

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

WEB ISSUE: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PRODUCTIVITY

www.alamopc.org

October 2009

\$5.00

Social Networking: What is it really?
page 20

Twitter: What you are doing right now
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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 (when resumed), Study Group or Sr. Comp classes call:

Registration number **210-736-0700**

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

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Alamo PC office number **210-736-0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210-561-2278**

If you have questions about advertising e-mail

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

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

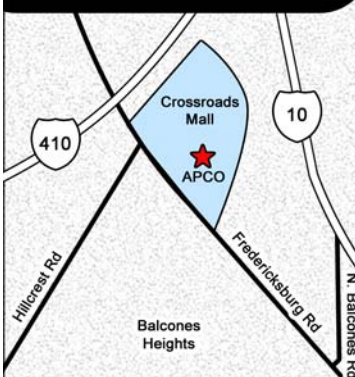
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

Monthly program meetings are normally held the second Monday of the month. Unless otherwise specified, 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 and/or Web site. Open to all members.

Alternate Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 3 for map of Crossroads Mall)



General Meeting Location:
4888 Whirlwind



Sept. Calendar

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

Monday Oct. 12, 2009
General meeting
7 PM 4888 Whirlwind
Loop 410 at I-35 (see map)

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

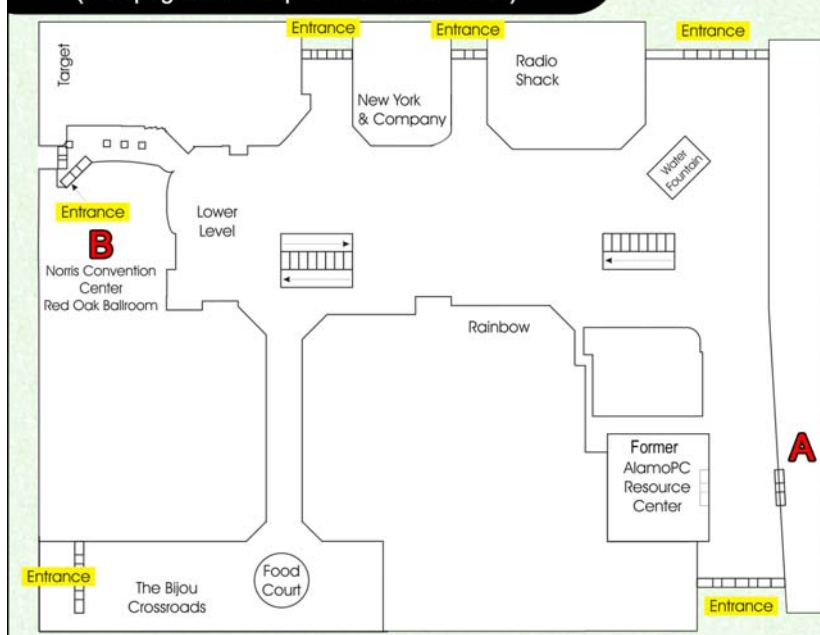
Office Center, 4888 Whirlwind

	736-0700	FAX 736-0032
Office Center Manager	Cary & Jean Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)
Past President/Programs	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)
Member Records	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)
Public Relations	Susan Ives	694-4582 (Home)
Product Review Coordinator	TBD (David Steward)	662-8606 (Home)
Study Groups Coordinator/Ed	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)
Special Projects	Joe Brazell	370-2207 (Office)
Registrar	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)
Webmaster	Mike Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)
Lab/Network Administrator	Gary Grieve	492-5066 (Home)
Trade Shows	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)
APCUG Representative	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)
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		dsteward@texas.net
		editor@alamopc.org

For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0700

Crossroads Mall (lower level)

(See page 2 for map to Crossroads 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) of 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

Web issue: social networks and productivity

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PC Alamode

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DeepPeeping the Web
"Mr. Watson come here, I want to see you"

product reviews

Book Review: Googlepedia
Book Review: DotCrime Manifesto
Software Review: PerfectSpeed

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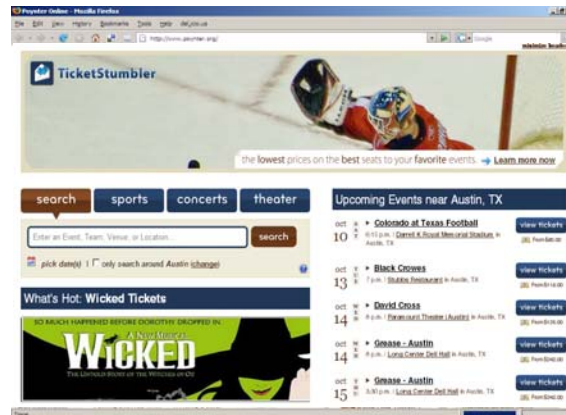
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ceding publication, e-mail to:
editor@alamopc.org

Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode
editor@alamopc.org

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Rate frequency.	Ad rates effective January 2005			
	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
	Per insertion			
Full pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	\$274	\$260	\$246	\$238
Half pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Half pg. (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37
*Consecutive months		**To be paid in advance		

PC Alamode Links List



Google Earth Cool Places

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

See the coolest places on Earth found by Google Earth users. Includes bugs, weird stuff and censored images you won't see in Google Earth.

Ticket Stumbler

<http://ticketstumbler.com/>

TicketStumbler is a secondary ticket market search engine and comparison website. The site allows simple ticket comparison, enabling visitors to find the best seats at the best prices.

This month, I hope you will enjoy this selection of Web-related articles. Most of you have been using the Internet for a long time, but even the most experienced users should learn a few tricks.

We start with a look at social networks and a brief look at the increasingly popular messaging site, Twitter.

Those who like to use Gmail might enjoy learning about MailPlane, a Web utility that allows users to continue to use Gmail even when not connected to the Internet.

FoxIt Reader and Google Chrome are two of my favorite applications. They are both fast and portable and give users a broad set of tools.

We finish out this issue with a look at how far telephone technology has come since the first voice message was remotely received.

Joseph de Leon, Editor

editor@alamopc.org



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

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

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"October" - Children, Columbus, Bosses, U.N., MIL, Treats

This month marks several things of interest to many: Oct 5th - Child Health Day: On this Day, we emphasize our commitment to teaching our children the benefits of good health. The President is requested to issue a proclamation each year — (1) designating the first Monday in October as Child Health Day; and (2) inviting all agencies and organizations interested in child welfare to unite on Child Health Day in observing exercises that will make the people of the United States aware of the fundamental necessity of a year-round program to protect and develop the health of the children of the United States; Oct 8th - National Children's Day: A day to celebrate our appreciation for children and to be reminded how precious they are. (Children's Day is an event celebrated on various days in many places around the world. International Children's Day is celebrated on June 1 and Universal Children's Day is on November 20th. Other countries celebrate a local "children's day" on other dates.) The holiday is simply set to honor children and minors; Oct 12th - Columbus Day: An observance honoring Christopher Columbus's first voyage to the Americas in 1492; Oct 16th - National Boss Day: A day to show appreciation to a boss, manager, supervisor or some other person(s) with oversight. Many times we do not realize the challenges of being the boss (overseer), which is why Patricia Bays Haroski, in 1958, decided to register the holiday and designate October 16th in honor of her father's birthday; Oct 24th - United Nations (UN) Day: Celebrated internationally on October 24th for the purpose of informing the people of the world as to the aims, goals, and achievements of the UN. It commemorates the origin of the United Nations Organization on October 24, 1945 when the UN Charter was ratified by almost all permanent members of the Security Council. UN Day is celebrated in various countries and includes a show of cultural performances and a food fair with food from all over the world; Oct 25th - Mother-In-Law Day: Observed on the 4th Sunday in October. Similar to Mother's Day, this holiday was started in 2002 to celebrate those special In_Laws who are sometimes only the brunt of jokes and/or negative speech; And finally, Oct 31 - Halloween: A day for trick_or_treating, costume parties, haunted houses, jack_o_lanterns and other related celebrations. Children love it because of all the "treats" they can receive!

Other things to keep in mind for October are: White Cane Safety Day: Oct 15th; National School Lunch week: beginning on the 2nd Sunday; National Forest Products Week: beginning on the 3rd Sunday; National Breast Cancer Month; and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The September BOD meeting was not officially held, as only three members have been attending in the past and one was out of town. A presenter for the September General Meeting had already been made known by David Steward, in an E-Mail (he was the one out of town). The two individuals who did come, in the event someone wanted to talk to board members, reviewed the latest financial information available for the organization, the declining membership, (only five 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 September General Meeting was made available after the September issue of the PC Alamode had been published, an E-Mail was sent to the E-Mail address of each member (to the E-Mail address on file in "Membership Records") asking if they intended to be present. Notice was also provided to all members and the general public at the AlamoPC website. As a result, 38 individuals expressed interest but only 32 showed up at our current location (4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio) for the "presentation" - a webinar with Gene Barlow on disk drives and programs associated with keeping them and their stored information in as good a shape as possible.

Gene used Skype as the internet connection vehicle to have members be able to see his laptop presentation and audio comments. From the Q&A portion of the meeting and comments after, it appeared the presentation was well received and informative. Gene indicated he was doing the same presentation for a west coast user group about 30 minutes after he finished with us. He also had some very generous discounts on software he handles, but only for members attending the meeting. In addition, he provided a couple of items for our monthly drawing for members who were able to attend. A good night for all.

It is very late in September, I have yet to be informed by David Steward about anything regarding the October General Meeting (12th). I can only hope he has something worked out for the meeting. I am hopeful the October 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 previously 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. As I have pointed out in many previous messages, this fact is confirmed by the ever declining membership (only 5 new members since November 2008), plus the fact we have not had a full compliment of board members (at least one vacancy) for the past four years.

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

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

I am hoping that we will have a presenter for the October 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, with a copy to me (president@alamopc.org, or privately to me - 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.

October Program

Bill Klutz

It is very late in September, and I have not been informed by David Seward about anything regarding the October meeting. 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) 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.

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:

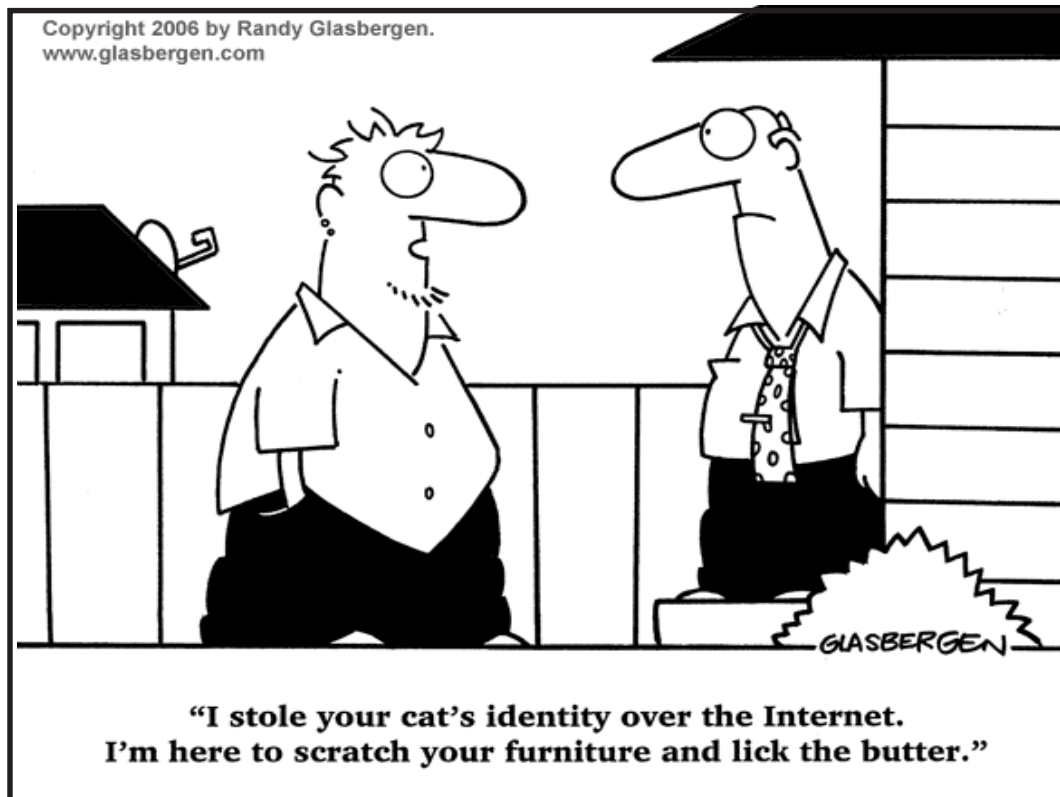
November 14th
December 12th

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



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Computer PM Master

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.

It's necessary for all computer users to update their Windows Updates and anti-virus software programs. This year the Conficker worm virus slithered onto millions of computers unprotected by a critical patch that Microsoft had issued late last year. The patch addressed a hole in the Windows Server service, which most desktop and server versions of Windows use. Without it, a computer is vulnerable to attack by infected machines across a network. Windows updates can be accessed by going to Microsoft site <<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/downloads/windowsupdate/automaticupdate.mspx>>,

which will provide directions for Vista or XP. Unfortunately one can not get Windows Updates for previous versions of Windows. All the name brand anti-virus software programs installed by the computer users provide free antivirus periodic updates to include AVG <<http://free.avg.com/download-avg-anti-virus-free-edition>>.

Computer Viruses:

Here are a few primary indicators that your computer might be infected:

- Your computer runs more slowly than normal
- Your computer stops responding or locks up often
- Your computer crashes and restarts every few minutes
- Your computer restarts on its own and then fails to run normally
- Applications on your computer don't work correctly
- Disks or disk drives are inaccessible
- You can't print correctly
- You see unusual error messages
- You see distorted menus and dialog boxes

These are common signs of infection, but they might also indicate hardware or software problems that have nothing to do with a virus. Unless you run the Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool and install industry-standard, up-to-date antivirus software on your computer, there is no way to be certain if your computer is infected with a virus or not. If you don't have current antivirus software installed or if you're interested in installing a different brand, you can try Windows Live OneCare free for 90 days or visit our Windows Marketplace for software from other companies. Beware of messages warning you that you sent e-mail that contained a virus. This warning can indicate that the virus has listed your e-mail address as the sender of tainted e-mail. However, this situation does not necessarily mean you have a virus. Some viruses have the ability to forge e-mail addresses.

IObit Advanced Windows Care

If you are interested in improving the performance of a sluggish computer, several computer experts

recommend the free version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care – Personal Edition, Version 2. Recently IObit released an upgraded and updated utility renamed Advanced System Care Free V3, which IObit claims has over 10,000 improvements and updates. You can go to the IObit website at <http://www.iobit.com/>, and downloading the new software. Once down loaded, you will be given the choice of multiple download sites. One of them is the Texas mirrors of MajorGeeks, a major download service. The download is about 7.6 megs in size. Once downloaded, you can click on the file to install it. When the install is complete, you will see displayed a clean fresh graphical interface that on the left of the window gives the choices "Maintain Windows," "Diagnose System," "Utilities," and "Home." Whichever icon is selected opens the right half of the window. For a test of the software, choose to Maintain Windows. You will be offered a check-box selection of "Spyware Removal," "Registry Fix," "Privacy Sweep," and "Junk Files Clean." You can select all of them and click on "Scan." In just seconds, all of the corrections and deletions will be carried out. Next you might want to select the "Diagnose System" icon. It will give you check boxes for "System Optimization,"

Continued on page 14

“Security Defense,” “Disk Defragment,” and “Security Analyzer.” The Security Defense feature can immunize the computer against thousands of malicious websites, illicit tracking cookies, browser hijackers, dialers, and other malicious software. Security Analyzer examines running programs to detect and disable any malware that may be currently running on the computer. The Utilities selection offers 20 distinct utilities to tune-up the computer and its applications. Under the Tune Up tab, you will find that Firefox can be optimized for maximum performance. The “Home” icon displays program version, database updates, most recent scan user account (free or paid “Professional” account), and the cumulative results of the scans that had been performed. The center “Care” icon automatically runs the system optimization utilities, as a one-click performance improvement function. IObit has a comparison chart that compares the features of Advanced System Care Free V3 with its software competitors, both free and commercial. This software is compared to seven major competitors (1 free and six commercial), and comes out feature rich compared to the competition. Some of the products listed have features and capabilities not included with Advanced System Care Free V3, but comparing system utilities and clean up programs, this program compares very well. After trying the free version, IObit wants the satisfied user to upgrade to the Pro version, which has more features and capabilities, and is currently on sale online for \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95) directly from IObit. The Pro version has additional performance improving features, a deep registry scan that roots out many more useless registry, additional tune-up features to both improve hardware performance and web speed, and free technical support.

Task Manager

If your computer is running slowly with a little detective work, you can track down the cause and get it up and running full speed again. The Windows Task Manager offers a quick and easy way to check the load on your Central Processing Unit (CPU). To open it, you will have to press Ctrl, Alt, Del (in Vista, you must then click Start Task Manager). Next click the Performance tab to see graphs slowing CPU usage. If your processor consistently runs at more than 50% of capacity, you may have a real problem. To distinguish between your system’s CPU usage for Windows and its CPU usage for any applications, select View, Show Kernel Times. Windows breaks the CPU usage graph into a red line for Windows and a green bar for applications. Click the Processes tab to view all your currently running processes, the micro-programs that make up your applications, and to display the CPU usage for each one under the CPU column. Reinstall any program that you discover is eating up processes unnecessarily or find and install a less processor hungry alternative. Task Manager’s Performance tab provides a quick snapshot of your computer’s Random Access Memory (RAM) use, too. In WinXP, if the Total Commit Charge regularly exceeds the Total Physical Memory, your system must frequently rely on the slower, hard drive, aka virtual memory or swap file. The greater this reliance, the slower your performance. (In Vista, click Resource Monitor and then the Memory bar near the bottom of the window to view your Commit Charge by application.). The most effective way to cure memory bottlenecks in your computer is by adding RAM. If you suspect that your hard drive is slowing down your computer, click, Start, Run (in Vista just Start), type perfmon, and the press Enter to open XP’s System Monitor or Vista’s Reliability and Performance Monitor. If your system is running XP but you don’t see % Disk Time, right-click Counter near the bottom of the window and select Add Counters. Then choose PhysicalDisk under ‘Performance object,’ and select % Disk Time. If counter consistently runs higher than 40 to 50 percent, your drive may be hindering your computer’s performance. If re-running Vista, you can check on your disk use in the Disk graph under Resource Overview.

TestDisk

TestDisk <www.cgsecurity.org> is a free, open-source application that runs a test on your hard drive. It can handle nearly any software drive failure, including damage to master boot directories. If your computer runs slow to the point where you are frustrated with it, then it may be time to purchase a new one. However, being taking that step, you should run Disk Cleanup to remove all of the “ash and trash” from your computer. Look, too, to remove unused computer software programs to give your unit more memory space. There are several utilities which can be used on your computer to remove unwanted spyware, etc. Next perform all of the routine preventative maintenance tasks, such as Check Disk and Defragmentation. If you have exhausted all of those options and don’t want to reinstall your operating system and the computer still run like a turtle, then give serious consideration to purchasing a new computer with more memory.

Web Sites

Here are several web sites which might be of help to you in solving computer problems. aFreeDLL <afreedll.com> can assist you in hunting for a missing DLL (Dynamic Link Library). This site makes finding, downloading, and restoring DLLs a breeze and all of the downloads are free. You can browse the site’s most popular files or search alphabetically and the site includes explanations and helpful tutorials to walk one through the download and installation process. MajorGeeks.com <www.inviteshare.com> has a collection of free and paid apps and utilities for your computer that have been tested to recover, repair, protect, and backup your machine. It sorts files by name, date, license, operating system, and popularity. Infected or Not <www.infectedornot.com> is a service that offers excellent and free NanoScan tool to quickly ascertain whether there’s malware on your computer. It also tracks computer infections around the world. You can obtain the data on both active and latent threats and learn what percentage of scanned computers have malware on them.

The reason your personal computer (PC) will not eventually perform as well when you just purchased it is because the machine is not running the same software. Software manufacturers quickly update their products by writing new programs that need faster hardware. If you want to use that software, then you have to keep up and buy the new hardware. As a result, it is when you need to use new programs that you find yourself needing a newer and faster computer. Every time you update your software, with antivirus, antispyware, and firewall software, these upgrades will gradually slow down the performance of your computer over time. Most desktop computers are designed to function for at least three years while laptops only have a two year life cycle when users continually update their software and hardware programs and peripherals.



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.

A month off makes me lazy and I've wondered if it would even be worth my while to continue the column because I am not getting many new product announcements lately. However, I do have one for this month. I was browsing some items I've saved while reading newsletters I receive; most I've had for ages, but if the product is still a good one, and I've only seen it in two or three newsletters, it should be usable. Perhaps I can keep DealsGuy going a bit longer.

Like many others across the US, I have my own adjustments to make. For me, its because of the GM bankruptcy. I don't know how many benefits I'll end up losing, but I'm glad my wife and I still have a part-time job to bring in a few extra bucks. However, we get less security work lately because some trade show management officials feel that old grey-haired people don't look good working in their shows, and sometimes our employers must listen to what the customer wants or lose business. Even if discrimination is against the law, employers must please the client to survive.

Also, some of our co-workers are vocal that since we have pensions, we shouldn't be working and taking money away from our younger counterparts who do not have a pension. Those people have not tried to live on a pension, especially a pension rate established 25 years ago when I retired. Most young people don't know that pensions don't grow much over the years. Some of our co-workers also only get a small pension to live on and could not make it without other income. Trade shows are fun to work, but the job doesn't pay much. There aren't many jobs available for seniors, except volunteer work. Right now (August), we have no security work scheduled until at least October. Some jobless people are taking these part-time security jobs with several companies in an effort to make them full-time by running from show to show with various companies.

*I Used That Good Tech Support Again!

I seem to get a lightning strike each year and in spite of having adequate protection, I still lose some equipment. It knocked out my favorite toy again, (my weather station), my router and a few other items. It's hard to safeguard the weather station because the wind anemometer sits on the roof, a vulnerable place for lightning. It seems the DSL filters saved my phones because two phones wouldn't work until I replaced the DSL filters in their phone lines. The phone line for my DSL modem was protected through the UPS, but my router no longer worked, so I finally replaced it. The new D-Link router had a disk with a setup wizard on it that worked fine for the setup, also configuring the security. However, I later found that my Ricoh printer wouldn't print. Other routers I've used sent print jobs just fine without any special configuration. After a lot of "trial and error," I decided my router wasn't talking to the printer, which connects to the network, so I called Ricoh.

A guy named Larry answered immediately and we went to work. He tried many things that included pinging the printer, which worked, but the printer still refused to print, even though the computer was now talking to the printer. He said my new router, a D-Link, didn't like my printer and he would have to keep trying port changes. After an hour, he found the right combination and I was printing. As before, Ricoh tech support answered in Atlanta and was easy to work with. He kept his cool, even when his new settings didn't seem to work, or I made a mistake when instructed to punch certain keys.

I noticed my DSL was running slower than usual, but running the computer directly from the modem worked fine. I was unable to find the D-Link free tech support phone number on the Web site so I e-mailed them for a phone number and finally was able to call their tech support. After some difficult time, they improved it. They said they were based in California, but didn't sound like it. Seems the modem and the router both had the same IP address.



Continued on page 16

However, I now couldn't print again, but another call to Ricoh fixed that. I told a friend about the good experience with Ricoh and he asked if I had talked to HP's tech support lately. He said he called HP tech support recently and talked to a guy in India. He had problems understanding him and nothing they tried was working. He said the guy finally hung up on him; and still no solution. My friend is quite computer literate so I doubt he was the problem.

*All About Charts

This product is said to be for software developers, but I'll pass it on because it has a discount and I don't know how many readers develop software. This had the most confusing write-up so I have edited out the hype and tried to make sense of what's left.

ArtfulBits aiCharts for Android is intended for software developers to use as an easily integrated part of their applications to allow representing and visualizing charts of different kinds. It is developed especially for the Android platform and is compatible with Android version 1.1, Cupcake 1.5 and Android 2.0. Presently, it supports the following chart types: Line, Spline, Point, Bubble, Column, Stack Column, Stack Column 100%, Bar, Stack Bar, Stack bar 100%, Area, Spline Area, Stack Area, Stack Area 100%, Pie, Polar, HiLoCandlestick, Funnel, Pyramid.

aiCharts does not use any low level native libraries and is 100% safe for Android OS users as it runs in a completely safe managed environment of Dalvik Java VM. Online documentation with samples and tutorials gives developers all the necessary information to easily integrate and provide support for applications with aiCharts. Online documentation will be updated frequently.

A subscription guarantees fast feedback, access to the internal bug tracking system and the latest solutions. Any problems that may occur will be reviewed and resolved as soon as possible, and solutions and/or patches will be available before the release of the next version. aiCharts creators assure that all users will get feedback and the ArtfulBits team will do everything possible to meet customers' demands, and to perfect aiCharts.

This opportunity seems more interesting considering the recently announced ADC 2 (Android Developer Challenge 2) launched by Google aiming to support developers in their efforts.

Get a 50% discount by using the code "DealsGuy-Customers-Choice" when ordering. Bonus is an added 1 Year Subscription. Limitations are: code works from September 01, 2009 until November 01, 2009. The code works on a Developer License, Bundle 3 and Bundle 5 and does not work on a Subscription only. That would help a lot on the MSRP of \$299.

Product page: <<http://www.artfulbits.com/products/>>

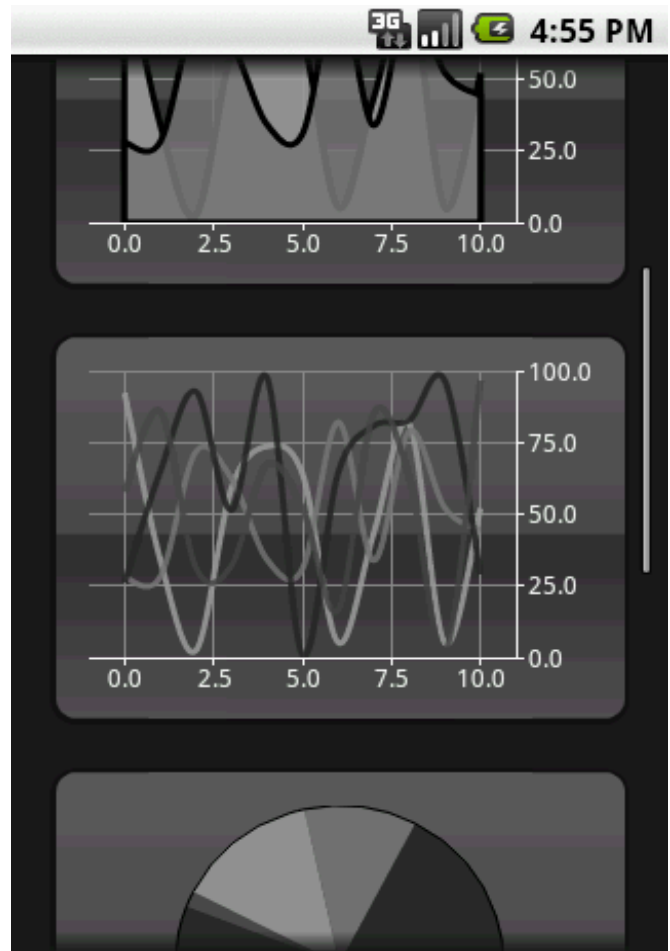
YouTube demo: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ho5wiV-o8g>>

Purchase: <<http://www.artfulbits.com/Products/Purchase.aspx>>

*Someone Sent Me This, But Didn't Want To Be Named

Ever wonder if somebody might have plugged a USB device into your computer for some reason? People sometimes like playing tricks on you (like a surprise midi file you didn't expect), or might browse through your HD and even copy items to, or from, a flash drive or some other media, but this product might provide some details if a flash drive was used. USBDeview finds out what USB devices are currently connected to your computer and also sees which devices were connected before. It tells you the time the device was plugged/unplugged (if the machine hasn't been rebooted). Other information possible is; device name/description, device type, serial number (for mass storage devices), VendorID, ProductID, and more.

USBDeview allows you to uninstall USB devices that you previously used, and disconnect USB devices currently connected to your computer. Unfortunately it can't figure out which files might have been copied from, or to, your machine, or even if that actually happened. Use your best judgments if you suspect that. Check this out at <http://www.nirsoft.net/utills/usb_devices_view.html>. This is a freebie and works on newer Windows systems. The Web site says no need to install it, just run the .exe file. I thought it sounded interesting.





Using a computer chair

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

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

You should be able to sit comfortably in the chair, using as much of the chair back as possible for support. The lumbar support, built into or added on to the chair, should fit comfortably into the curve of your lower back, and your feet should be flat on the ground (use a footrest if necessary). The seat should be a comfortable size that allows at least one inch between your legs and either side of the chair, and supports your legs without applying undue pressure to the back of your knees.

Tips for using your chair

1. Use a chair with a backrest that is easily adjustable and able to support the back in a variety of seated postures.
2. Provide a chair that is sized to fit small or large users. Note: this is especially important if the chair is to be shared by several users.
3. When sitting back, make any adjustments to the seat pan to reach a comfortable position. The seat pan should extend about an inch on both sides of your legs, and should not apply pressure to the back of your knees.
4. Seat pan should be "depth" adjustable to adequately support taller users while allowing shorter users to sit with their back fully supported. The seat pan should provide support for most of the thigh without contact between the back of the user's knee and the front edge of the seat pan.
5. If your armrests cannot be properly adjusted, or if they interfere with your computer positioning, remove them, or stop using them.
6. There isn't a single static seated posture that should be used all of the time. It is a good idea to move around into different postures throughout the day to improve circulation and reduce muscle fatigue.
7. Start with your seat at the highest setting and then adjust downward until your legs and feet feel comfortable, and angle of the back of your knees is open.
8. Studies show that the best seated posture is a reclined posture of 100-110 degrees NOT the upright 90 degree posture that is often portrayed. In the recommended posture the chair starts to work for the body and there are significant decreases in postural muscle activity and in intervertebral disc pressure in the lumbar spine. Erect sitting is NOT relaxed, sustainable sitting, reclined sitting is.
9. If chair mobility is important to help you to do your work then the chair should have at least a 5 leg base with casters that glide freely over the floor surface. You may also want to choose a chair that swivels easily.
10. In the vast majority of situations you should not need a foot support to be able to sit comfortably on your chair? However, if you do need a foot support then choose a free-standing floor-mounted support that will allow you to rest your feet out in front of you in a comfortable manner.





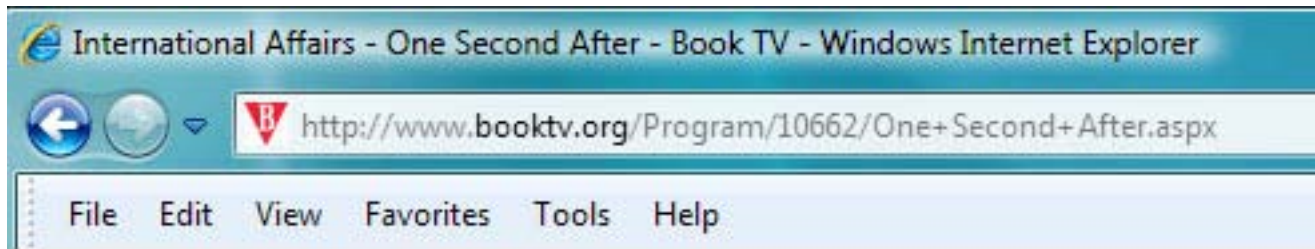
Vista Task Scheduler

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>

Whenever you select a menu item or activate an icon on your desktop, you are most likely opening a file called a shortcut. This is a great time saver for the average person who uses computers on a regular basis. A computer shortcut is a file similar to any other file that resides on your computer, with one big difference. It's only function is to direct the operating system to the location of another file so you don't have to go exploring through layers of folders to find it, assuming you even know its location. As mentioned above, it's a great time saver.

Wouldn't it be handy to have a desktop shortcut icon that would bring you to your favorite web site without having to go through all the intermediate steps to get there? First you need to open your browser. Then it's a matter of getting the URL into the address bar. There is more than one way to do this. You can use the mouse to select an item from the Favorites bar or Command bar. You can also type in the address manually, which is prone to error and can be cumbersome if the URL is long and complex. Suffice to say that Microsoft has provided the ability to create many paths to the same destination. No matter which path you take, the first time you visit a web site is the most time consuming. Only once do you need to take the longest journey. Subsequent visits can be made via a desktop shortcut. Let's take the path of least resistance.



The illustration shows the web address (URL) of a web site we'll presume you visit frequently. The easiest way to create a desktop shortcut to this location is to:

1. Right click the icon immediately to the left of the web site address. In this example, it's the red down-pointing triangle with the white B inside.
2. Minimize any open windows blocking access to the desktop.
3. While holding the right mouse button, drag the icon to an empty portion of your desktop.
4. Release the right mouse button and a dialog box will appear prompting you to create a shortcut on the desktop.
5. Click on the Create Shortcuts Here option.



Your desktop icon will resemble the illustration on the left. Customizing the icon is easy. Right-click on the icon, and select Properties from the popup menu.

Activate the Web Document tab. From here you can change the icon by clicking on the Change Icon button and choosing from a large selection provided by Microsoft. If you don't care for any of these, you can browse through folders on your computer until you find one you prefer.

The Security tab allows you to grant or deny access to anyone who also shares your computer. Information on the Details tab will vary with the web site.

The General tab, (which should be the Details tab), is where you get the detailed information about the icon.

Change whatever you think needs changing or leave everything alone. The choice is yours.

As always, the devil is in the details. If the website you wish to access through the shortcut requires authorization, the shortcut may not work. If a user ID and password are needed you will most likely get a message telling you that you're not getting in until you provide proper identification.

Accessibility options

Vinny La Bash , Sarasota PC User Group

The accessibility options in Windows 98 far surpass those in Windows 95. Not only do they include a new option, Microsoft Magnifier, but they now offer a wizard to help you select which options are right for you. We'll describe how to install these new options assuming you haven't installed them already, since they aren't part of the default setup program.

Open the Control Panel, select Add/Remove Programs and click the Windows Setup tab. When Windows 98 finishes checking your system for installed components, select Accessibility in the list of components, and click the Details button. Select Accessibility Tools, click OK twice, and insert your installation disk when asked. Click OK again, and wait until Windows 98 finishes copying the files it needs.

If you're not sure how to go about searching through all the Accessibility options to find out which ones are right for you, let the wizard do it for you. Select Start, Programs, Accessories, Accessibility, Accessibility Wizard. In the dialog box that appears, click the text you find most comfortable to read. (Funny, the instructions are in the smallest text!) Click Next twice (unless you want to change one of the selected options), then check any of the four statements that apply to you. Click Next, and follow along as the wizard asks you some questions, based on the statements you selected. For example, if you indicated that you have a hard time seeing things on-screen, you'll have the option to set a new scrollbar size, icon size, and color scheme.

When you reach the end of the wizard, click Finish to keep the settings you've selected.

Now, let's take a closer look at Microsoft Magnifier, a very neat tool for the visually impaired or for those of us who need to give our eyes a break once in a while.

Select Start, Programs, Accessories, Accessibility, Magnifier. If you use this tool a lot, you'll definitely want to place a shortcut to it somewhere handy, such as the desktop or your Quick Launch Toolbar. Everything on your screen will jump down a bit to make room for a magnified area of the screen. By default, what you see in that area depends on the location of your mouse. Move your mouse pointer to something on-screen and you'll see it magnified.

Click OK to minimize the Microsoft Magnifier dialog box and get back to work. It's a little strange when you first try it, but it sure beats holding a real magnifying glass up to the screen! To turn off the magnifier, restore the Microsoft Magnifier dialog box, if it isn't already, then click Exit; or, right-mouse-click its Taskbar item and select Close.

If the Magnifier's default settings aren't quite right, feel free to change the defaults using the Microsoft Magnifier dialog box. For example, if you find it dizzying to see an exact duplicate of what you're working on at the top of the screen, try inverting the colors. Select Invert colors, and assuming you're working on a document, you'll now see white text on a black background.

Or, to really zoom in on something, increase the magnification level. You can always change it back to the default which is two times normal size. Play around with the different options, and when you finish making changes, click OK to minimize the window.

Note that you can also increase the size of the Magnifier pane to as much as half of your screen by holding your cursor over the bottom edge of the Magnifier until it turns into a double arrow, then dragging the edge down. Now that you have been exposed to an overview of the latest options of the Accessibility tools, you owe it to yourself to explore its capabilities even though you may not consider yourself disabled.



Web issue: social networks and productivity

Social Networking What is it, really?

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida,
www.spcug.org, president@spcug.org

Social Networking is all over the news; Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are the ones that get the most play. So what are they, really? Well, they're websites that provide another way of keeping in touch with friends, family, and associates. What are some older social networking methods? Maybe, the Telegram, the Telephone, Visiting on Sunday, Writing Letters. These are all ways of keeping in touch with your family and/or circle of friends. Yesterday we had these less technical ways of keeping in touch. Today we have the computer to help us keep in touch via email, instant messaging, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone, and social networking. Social networking has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people, and it now seems that social networking will become a regular part of everyday computer life.

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Social Networking is probably the newest technology and revolves around an internet website that provides social networking services. How about this for a definition of a social network: A site that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; to create a list of other users with whom they have a connection; and to view their list of connections and those made by others within the system. With that in mind, a social network focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging.



On many of the large Social Networking sites, participants are not necessarily “networking” or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network, such as on Facebook and Twitter.

While it could be said that email and regular websites have most of the essential elements of social networks, the social networking sites make it easy to use. Here’s a look at some of the more popular sites.

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) – LinkedIn is mostly for business people and professionals. People use it to maintain contacts and to develop new business opportunities. To use LinkedIn, you create a profile where you describe yourself, listing work and education history, skills, specialties, etc. Just like a resume. Once you have your profile, you start connecting to others. That’s the driving force behind LinkedIn. You use your connections to promote yourself and build relationships.

Twitter (www.twitter.com) – Twitter is a micro blogging service. When it started out, people used it to tell others what they were doing at various times during the day. Now it has evolved into a way to tell people about your activities and then provide a link to further details. SPCUG as a group could have its own Twitter account. Once we had it, interested members could “follow” it and receive our group information known as “tweets” delivered to them. A Twitter “tweet” has a limit of 140 characters. This may possibly be a substitute for our use of Constant Contact to contact the membership for changes in educational class schedules.

Facebook (www.backbook.com). Facebook is sort of a cross between LinkedIn and Twitter. Facebook used to be mainly for students, but has become more mainstream. Like LinkedIn, you build a profile of yourself, where you talk about what your interests and hobbies are. Like Twitter, you can do micro blogging about things you want people to know. In Facebook, you have friends as opposed to connections or followers.

Users of Social Networks, in general, can upload a picture of themselves, create their “profile” and can often be “friends” with other users. In most social networks, both users must confirm that they are friends before they are linked. For example, if Alice lists Bob as a friend, then Bob would have to approve Alice’s friend request before they are listed as friends. Some social networking sites have a “favorites” feature that does not need approval from the other user. Social networks usually have privacy controls that allow the user to choose who can view their profile or contact them, etc.

Privacy of Social Networks is a big concern. On large social networks, there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Users of these networks need to be aware of data theft and viruses. However, large networks often work with law enforcement to try to prevent such incidents.

Access to one’s information is also of great concern. Many social networks such as Facebook, provide the user the choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized user(s) from accessing their information. To edit information on a social network account, the site usually requires you to login or provide an access code. This prevents unauthorized users from editing an account such as posting pictures or changing personal information.

Social Networking is a promising new technology for staying in touch. Give it a try, there must be some group of people you would like to keep in touch with.



What You Are Doing Right Now

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

Several of the readers of this column asked me, "What is Twitter?" following the media reports that senators and congress people were "Twittering" during recent presidential speeches. Twitter (the internet service and the person who does the posting) and Twittering or Tweeting (the posting of personal activities on Twitter) has become one of the most popular ways of communicating one's activities so that others can follow what is going on in the life of a Twitter. The service is self-described as, "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" According to some of the national media quoted by Twitter.com, "The New York Times calls Twitter "one of the fastest-growing phenomena on the Internet." TIME Magazine says, "Twitter is on its way to becoming the next killer app," and Newsweek noted that "Suddenly, it seems as though all the world's a-twitter."

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The screenshot shows the Twitter homepage with the Twitter logo at the top. Below the logo is a section titled "What is Twitter?" with three buttons: "What?", "Why?", and "How?". Below these buttons is a large image featuring a yellow bird on a branch and a list of tweets. The tweets include:

- Ev Waited all morning for PG&E, who didn't without power or Internet let me get some over, back at office. 2 minutes ago from txt.
- Maggie Just landed in LA. 2 minutes ago
- mollydotcom wishes she could sleep recovering from trauma. 2 days of dr web ...

Below the image, the text reads: "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: **What are you doing?**"

Twitter user would post his daily activities as they occur; Twitter explains it this way, “Why? Because even basic updates are meaningful to family members, friends, or colleagues—especially when they’re timely.”

Just to experience the life of a Twitter, I went to www.twitter.com and signed up for a free account. The signup process was very fast and easy, only asking for me to create my user name, create a secure password, and entering my email address. After creating my account, I was given the opportunity to upload a photo of myself for display to anyone that views my Twitter page, and allow me to customize my page to control the way others view it. I entered my first short message that I was using Twitter, and it appeared on my now personalized webpage. Since messages and other postings are intended to appear as text messages on cell phones as well as on a webpage, individual postings are limited to 140 characters, the maximum length of a text message (SMS) allowed on most cell phone systems. As I was typing this column,

I posted a Twitter (message) that I was typing this column; if anyone is following my activities at this instant, he would receive this news as a text message on his cell phone, as an RSS feed on his computer, and email, or by simply viewing my Twitter webpage. On my view of my webpage is a text box where I can type my current activity, as long as I keep it under 140 characters, as shown by the counter adjacent to the text box. Postings can be made or received by computer, cell phone text message, Blackberry, or other communications device. Postings can also be received on any newsreader that uses the RSS format news feed.

Twitter makes it very easy to find friends who also Twitter. By clicking on the “Find People” icon, a window is opened that says “Find people”. Follow them”. To locate friends on Twitter, I chose to allow Twitter to access my email address book to determine if any of my current correspondents are on Twitter. Twitter can access (but only with your express permission) address books on Yahoo, Gmail, AOL, Hotmail, and MSN. It will quickly scan the online address book, and match any email addresses in the address book against the millions already in the Twitter database. Twitter states that it does not save the email addresses and passwords, and does not send out emails to those located without express permission to do so. I also used the “Find on Twitter” feature to enter my last name to see if any of my relatives are on Twitter, and add them to my friends list. Just as a lark, I entered the names of some of our elected officials, and found that several of them do have Twitter accounts. If I want to invite friends by personal email, I can enter their email addresses in the “Invite by Email” box, and Twitter will send them an invitation.

If I want to add celebrities to my friend’s list, I can click on “Suggested Uses”, and a list of celebrities who Twitter will be displayed. By checking the box adjacent to their names, we can exchange Twitter posts and monitor each others’ activities. Some of the more interesting celebrities and online services that can be added to anyone’s Twitter friends list are the Jodrell Bank observatory, the Dell Outlet Store, JetBlue Airways Customer Service (monitors Twitter 24/7), the New York Times, 10 Downing Street (the official residence of the British Prime Minister), rapper M. C. Hammer, CNN Breaking News, Al Gore, John McCain, Whole Foods Market (Fresh organic tweets from Whole Foods Market HQ in Austin), Lance Armstrong, Britney Spears (Yes! This is the real Britney Spears!), George Stephanopoulos (ABC News Chief Washington Correspondent and Host of “This Week”), Women’s Wear Daily, the Nightline TV news show, Martha Stewart, comedian and magician Penn Jillette, rapper 50 cent, and many more. The business and news outlets listed post breaking news or special deals to their Twitter friends. One that I added, being the nascent bargain shopper, is Woot.com, which posts one deeply discounted bargain each day in each of its merchandise categories.

Twitter, the company, is headquartered in San Francisco, and was founded in 2006. It is a small company, with only a few dozen employees, but has millions of members. It has a marketing model to generate revenue, but the revenue model has not yet been implemented, leaving all of the posts and web pages currently free of advertising.

I am not sure how much I will be using Twitter on a regular basis by posting my personal activities and short commentaries, but I will check my page occasionally just to see who is following my activities. The main purpose of Twitter is to answer the question, “What are you doing?” For those who want others to be able to know the answer in real time, they can do so with Twitter.



The screenshot shows the Twitter interface. At the top is the Twitter logo and navigation links: Home, Profile, Find. Below this is a large text box labeled "What are you doing?" with a character count of 140. Below the text box is a timestamp: "Latest: Typing my weekly newspaper column. less than 5 seconds ago" and an "update" button. Below this is a list of tweets from user "iwilsker". The first tweet says "Typing my weekly newspaper column. less than 5 seconds ago from web" and includes a profile picture of a man in a suit. The second tweet says "Loading Twitter about 2 hours ago from web" and also includes the same profile picture. At the bottom right of the tweet list is an "Older »" button. Below the tweet list is a section titled "What to do now:" with a small icon of a person with a speech bubble. The list includes: 1. Tell us what you're doing in the box above, 2. Find some friends and follow what they're doing, and 3. Turn on your mobile phone to update your friends on the go.

If you like Gmail, you might love MailPlane

by **Kurt Jefferson**, Macintosh SIG Leader, Central
Kentucky Computer Society, www.ckcs.org

Raise your hand if you use Gmail (Google's email service). Plenty of people do. But I have always preferred viewing my email using an email client rather than Web mail. (A client is just computer jargon for an email program such as Apple Mail, Microsoft Entourage, or Thunderbird).

For free, Gmail allows you to configure your email client so you're able to get and send email that way rather than through Gmail's Web site. You can even choose between POP (an older system of email delivery) or IMAP (a newer system).

But using Apple's Mail program with Gmail didn't seem to be the best option for me. Joe Kissell, who's written a number of books about Apple Mail and email in general, writes in a TidBits article: In particular, if you expect Mail (or any IMAP client) to work just like Gmail's Web interface in the way it handles archiving, some of what I describe here may disappoint you.

Kissell writes that Gmail started life as a Web-only email system without folders. The idea was to throw all your email into one big mailbox and then do a Google search to find older messages. Later, Kissell says, Gmail allowed users to apply multiple labels to messages. That way, it was easier to find messages by remembering which label or labels applied to a specific message.

Finally, Google decided to allow users to access their Gmail accounts through their own email client. But there could be a catch if you own more than one Mac or PC. Kissell says the folks at Gmail monitor what they consider to be excessive email activity such as downloading all of your IMAP messages a number of times each day. The mathematical equation detailing what Google considers excessive isn't public, but Kissell has run into the brick wall before. He says he's been locked out of all IMAP access for up to 24 hours.

In other words, when Kissell checked his email, Gmail stopped delivery because he exceeded the message limit. How did he get around this? You can follow step-by-step directions in his TidBit's article. You might especially be interested in the section labeled, "How to Configure Everything for Maximum Happiness."

Joe Kissell's Tidbits article is here: <http://db.tidbits.com/article/10253> Kissell changed his settings in Apple Mail so he could live with Gmail's reliance on labels and archiving, Mail's reliance on mailboxes (folders), and the fact that Gmail began life as a Web mail service.

I went another route. Since I'm not a huge fan of Web mail (I use it when I'm away from home but prefer a small client), I because searching for alternatives to use my Gmail account.

I stumbled upon an article in Macworld describing an email program which I had never heard of before. It used WebKit, the same open source software on which Apple's Safari is built.



In other words, this email program mimics Gmail's Webmail (even though it's not Webmail), works only with Gmail, and provides a toolbar that can be customized.

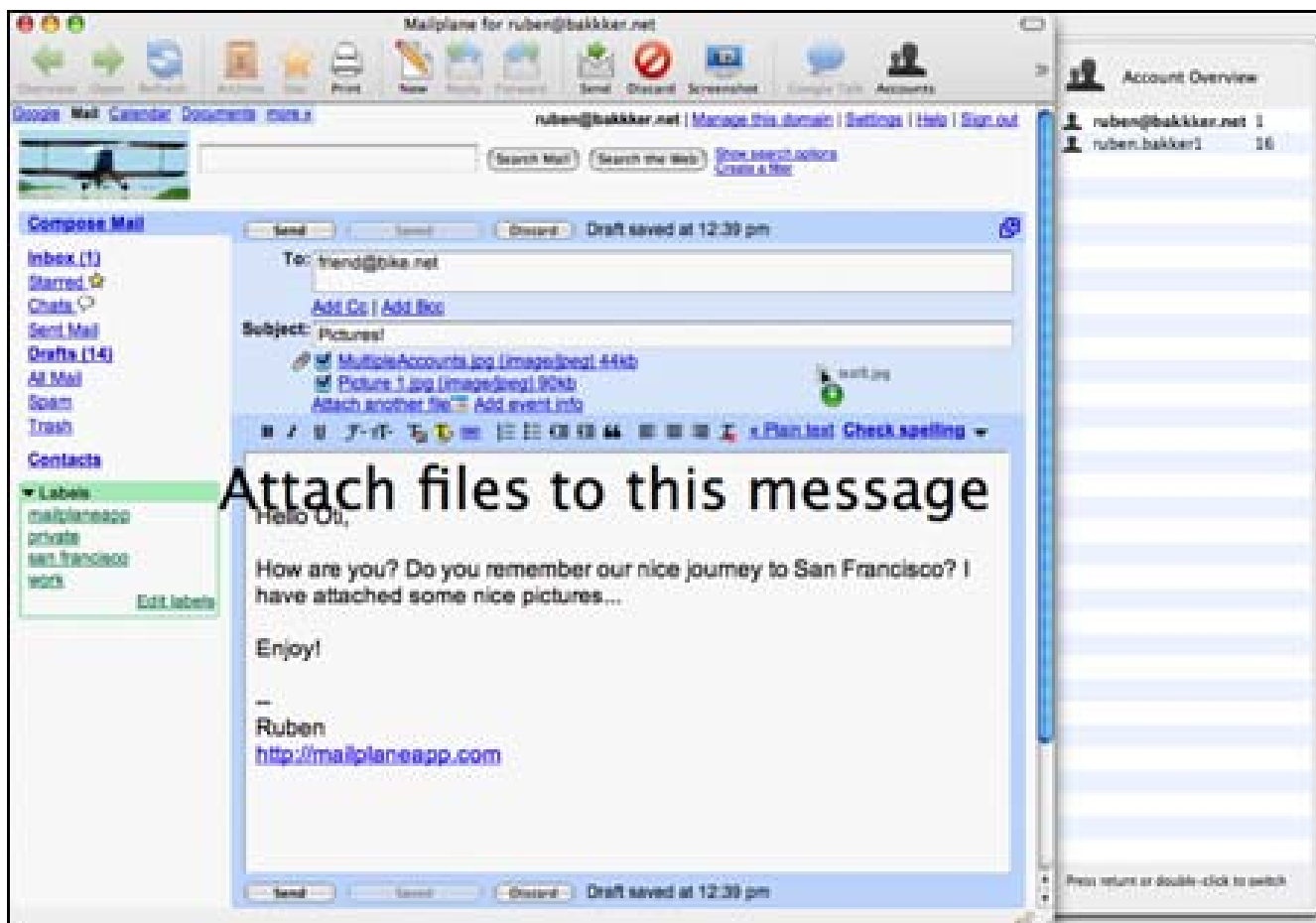
The program is called Mailplane. It's unique in that it supports standard Mac OS X features, allows Google searches from within the program when activated, and uses Gmail's labeling and archiving options. A plug-in allows the user to send photos from within iPhoto. The Dock icon notifies the user by revealing how many new unread messages have arrived. A Mailplane icon in the menu bar also reveals the new message count, checks for incoming messages, and lets the user quickly check for messages in more than one Gmail account.

One of my favorite features is Mailplane's address book. It pulls email addresses directly from Apple's Address Book in my Applications folder. I can either begin typing a recipient's address in the proper Mailplane pane and it will autofill or I can choose Mail --> Insert --> Email Address from the program's menu bar.

If you're a fan of Gmail's keyboard commands don't sweat it. You'll be glad to know that Mailplane uses most of the same Mac shortcuts. Need to include an attachment? Simply drag and drop it into the Mailplane window (or click on the paper clip and find the attachment in the Finder). One neat feature lets the user adjust the size and quality of an attachment by user a slider bar. In addition, Mailplane 2.1(in beta) supports offline Gmail so the user can read his or her messages without being connected to the Internet.

As I write this, I have 26 days left to evaluate the program. It costs \$24.95 for one copy or \$15 for a family option. If you've got up to 5 Macs in your household, the latter is the wiser purchase.

Mailplane is not perfect. It is a work in progress. But so far, it appears to offer a good alternative for Gmail users who don't like to use Web mail. As Google keeps expanding its Google Labs programs, Mailplane keeps allowing the user to expand the email program's offerings. If you use Gmail on a Mac, give Mailplane a chance. You might find yourself wondering how you got along without it.



Foxit Reader

A Worthy Alternative to Adobe Reader

By **Sharon Walbran**, Editor, TCPC Digital Viking, Twin Cities PC User Group, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, www.tcpc.com, SQWalbran@yahoo.com

When one of my clients was concerned about hacker threats to Adobe Reader last winter I went in search of alternative software. I found the free version of Foxit Reader at <http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/>

It's well worth a look! Here are just some of the advantages:

Small Size. The file is about one-sixth the size of the latest free version of Adobe Reader and takes seconds to download and install. The small footprint is great for older computers or those short on hard drive space. There is also a U3 version for flash drives.

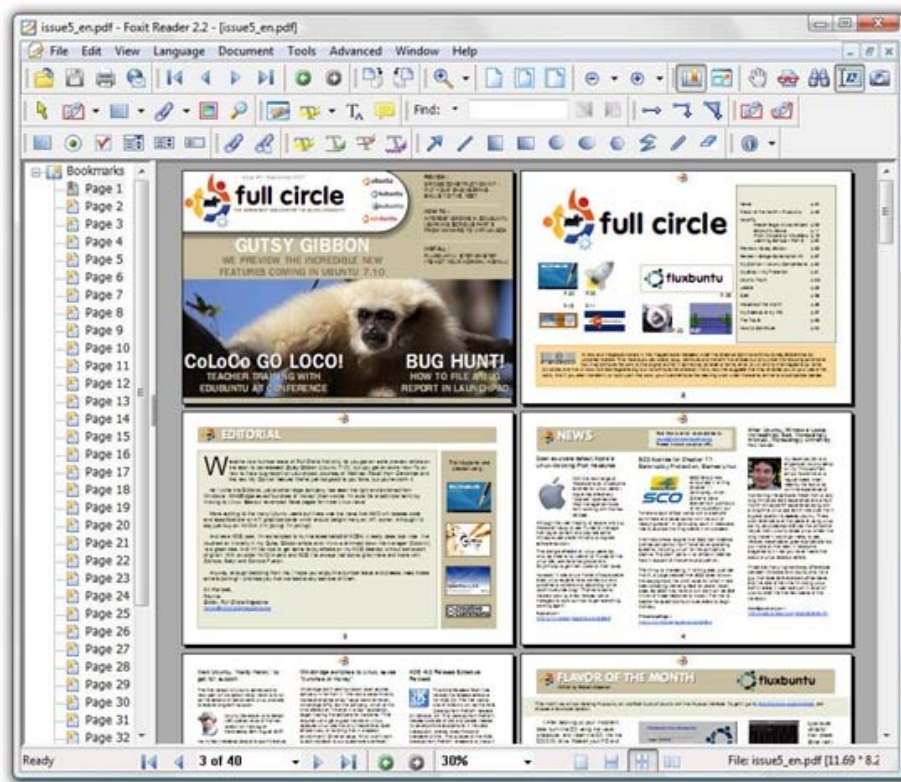
Speed. It starts up fast and runs fast. No delays while splash screens load. Printing is also speedy.

"No surprises." Foxit Reader will remind you of Adobe Reader—same interface, menus and toolbars so the transition is painless.

Open multiple files in tabbed format. If you like the ability to open several web pages on tabs in Mozilla Firefox you'll like the tabbed format of Foxit Reader as well. View several PDF files at a time and switch between them easily by clicking the tabs.

Mark up and leave comments on PDF documents. You can insert text boxes with comments right in line with text in the PDF document or draw arrows and graphics or highlight text. This is very helpful, especially when you are collaborating on a document with others.

Take it for a test run. You will not be disappointed.



Google Chrome 3 Ready for Prime Time!

By Ira Wilsker

Longtime readers of this column may remember that I wrote about Google's Chrome browser when it first came out. I found that Chrome version 1 was unstable, and incapable of loading many of the websites that I routinely visited. About a year ago, with high hopes, I tested the then new release of Google Chrome version 2, and found many of the same bugs and incompatibilities that I found in version 1; my title of that column said that Chrome 2 was "Not Yet Ready for Prime Time." I am now happy to report to you, my faithful readers, that the newly released Chrome version 3 is indeed "ready for prime time."

Google Chrome is a free download from Google at www.google.com/chrome, and runs on XP and Vista, both 32 and 64 bit systems. The Google setup is a small 557kb executable file that downloaded quickly, and installed smoothly with no problems or conflicts on my Vista Home Premium 64 system. During the very quick install, Chrome identified that Firefox was my default browser, and asked if I would like to import my bookmarks (favorites) and other information from Firefox. A pull down menu was offered which would have also allowed import of items from Internet Explorer as well. Not surprisingly, Chrome had setup as a default home (startup) page Google.com, which I chose to change to my existing personal startup page (My Yahoo). Other than the trivial question about whether I wanted a desktop and quick-start icon for Chrome, the new browser installed in seconds.

Since I was skeptical about Chrome, based on my past problems with the earlier versions, I proceeded to immediately visit those websites that I was unable to load in versions 1 and 2. To my pleasant surprise, all of the sites that failed to load in the earlier versions of Chrome not just loaded flawlessly, but also opened very quickly.

My first impression of Chrome was that it loaded far faster than Internet Explorer or Firefox on my computer, and that it has a very clean look to the browser, in that it is not cluttered by a lot of infrequently used icons and toolbars, as well as other items that take up the precious real estate on the desktop. When I entered the URLs of my frequently visited websites, Chrome already had them filled ahead of my typing them, evidence that Chrome successfully imported them from Firefox. Since this was a clean install of Chrome, such that there could not be any online cache to load, I was amazed as to how quickly web pages loaded. While it was not a scientific experiment, and the evidence would only be anecdotal, I opened Internet Explorer 8 (IE8), Firefox 3.53, and Chrome 3 in adjacent windows. Without the need for a stopwatch, it was glaringly obvious that Chrome loaded the same web pages much faster than IE8 did, and somewhat faster than Firefox. Of these three browsers, all the latest builds running on a quad-core machine, Chrome was clearly the speed demon of the three. Chalk up a performance win for Chrome.

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Google chrome

[Help](#)

Learn about Google Chrome



Speed: Fast to launch, fast to load web pages

- Quick to start up from your desktop
- Loads web pages in a snap
- Runs web applications faster than ever

Google Chrome: Search from the O..



Simplicity: Designed for efficiency and ease of use

- Search and navigate to web pages from the same box
- Arrange and organize tabs however you wish — quickly and easily
- Get to your favorite websites with just a click, from the thumbnails of your most visited sites in the New Tab page

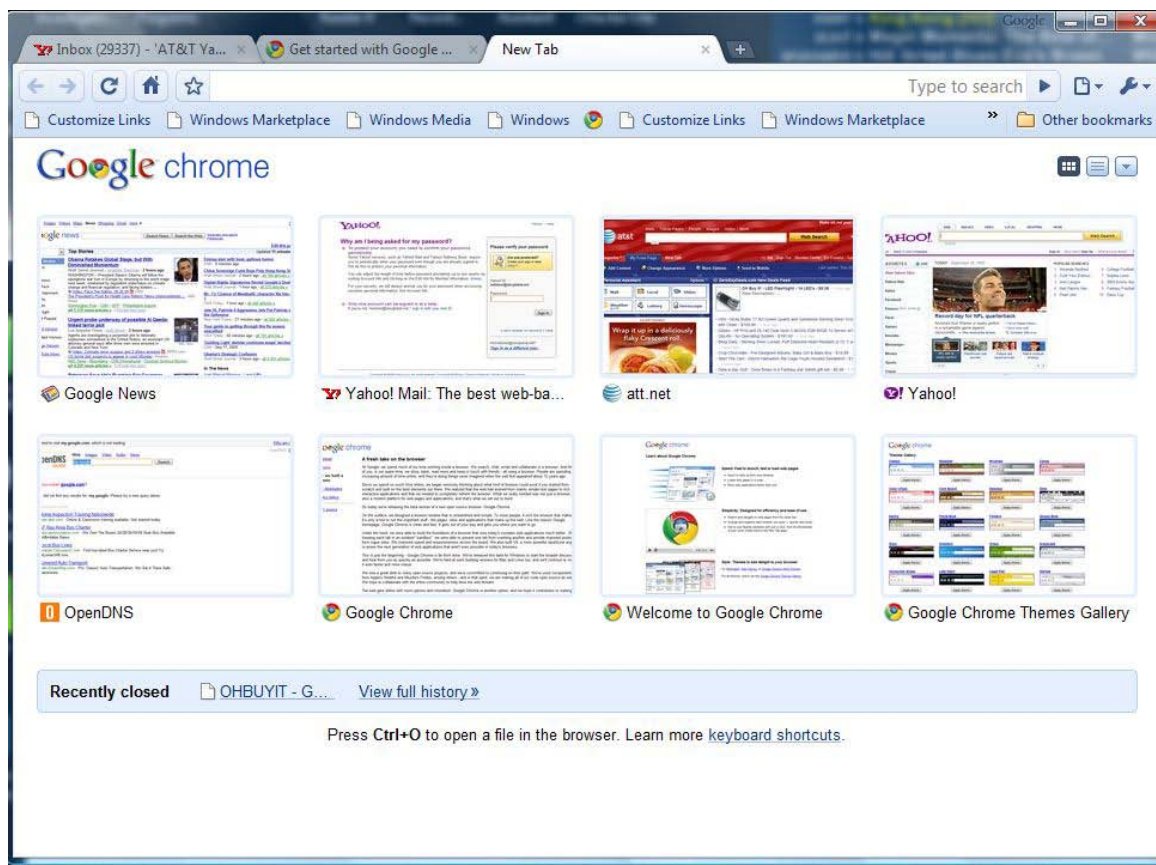


Style: Themes to add delight to your browser

Try [Minimalist](#) or [Star Gazing](#).

For all themes, check out the [Google Chrome Themes Gallery](#).

For more on Google Chrome's features, check out the [Google Chrome Help Center](#).



While I appreciated the clean appearance of Chrome when it opened, there are undoubtedly many who would like to change the appearance of Chrome to modify it to meet personal preferences. As I type this, Google has 29 themes available for Chrome at tools.google.com/chrome/intl/en/themes. The available themes range from “Minimal” that has an almost blank window with only minimal coloring, to several that are complex and brightly colored.

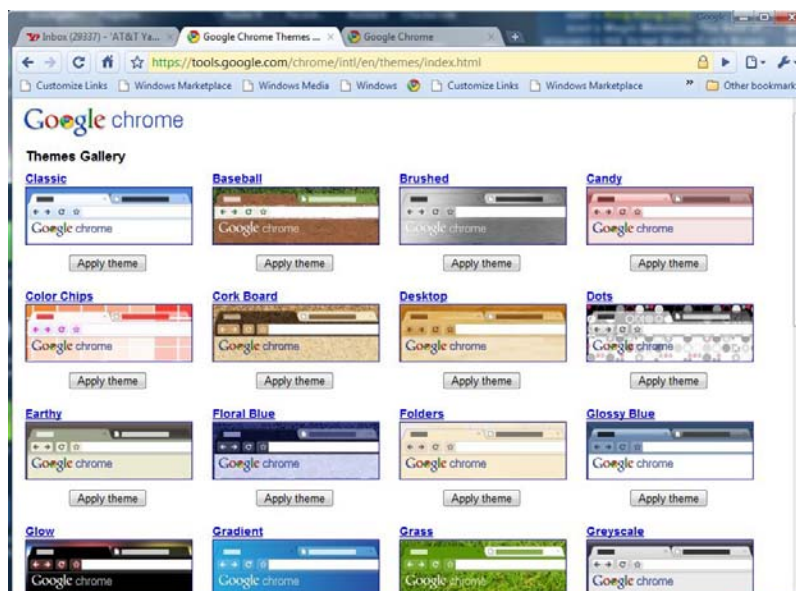
While Chrome is written in tight code, and loads very quickly, it is still very feature rich. It is amazingly intuitive and easy to use. One of my favorite features is clicking on a “+” in the tabs on the top of the page to open another browser window, and being greeted with interactive thumbnails of both open and recently closed websites; clicking on one would open that page in an instant. Chrome remembers the most frequently viewed pages, and displays thumbnails of those when a “New Tab” is selected. This makes it very easy to select a page, or the user can always type an address in the address bar or click on a bookmark. Another useful feature is the ability to search directly from the address bar. By simply typing a search term in the address space, the default search engine will be queried, and the results displayed. While Google was obviously the initial default search engine, it was a simple process to change the default to my personal favorite, AllTheWeb. To test the search function from the address bar, I typed my name in the space where I would normally type a web address (URL), hit enter, and the AllTheWeb page instantly opened with the web pages with my name. It was also actually fun to drag and drop tabs, watching the contents being moved around the browser page; this way open tabs can be organized to satisfy the whims of the user. Tabs can also be dragged and dropped on the Windows desktop, where they appear as a complete new window, and can be dragged back to the original browser where the tab will be integrated back with the other tabs. Each tab is independent, and a problem or crash in one tab will not likely crash the entire browser and other open tabs.

Many would wonder why Google would create and promote Chrome as another free browser in the now crowded field of browsers. The developers of Chrome identified needs and problems with the existing browsers, and addressed those issues on the web page “A fresh take on the browser” (www.google.com/chrome/intl/en/why.html). “Under the hood, we were able to build the foundation of a browser that runs today's complex web applications much better. By keeping each tab in an isolated “sandbox”, we were able to prevent one tab from crashing another and provide improved protection from rogue sites. We improved speed and responsiveness across the board. We also built V8, a more powerful JavaScript engine, to power the next generation of web applications that aren't even possible in today's browsers.” By design, Chrome is intended to be more secure than its competitors, more stable with the “sandbox” concept, and faster. While I have not significantly tested the security capabilities of Chrome, and I am fully cognizant that security is a continuing effort, my initial impression is that Chrome is reasonably secure, although Google has recently released some security and features patches to harden the browser. As stated above, the Chrome developers were very successful in creating a very fast browser.

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Chrome is an open source product, meaning that anyone can get the code and write applications for it. In writing Chrome, the developers acknowledged that they used open source code from other sources, including code and components from Firefox and Apple's WebKit.

Google has done an excellent job with Chrome 3, and in its first few days of release has captured a small but rapidly growing share of the browser market. As more users download and install Chrome and find that it does indeed offer substantial performance and safety improvements over Internet Explorer. Other than not being compatible with some of my favorite Firefox add-ons, I found Chrome to be a most capable browser. Since Chrome is open source, I can foresee comparable add-ons being developed for Chrome just as they had been for Firefox.



I can now give Chrome my highest recommendation, and suggest that Windows users download Chrome and give it a try. It is perfectly OK to have multiple browsers installed on a computer, and select which one to run at any time. Since Chrome will import favorites, bookmarks, and other information from IE and Firefox, it would be fully ready to use after being installed. Download Chrome from Google (www.google.com/chrome) and try it. Since it is free, you really have nothing to lose, and will likely gain dramatically improved browsing performance, security, and satisfaction. After all, is that not why we surf the internet anyway?

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Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue Service

DeepPeeping the Web

by **Jerry Goldstein**, Vice President & Newsletter Editor, The PCUG of Connecticut, www.tpcug-ct.org, jerryg@attygoldstein.com

Last summer Google announced it had passed the one trillionth mark in its list of known and searchable Web pages. If you think Google does the best job of searching the World Wide Web you will be in for a big surprise. By 'big' I mean a search engine that goes way beyond standard search engines like Google, which only look at the surface of the Web compared to the vast, deep, and so far uncharted depths of the Web.

I say "you will be in for a big surprise" because a deeper search engine is only in its initial research stages. Standard search engines only skim the surface of the Web. Kind of like you're looking over the surface of the ocean, instead of looking into its vast undersea life. The plan is to create a search engine that will open 90% of the Web to searches.

A study at the University of Utah is trying to find a way. The study searches typed text rather than the hyperlinks that the present search engines use. A beta version of DeepPeep is available at: <http://www.deeppeep.org/>.

We have a long way to go but eventually almost the entirety of the Web will be searchable. Web pages exist already that tell you the best taxi fare, flight schedules, and shopping catalogs. DeepPeep wants to give you access to this information. A whole new way of searching has to be worked out first.

Scientists have said that 90% of what we know was discovered in the last 50 years. DeepPeep is working out a way to get that knowledge to you.

DeepPeep



discover the hidden web


 All Domains [Advanced]

DeepPeep is a search engine specialized in Web forms. The current beta version currently tracks **13,000** forms across **7** domains.

DeepPeep helps you discover the entry points to content in Deep Web (aka Hidden Web) sites, including online databases and Web services.

Advanced search allows you to perform more specific queries. Besides specifying keywords, you can also search for specific form element labels, i.e., the description of the form attributes.

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"Mr Watson Come Here, I Want To See You"

If only Alexander Graham Bell had known about APPS!

By Lou Torraca, President, The TUG, MOAA User Group, Hawaii,
http://the_tug.homestead.com, af06hi@gmail.com

I surrender! I have for a very long time been ignoring the smart phone craze. Mostly because I just can't see myself doing everything, and I mean everything on a phone! But I have to admit, the proliferation of "apps" via a bazillion storefronts on the web, has me fascinated, from a business point of view that is, so I have spent a considerable amount of time researching what I call the "app phenom" and consequently, I have at least as many pages of stuff on the topic as there are app storefronts...I think! So, I confessed this to a colleague and he immediately said:" so do a column on it already." After a bit of soul-searching, I decided what the heck, why not and I began to organize the plethora of info I have accumulated. Early on it became obvious I had not been very discriminating in what or how I filed away app stuff and I was about to pick another topic, when my friend, Andy Marken came along with the solution to my problem, so sit back and read a most insightful dissertation on the subject of "apps"

Open for Business – Apple wasn't the first to build a Smartphone or the first to offer apps. They were just the first to make them real, real fun/interesting. Offer the right merchandise, the right mood and most people will take the bait. Source – Screen Gems

Guess when you have \$56 billion and change in the vault in today's economic environment you must be doing something right. Just wish our kids would quit contributing to the stash Apple is using to buy GPU (graphics processor unit) technology and game designer talent.

A few years ago Apple decided all Smartphones sucked (they're not too hot on netbooks either).

So they announced the step up from the iPod (they didn't like those other MP3 players!)...the iPhone.

Make a Call Too – When Apple introduced the iPhone it was more than a Smartphone. Actually it was everything else first and then a phone. Good move because the company set its solution way apart from everyone else and the rest of the market scrambled to catch up...still are. Source -- Apple

Changing the Game

Then they did something really dumb...gave AT&T a two-year exclusive on the phone.

They decided ecommerce was no longer cool and that iCommerce is so much better.

Goes well with:

- iTunes
- iPod
- iPhone
- iMovies
- iStore
- iApps

Instead of keeping a closed ecosystem as they did with the Mac, they encouraged others to make products they would sell in their store.



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Sure it's Apple which means:

- works on their devices (iPhone and iPod Touch), their way
- works in their closed environment
- sold only in their store

It also means:

- you use their SDK (software development kit) but heck it only costs \$99
- they determine which apps fly and which don't make the cut (sure fire rejection is something that competes with their stuff!)
- you agree to the 70/30 split (70% for you, 30% for them – seems retail fair)

Developers' Dream – The new Apple developers kit makes it fast, easy for people to produce applications they can make available to iPhone/iPod Touch customers (once Apple gives its stamp of approval). Source - Apple

Cripes it seems to work!

Mega Store

The iPhone apps store looks like a Wal-Mart mega store.

The store has been open less than a year, product is stacked to the rafters, people are mobbing the aisles.

They've got 30,000 (give or take a few thousand) apps to choose from.

Some free...some \$1-\$5...some \$20-\$30...some heftier ones for businesses.

In less than a year they recorded some kid making the billionth download.

Number 1 Billion – Some kid really racked up the loot after being the one who grabbed the one billionth download from the iTunes apps store. Lucky stiff – 10 grand in booty without even trying. The store has been open less than a year and has averaged 3.5 million app downloads a day and the iPhone/iPod Touch users have grabbed an average of 33 apps...each! Source -- Gizmodo

That's:

- 3.5 million downloads a day
- Average of 33 apps per device

That's an attach rate any company would kill for!

Suddenly they don't look that stupid!

Carriers and other "interested" parties seem to agree.

Little apps stores are popping up all over the iNet.

Stores Everywhere – Big and small there are Smartphone app stores everywhere. Some richly stocked, some sparsely. The challenge for developers is to be found on the shelves. The challenge for users is picking the ones they'll need and/or enjoy the most. Source -- NYTimes

Google, Microsoft, Nokia, RIM (Research in Motion – Blackberry), all the carriers.

Who did we miss?

Oh yeah...Palm will eventually introduce its Pre counterpunch with powerhouse Sprint.



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While everyone else has their app store shelves well stocked visiting Palm's store is....depressing.

Looks a little like a grocery stores in St. Petersburg Russia in WWII...

We can see why OS folks want an app store.

The more apps on the shelves the more device manufacturers they attract, the better they look to carriers, the more app developers they attract and the popularity courting continues.

But carriers?

Dialing for Dollars

Selling apps won't really impact their bottom lines.

Lots of the apps are freebies, most sales are \$1-\$5; they only get 20 or 30% out of the sales.

The developers drink from the same cup.

They'll jump on the iTunes bullet train with their neat app.

The power of Apple will sell their music program, video games, direction/people finder, weather tracking, restaurant/store finding friends tracking (stalking), whatever app and they'll instantly get rich.

Assuming people can figure out how good your thingy is and how much he/she needs it – awful tough without good articles/reviews -- the apps dude/dudette will make a whole 70 percent on each of those \$1-\$5 sales.

But for carriers it's all about selling more connection time, more bandwidth.

Their bucks come from:

- your data communications over their pipes
- making sure you stream music, TV, video to your third screen.
- connecting you with other gamers, friends.

The carrier sells you airtime for days, weeks, months, years on end.

Someone needs to ask the carriers almost the same question Beth asked Derek, "She was naked in your hotel room?"

Then quickly add what Derek told Sharon, "You need help."

It's the money play folks!

Our kids are like the millions of other iPhone, iPod Touch users around the globe.

They love muddling through the Apple iTunes app store ...just to see what's new, what's hot, what's fun, what's available.

Apple Apps – 30,000 iPhone/iPod Touch apps and counting. Serious developers,

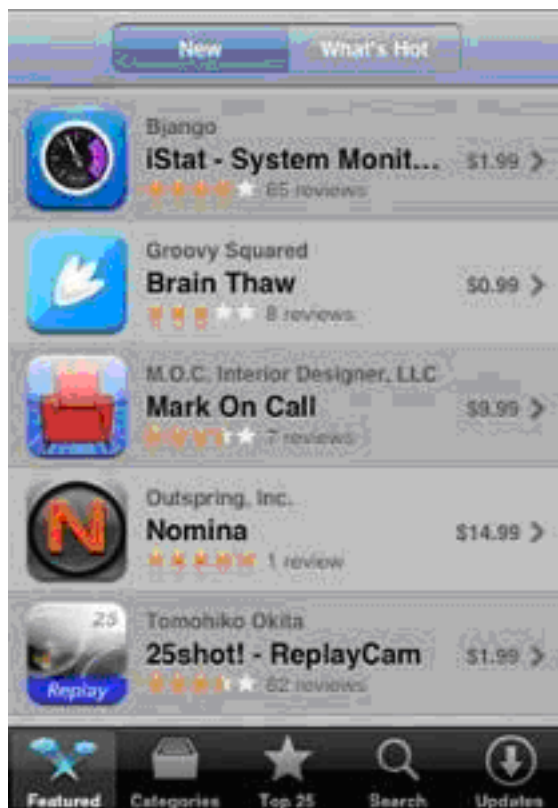
kids in class, techs in their spare time (or at work) are all busy developing business, personal entertainment, game, audio/video applications they hope will rack up big sales on the iTunes site and profits for them. Move them to other platforms and even more money if they look as good on the other devices. Source -- Apple

Too bad there aren't any aisle (category) signs or sampling stations along the way.

Since there isn't, they see something they think they'll like and BAM !!! easily download from iTunes (we get billed).

Then they suck up more minutes from AT&T!

Sure Google, MS, Nokia and Blackberry are adding apps as fast as they can but it's just way too easy for folks to buy from iTunes.



Our son – who has an “I can make it better” mind – was thinking about some apps that he knows people are eagerly waiting to buy. He coughed up the \$99 for Apple’s SDK.

Next Round

He got real excited when Apple announced the iPhone OS 3.0 SDK...100 new visual features, 1,000 new APIs (Application Programmer Interface), the thinly veiled promise of doing stuff that would run beautifully on three screens – TV, computer, iPhone.

Next Generation – One thing you have to admit is that Apple makes a big deal out of every announcement and the unveiling of the iPhone OS 3.0 software and new SDK was no exception. The event said a lot about the company’s three screen plan without saying a lot and opened new doors for more powerful, more graphically intensive iPhone games and applications. Source - Apple

That got his mind racing.

All we saw with the new developer’s kit was that Apple had raised the bar again with their closed environment. That means:

- people will develop more, richer, more intensive, more intrusive apps for Apple to sell so they dig their hooks even deeper into those poor Kool-Aid drinking folks
- more people will get excited about buying/using/playing with the iPhone and Apple might – just might – become the #1 Smartphone producer (something they totally ****ed up with the all-inclusive Mac)
- AT&T will sell more 2-year contracts, more on-air minutes

Sure Apple may do an iPhone Lite for Verizon (huge whisper campaign going on) but who wants lite when you can have a real iPhone?

And an overly stuffed/easy to use iTunes store. Lite just doesn’t seem to have the panache!

Suddenly a Smartphone is so much more than an e-wallet (iWallet). Really smart kids, doodling program developers and idea folks see their road to riches!

First they’ll supplement their income making fun, neat, useful, relaxing, whatever apps. Then they’ll rent Steve’s grounded jet.

The mobile apps market may reach \$214 billion by 2014 but it’s a market made up of tens of thousands of inexpensive apps developed by thousands of people.

Herding Cats

It doesn’t have the formula to appeal to VCs. It’s tough for them to sell these “businesses” to the public or some other company so they can rack up a huge return. It’s too much like herding cats. But that’s ok.

Can’t wait for the kid to release his iPhone apps and starts collecting the dimes and quarters.

Then he plans to modify them for Android, Windows Mobile...maybe even BlackBerry.

Think Man, Think – Apple’s enclosed ecosystem has executives at other OS and hardware firms scheming on how they can outdo the fruit company and have the same unfair advantage with carriers and consumers. Individuals with serious and funky application ideas see the locked system as a great opportunity to earn fame and fortune. Source – Screen Gems

If we’re lucky he may be able to replenish our devastated 401K. Apple may have gotten it right this time.

Key question is how quickly, how comprehensively, how successfully will the other players – Google, MS, RIM, Nokia/Symbian -- get their acts together.

So, the key question for me is, will I now take the leap to the app world and get a smart phone?

Stay tuned and I will let you know what I decide, and remember to have fun with all the new goodies, especially if you already are a smart-phone person. I’d be interested in what you think. Be sure to give me a call!



Book Review

Googlepedia

Published by Que

A review by George Harding, President, Tucson Computer Society, AZ,
www.aztcs.org, georgehardingsbd@earthlink.net

This book is the greatest! If you are interested in anything Google, this is the place to go to find out about it. This is a Que book, the 3rd edition, by Michael Miller, who is a prolific author for Que. He's written some 80 non-fiction how-to books, mostly about computer-related subjects.

The book has over 700 pages, including a comprehensive index, a very complete Table of Contents, 46 chapters and 3 appendices.

I suspect that a 4th edition is not far off, because Google is constantly developing new tools that you will want to know about.

The best known Google tool is the Web Search engine. In the olden days, say five years ago, there were several search engines, all of which produced a list of results that contained many duplicates and may not even have produced something useful to you.

Google took a new approach to produce search results that do not have duplicates, are up-to-date and are sequenced by probable usefulness to you. They do this by the following process:

Periodically, usually every few weeks, their GoogleBot crawler searches the web for each page, tracks every link in the page and saves a copy of each page it encounters on its servers. Google creates an index to each of the saved pages, storing every important word on each page.

Once a search of the pages is complete, the results are ranked by methods known only by Google.

The rankings are displayed on the search results page in order by what is likely to be the most important to you, to the least likely. There are many techniques to making a successful search, and these are described fully in the book. Using quotes or operators can significantly improve the accuracy of your search.

What's most interesting, though, is all the other services provided by Google. I suspect you, like me, are not aware of many of these:

GOOG-411. Search for businesses by voice from your cell phone. Dial 1-800-GOOG-411 to try it out.

Google Desktop. Create a home page environment that has just what you want on it.

Google Docs. Word processing, spreadsheet and presentation documents on the web, sharable with others.

Google Earth, Sky and Mars. Tools to explore these areas.

Google Gmail. An email portal.

Google Groups. Create and join specific discussion groups.

Google Maps. View maps and driving directions.

Google Notebook. Store web information you come across.

Google Reader. Display articles and headlines from blogs and RSS feeds.

Google Scholar. Read and search scholarly journals and articles.

Google Transit. Plan your trip using public transportation.

Google News and Web Alerts. Be advised of new material that meets your criteria.

Each chapter tells you about a Google service and how to use it. Each description is described simply to begin with, but continues with more details about how to make use of special features. You can easily be an expert user of any of their tools through this book.

All of these services came out of the Google Labs, which is essentially an R & D facility. It is constantly on the search for new, useful tools for users. One recently announced service is Google Voice that gives you free phone calls within the US, but also forwards calls to your cell phone and land line and transcribes voice messages into email.

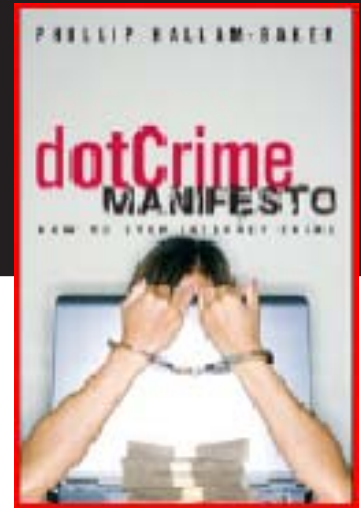
I found this book fascinating, because it opened my eyes to all the things that are available from Google. It will take me some time to learn about the ones in which I'm interested.

Book Review

dotCrime Manifesto

Published by Addison-Wesley

A review by John Lundgren, Member, NOCCC (North Orange County Computer Club) California, Orange Bytes, www.noccc.org, editor@noccc.org



The author, Phillip Hallam-Baker, lectures and knows how to keep his audience's attention, at least in print, since I can't speak for his in-person lectures. Although the book's subject seems rather dry, this author kept me entertained with anecdotes such

as the Mr. Coffee machine example on P. 62, and good Web historical content. It's not filled with geek speak, it's an excellent Layman's guide, and I think it's a good read. I should point out that although the author is British, I thought it odd that I didn't find the text to have typically British grammar; perhaps that's because his employer is a U.S. company. To help the reader refresh, each chapter is ended with a page of Key Points for revue. Some examples have a reference number and in the back of the book there is a list of reference notes for each chapter.

This book discusses the Internet crime problem with historical examples and in the future what must be changed to reduce this problem. The book describes the crimes on the web, and points out that they are essentially the same crimes that have been going on for eternity, just that they have now been adapted to the web. It's the same old fraud, confidence games, tricksters, liars, cheats and thieves. Hallam then points out that the reason these crimes prosper on the Net is lack of accountability, and how this makes it difficult or impossible for law enforcement to trace down the suspect. He explains his well thought-out solutions to these problems.

One example he uses is the automobile, and how early on people found that license plates and driver's licenses, and traffic laws that made people accountable have helped to make the highways a much safer place. Hallam then shows how to make the net accountable through the widespread use of public key encryption to make certain that transmissions are really from where they say they're from. Again I should point out that as the author stated in the preface he has deliberately avoided the use of Geek Speak, or jargon. This helps the layman to truly understand the simple, underlying principles and methods he lays out.

The author is a senior at Verisign, and thus has to speak for his company at times when he puts forth solutions, since his company is involved in this. But the book is not a sales brochure for his company's products. Throughout the book, he stresses the user's experience, and how security and accountability must not negatively impact the user.

I quote one of my favorites: "The user is ... bombarded with information he simply doesn't need, such as warning dialogs of the type that lawyers write to dump responsibility for security onto the user." I can speak from my own experience how important this is. I have seen situations where, in the name of security, the password complexity and mandatory change intervals are so onerous that most users have their passwords written on a Post-it on their monitor. This completely defeats the security! Anyone can walk up and sign on as another person.

In one example that Hallam used, you want to know that your child is visiting a chat room that is for children, and that other chatters are not pedophiles posing as children. Some form of authentication must be required so that the chat room users must prove that they are children, yet must not require the child to reveal his or her true identity. Then I had to think about his example of Alice, and her visit to the local bar. He points out that the bartender only needs to know that Alice is of legal drinking age, but Alice does not need to prove that she is Alice - that's none of the bartender's business. And the bartender does not need to know how many times Alice has been there before.

Thus, when Alice shows her driver's license, it is really revealing too much information. These are interesting thoughts, now that he has compared the online world to a situation in the real world I hope you find this book as enjoyable as I did. I just hope that his accountability solutions are soon implemented; they were desperately needed long ago.

A Few Closing words

I must mention spam, for that is one subject the author discusses. Right now our email statistics show that more than 90 percent of all emails are spam, which means we are continually deluged with a tsunami of junk emails. Of the remaining 10%, some of those emails are spam that managed to sneak through, so the actual percentage is even higher than 90 percent. Statistics from some authoritative sources say it's 92 percent. That small percentage that sneaks through is still enough to make it worthwhile for the spammers. If no one bought any of their fraudulently advertised products, the spammers would have to do something else to make money. Two wise advisories are: 1. Never buy anything advertised in junk email. 2. Never click on a link that is in a junk email. This is especially true for phishing emails, those that say your bank or Paypal requires you to verify your account. If you have reason to believe that the email might be true, go to your web browser and type in the URL for the bank or www.paypal.com, and log in using this method. If you click on a link in a junk email, it will steal your account and password. My hope is that all the spammers get thrown in jail. I was elated to read recently that a prolific spammer was locked up for 3-1/2 years. The problem is there are many more out there. Will the Net survive? Only time will tell.

Software Review

PerfectSpeed

A review by Ira Wilsker

One of the most common pleas for help from readers of this column is to improve the performance of their computers. A common thread is that the computer was fast when new, but is now frustratingly slow. Common solutions include performing normal maintenance tasks such as deleting useless files on the hard drive, defragging the drive, cleaning the registry, and tweaking Windows settings. I recently had the opportunity to try a \$30 software product "PerfectSpeed" from Raxco Software.

One of my daughters recently brought me her five year old Compaq notebook computer, a relic with the old style Celeron processor, XP Home, 40 gig hard drive, and 512 megs of memory. It was very slow to boot, sometimes taking up to 10 minutes to boot, and when shutting down would take a like amount of time, or not shut down at all. Loading programs such as Word were agonizingly slow, her browser (Firefox) would take several minutes to load, and overall performance was dismal. When new, the computer was comparatively fast as I had doubled the memory from its factory installed 256 megs, to 512. With the price of memory being fairly reasonable, I had considered purchasing another stick or two of memory, and replacing one or both of the 256 sticks with a 512 meg or 1 gig stick; there are only two memory slots on the motherboard.

My first step was to do what I do on all computers that I work on, and that is to do a comprehensive scan for malware. I performed a full scan with an updated MalwareBytes AntiMalware, and other than several tracking cookies, her computer was clean. For verification, I then ran a freshly updated a-squared, which is both anti-malware and antivirus, and other than some more questionable cookies, and some suspicious traces of malware that had likely been removed previously, her computer was clean. She does have a major security suite installed which is auto-updated frequently, and performs scheduled scans, a most worthwhile precautionary activity. I used MSCONFIG to check her startup files, and found an excess of unnecessary programs loading at boot, which I unchecked; since they will not be loading at subsequent boots, her boot process will be faster, performance will be improved because less system resources are used and therefore free, and there will likely be fewer software conflicts and crashes. Since fewer programs will be loaded, shutdown will also be faster.

My next decision that I had to make was what utilities to use to conduct performance improving maintenance on her computer. There are several utilities available that can perform that function, but I was tempted to try something new from a Maryland company that I knew from prior experience published excellent quality software, Raxco Software. Raxco recently released its PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer 2.0, retailing for about \$30 for a single license, with a 3 license pack currently on a promotional price of \$39.99 (regularly \$59.99), and a 10-pack for \$99.99. A fully functional 15 day free trial is available for download from www.perfectdisk.com/products/home-perfectspeed/free-trial. I installed PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer on her computer, and put it to work.

The first task is to click on the "Performance Check" button which scans the registry for errors, checks for useless clutter and duplicate files on the hard drive (Free Space check), looks for "privacy traces" such as cookies, and then checks the hard drive for fragmentation. After running the Performance Check, the performance status gauge on the top right corner showed her computer's status as "Poor". Her registry had over a thousand errors, there was about 2 gigabytes of useless files on her hard drive, she had hundreds of cookies and other privacy traces (but no tracking cookies as they had been deleted by the previous malware scans), and a terribly fragmented hard drive.

With my approval, I allowed PerfectSpeed to clean the registry. It uses a proprietary system to safely clean the registry without threatening the performance of valid programs. This process removes obsolete registry entries that can degrade performance, and lead to a host of other prob-



Continued on page 38

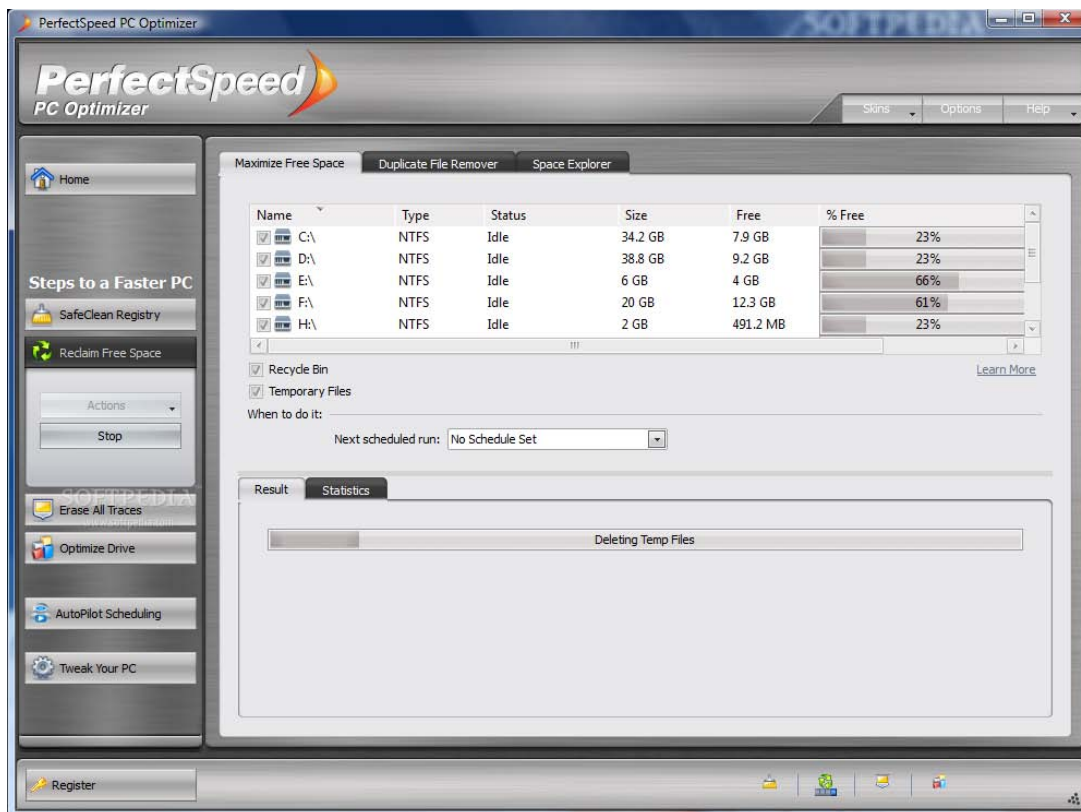
lems. A corrupted or bloated registry can also lead to slow boots and difficult shutdowns. After PerfectSpeed cleaned the registry, I allowed it to reclaim space on the hard drive by deleting hundreds of obsolete temporary files, thousands of old browser cache files, useless duplicates of files, and other debris left on the hard drive. The “Traces” scan detected data on her hard drive that could be a privacy issue, such as browser cookies, internet history, and other privacy threats. In this case, I chose not to delete the browser history, and many of the cookies, as their convenience value outweighed the small amount of space they take up on the hard drive. It is a proven fact that the more fragmented a hard drive, the longer it takes to read and write files, a major drag on performance. PerfectSpeed has a Microsoft certified defragmentation utility that optimizes the hard drive for maximum drive performance. By rearranging files on the hard drive, and writing them in contiguous sectors and tracks, the drive does not have to work as hard when reading and writing data. This speeds up all of the drive related performance issues, often resulting in significant increases in speed. It took about 40 minutes to defrag her hard drive, a time no doubt increased by the high degree of fragmentation present on her drive before the optimization. Raxco is recognized for the excellence of its PerfectDisk series of disk optimizers, and that pedigree was evident in the defrager in PerfectSpeed.

After I completed the optimization process, which took about an hour in this case, I shut down the computer and asked my daughter to turn it on. It booted quickly, much to her surprise. I asked her to load Word and Firefox, which loaded very quickly, compared to before the optimization. I asked her to shut down the computer, which she did; the blue shutdown screen appeared, and in a matter of seconds, it disappeared, and the computer turned itself off. The grin on her face was all of the compensation that I needed.

PerfectSpeed is not just for running on demand, as it also has an “AutoPilot” feature which will periodically run the optimization utilities at scheduled times, and when the computer is on but idle or in a state of low system activity. With AutoPilot engaged, the computer will be re-optimized on a regular basis, maintaining a high level of performance.

There are many tweaks which can be implemented in Windows to make incremental improvements in performance, security, and appearance. PerfectSpeed has a “Tweak Your PC” button which displays the tweaks that are available, with a “Learn More” link adjacent to each one which will open a balloon-window with a description of the tweak.

PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer worked well on her computer and made a dramatic improvement in its performance. While the features offered by PerfectSpeed are comprehensive and appropriate, and do an excellent job at what they do, the one feature that it is lacking that would also contribute to PC optimization is a startup manager. If Raxco will include a startup manager in its next version, PerfectSpeed may be unbeatable as an optimizer. Still, as it stands in its current version 2.0, PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer did an outstanding job in cleaning up my daughter’s computer, and dramatically improving its performance. Based on my experience with it, Raxco’s PerfectSpeed PC Optimizer is a winner, and should be strongly considered by anyone who wants an optimized PC getting all of the performance he paid for in a machine. I recommend that readers download the free 15 day trial version (www.perfectdisk.com/products/home-perfectspeed/free-trial) and experiment with it. Once you find that it will likely improve the performance of your computer, an affirmative decision to purchase PerfectSpeed will be an easy one to make.



October 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 High Growth Stock Investing (a/r) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	2 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR*	3 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
4	5 Board of Directors Crossroads Mall @ the Food Court 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	6	7	8	9	10 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
11	12 General Meeting @ 7 - 9 P.M. Presenter:	13	14	15	16	17 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
AlamoPC Organization						
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. Copy deadline is 10th of month preceeding publication. Classified ads are free to members of Alamo PC.

Wanted Classified ads from members of Alamo PC. It costs nothing and it's a good way to sell or buy any computer-related item.



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color

Alamo PC logo

Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at **736-0700**

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

Your membership number entitles you to a full year of membership privileges. Established in 1983, this non-profit, all-volunteer organization is dedicated to helping members keep up with trends and technologies.

Monthly Meetings

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

Award-Winning Magazine

When you join Alamo PC, you'll receive its award-winning magazine, *PC Alamode*, each month. You'll learn of group activities and you'll enjoy the reviews of new products from your fellow members. Regular columnists will give you insight to this fast-paced, dynamic industry. As a member, you can sell your outgrown stuff in our FREE Classified ads section.

Special Interest Groups and Classes

Alamo PC offers more than 30 Study Groups and classes on specific software programs for beginners to expert. These small groups typically meet once a month in one of our two hands-on computer labs or classrooms and provide an opportunity to get answers in an informal setting. There are groups for word processing, Web design, graphics and programming and even study groups to help you get Microsoft Certified. You can attend as many SIGs as you'd like and, as you become experienced, even lead one!



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

Alamo PC is on the Internet, and more importantly, Alamo PC can help you get on the Internet too. If you're already on the Internet, attending one of Alamo PC's Internet SIGs will help you to become a savvy Internet surfer.

Alamo PC SeniorComp

Are you age 45 or older and not into computers or the Internet yet? Let us help. Contact Alamo PC today and sign up for the very next class. Classes are hands-on at a pace to match your learning style.

Expert Help

Deadlocked with a computer problem or question? Get access to personal help from expert Alamo PC members. Just call! If you need someone to diagnose hardware and software problems, try "THE DOCTOR IS IN," a free clinic where members bring in their computers and allow our experts to help diagnose and often fix many PC ailments.

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

To join, return the application below or sign up online at www.alamopc.org. Your \$45 dues covers your entire family!e. You may use your credit card or send your personal check. If you need more information, call (210) 736-0700. Shortly after joining, you'll receive a membership card entitling you to all rights and privileges and discounts. **JOIN TODAY!**

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE: Call 210-736-0700 for details.



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. This information will be kept in confidence - it will be used for planning purposes only

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____
DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____ OCCUPATION: _____
EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Please accept my membership for: ☐ 1 year -\$25

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

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

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

