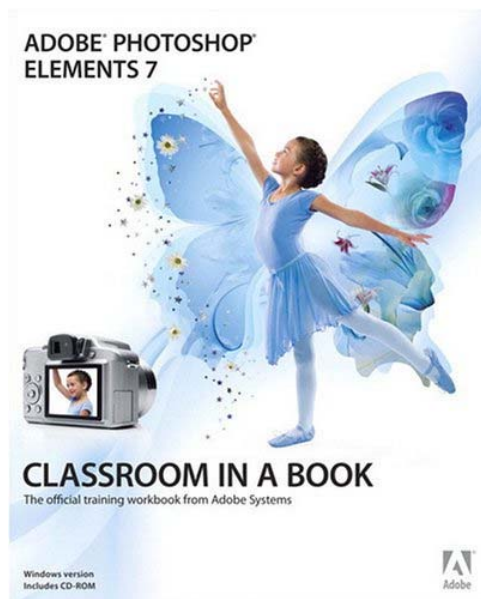
No pun intended.

The more techniques that you are to master, the more likely that you can meet the challenge of fixing a difficult photograph. At this time sophisticated selection methods were introduced as well as a more in-depth look at layers. The next lesson was concerned with fixing exposure problems. Adjustment layers and blending modes were explained and demonstrated. Multiple images can be automatically fixed in batches with good results. Several methods and approaches are shown.

One lesson explores working with text. Included is a section on overlaying text that provides the ability to add a copyright of various appearances. Creating a type mask is demonstrated.

Another lesson is devoted to combining multiple images easily. The lesson learned: do not believe any image that you see. And another very good lesson is provided regarding editing RAW images.

Overall, this was a very interesting and informative book. Time-wise I spent the best part of three days reviewing each lesson and completing suggested assignments. Now, if I can just remember and use what I have learned! Practice. Practice.





## Software Review

### FastStone Image Viewer 3.9

Published by FastStone

A review by Charlotte Brown, President of the Canton/Alliance/Massillon Users Group, Ohio, [www.camug.com](http://www.camug.com), [cbrown@mystepco.com](mailto:cbrown@mystepco.com)

If you want a really simple but powerful basic photo program, look no farther than FastStone Image Viewer 3.9. This is the program that I encourage my students to use in the beginning of their picture enhancing journey. When you want to do more things than Image Viewer offers, you can add another program. Many of the programs that help you through the next steps are also free. Working through the basics into more advanced techniques is not as overwhelming as jumping into the middle of a professional program and wondering how to do simple things such as cropping, adjusting light, changing to sepia or grayscale, or even converting to other file formats.

FastStone Image Viewer has powerful capabilities of batch converting images from one format to another, for example, from jpg to png. It also allows for batch renaming & resizing, batch watermarking and dpi adjustments and more. To keep things simple, let me walk you through the process of taking only 1 picture at a time through a series of adjustments to make the final print.

I always use 3 windows when working with FastStone Image Viewer. This is the default setting. The upper left window allows you to browse through Windows Explorer to the folder containing your photos. Double clicking the folder opens thumbnails of the files in a large window on the right. When you click on a picture to select it, you see a large thumbnail in the lower left-hand window. Look over my shoulder as I browse to Pictures and double click the folder inside that I have named Christmas 08. Large thumbnails of all the picture files in that folder now appear in the large window. I will select a file titled Jayden. Now Jayden's picture appears not only in the window on the right but also as a large thumbnail in the lower left hand corner.

The first thing I do is click File > Save As. I rename the file as JaydenP and use the drop-down menu by File Type to select png. Then I click Save. The new file appears in the large window with all the other thumbnails. It is much bigger than the original jpg. It is now in a lossless format, allowing me to make all kinds of changes without losing any of the information originally captured by the camera. I could choose to work with tiff to accomplish the same capabilities. Png files allow me to cut out transparent areas if I wish and the file size is smaller.

Let me insert something that will interest those of you who are doing more advanced work. The rest of you can skip to the next paragraph! When I double click the picture, it fills my entire window. Moving the mouse to the right side of the screen brings up information about the picture. One of the tab choices is Histogram. That provides me with information about the lighting. Here is a little tip. If you double click the original jpg or you decide to save as tiff instead of png, the tab titled EXIF will give you all the camera information captured when you snapped the picture: date and time, make and model of camera, ISO setting (much the same as film speed in the olden days), the aperture setting, shutter speed, focal length, and whether or not the flash fired.

Now let me return to the really simple process of working with JaydenP, my png file. I click on Edit on the menu bar, and then click on Resize / Resample. Now I can choose to size my picture by number of pixels, percentage or print size. In this case I want to make a color print so I will click on the radio button titled Print size. Next I will select 300 dpi by using the drop down menu or hand entering the numbers. Remember that digital cameras were developed for digital viewing. Most digital camera settings take pictures at 72 dpi. When you resize to 300 dpi, you have a much clearer picture that has a slimming effect on your subject that is much more flattering!

In this case my picture is portrait, not landscape, so I will choose 5 x 7. I put a check mark in the selection box titled Preserve Aspect Ratio so I don't create distortion effects similar to those created by convex or concave mirrors! I notice that the photo will not be exactly 5 x 7. One thing to remember is that digital pictures are not the same scale as film pictures. In this example, my picture turns out to be 5.25 x 7. I click OK. Now I am back to the 3 pane original window and my picture is still selected (blue frame around it). Now I click on the cropping tool. I check the Paper Ration to make sure it says 7 x 5 and has a check mark by Flip Ration so that I get a 5 x 7. A dotted line around the picture shows that the program is suggesting an even crop from both sides. After looking at the picture carefully, I decide I want the entire crop to come from the left side. When I move the mouse onto the picture, it becomes a 4-sided arrow. I click and drag the dotted outline to the right as far as I can and click Crop followed by Close. The picture is still selected in the main work area.

Now I click on the Red Eye control on the toolbars below the menu bars. The picture pops open in a new screen. I like to use a zoom ration of 200%. Then I click in the middle of the eye and draw a circle that covers the entire eye. I can click in the middle

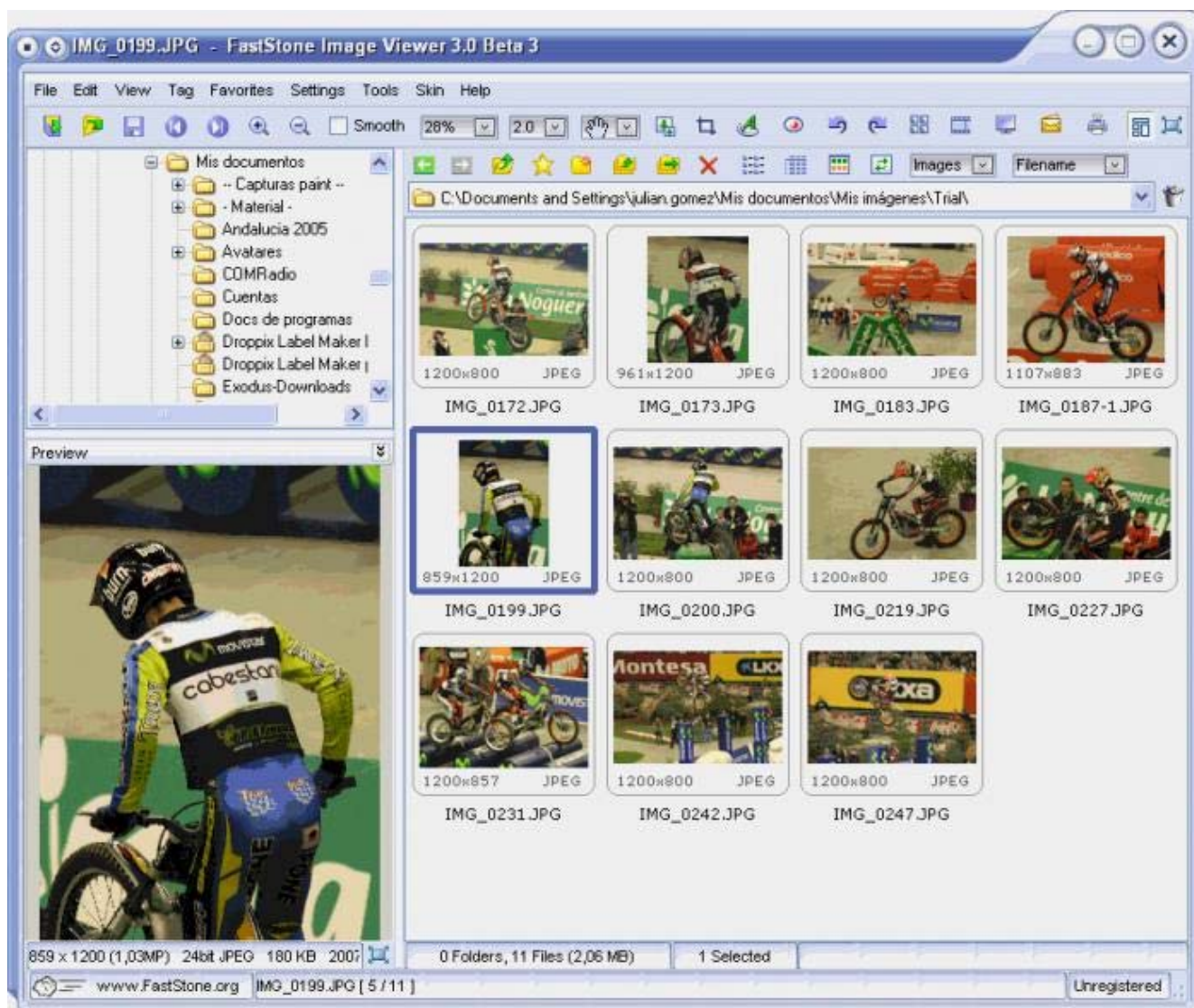
*Continued on page 38*

of the circle I have drawn, hold down the mouse, and move the circle to fine-tune its location. Then I click Remove Red Eye. Whoosh! It is gone. The program takes me back to the mail work area with the three windows.

I click once more on Edit. This time I chose Enhance Colors. The picture opens in a full screen with controls at the bottom for adjusting brightness, contrast, gamma, red, green and blue levels, hue and saturation. You can create some wild looks here. I brighten the picture slightly and make a small color shift to enhance the reds. I click on "Hold Down to See Original Image" to make sure I like the adjustments I have made. When I am satisfied, I click OK. Once again I click on File > Save As. This time I rename the file Jayden 5x7 and select the type as jpg. All my changes hold. The picture is still 300 dpi. The size will be perfect with no surprise cropping by the photo lab.

The program allows for so much more: adding text, straightening a picture before cropping, creating slide shows, and things I haven't yet explored. I downloaded the newest version this week. There is now an 83-page manual you can download to learn from clear directions and screen shots how to take advantage of this marvelous program. The manual was written by Bill Westerhoff who has written tutorials on other free photo products as well as Photoshop Elements 3-7.

I suppose you now are wondering about the price. First of all you need to know where to get the program. Go to [www.faststone.org](http://www.faststone.org). There is no charge to download this program. You will be encouraged to give a donation keep the developers encouraged to work on future enhancements. If you decide you like the program as well as I do, you will want to help them. There is no set fee, so whatever you choose to give is up to you.



<b>SEPTEMBER 2009</b>						
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> High Growth Stock Investing (w/r) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	<b>4</b> Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR*	<b>5</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Board of Directors Crossroads Mall @ the Food Court 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> General Meeting @ 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			
<b>ALAMOPC ORGANIZATION</b>						

\*PRR\* = Pre-Registration Required

# The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

## HGSI Study Group

The premise of the HGS Investor SIG is, "Knowledge becomes stronger when passed on to others." We have created an environment for continuing education and open discussion between well informed members and guest speakers in matters of using Fundamental and Technical Analysis for the buying and selling of equities.

**Contact:** Maynard Burstein

<maynardb@juno.com> 735-3288

**When:** 1st Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm

**Where:** Contact Maynard for location

**Pre-registration:** Call Maynard

**Technical Rating** ★ - ★★★

## Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

Develop your skills at your own pace and at a time that fits your schedule. Introductory private tutorials for one, two, or three students. Choose from:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Basic Computer Skills, or
- Keyboarding/Typing

**Contact:** Learning Center (210) 736-0080 or 736-0700

**When:** Days and hours are arranged between the student(s) and teacher.

**Where:** Learning Center

**Fees:** 1 student: \$35 per hour, 10 hours for \$300. 2 or 3 students: per student—\$20 per hour, 10 hours for \$150

**Pre-registration:** Yes—call or visit the Learning Center

**Technical Rating:** ★

## MCSE Advanced Study Group

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

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

**Tuition fee:** Cost of any books and registered tests.

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

**Where:** Communities in School, 1616 E. Commerce

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

## Small Business Server Study Group (SBS)

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

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

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

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

### Technical Content Ratings

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



# Help Numbers

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

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

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

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

## Step One

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

### Microsoft Office

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

### Corel Office

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

### Photoshop

- 13 Adobe Photoshop

### Internet and E-mail

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

### Open Office

- 24 OpenOffice

### Financial

- 25 Quick Books
- 26 Quicken

### Auction Online

- 27 eBay

### Genealogy

- 28 Family Origins for Windows
- 29 Genealogy

### Communications / Management

- 30 Time&Chaos
- 31 Act
- 32 Goldmine

### Data Base

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

### Networking

- 38 Networking

### Other

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

## Step Two


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

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

# Classified Ads

E-mail your ad to the Editor, PC Alamo 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.



