

Backing up and restoring files

By Ron Hirsch, Member and Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida, www.brscs.org, Ronhirsch1439@comcast.net

If I had to pick a single area where most computer users are extremely lacking, it's in the area of backing up and preserving the documents and other items that they generate during the course of their computer activities. Most people just dismiss the subject with "Oh I don't really have anything of importance, and even if I do, I can always redo it easily." These people may only use their computer for the Internet and e-mail. But, redoing your address book and bookmark listing can be a task in itself.

And, if you use a program such as Quicken or Money, you have lots of financial info that would be a real job to rebuild if all your files were lost. I reminded a friend about backing up his Quicken stuff, and he said that he really didn't have to, as Quicken always backs things up automatically, which it does. But it backs things up onto the same hard drive, into a different folder. So, about 6 months later when his hard drive failed, his backup was worthless, and he was a very unhappy person.

WHAT DOES BACKUP REALLY MEAN?

Backup is the generation of duplicate files, often onto a removable medium, for all the things that you have generated on your machine. Generally, these are files that you have produced, not the program files which came on the CD. These duplicate files must be stored on something which can be separated from your machine, and definitely separated from your internal system hard drive.

Since most people have only one hard drive, it does not make good sense to backup onto that same drive. And, if you have your main drive partitioned into say a C and D drive, you will still lose your backup if the drive fails. If however, you have a second hard drive on your computer, you are much safer storing your backups there.

There are online services which offer "online backup" at a small cost, or no cost. This can offer access from another computer, when you might need that data. But I personally don't want my private data et al on an online computer, where it is possibly subject to being hacked or having that operation go out of business.

NOTE: This article is only discussing backup of your personal files and data - it is not addressing a complete backup of your system drive, including your operating system (probably Windows). That is a separate topic which will be covered in another article.

Continued on page 13

Volume 27, Number 3

PC Alamo

(501 (C) (3))

PC Alamo (ISSN 1065-3708) is published on-line monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 2010 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of PC Alamo may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and PC Alamo. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

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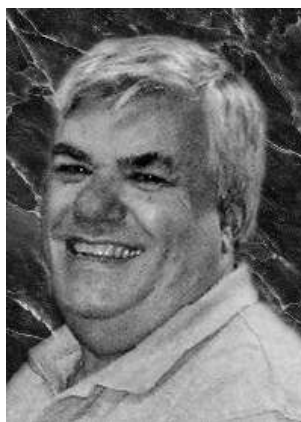
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Volunteer of the Year



Bill Beverley

Volunteer of the Month



Neil Shaver

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:

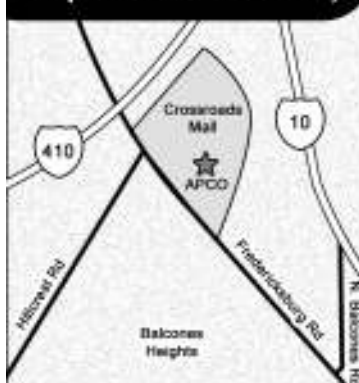
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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



March Calendar

Tuesday March 2, 2010
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I-10 (see map)

Monday March 8, 2010
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

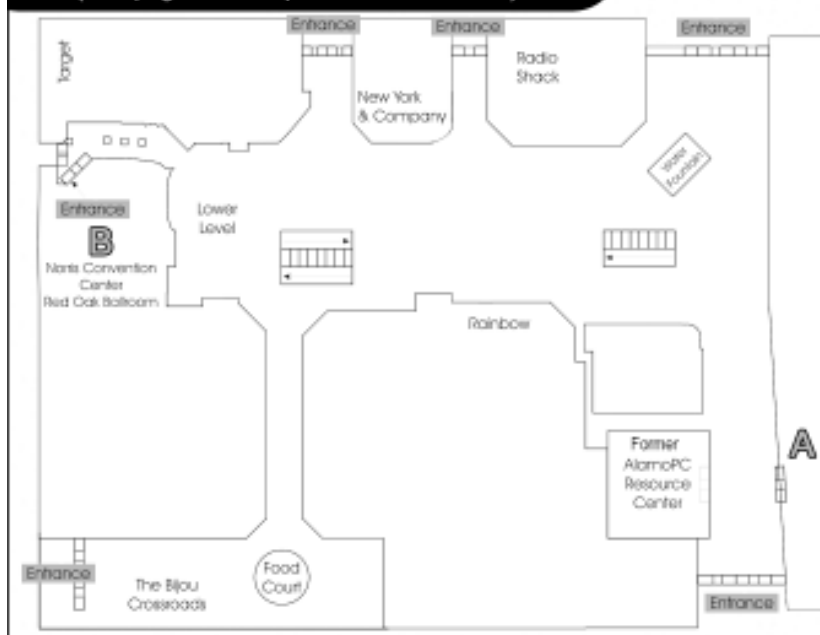
FAX 736-0032

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

For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0700

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

Enter

Welcome to the new and improved PC Alamo. I've changed the format back to black and white with columns to make printing easier on desktop printers.

I've de-emphasized graphics so as not to eat up all the ink in cartridges, but a few articles will still need large or many graphics to illustrate a point. Be sure to browse the contents of the document before you print. Also, be aware that certain pages have information that you may not want to print every month, such as phone numbers and the membership renewal form.

Guess how many people I've heard from since the previous issue. If you guessed none, you're right! In fact, that last time anyone submitted anything to the magazine was in early 2009. It was a classified ad. Last APCO product review? I honestly can't remember—I'd guess sometime in 2007.

One of you must have found a cool new Web site you like, bought a neat gadget you love or struggled to get some software to do what you want. You like it reading tips from other computer users. Share a short tip, give us your impression of some software or hardware you bought or just complain about your terrible computer skills.

Come one now, surely someone is reading. Right?

Joseph de Leon, Editor

[<editor@alamopc.org>](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

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

March Program

Bill Klutz

David Steward has scheduled himself to be the presenter for the April General Meeting. So, unless I hear otherwise, the meeting location will be at our current office location (4888 Whirlwind, SAT, 78233) on April 12th at 7 PM. Since things can change at the last minute, please check the Alamo PC web site (www.alamopc.org) for information on the meeting and the location. Make plans now to come and bring some friends. As always, we hope to have an interesting presentation.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"April" - Fool's Day, Easter Events, Income Tax, Earth Day

This month has several things that may be of interest to most folks: 1st - April Fool's Day: With all of the world, national (primarily Wall Street), state and local financial and real estate crisis management attention that has been bombarding the many communications outlets (TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc.), the ongoing and seemingly ever increasing Internet scams, the recent passage of the "Obama/Democrats Health Care Bill and numerous other things that we have been in contact with almost daily for the past many months, some of us don't need a special day to remind us that we may have already played the FOOL; 2nd - Good Friday: the Friday before Easter (Easter always falls on a Sunday). It commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus at Calvary; 4th - Easter Sunday: celebrates the resurrection of Jesus; 15th - Income Taxes Due - If you haven't started, remember the date and that midnight is the deadline (unless you file for an extension and include any funds you may owe); 21st - Administrative Professionals Day: Administrative Professionals' Day, previously known as Secretary's Day, is celebrated to recognize and show appreciation for the work of administrative employees. (It is observed as part of Administrative Professionals Week - 19th- 23rd); 22nd - Earth Day - a day to help remind us that we should be taking care of the place where mankind lives, but we should personally make every day our own "Earth Day" and do what we can to contribute to the well-being of the very great planet Earth.

Rent expense (although much reduced) has been paid through April, but declining membership (less than 200 at last count), waning interest in the organization, very low attendance at monthly General Meetings (only 13 present in March), and shrinking finances (less than \$200 available to pay remaining expenses and anticipated expenses) continues. (With remaining funds being as low as they are, it looks like an official organizational presence will only be able to be maintained for a few more months in 2010.) Fortunately, the member's access server has been moved to a new location and is to become functional, at the earliest opportunity with no cost to the organization. Also, the Alamo PC magazine (PC Alamode) will continue to be published as long as the current editor is willing to do the job. We are continuing to try and find ways to keep a presence of the Alamo PC Organization alive, but it has not been easy. The Main "Home Page" server continues to remain unaffected, and will continue to be available although it is being maintained in a "caretaker" mode at present.

These actions have allowed Alamo PC to pay existing and new short term bills, and may have provide some funds for any last minute funds required to close accounts. Any future expenses,

once funds have been exhausted, will have to be taken care of by one or more current board members, if a presence is to be maintained.

The March BOD meeting was not held, as I was the only one available. Each of the others had a conflict that was deemed "more pressing." At present, our location and General Meetings will continue thru April 2010. In the interim, options will continue to be addressed and a more long-term solution will try to be found, so that monthly meetings (even if ad hoc) of interested individuals can continue to be held at either the current location or an alternate location that may be available..

At the March General Meeting David Steward provided a program and answered related questions. He also touched on some other items of general interest to the 13 people in attendance. Questions were again forthcoming about Alamo PC and the Organization's future. Answers were provided as information was available, and proposed thinking and actions were again reviewed. Those present seemed to understand the difficulties leadership is faced with, given the expenses and declining membership. Some again indicated they were surprised the leadership had been able to keep the organization functioning for as long as it has.

It is late March and David Steward has indicated he will be the presenter for the April General Meeting (12th) and for any future meetings, unless he can get another presenter. The meetings, unless otherwise noted on the web site, will be at our current office location (4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio). It is once again in David Steward hands, so we will have to wait to see what actually transpires! Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting which begins at 7PM.

At this point, it is almost pointless to reiterate that overall interest in User Groups at the corporate and membership level continues to wain. Also, that I have pointed this out in many previous messages, and this fact is confirmed by the ever declining Alamo PC membership over the past four years.

With the declining number of individuals who are currently serving the organization in a board member capacity, and who have been willing to continue serving, it looks like it won't be long before the "lights may go out" on an era.

Being a member of Alamo PC since the early 90's, and having tried to serve the Organization in various capacities has been a great experience. But, as I have previously stated, the mission

Continued on page 8

of Alamo PC when started was “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.” Over the years that mission has been accomplished, albeit with declining effectiveness. We should be aware that individuals born since Alamo PC was founded in 1983 have grown up with computers, most individuals who were about 25 then were associated with computers through their jobs, and those who were about 50 have moved to the 75 year figure and many of that grouping are no longer with us.

As, I have said before, “the future of OUR organization ... [rests] ... in the hands of its members (however few they may be). Whether WE continue (or not) depends on OUR interest and involvement. A Board of Directors cannot keep an organization going without members.” For this organization, it primarily depends on membership renewals and/or financial support. With-

out those, we can not meet our financial obligations and additional ‘business decisions’ will be forced that will ultimately affect everyone involved. Because of this, many “Business decisions” have had to be made and it is beginning to feel like the loss of a friend or family member, and the impact for those in the community desiring to learn about computers or improve their computer skills is being felt

Again, my thanks for allowing me to try and serve each member, although I have some misgivings about the effectiveness of my service to the Alamo PC Organization. Anyone having questions regarding any area addressed or any matter pertaining to the Alamo PC Organization, and any future proposed plans should refer them to membership@alamopc.org (Steven Tech) or to me at either one of the following: president@alamopc.org, or privately at wlklutzjr@juno.com). We will try to provide information relating to the request.

Computer Tips

Using Shading to Highlight Information

Anyone can use any of these ten sites (listed at the website below) to obtain a Free scan of a PC for problems.

With so much technology becoming cloud based, it's no surprise that the companies that create anti-virus software are moving right along with the trend. The article at the beingPC.com site (location listed below) has a list of companies that have free online scans.

Several of the companies listed are familiar and likely to be recognized by many. Most of the scanners install some type of software on your system (usually small) so the online scan will work. Therefore, it's a good idea to backup any data that might be lost (along the lines of "not likely to happen but better safe than sorry" idea). Before starting a scan, keep in mind a scan takes more time on slower connections.

<http://beingpc.com/2010/01/scan-your-pc-online-for-viruses/>

COMPUTERfest Productions

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.

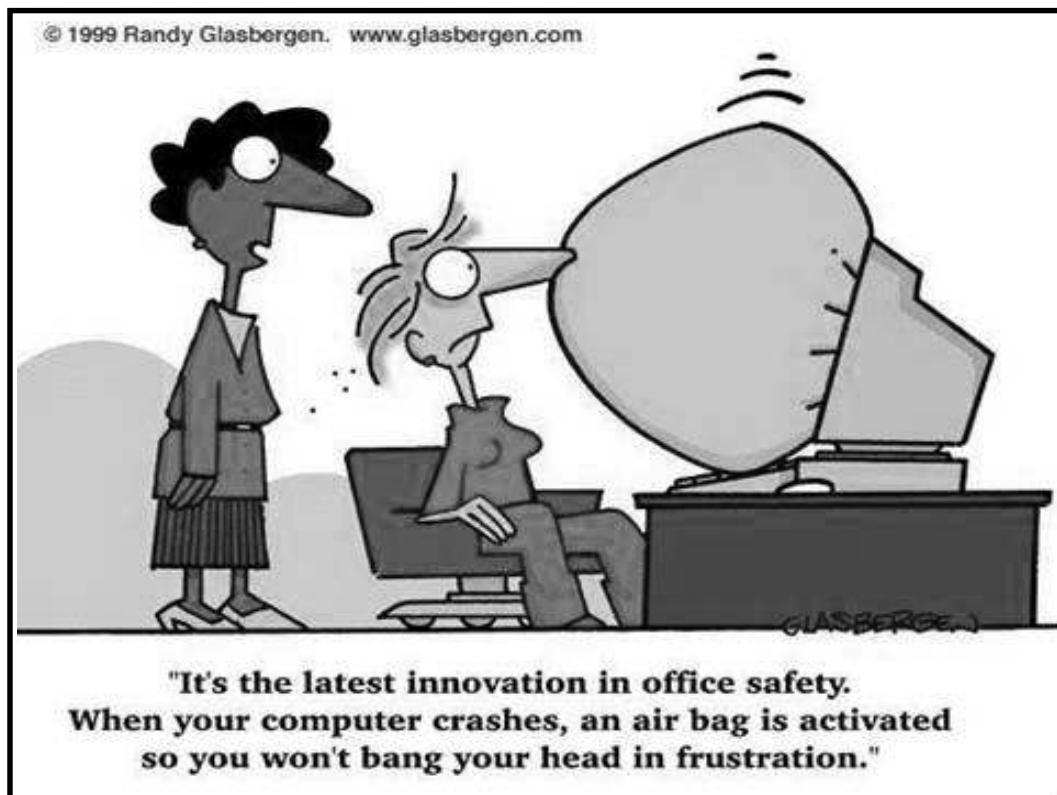
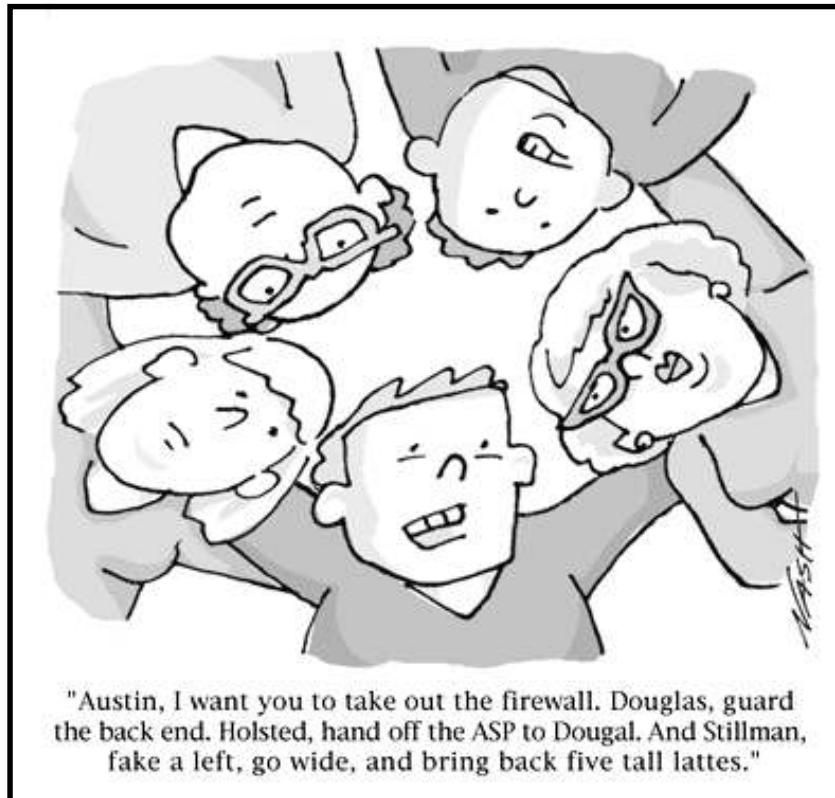
Show Dates:

May 22nd
July 10th
September 11th
December 11th

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

Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen





Games

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.

Art of Theft

The Art of Theft <<http://www.komando.com/downloads/category.aspx?id=4484>> puts you in the shoes of Trilby, a British cat burglar. The goal is to pull off a number of daring thefts. You should watch for alarms and human enemies as you play this game. It's important to keep your wits about you. Fortunately, you have plenty of tools at your disposal.

Brain Teasers

AskOxford <www.askoxford.com> features crosswords, hangman, and other fun word games. You could spend all day on this site! Some of the games are more difficult than they seem. But, after playing with them for a time, you'll notice your skills will quickly improve.

Catch a mouse

Do you remember watching Tom and Jerry cartoons? It seemed that the mouse was always outsmarting the cat. No matter how hard he tried, the cat just couldn't catch the mouse. Maybe you can do a better job of catching the mouse. Well, now's your chance. At this site <daflax.com.br> you can construct your own mousetrap. You can use all the popular props from cartoons: mini cannons, roller skates, bowling balls and a bevy of other tools.

Cheat Codes

Many computer and console games have "cheats." These give you certain advantages when you're playing the games. Some people may find it objectionable, but others may find it a source of fun. At IGN Games, <www.games.ign.com> you can find cheat codes for hundreds of games. To get started, you must search by the game's name. Then amaze your friends as your gaming skills "improve." But even if you insist on taking the high road, IGN Games won't disappoint you. You'll find reviews of the latest games and price comparison tools.

City Planning

Few video game franchises are as popular as the Sims <www.komando.com/downloads/>. We're probably all familiar with the Sims game with simulated people. But before Maxis started making games with people, it made games that let you build cities. There were other versions, too. You can plan your city and see how well it turns out. This game is free to play online. You can also see what other people have done with SimCityscape.

Excel

When someone mentions Microsoft Excel, you probably think of budgets and charts. Generally speaking, spreadsheets aren't exciting. So, what if I told you about a game based on Excel? You'd probably think I was joking, but it is an Excel-based game found at <<http://www.kongregate.com/games/Krystman/excit>>. Believe it or not, it is really fun. Your sole goal: Escape the worksheet and advance a level. Sounds easy, doesn't it? It's not. There are plenty of obstacles and getting around them isn't an easy task. This game just might change your opinion of Excel!

Fun Games

The games at this site <<http://www.k2x1.com/>> seem deceptively simple at first glance. For example, one requires that you press the spacebar when told. But you'll soon discover that the games are challenging.

Jigsaw Puzzles

Now you can solve jigsaw puzzles on the Web. The site <<http://www.shockwave.com/sw/content/jigsawpuzzles>> has a new jigsaw puzzle every day. You can change the difficulty of each puzzle by choosing the number of pieces. You can save a puzzle and come

back to it later. Best of all, you don't have to worry about losing any pieces.

Letter Game

If you are into word games, check out his fast-moving Scrabble-like game at <<http://www.kewlbox.com/games/game.cfm?gameID=83>>. You have to create words from the letters presented which is no easy task. Speaking of sounds, if the game's sounds bother you, there is a button on the game to turn the audio off. You can play two minute games for free, but if you want unlimited time, you have to pay.

Marbles

If you like Marbles or want a fast-paced game to play, try Speed Marbles <www.netives.com/Games/SpeedMarbles/index.shtml>. You can knock out colored marbles by clicking on them. You need to have two or more touching marbles to remove them from the board. The more marbles touching each other, the higher the point score. Once you're done, you can upload your score and compare it with others.

Mindless Game

At <<http://uk.download.yahoo.com/ne/fu/dodge.html>> is one of those mindless little games that will drive you to distraction. You have to click and drag a red square, avoiding the blue blocks. The game is over if you leave the white area or get hit by a blue block. Here's a little tip: When you click on the red square, drag it straight down.

Miniclip

Miniclip, <www.miniclip.com/Downloads.htm>, has over 100 free games. Some of them are challenging or just plain silly while others are irreverent, but they're not mean spirited, and they'll give you a good laugh. There's a game called Flashman, which is really just Pac Man. You can play the games online or download them to play later. You can even put them on your Web site, if you

Continued on page 14

have one. Flash and Shockwave are required. You'll be directed to download the free players if you don't have them.

More Games

You'll find pinball, tennis, foosball and other popular virtual and real-time games at <www.moregame.com/>. If you like original games, there are plenty at this Web site. You can register with the site to post your high score. Enter Guest as both the user name and password to play anonymously. A mindless little game that will drive you to distraction is at <<http://uk.download.yahoo.com/ne/fu/dodge.html>>. You have to click and drag a red square, avoiding the blue blocks. The game is over if you leave the white area or get hit by a blue block. Here's a little tip: When you click on the red square, drag it straight down

Music Catch

For Music Catch <<http://www.reflexive.com/index.php?PAGE=WebGamePlay&WGID=94>> all you need do is catch shapes using your cursor. The shapes change color and size. Combined with the background music, the game becomes hypnotic. It's great for relieving stress! There isn't much you need to know about the game. Yellow shapes are good; red shapes are bad. Purple shapes give you purple power! Other shapes become magnetized to your cursor.

Network Solutions

If you feel yourself becoming addicted to Internet gaming, here are some tips and tricks to make sure things run as smoothly as possible. 1. Windows' Internet games work fine through a home network. Everybody on the network can play a different game with a different person. Or, if they chance upon the right opponent, they can play against people in the same house. 2. Normally, you receive a random opponent. To choose your own opponent or meet friends online, head for the MSN Gaming Zone <<http://zone.msn.com/Default.asp?hb=f>> and sign up for a free membership. 3. Although the Internet games work well when connected through a single modem on your home network, they're not the best at connecting through more elaborate networks that use proxy servers. 4. When you first connect, the Internet assigns you a beginner skill level and matches you up with beginning level players. To look for

more skilled players, change your own skill ranking by clicking on the Game menu, choosing Skill Level, and choose between Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.

Online Investment Game

Investing isn't a game, of course, but you can make one of it. These Web sites offer investment games to sharpen your strategies and skills. Here, you can play the game for a few months before graduating to the real thing: Fantasy Stock Market <<http://www.fantasystockmarket.com>>. Start with the requisite \$100,000 in play money and try to beat the other players in building a healthy portfolio. Players are ranked and a new game starts each month. You can also research stocks from this Web site. Investment Challenge <<http://www.ichallenge.net>>: "The most realistic stock market simulation for students," boast the makers of this site. Here, you again start with \$100,000 in your fictional account. Different games are designed for middle school, high school, and college students.

Pac-Man Central

Video games are a big business. The latest gaming systems run hundreds of dollars, and they're flying off shelves. Of course, developers are spending big bucks to make games for these consoles, and these sophisticated games have stunning graphics. But maybe the controllers are too difficult for you to use. With some game consoles, you need a degree to understand the remote! If this sounds like you, visit <<http://www.webpacman.com/>> for some old-school fun! There are several versions of Pac-Man. If you're a purist, stick with the original version of Pac-Man, while others will want to try some of those additional fun games.

Magic Pen Games

Many of these Magic Pen games <magic.pen.fizzlebot.com> test your ability to shoot aliens or, they may just test your reflexes. The premise is really simple. You have to move a red ball over a flag. Now, to accomplish this, you need to use a little ingenuity. You have to draw other shapes in order to move the ball. For example, you can draw ramps, pendulums and other balls. I'm sure you'll find it a challenge!

Performance

There are many ways to improve performance in the more processor-intensive games. 1. Make sure you have the latest DirectX drivers by using the Windows Update feature or going to <www.microsoft.com/directx/>. 2. Ensure your games are optimized to work with specific types of video and sound hardware, such as some games require Direct3D, while other OpenGL for video output. 3. Reduce the color depth and resolution, either globally in Windows or in a particular game's setup screen, to increase the speed if your games are running slowly. 4. Check the game's manufacturer documentation for details that may affect your computer and look for updates to the game software. 5. Disable any unnecessary background applications. 6. Optimize your network settings if playing a network game. 7. Buy a good 3D accelerator because it makes 3D performance acceptable at high resolutions.

Planarity

Planarity <www.planarity.net> features mind-bending planar graphs. Planar graphs are diagrams that can be drawn with no intersecting lines. Planarity displays planar graphs that have been jumbled up. You must move the points so that the lines which join them don't intersect with one another.

Pong

These days, there are plenty of news junkies. Despite our desire to keep up, we don't think of the news as fun. It's a way to stay informed. Well, MSNBC has put an entertaining twist on the news. Stop by its site to play NewsBreaker. That's right – the news is now a game! You'll be reminded of the classic video game Pong <www.newsbreakergame.com>. The goal is to break down a wall with a ball. As you do this, headlines will fall. Catch the headlines to earn more points. Of course, headlines alone won't satisfy your craving for news. So, you can link to the news stories that you catch. Just remember to pause the game.

Puzzle

Samorost <<http://analogik.org/games.php?i=samorost>> is a quirky little puzzle game. It's intended to make you think, although it may drive you crazy! The goal is to advance a little space guy to the next level. To do so, you have to click the right things in the right order to put things in motion. Here's a hint to improve your game. Move your mouse cursor around the screen until you see a hand. Then, you will know where to click. The next thing you need to figure out is in what sequence. Another puzzle site worth exploring is <www.clickmazes.com>.



From the Deals Guy

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click,

Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <Bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> for past columns and some interesting articles.

I finally received the necessary data to prepare and file my 2009 federal income tax. I had download TaxAct when it was only \$12.95 in preparation. I entered the data and when the program computed my taxes, I printed the pages to study them. It showed I was only paying a small income tax and would get back most of the withholding taxes as a refund. My return was relatively simple with five W2s, three 1099s for interest received, and two 1099s for dividends received, neither of which amounted to much this year.

I also had a capital loss for the almost worthless GM stock I sold and I also had insulation installed in our attic which was deductible. The fact that I would be getting back almost all of the money that I paid in made me suspicious. I've always had excellent results using TaxAct in previous years, but getting most of my money back didn't look right. I decided to do it all over again with another free tax product, to compare results.

I decided to try the popular free Turbo Tax to double check. It's done right online. I studied my way through it and found some interesting features; and a few confusing items. When I was almost finished, I discovered that the free Turbo Tax would not handle a capital stock loss transaction unless you paid \$14.95 for its other features, (I may have missed something in it). However, it did ask for information about loss carry forwards from my '08 tax return (naming the line numbers) and I could probably use that part by substituting some figures to accomplish what I wanted to know. I tried it and ended up with a result that was somewhat different than I expected, but I thought "it was possible it could be right and maybe TaxAct was wrong." I liked Turbo Tax, although the W2 importing feature didn't work for me in either of the free products I tried.

After considering my valuable time, I decided to try a free tax preparation program from the IRS Web site. There were many free ones listed there, but only four worked for Florida Residents. I choose

one called "Complete Tax" and had to do that one on line. I entered the data and it was continuously computing and showing my refund as I entered the data, with a few wild refund numbers. This one allowed my capital loss transaction and asked for loss carry forwards, but when I was done; my refund was more than I had paid in. I rechecked it and found several insignificant omissions, but had to do trial and error to see if they fixed anything. Some were places I hadn't put a check mark for the page being finished, and two were minor data errors.

After an hour of checking and rechecking numbers and check marks, it finally showed a refund that was within \$20 of what TaxAct had come up with. Again, I rechecked most of the figures in both programs. I was unable to figure out how to get Turbo Tax to print the pages, or even look at them on the screen, which made comparisons tough. However, Complete Tax did let me print the return and I could easily study the printed pages from Tax Act and Complete Tax to compare numbers. I was finally convinced I could submit the Tax Act return after I input the \$250 Stimulus checks I had originally missed. Complete Tax had easily shown me I should enter our stimulus checks, which I missed in the other two. I had to call Tax Act tech support to find where to make that entry, but they answered immediately and walked me through it quickly. They have great tech support.

It's been submitted and the refund should be here in ten days, unless the IRS finds fault with my work. Tax Act did its job again and I'm happy, although Complete Tax was good. I'm already considering what to do with the funds. Spending it seems like a good idea to help the economy. Maybe I'll call the cruise line!

*Conference Update

FACUG (Florida Association of Computer User Groups) is having great success with the 2010 spring conference. Holding it on a cruise ship is certainly

different, and I applaud Sam Wexler and the other officers for taking on such an enormous task. There are about 250 conference registrants and, considering the spouses, there will be over 350 attendees. APCUG is not a cosponsor this year because of differing opinions. FACUG has always used the same time frame for this conference with continued success year after year. Why fix something that isn't broken. I'm happy that there will be several attendees from APCUG and a few are doing breakout sessions which I'm looking forward to. There's going to be so many breakout sessions that attendees will have problems making choices. More next month.

*Ever Wonder???

Perhaps some have wondered just what files, DLLs or other things are being used by a particular program. The folks in the local Technology SIG were talking about "Process Explorer" which tells you that information. The CFCS (Central Florida Computer Society) technology SIG is interesting because anything and everything might get discussed and you always come away with new knowledge. I can't attend because I don't drive at night, but I am on their Googlegroups so I can keep up. Process Explorer is free at <<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896653.aspx>>. CFCS is not the only group with that kind of SIG. I read many newsletters and noticed a few other user groups have a SIG like that.

*This One Does A Lot For Your Videos and Photos (I edited this announcement to shorten it.)

STOIK Imaging announced the release of the Premium edition of Imagic, a video and image processing solution with enriched functionality. The standard edition is distributed free of charge and provides the advanced features of the Premium edition for 30 days. Features include creation of stereo images, panoramas, slideshows and collages, sophisticated photo editing tools and more. Both edi-

Continued on page 16

tions support direct uploading of photos to Google Picasa and Flickr. A combination of various functions allows working with one versatile solution instead of purchasing and installing several programs.

The built-in photo editor features a Retouch Brush, Skin Makeup, Lens Correction, Color Variations, and many automatic correction functions. It is easy to align and crop photos as well as apply various artistic effects, frames, and clipart images. Besides photo processing, the photo editor also features creation of different kinds of puzzles.

In addition to support for .MPO files (available in the previous edition), Imagic Premium now features creation of stereo images (anaglyphs, .JPS and .PNS files); extending a photographers' opportunities. Another useful feature is Dark Room editor for processing of .RAW and flat photos. The original image remains unchanged, as all adjustments are saved as a set of parameters. The .RAW files can

be converted to a variety of formats, while .JPEG files can be optimized in quality and reduced in size.

The convenient browsers of Imagic Premium allow the user to find any file quickly and easily due to fast indexing algorithm scans and their ability to search by EXIF attributes. There are three browser types; a common Folder Browser, a Calendar Browser for organizing files chronologically and the Tags Browser for organizing by categories. However, the browsers are not intended just for organizing photos and video files, but they can automatically detect all matching photos and seamlessly create panoramas in a single click. Other sophisticated browser features are Batch processing, Geotagging, Slideshow creation and more.

The built-in video editor offers other features; frames can be cut, trimmed and rotated, adjust brightness and contrast, apply effects and transitions, use various

titles and captions, and add audio files or record narration. The results can be exported to a variety of popular formats. The program supports multiple ways of sharing images; e-mailing, creating slideshows, uploading images to Google Picasa, Flickr and other web photo albums, as well as direct printing with advanced options.

STOIK Imagic Premium is compatible with Windows XP/ Vista/ 7 and costs \$49.00 USD for a single-user license. User group members get a 25% discount on all STOIK products by using the coupon code "DEALSGUY" in the appropriate space when ordering; good through May 2010.

Direct download link: <<http://store.eSellerate.net/sti/dg>> (Check the calculated closely when ordering)

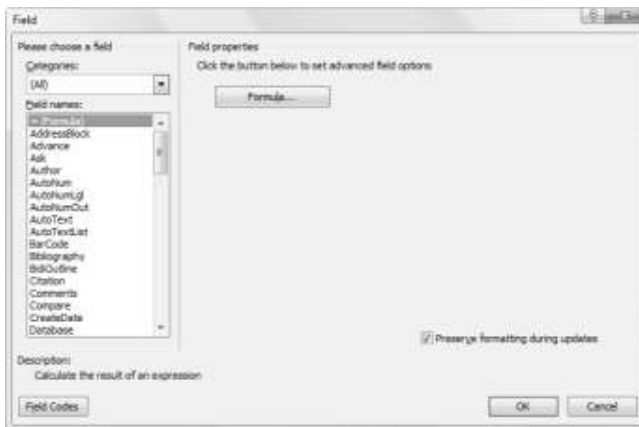
Company website: <<http://www.stoik.com/>>

Sharon Parq Tips Microsoft Word

Inserting the Total Number of Pages in Your Document

It is not unusual to put a page number in your headers or footers, if you choose to use headers and footers with your document. You can also, however, insert a field that indicates the total number of pages in a document. This can be used in a header or footer or directly within the text of your document. To insert the total number of pages in your document, follow these steps:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the total number of pages to appear.
2. Make sure the Insert tab of the ribbon is selected.
3. In the Text group, click Quick Parts. You'll see a drop-down menu.
4. Choose Field. Word displays the Field dialog box.
5. In the Categories drop-down list, choose Document Information.
6. In the Field Names list choose NumPages.
7. Click on OK to close the dialog box and insert your field.



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Backup from page 1

The backup media should be stored in a place where they it will not become lost, stolen, or damaged. When I was in business (many years ago), we backed up all our files every day, with a rotating system of seven tapes. Copies were stored in a fireproof safe, and periodically, we placed a current copy in our safety deposit box at the bank. Just putting copies on the shelf doesn't protect against their loss in case of a fire. Obviously, most users don't have to go to such extremes. But, for important information, it's a good idea to periodically put a backup copy into a secure and fireproof place, such as a home safe, or your safety deposit box.

In order to be able to follow and use the material in this article, you must be conversant with using Windows Explorer, or a similar file manager. Earlier this year, I presented several articles on this activity, with several exercises on the subject. If you are not familiar with using a file manager to copy files and add new folders and subfolders, I would suggest that you bone up on this subject first, and then get back to this article.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO FIRST

First of all, the typical user who has programs in which files are saved, generally has no idea where they are. So, the first thing to learn is just that. When you are in a program such as Quicken, your files are generally saved in the same folder as the Quicken program. Other programs may use the My Documents folder, My Files folder, the Documents and Settings folder, or a special folder that the program has set up to store things.

I personally set my own folders for storing things. And, fortunately, most programs allow the user to specify where things are stored. In WordPerfect, I have a master folder set up, name WPWIN. Under that I have about 56 subfolders for all the categories that I have defined. There is a folder named "BocaBits", which holds all the articles I've written for this publication. One of the main advantages of having your personal files organized in a master folder is that they are easier to copy to a backup medium. Just copy the main folder, specify to include the subfolders (if that is needed), and everything underneath will be copied. This is far easier than having to locate many different folders, and copy from each one individually.

Remember, using subfolders is a must. Some years back, one of my friends stored

all his files for all his programs in the same folder, with no subfolders. Finding a file to use was almost like looking for a needle in a haystack. And, name your files using descriptive long filenames which all operating systems since Windows 95 can use. Which is easier to find "Letter to Jack re the new building.doc" or "let2jreb.doc"?

Here are some steps that I would suggest users consider - change the names to suite your desires.

1. Add a new folder on your C: drive, and call it "All My Stuff" (without the quotes.)

2. Add as many subfolders under it as you need. For example, (assuming you have these programs) add one for Word, Quicken, Money, Excel, etc.. Then, add as many subfolders under each of the main subfolders you've added. For example, the "Word" folder can have subfolders named "Letters", "Faxes", "IRS correspondence", etc.. (Don't use the quote marks - they are used here for clarity.)

3. Then in each of those programs go into "preferences" or "settings", or wherever is appropriate, and set your new path and folder name there as the place to keep stuff. In something like Quicken, it wants its files where it specifies, but when you call for a backup in Quicken, you can specify the path/folder. So this folder you set up will always have duplicates of Quicken's files, ready to be copied out to the removable media you choose.

4. For programs such as Outlook Express or AOL, it's a good idea to save your address book, and your bookmarks. Finding the names of these files, and where they are located will be a good exercise for you in using Windows Explorer, and learning more about your browser.

NOTE: It is not absolutely necessary to do all of these previous steps if you're willing to do your backup work with all your files where they are now. These steps are just offered to make your job of backing up easier. If this is the case, you can skip to the section entitled "WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP."

HOW DO I GET MY EXISTING FILES INTO THESE NEW FOLDERS

If you don't know or can't find where the program stores the files you create, go into the program, generate a new document, and do a save on it. When the "save" window comes up, it may well show you the path/folder that the program uses. So you can now go to that folder, and find all the stuff you have done pre-

viously. While you're in the "save" window, you can now specify your new repository for your files in this program, assuming it will cooperate.

If this does not happen, do a search in Windows (START>SEARCH) to find that file, and the location path will be available there.

Rather than move the existing files, I'd copy them into the new folder you set up. That way, if there are any "goofs" (perish forbid), nothing has really been lost. In the case of a program like Quicken, just open Quicken, and press CTRL+B. This should open the backup window, and you can type in the path/folder you've just made.

Later on, when you know that everything has been safely copied into your new folder tree, you can safely delete the files in their original locations if you want to do so.

When you've done this for all your important stuff, you will now have a new "filing cabinet" with "drawers" for all your important files.

WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP?

In the "olden days", the choices were fairly limited. Floppy disks and tapes were about it. These days, those two media are not the ones of choice. Floppies have limited storage space, and most people don't have a tape drive, nor should they bother to get one these days.

The two choices that I would recommend are external USB drives, which many people have or flash drives which many people also may have. If you're not familiar with these devices, you should become familiar - they are very inexpensive now and are the perfect media for backing up purposes, transporting, and archiving files.. Or you can use a ZIP disk, if you have a ZIP drive, or use a CD rewritable disk.

To "burn" a CD, you must be familiar with this process. If you have a recordable or rewriteable drive on your machine, there should be a software utility to handle copying files. Usually this utility is on the CD that came with your hardware. But, it's possible that the utility wasn't loaded on at the factory. Check through the manual or help files to learn more about this.

Remember, once you get into the habit of backing things up, you can feel more comfortable about not losing lots of time and effort trying to reconstruct things. And, when you get a new computer, your new

machine can take the backup medium you used, and copy it all (as desired) onto the hard drive of the new machine.

ONE FURTHER RECOMMENDATION TO SAVE YOUR "STUFF"

One area that most users don't bother to consider, is the use of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). These units plug into your wall outlet, and then the computer and monitor plug into it. Many don't feel that this is of any value to them, but I'll bet that they've had a crash during a power blink. The primary use of such a device is to keep your computer and monitor running when there is a power failure, either an extended one, or momentary power blink. The purpose of a

UPS is not to allow you to keep working for an extended period when the power goes off, but to allow you to save your work, and shut down in an orderly fashion. Or, when the power "blinks", your system doesn't crash, and you lose the work that you have on screen. Even a one tenth of a second blink can wipe out what you're working on. And, if you haven't just saved it, you've lost it.

Furthermore, all computers should be connected via a high end surge protector to protect against line fluctuations and power surges. A UPS is also just about the best protection that you can use here. And, these days, UPS units are available for not much more than the cost of a good surge protector. Check Costco for some

good values here. A capacity of 300-500 VA is a reasonable range for most home computers. Remember, as a minimum, you need to have your computer and monitor connected via the UPS. Without a monitor, your computer isn't good for much.

So, HAPPY backing up - try it. The day will definitely come when you'll be glad you did. And once you get to be an expert at it, you can impress your friends by teaching them.

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

Adding an NAS Drive To Your Network

Written by Ron Hirsch, Member & Contributing Editor, Boca Raton
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A few months back, I presented two articles in Boca Bits on setting up a wireless home network. And, I reviewed the big advantages of using the Cisco program "Network Magic" to configure and manage your network settings, and elements.

With your network, you can share files, printers, et al quite simply. But, to share files from a given computer, for example, the computer having those files must be up and running. And if you want to share a printer on the network, the computer where that printer is installed, and of course, the printer, must be up and running.

There is a quick and easy way around this, and that is to use an NAS (network attached storage) device. This is essentially a hard drive, within an enclosure, which has a "mini" operating system included, which takes the place of a computer, and provides the user with a simple way to then connect the hard drive(s) to the network, and provide access to the contents thereon. Access to everything on the NAS device is available at all times.

And, many of these NAS devices also provide a USB port for use with printers and other accessories. Putting a hub on

this port will allow the use of whatever USB devices that one wants to put on the network. For devices which require an installation, such as a printer, or scanner, the computer wanting to use that device must have had the install procedure run, just as one would do when that device is connected directly there.

OVERVIEW OF NAS DEVICES

There are several varieties of NAS devices out there. The three main flavors are:

1. Small self contained units which include one or two hard drives, ready to go
2. Medium size units with no hard drives included. The user gets his own hard drives and installs them into the unit.
3. Large (and expensive) units, not really designed for home users, and also priced too high for home use.

MAXIMUM FILE SIZE

When I started looking into NAS units, there was one area where I was confused, since no units that I could locate could

handle hard drives with the NTFS formatting capability. I wanted this to be able to store images created by True Image, for my system backups. These image files are usually 20-30 GB, but the limit in FAT32 and EXT2/EXT3 is 4 GB (minus 1 byte). So to store a 20 GB file from True Image, it breaks it up into 4 GB chunks.

Apparently, to use NTFS, which is a Microsoft format in Windows versions from Windows NT, XP, and onward, there are fees which one must pay to Microsoft. And few manufacturers, if any, want to pay this fee, so they settle on either FAT32 (the older Windows file system), or EXT2/EXT3, which is a Linux file system. These choices are fully compatible with Microsoft Windows - all versions.

I finally decided to accept this formatting system, and decided that I would not use the NAS drive to store True Image backups. The read and write speeds, working on a home network NAS drive, are very much slower than working to an internal SATA drive in my machine, and also much slower than working to a USB drive connected to a computer. So I would

just use the NAS unit to have all my data and files on the network, and instantly available to any computer on my network.

WHICH NAS UNIT TO GET

I did a lot of searching, reading user reviews, and checking prices. I hadn't realized that there were so many choices out there. I considered price, quality, ease of use, and many customer reviews on a variety of sites. I finally decided on the D-Link DNS-323.

This unit has an all aluminum case, holds 2 SATA drives, has an internal fan, seemed to be a well manufactured. And, the price for the unit from Amazon was \$158, with a \$30 mail-in rebate. I also ordered two 1 TB drives to go with the unit. The total price of \$338 for everything is a very competitive total price, to get 2 terabytes of storage onto the network

This unit also has a USB 2.0 port on it, as shown below. So users can attach whatever USB devices they want to be available on the network

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There was very little to assemble when everything arrived. The case and its front cover are very nicely manufactured, and show excellent quality. The front cover of the unit slips off very easily - actually too easily. Then the drives are merely slid into the case where their connectors engage the mating connectors inside the back of the case. Then the cover is put back on, and the assembly part is all done. Below are two pix of the front and back of the case. To remove the drives, slip off the front of the case, and use the "drive eject" levers on the rear of the case.

One thing that the rear view does not show, nor did the manual mention it, is the small pinhole sized opening alongside the Ethernet port, which is the

opening to insert the end of a paper clip, to reset the unit. I will discuss resetting later on.

The manual for the DNS-323 is probably the most comprehensive manual I've seen in a long time. It has complete instructions for installing and using the unit. There are lots of color images, and very clear info on each step of the installation process. You do not have to be a computer expert to install this device. If you follow each step carefully, the install process should proceed very smoothly.

The manual is a PDF file on the CD which comes with the unit. I personally always print out the manuals for all my important hardware and software. Things have certainly improved in recent years, and most manufacturers have taken steps to insure that users can properly install their hardware.

This article is about the NAS device that I used. Depending upon which NAS unit you purchase, the actual steps will of course differ. But the essence of doing the install is essentially the same for any similar device.

ACTIVITIES ALONG THE WAY

Here is a list of the various tasks that will be performed during the instruction process for the DNS-323.

Access the drive bays by sliding the faceplate up until it unlatches from the device.

Once the faceplate is unlatched, pull it off the device, exposing the drive bays.

Insert a 3.5" SATA hard drive into each available drive bay. Make sure to align the drive connectors to the endpoints in the DNS-323. Gently push the drive in until it connects.

Reattach the faceplate to the front of the device.

Connect an Ethernet cable into the available Ethernet port. This cable should connect the DNS-323 to your local network.

Finally, connect the power adapter to the power receptacle.

FRONT PANEL BUTTONS

Power Button: Press once to power on the DNS-323. Press and hold the button until it begins to blink to power down the DNS-323.

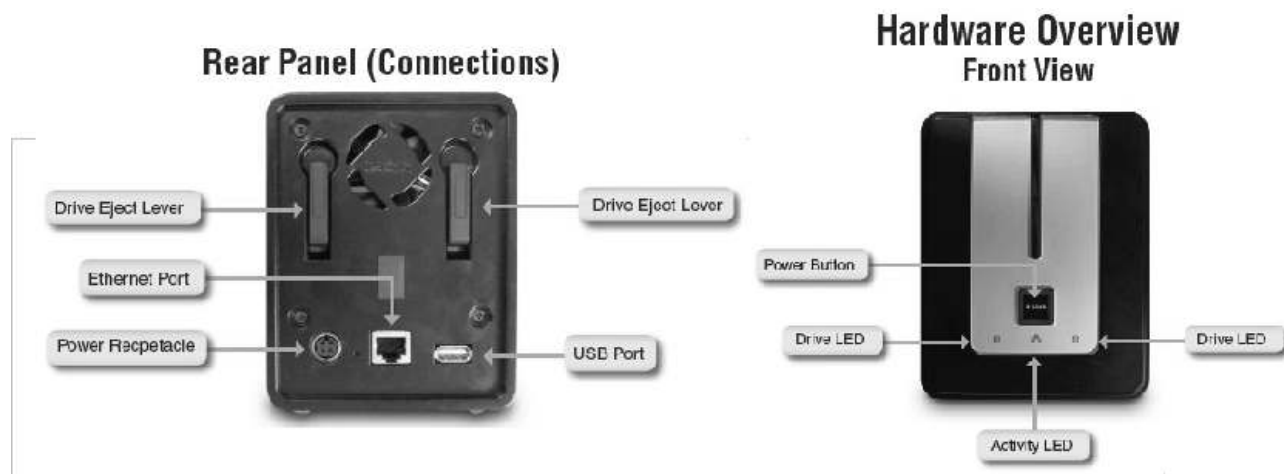
Drive LEDs: These LEDs will be solid BLUE when drives are connected but inactive. The LEDs will blink when the drives are being accessed, formatted or synchronized. They will illuminate AMBER if a drive has failed.

Activity LED: The Activity LED will be solid BLUE when there is an Ethernet connection. It will blink to indicate LAN traffic.

SETTING UP THE UNIT

When first powered on, during the initial boot sequence, the DNS-323 will wait to be assigned an IP address via DHCP. If it does not receive a DHCP assigned IP address, by default it will have a self-assigned IP address of 192.168.0.32. It is recommended to use the included D-Link Easy Search Utility when accessing and configuring the DNS-323 for the first time. If you want to change this IP address before logging in or are unable to connect to the DNS-323 IP address, you can use the Easy Search Utility provided on the product CD to locate the device on your network and make any needed changes.

To run the Easy Search Utility, insert the DNS-323 CD into your CD-ROM drive.



Once this has started running, the window below will appear. Then follow the steps as they are presented.

Along the way, all the necessary steps will take place to format and set up the unit. The formatting is a special format which is Windows compatible, but is neither NTSC or FAT32. Any information on the drive(s) you install in the unit will be wiped clean when the formatting is done.

Once again, the manual has detailed info on each step in the process, to assist users in making choices, when choices must be made.

HOW TO USE THE UNIT AFTER SETTING IT UP

Once the setup process is completed, the unit is ready to use. It will show in the drive listing for any machine which is connected to your network. The drive letters which were assigned will show along with all the usual drive letters for your machine. You can move, copy, & delete files just as you would for any drive.

For maximum utility, the NAS drive should be left on at all times, to insure that any computer on the network can access it. It does have a power saving feature that will put it to sleep after several minutes (5 minutes is the default), and it will use very little power in that mode. Once it has gone to sleep, it will take about 5 seconds for it to come back on, and spin up to full speed.

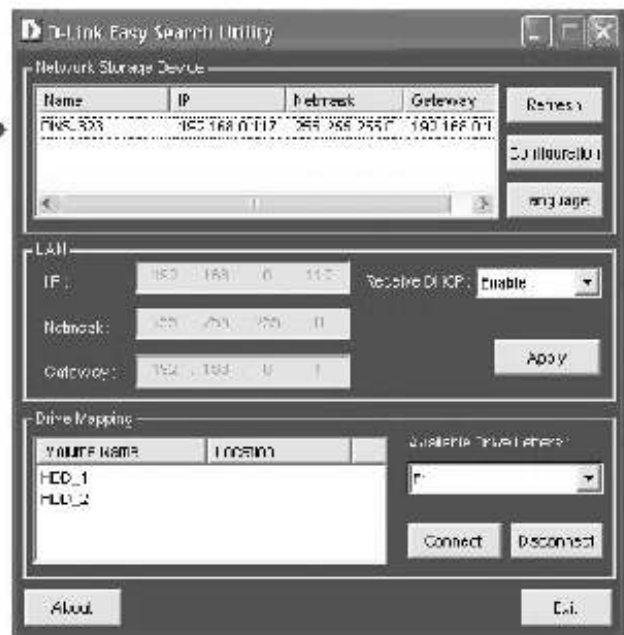
If you copy all/most of your important files onto the NAS drive, this will serve as a backup for these files. And they will be instantly available to all your other machines on your network. This can be very time saving when you want to access things like pictures et al.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site <http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.php>. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose-leaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in Boca Bits.

Click Easy Search Utility.



Highlight an available DNS-323 and click Configuration to access the web-based utility.



Controlling System Restore

By Vinny La Bash, Member and Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida, www.spcug.org, vlbash@comcast.net

Did a shareware application you were enamored of turn out to be an unmitigated disaster? Perhaps a device driver installation, system update or modification to a registry key went bad, and your system wandered into an alternate universe. Windows has a utility called System Restore that takes a picture, called a Restore Point, of your system before certain types of operations are started. System Restore is a very handy feature that allows you to go back in time to erase actions you have come to regret. If a problem occurs you can revert back to the way things were, and all is well again.

System Restore, for all its utility and convenience, has its drawbacks. Some argue that if there is not enough free disk space, System Restore will fail to create a restore point, so an unsuspecting person may discover that there is no restore point available when trying to put things back to normal. There is also no way to make a permanent restore point that will not get deleted after a time when automatic restore points need the disk space. This could be a predicament if a problem is intermittent.

It is possible that System Restore may be responsible for your disk drive running out of room. While today's super-sized drives make that less likely than a few years ago running out of disk space could still happen, especially if you load up your system with videos. You can reduce that likelihood even further by configuring System Restore properly.

The snapshots we talked about in the first paragraph are taken by a built-in program called the Volume Snapshot Service (VSS). There is no way to access this utility in the standard Windows Graphical Utility Interface (GUI). This means you can't get to it with a menu option. You need to open a Command Prompt window with elevated administrator privileges.

Click on the Start orb located down at the bottom left corner of your screen, select All Programs, and open the Accessories folder. Right click on the Command Prompt icon, and then select Run as Administrator from the menu. That will open up a Command Prompt window with enough authority to configure System Restore.

Before doing any configuration, let's take some time to understand how System Restore works. You can do this with the vssadmin tool. At the Command Prompt type `vssadmin /?` (Press Enter after typing a command.)

You see a list of all the commands supported by the utility.

(Note: Shadow copy = Restore Point)

Enter the command `vssadmin list shadows`

This displays a list of all the restore points currently on the system.

The list shadowstorage command displays the amount of disk drive space currently being used to store restore points, how much space is set aside to accommodate restore points, and the maximum permitted size for restore points.

To see what's available on your own system, at the Command Prompt type:

`Vssadmin list shadowstorage`

Take a few minutes to understand the way the information is displayed. If there is enough free disk space you can store up to 64 restore points before Windows automatically starts deleting old restore points to accommodate new ones.

Making backups is an essential task, but there is no reason why Windows should be allowed to consume every available



byte of storage with System Restore points. The default settings allow Windows to run amok but you can reset the maximum value with the `resize shadowstorage` command.

Here is an example:

`Vssadmin resize shadowstorage /for=c: /on=c: /maxsize = 12GB`

The `/for=` switch specifies the disk drive where the storage space is to be resized.

The `/on=` switch tells Windows where to save the Restore Point.

The `/maxsize=` switch tells Windows how much space it can use for Restore Points.

If you don't specify a maximum size you are giving Windows permission to do anything it wants. The minimum size is 1GB. I have seen references stating that the minimum size can be as low as 300MB, but I could not verify that information.

After entering the `resize` command the system needs to be restarted to take effect. Configuring System Restore points won't solve every problem you may have with Windows, but it will give you more control of how Windows allocates resources.

How I Fixed My Corrupted Recycle Bin

Written by **Sandee Gimblett**, a member of the Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers, Tacoma, WA, www.tapcug.org/, maggiebs@harbornet.com

After recovering from a severe system crash on my laptop running XP, I discovered that I had a corrupted recycle bin. When I opened the Recycle Bin, no files at all would appear, yet when I chose to empty the Recycle Bin, the message would ask if I wanted to delete 76 files. I said not to delete the 76 files. I then created a test file, deleted it, and, again, no files would show-up when I opened the Recycle Bin. When I said to empty the recycle bin again, it now asked if I wanted to delete 77 files, which confirmed my suspicion that the deleted files were actually in the Recycle Bin, but I just couldn't

get access to them.

I eventually discovered that the files were in the following directory, accessed via the Command Prompt, in a folder named: C:\Documents and Settings\Sandee\Recent.

After several attempts to repair the Recycle Bin without success, including running ReplBin.reg and other registry repair techniques, here is what finally worked:

1. My Computer
2. Local Disk (C:)
3. Tools
4. Folder Options
5. View
6. Clicked on SHOW HIDDEN FILES AND FOLDERS
(I keep this option checked anyhow)
7. Un-clicked on HIDE PROTECTED OPERATING SYSTEM FILES (This should usually NEVER be unchecked, but I unchecked it so I could get access to the Recycle Bin operating system hidden folder)
8. Chose APPLY TO ALL FOLDERS, chose APPLY, and clicked OK.
9. Right-Clicked on RECYCLER file and renamed it to RECYCLER-BAD
10. Created a dummy file and deleted it.
11. Rechecked my Recycle Bin icon on my Desktop again, and...
12. VOILA! My newly deleted dummy file was there and all is well again!



Recycle Bin

Another Useful Control Panel

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

In an earlier edition of the Monitor, July 2009, we discussed what control panels are, and looked at the “Folder Options” control panel in detail. As we said in that article, “The Windows Control Panel is the component of the Windows User Interface that allows users to modify and personalize the way Windows (XP and Vista) operates. All of the User Interface settings and controls that are under user control can be manipulated by the small applications (called applets) that are part of the Windows Control Panel.” The “System” control panel is another of these

very useful applets. It provides basic information about the hardware, the software, the device drivers, and how the computer operates in a network. The information provided under XP and Vista is similar, but the displays are different.

There are a few basic things that every user should know about the computer they are using. Some of these are: what CPU (Central Processing Unit) is the computer built around; how much RAM (Random Access Memory) is installed; what OS (Operating System) is being used and

what OS Service Pack is installed, if any; what is the computer’s name; how many hard drives are installed; and how much space is available on each hard drive. The “System” control panel provides the answers to the first 4 of these questions. (The hard drive information can be obtained by double-clicking My Computer, or Computer in Vista, and looking at the properties of the hard drive by right-clicking the hard drive of interest and selecting properties.)

To get to the System control panel on an XP machine, on the taskbar click start, then click on Control Panel, then double-click on the System icon. This will display the System Properties window.

The CPU, RAM, OS and Service Pack can be seen on the System Control Panel-General tab, as shown in the following:

In this XP example, the CPU is an Intel Pentium 4 (running at a clock speed of 3.2 GHz), there is 1 GB of RAM installed, and the OS is Microsoft Windows XP

Continued on page 20



Professional with Service Pack 3 installed.

Computers that are part of a home network must have a name, a description, and be part of a Workgroup. The Computer Name is used to find data located on computers on a network. The workgroup indicates which other computers can potentially share data with this computer. In XP, this information is obtained from the System Control Panel-System Properties-Computer Name tab as shown in the following:

In this XP example, the Computer's (network) name is "Desktop2", its description is "FrontRoom" (which is also its location), and it is part of the "B" workgroup. Changes to the computer name and workgroup can be accomplished by clicking the "Change..." button.

The Vista System Control Panel also provides the same type of information. To get to the System control panel, on the taskbar click start, then click on Control Panel, then on the left click on "Classic View" (if it is not already in classic view), and finally double-click on the System icon. This will display a window for you to "View basic information about your computer". The System Properties window can be displayed by clicking on the "Advanced system settings" link in the list of Tasks, to the left side of the "View basic information about your computer" window. This window is as follows:

In this Vista example, the CPU is an Intel T2060 processor (running at a clock speed of 1.6 GHz), there are 2 GB of RAM installed, and the OS is Microsoft Windows Vista Home Premium with Service Pack 2 installed. In Vista, there are some additional pieces of information. The System type: shown here indicates that this machine is using a 32 bit OS (Operating Systems today are either 32 bit or 64 bit). The Rating: shows a "3.0 Windows Experience Index". The "Windows Experience Index" is a measure of the capability of your computer's hardware and software configuration and is expressed as a number between 1 and 5.9. A higher number generally means that



your computer will perform better and faster than a computer with a lower number, especially when performing more resource intensive tasks.

And in this Vista example, the Computer's (network) name is "SonyLaptop", its description is "FamilyRoom" (which is also

its location), and it is part of the "B" workgroup. Changes to the computer name and workgroup can be accomplished by clicking the "change settings" link.

The System Control Panel also provides access to the "Device Manager". This is where you can get detailed technical information about all of the hardware "devices" that are installed on your computer and allows you to install and update the software "drivers" that are associated with the hardware. (CAUTION-Be very careful in this area. Changes here can cause unintended consequences and possibly severely disable your computer.) This is an area that is probably best left to the technically inclined. However, if you are having problems with specific devices, the device status may be of help. Status Icons are shown for devices that are questionable (yellow), or not operating (red). The device properties may also be helpful and are displayed by a right-click on the specific device in the list and then selecting "properties". The System control panel provides a lot of information, most of which you do not regularly need, but when you do need that kind of



technical information it is nice to know where it can be found.

Fixing the Little Things: Using Tabs to Line Up Columns in Word

Written by **Nancy De Marte**, SIG Chairperson, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, ndemate@Verizon.net

Sometimes it's the little things going wrong with your computing that drive you crazy. For example, an email which took you half an hour to compose might not send correctly. Or suddenly the size of the type in a Word document changes. Maddening, isn't it?

One small, but common problem when you are using Microsoft Word or Word Pad often crops up when you try to create a list of items. Maybe you belong to a club, and it's your job to keep a list of the members' names with email addresses and phone numbers. You've been asked to print the list and bring it to the next meeting. Diligently, you type the list, using the Tab key to line up the columns neatly. It looks great on the screen, but then you print it. The columns waver all over the page. How could this happen? How can you fix it?

Tabs in computing are a holdover from the old typewriter days. The idea is that you can set tab stops along a ruler at the top of your Word or WordPad window that will help you create vertically even columns. Then, when you type, you merely press the Tab key on the keyboard to move the insertion point to the next tab stop. The problem is that Microsoft set up half inch automatic (default) tab stops which many people use rather than setting their own. Since individual characters (letters or numbers) are not the same width, just using the default tab stops will not guarantee even columns. You must set tab stops on the ruler yourself to ensure the desired results.

It's best to set the tabs for a simple list before typing because they can always be changed after the text is present. To do this, first make sure the ruler is visible. In Word 2003, click View in the menu bar and put a check mark next to Ruler. The ruler should now appear at the top of the document window.

Now look carefully at the left end of the ruler for the tab stop type indicator. The standard left-justified tab stop looks like a capital L. (Sometime you might want to click this L and look through the other types of stops for future use. Don't do it now.) Now you are ready to set your tab stops.

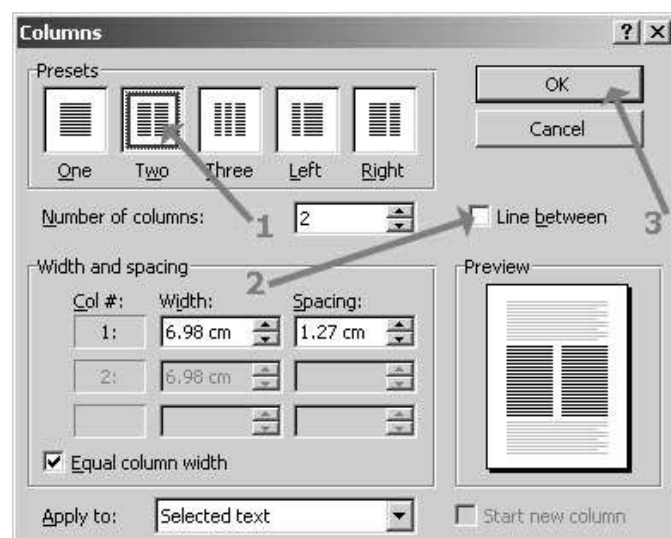
To plan your tab stops for the club list mentioned above, you will probably type the members' names beginning at the left margin, so you don't need a tab stop for them. You'll need two stops on the ruler: one for email address and another for phone numbers. To add a tab stop, merely click on the ruler in a spot which you think will accommodate your text, in this case, the email address. An L will appear on the ruler. Repeat this process a bit further along the ruler to set a stop for the phone numbers. When you have finished, check your list against the stops to see whether you have allowed enough space for the columns.

Now it's time to add the text. Beginning at the left margin, type the first name, then press the Tab key on the keyboard, type

the email address, press Tab again, then type the phone number. Press the return key (Enter) to move to the next line and repeat the process. If, after you have typed in the whole list, you find some text getting cut off, you may need to move the tab stops. First, and very important, highlight the entire group of text. Then click on one of the L's on the ruler, hold down the left mouse button, and drag it to a new location, which will move the text with it. Until you deselect the text, you can adjust tab stops as much as you wish. Finally, save the document and, before printing, use the Print Preview command to see how it will look on the printed page.

If all went well, you should have perfectly even columns.

There are other ways, of course, to create lists like this. The Microsoft Office spreadsheet program Excel is a great alternative, especially if you want to sort the list. Word allows you to create Tables, which is another way to ensure even columns which can be sorted. But these are topics for another article.



Mac OS Tips

By **Ernie Cox, Jr.**, a member of the Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ, <http://gvcc.apcug.org/>, Ecoxjr@cox.net

Using “Spotlight” To Do Math

By the time you find the calculator on your Mac or in the bottom drawer, your Spotlight can do basic math for you. In Leopard, the math problems are done by remembering that * is used for multiplication, + for add, - means subtract, and / (forward slash) stands for division. Now, using the symbols, you can find out how much one and one is by pressing return.



A Mac Program Freezes Up

Relaunching the Finder comes in handy when a force-quit or other bug freezes up your computer, and it won't do anything. To relaunch, press Option-Control-click on the Finder icon in the Dock, then choose Relaunch. Another way: Option-Right-click on the Finder icon—if you have a two-button mouse.

Cleaning your USB Flash Drive

If you have a USB flash drive with outdated information, the easiest way to re-use it is to plug it into your Mac, select its contents, click on the apple key and delete to send the contents to the trash. Or drag or delete the files to the Trash, and empty the Trash (Finder Empty

Trash). Doing this eliminates the need to reformat the drive and provides the space you need to copy your files. If the files can't be deleted (perhaps because they've been corrupted in some way), launch Disk Utility (in /Applications/Utilities), select the flash drive from Disk Utility's list of drives, click on the Erase tab, choose MS-DOS (FAT) from the Volume Format pop-up menu, and click on Erase. The drive will be erased and then reformatted.

Cleaning Your Battery

Each time the internal battery recharges, it stores in its memory that setting (i.e. whether the battery completely or only partially discharged). Using PRAM (Parameter Ram) erases settings stored by the battery so that it will completely recharge every time.

On start-up, press down the Command, Option, P and R keys on the keyboard at the same time, and hold this combination until the gray screen appears. Hold down the keys until the computer restarts and you hear the startup sound for the second time. Then you can release the keys.



Mac New Administrator Password

On a Mac computer, over time you may get tired of using the “Admin Password” and want to change to a new one.

Go to System Preferences and click on “ACCOUNTS.” An “Accounts” window will drop down. Click on the lock at the bottom left hand side of the window. You must know the old password to open the lock. When the lock opens, click on the name with “Admin” under it. Next click on “Password.” Just to the right is “Change Password,” click there.

A window will drop down for you to fill in the current password and new password. You must know the old password and verify the new password after writing it in.

Click on the words “Change Password,” a window will drop down telling you that the password will be changed. If you want to change the administrator name along with the password, you will have to log out of the old name and then log into the new name on start-up to use the new account.

Once you have done the new log in, you must go to the My Account column. At the bottom are plus and minus signs.

Click on the old name with Admin and then click on the minus sign to delete the old name Admin. From there, you will log out and then log back into the new name Admin.

Hardware Review

Slides 2 PC

Published by Ion Audio

Reviewed by Bruce Preston, president, West Mountain Systems, Inc., long-term board member of DACS and conducted the Random Access sessions at the General Meetings as well as chaired the Microsoft Access SIG, www.dacs.org, bpreston@mags.net

Converting Slides to Digital Images

Author's Note: This article best appreciated if read while listening to Paul Simon's Kodachrome.

By my estimate, over the last 40 or so years, I have taken about 6,000 slides. Topics include such things as family get-togethers, Formula 1 and Can-Am races at Watkins Glen, SCCA races at Lime Rock Park, bike tours in Vermont, the U.K, Western Europe, and steam locomotives in Colorado, Vermont, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. For all of these I much prefer the color fidelity and permanence of slides over prints.

Unfortunately, slides also require either setting up a projector and screen or using a hand-held viewer, and don't easily lend themselves to sharing. Years ago I had a Polaroid SprintScan 35 film scanner, but it required a SCSI adapter card and Polaroid went under without delivering drivers for Windows 2000 or XP. It was also somewhat slow taking about 2 minutes per scan. I will grant you that it delivered high quality images. My brother in law has scanned a few slides using a flatbed scanner with a light box cover, but the resolution was not great. It was acceptable for distributing by e-mail or posting on a web page, but not satisfactory for full screen viewing.

A few months ago I discovered Ion Audio's "Slides 2 PC" 35 mm Slide and Film Scanner. It is a nifty compact device that consists of housing containing a fixed-focus USB 2.0 camera, a white-balanced light source and a pair of carriers – one that can hold 3 mounted 35 mm slides, the other for 6-exposure 35 mm negative strips. System requirements are minimal – Windows XP or Vista, and a USB 2 port. (If you only have USB 1.1 you will need to add a USB 2 card to your desktop or get a USB 2 PCMCIA card for your notebook. I tried it on my old notebook and the driver refused flatly stating that it needed USB 2.)

Slides 2 PC comes bundled with ArcSoft's Photo Impressions 6, a consumer-friendly image capture/editing/cataloging program commonly bundled with digital scanners and cameras. The scanner appears as a TWAIN device, I happen to prefer the free (for personal use) IrfanView as I have used IrfanView for years. <http://www.irfanview.com/> One thing I disliked about the ArcSoft package was its insistence upon loading an always resident module.

I don't know if the device will work with a Mac – next time Scott is around with his Mac we'll see if it recognizes it. Since it is a TWAIN device there is a good chance as long as your bring your own software.

Operation is simple; I'll describe the process when using IrfanView. Select the TWAIN source from the FILE menu, and then select ACQUIRE/BATCH. The first dialog box asks

If you have many slides or negatives that you'd like to convert to digital, give this unit some thought.
I'm very happy with it.

for a target folder, a root filename, the starting number and the number of digits. I created folder "\My Documents\My Pictures\VBT Tours\1972" as the folder, "VBT_" as the filename root, 1 as the starting number, and 3 as the number of digits. I clicked OK and the scanner loaded with a real-time preview. In this case of a blank white area since I hadn't loaded a slide. Note that since it is a video camera rather than a moving scanner mechanism there are essentially no moving parts within that can get out of calibration.

The carrier is hinged along the long side – open it, place 3 slides in the slide carrier or a film strip in the film carrier and



close it. Slide the carrier into the scanner until you feel it click at the first positioning notch. In about a half second the image will appear, then reappear once the auto-exposure kicks in. Tap the top of the scanner and the image is captured to memory. A thumbnail appears above the preview image. Slide the carrier to the next notch and repeat the process. Reload and repeat until you have up to 12 thumbnails. Click on the first, shift-click on the last one to select them all, then click on the 'Transfer' button on the screen and they will be written to disk. Resultant JPEG images are 2592x1680, 24 bit color depth. They average about 2.5MB in size.

If you use Photo Impressions 6 as part of start up you get a configuration screen for the scanner where you may select image size, color depth, JPEG or TIFF, and specify whether you are scanning transparencies (slides), color or B/W negatives. IrfanView just uses the defaults of JPEG at 24 bit color depth.



In the box:

- Slides to PC Scanner
- Slide Tray
- Negative Tray
- Optics Cleaning Tool
- Software CD
- Quick Start Guide
- User Manual

As far as speed is concerned, on this lazy Sunday afternoon I scanned 60 slides in 33 minutes without rushing. This included taking the slides out of the Bell & Howell 'Slide Cube' and reloading them. I have yet to go into the JPEGs to rotate the images that need to be turned from landscape to portrait orientation – IrfanView can do that with a single key-press.

For those who like spec sheets:

5 mega-pixel scanner

USB 2.0 interface

f/6.0 four element glass lens

Fixed focus, auto-exposure and color balance

More information at <http://www.ionaudio.com/slides2pc>

Sources – I did a little web searching while wrapping up this article. The average eBay auction over the last 60 days closed at \$85 including shipping. J&R has it for \$79.99 plus shipping which I suspect will put it right about \$85. If you like rolling the dice, from time to time a factory refurb shows up on eBay at about \$65.

If you have many slides or negatives that you'd like to convert to digital, give this unit some thought. I'm very happy with it.



System Requirements:

- Windows XP (32-bit) or Vista (32-bit)
- Pentium III 450 processor or equivalent (PIII 800 recommended)
- 128 MB RAM (256MB recommended)
- 50 MB available hard disk space (100MB recommended)
- USB 2.0 port

Software Review

Norton Internet Security 2010

Published by Symantec

Reviewed by Ash Nallawalla, Reviews Editor, Melbourne PCUG, Australia,
www.melbpc.org.au, ash@melbpc.org.au

It's about that time of the year when we have to update our antivirus (AV) software and so I installed Norton Internet Security (NIS) 2010 on my Windows 7 desktop. My previous AV package was Norton 360, which includes much of NIS 2009.

There is a whole virus-making industry out there on the Dark Side, which constantly unleashes new malware and makes it more sophisticated all the time. These days, the infections try not to damage your files. You may not even be aware of the threat, because your PC is more valuable as a remotely controlled zombie. Your PC could be used to send a moderate amount of spam, or be used as a proxy site to perform some shady actions, or to propagate malware.

Features

NIS 2010 requires a minimum of Windows XP 32-bit with SP2 or later. In Windows Vista and Windows 7, both 32-bit and 64-bit versions are supported.

As is to be expected with an Internet security product, NIS 2010 provides the following features:

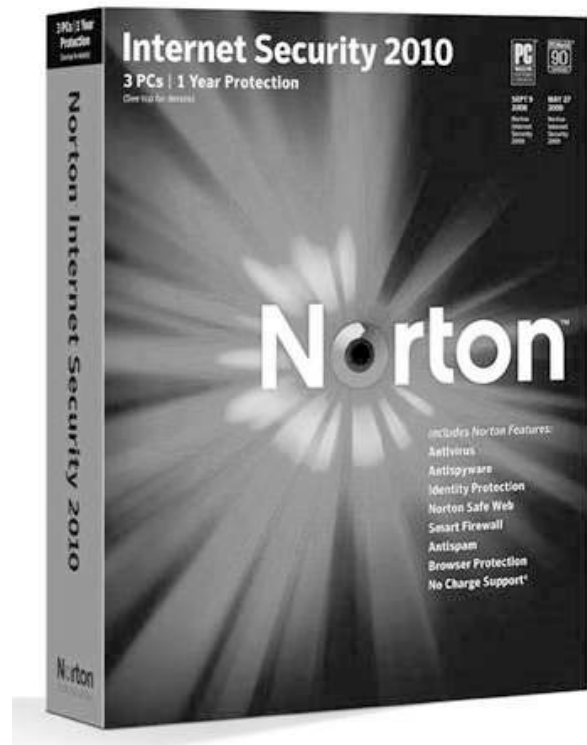
- Blocks viruses, spyware, Trojans, worms, bots and rootkits
- Two-way firewall
- Email protection
- Parental controls
- Home and public network security
- Identity protection
- PC tune-ups

NIS does not perform a backup/restore of important files as is done by Norton 360 Version 3.0 but I didn't miss that feature as I use another program for backups. It does a little more in the tuneup department, so I felt a little better off.

Technology

A staple ingredient of AV software has been a look-up table of "signatures" – sequential bits of programming code whose presence on your PC means that you are infected. A full PC scan compares all your files with these signatures and takes action as you wish, e.g. clean, quarantine, or delete the infection.

Over the years, AV vendors also introduced heuristic scanning, which examines your files for signs of code that could do the wrong thing. For example, if your Word document is infected



with malware that includes an instruction to format your disks, then this is considered abnormal and flagged as a risk. You can imagine that the poor AV software has a lot of checking to do and could slow down your work if the list of signatures keeps rising.

Mutating malware becomes harder to detect, as the signatures keep changing, so all unknown files need to be checked. Symantec now uses a family of techniques called Quorum to speed up this scanning. Quorum uses reputation to assess each new file it finds, based on the Norton Insight Network community of other people who use the same software. For example, if you downloaded a PDF file from a site that is flagged as risky by Norton SafeWeb, then it will be scanned. If the filename and signature are known to it, say, a Microsoft product, then it will skip it by default. If many people run some new application from a new company, in time, this anonymised usage data will get to Symantec (with your permission) and eventually it will get to the safe list.

- Norton Insight Network
- Dashboard
- The Norton Toolbar helps protect your web surfing
- In Use

The single-user version came on a car-shaped USB drive and installed easily. It disabled Windows Defender and got to work, downloading updates immediately. I don't surf at dubious sites so I don't expect to find viruses every other day, but when I inserted a little-used USB drive, it found a virus in its autorun file.

Virus found!

One of the benefits of using Norton security products is that your web browser is enhanced to show a green tick, red cross or a question mark when you perform a search. This is part of Norton SafeWeb, which has a collection of known safe sites and known harmful sites. The rest are yet unknown to SafeWeb. I was looking for a file and clicked a likely result, but I remem-

bered that the website was classified as unsafe, and then wondered why I wasn't seeing the ticks and crosses.

Upon reading the Norton support forum (<http://community.norton.com>) I found out that the Skype add-on for Firefox was the problem. I removed the add-on and the SafeWeb markers returned.

Before: Notice no Norton SafeWeb ticks after each result.

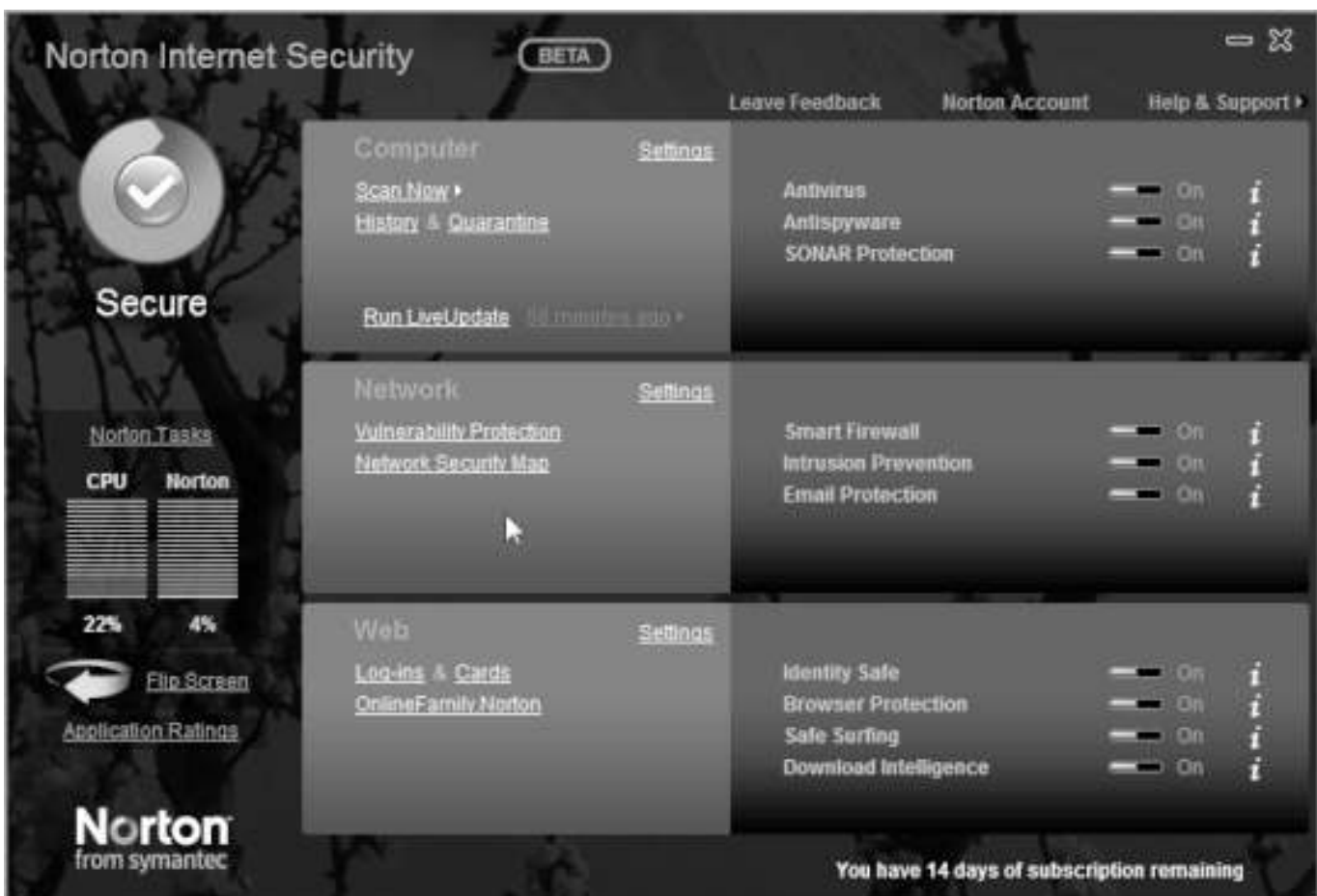
A safe download

After: Remove Skype add-on for Firefox: problem fixed

Availability

NIS 2010 is available from most software retail outlets for \$100 or less.

For more information about Quorum, see <http://tinyurl.com/quorum2>. For a study of similar products by AV-Comparatives, see <http://tinyurl.com/na5k5x>.



Book Review

The Cathedral & the Bazaar by Eric S. Raymond (1999)

Published by O'Reilly

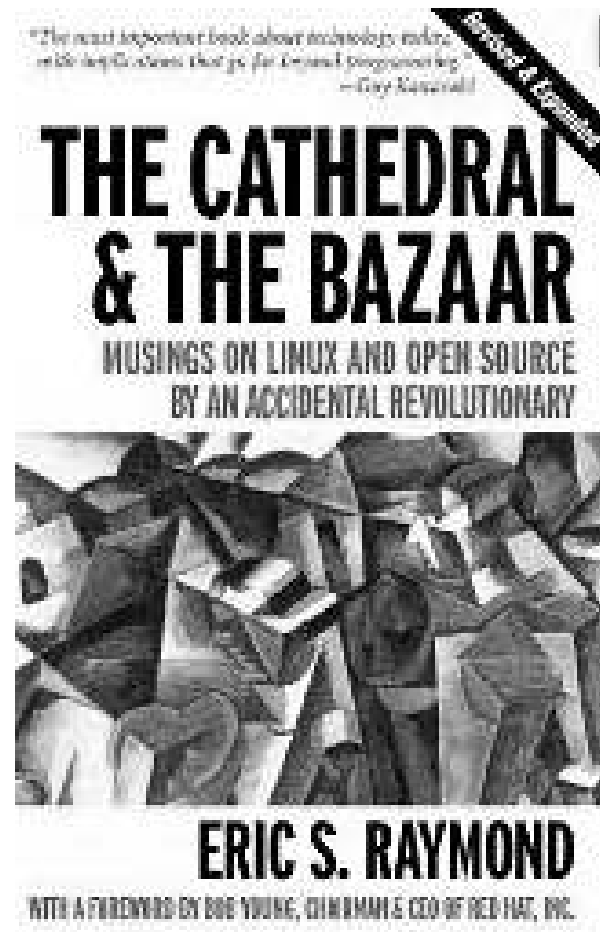
Reviewed by Sean Henderson, a member of the Danbury Area Computer Society, Connecticut, www.dacs.org, shenderson@dacs.org

About ten years ago a very inspiring book was published by a famed hacker by the name of Eric S. Raymond. The title is "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" published in 1999. Raymond was the author of a program in UNIX called fetchmail and this book is based on an essay he presented at a Linux event. I came across this volume in the bookshelf where I work. The title was cited in the documentary "Revolution OS". Now having read the book I can see where much of the book and documentary dovetail.

Raymond's book has some not-so-obvious aspects to it. One is that it is a bit of a theoretical primer on economics and resource management theory. Before reading the book I didn't know the terms "hierarchy culture", "exchange culture" and "gift culture". Now being aware of these terms and definitions, I look at open-source software in a more informed way. For the past couple months I've been concerned at work that I was the only developer on a commercial application with thousands of users. After reading this book it has confirmed my notion that developing in isolation is not the most advantageous way to develop any application, regardless of whether the source files are released or not. The implications for development of any complex system are apparent.


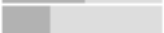
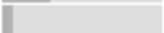
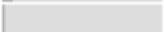
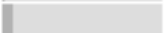
One of the book's nuggets is a quote from Linus Torvalds that "given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow." Other great information is provided on the nature of hacking, the term "hacker" and how it is abused in media, and the origins of the whole free software movement and various other distinctions. It also explains to non-programmers and business types why programmers would contribute code and improvements to a project on a volunteer basis.

I highly recommend this book to anyone involved in any sort of software development or if you are managing a software project. It is a useful book also for filling in some technology history gaps, and perhaps (re)learn some key concepts.



amazon Customer Reviews

52 Reviews

5 star:		(27)
4 star:		(16)
3 star:		(4)
2 star:		(1)
1 star:		(4)

Average Customer Review

★★★★☆ (52 customer reviews)

Next Generation Malware Attacks PCs Via Firmware in Hardware Devices

Submitted by Bill Klutz, president Alamo PC Organization, www.alamopc.org,
president@alamopc.org

At the recent CanSecWest international security conference in Vancouver, French researchers compromised a Linux PC by exploiting a feature in the machine's network card. The same technique could be used to take control of any PC including Windows PCs that uses Broadcom NetXtreme cards with the remote factory diagnostic mechanism enabled. These cards are in widespread use and have been used in a number of Hewlett Packard PCs. Thankfully, by default the remote factory diagnostic mechanism (ASFor Alert Standard Format 2.0) is normally turned off.

Exact details of the attack were not revealed at the conference but in another presentation security researcher Arrigo Triulzi demonstrated a similar attack on Broadcom cards. He used the remote factory diagnostic mechanism to install custom firmware on the network card. This firmware was used in conjunction with other hardware to create a tunnel into the PC in such a manner that packets sent via the tunnel were not visible to the system firewall. Using the network card's access to memory the attacker could then run whatever code he wanted.

A patch for certain Broadcom network cards has been issued by HP:

<http://h20000.www2.hp.com/bizsupport/TechSupport/Document.jsp?objectID=c...>

This new attack technique is particularly scary as it takes place at a very low level and is not visible to security software running on the PC. The user would thus be totally unaware the machine was compromised. Also alarming is the possibility we may see a wave of new malware attacks that exploit flaws in firmware installed in hardware rather than software.

This new exploit is yet further proof that no PC can ever considered to be 100% secure. That may sound frightening but it's the harsh truth. It's also true of almost all security situations not just computer security. For example you can never provide 100% security against your house being robbed.

This harsh fact should not deter you from using a computer not attempting to defend it as best you can. It is however a wake up call to those who have a blind belief in the complete effectiveness of their security software.

It's also a wake up call to be mindful about your computer practices. You wouldn't ever leave valuable jewellery on your kitchen table just because you have a burglar alarm – you'd put it in a safe or store it at a bank. In same way make sure you encrypt highly valuable information on your PC or store it offline. It's not perfect but it's a lot better than leaving your valuable information hanging around.

For further details on this new exploit see here:

http://www.arnnet.com.au/article/341190/jedi_packet_trick_punches_holes...

Thanks to regular contributor Lex Davidson for alerting me to this.

Computer Briefs With Pim Borman

Defragmentation explained

Fragmentation is caused by creating and deleting files and folders, installing new software, and downloading files from the Internet. Computers do not necessarily save an entire file or folder in a single space on a disk; they're saved in the first available space. After a large portion of a disk has been used, most of the subsequent files and folders are saved in pieces across the volume.

When you delete files or folders, the empty spaces left behind are filled in randomly as you store new ones. This is how fragmentation occurs. The more fragmented the volume is, the slower the computer's file input and output performance will be, and there will be a significant degradation in performance.

Defragmentation is the process of rewriting non-contiguous parts of a file to contiguous sectors on a disk for the purpose of increasing data access and retrieval speeds. Because FAT and NTFS disks can deteriorate and become badly fragmented over time, defragmentation is vital for optimal system performance.

In June 1999 the ABR Corporation of Irvine, California, performed a fragmentation analysis and found that, out of 100 corporate offices that were not using a defragmenter, 50 percent of the respondents had server files with 2,000 to 10,000 fragments. In all cases the results were the same: Servers and workstations experienced a significant degradation in performance.

April 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 High Growth Rock Investing (AIF) 8:30 - 8:50 PM	3 Real Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *TBA*	4 MUSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *TBA*
5	6	7 Board of Directors Covarrada Hall @ 10a 6:00 - 8:00 PM. (Members are welcome to attend)	8	9	10	11 MUSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *TBA*
12	13 General Meeting @ 7 - 9 PM. Presider:	14 Alamco Orders (Doddlet - Web Development Technology) 7 - 9 PM.	15	16	17	18 MUSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *TBA*
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 MUSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *TBA*
26	27	28	29	30		
AlamcoPC Organization						

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. |

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 Alamo*, 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.