

# Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

# README.DOC

August 2004

Newsletter

Volume 20.8

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD IN THE COSTA MESA SENIOR CENTER 695 WEST 19TH STREET  
AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF 19TH AND POMONA

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## August 28th General Meeting

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Orange Coast IBM PC User Group  
695 W. 19th St  
Costa Mesa, California 92627

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**General Meetings are held from 9:00AM to noon on:**

**28 August  
25 Sept  
30 Oct.  
27 Nov.  
18 Dec.**

**For details see inside pages of this issue, Web Page**

**Meetings of the Executive Board will be held at noon on:**

**28 August  
25 Sept  
30 Oct.  
27 Nov.  
18 Dec.**

**All OCIPUG members are welcome**

**Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings**

**are held monthly as follows:**

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1st Tuesday</b> | <b>Internet</b>      |
| <b>2nd Tuesday</b> | <b>Hardware</b>      |
| <b>3rd Tuesday</b> | <b>Windows</b>       |
| <b>4th Tuesday</b> | <b>Digital Photo</b> |

**All SIG Groups start at 7:00pm**



**S**mart Computing has been a respected resource for computer users for years. Their mission is to help users of all skill levels improve their PC-related productivity. In addition, you will be introduced to their newest publications, *PC Today* and *CE Tips*. Come spend a fun and dynamic morning and receive a free issue of *Smart Computing*! See you there!

*Smart Computing* is a monthly computer magazine designed to help users of all skill levels improve their PC-related productivity. You'll find dozens of features, columns, reviews, and tips & tricks to help you become a more efficient computer user. In addition to receiving monthly issues, subscribers of *Smart Computing* magazine gain admittance to all facets of the *Smart Computing* User Group Program. You'll enjoy every section of the magazine, which includes:

- ◆ "Focus On" Topics
- ◆ Product Reviews
- ◆ PC Operating
- ◆ General Computing Articles
- ◆ Plugged In
- ◆ PC Project
- ◆ Quick Studies
- ◆ Troubleshooting
- ◆ SmartComputing.com
- ◆ Tidbits
- ◆ Tech Support
- ◆ Sounding Board

*Smart Computing* allows you to stay abreast on the latest products and trends, solve troubleshooting problems, perform PC tasks, utilize software programs, enhance your online time, learn tips and tricks, and much more. *Smart Computing* is your ultimate computing and technology resource!

One of our goals at *Smart Computing* is to provide readers with as much information as possible, in a user-friendly format. Our website, [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com), allows users to access a vast amount of information from all of our publications. Numerous tools exist on the site, granting subscribers access to an article archive of more than 19,600 articles and other helpful tools:

- Search Engine
- Dictionary
- Question & Answer Board
- Chat
- Daily Tips & Terms
- Product Reviews
- Online Access to PC Novice, PC Today, CE Tips, and CPU!

We'll show you where to find each of these features, and how to use them.

Designed to benefit both you and your user group, the *Smart Computing* User Group Program provides you with practical computing information and gives your user group the opportunity to earn free subscriptions to *Smart Computing*. Here's how: For every 5 paid subscriptions we receive from your group, we give your group a free subscription! These free subscriptions can be used as door prizes, raffles or gifts to promote participation and attendance at group meetings. Learn about how you and your group can benefit from the program, plus learn about the brand new section of the *Smart Computing* Web site designed solely for the user group community. It makes participating in and benefiting from the program easier than ever before!

- Our presentation begins by showing *Smart Computing* images and features in PowerPoint format. Next, we will guide user group members through [SmartComputing.com](http://SmartComputing.com) as we conduct live demonstrations of each feature. We will also discuss the *Smart Computing* User Group Program.
- We will have special order forms available which offer a free issue from our Learning Series (a \$7.99 value) with every order at the meeting. These issues will be available for group members to take home at the meeting. Plus, multi-year (2- or 3-year) subscription orders made with payment at the meeting will receive a free issue from our Reference Series (a \$9.95 value) in addition to the Learning Series issue.
- We will bring a copy of *Smart Computing* and a guide to [SmartComputing.com](http://SmartComputing.com) for everyone in attendance.
- We will bring door prizes to be given away at the meeting.

# SCHEDULES AND REPORTS OF EVENTS

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) SIG MEETINGS

*(All Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings are held at the Costa Mesa Senior Center on the southeast corner of 19th and Pomona at the times noted below.) The next SIG meeting will be:*

### Support Our Sigs

Sept. 7, 2004  
Internet - 1st Tuesday 7:00PM  
Mark Borison    webmaster@ocipug.org

Sept 14, 2004  
Hardware - 2nd Tuesday 7:00PM  
Ed Leckliter    eleckliter@adelphia.net

Sept. 21, 2004  
Windows - 3rd Tuesday 7:00PM  
Robert Strader   robert.strader@comcast.net

Sept. 28, 2004  
Digital Cameras / Scanning - 4th Tuesday 7:00PM  
David Wintle    allart@pac.bell.net



## Upcoming General Meetings

August 28th  
Smart Computing  
September 25th TBA  
October 30th  
Gene Barlow UG store Parttion Magic,  
Drive Image, etc.



|                     |                |              |                            |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| President           | Dave Wintle    | 949-548-7994 | allart@pacbell.net         |
| Vice President      | Vacant         |              | president.bod@ocipug.org   |
| Secretary           | Frank Mastroly | 714-960-9472 | fmastroly@earthlink.net    |
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| Director-2003       | Red Davidson   | 949-548-0413 | red.d@juno.com             |
| Director-2003       | Ed Leckliter   | 310-944-6453 | eleckliter@adelphia.net    |
| Director-2003-2004  | Morris Fier    | 949-646-8292 | d_fier@sbcglobal.net       |
| Director-2002       | Sandi Tierney  | 714-648-2218 | gadgetgoddess@juno.com     |
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| Readme.Doc Editor   | Mark Borison   | 714-963-8296 | mborison@yahoo.com         |
| Webmaster           | Mark Borison   | 714-963-8296 | mborison@yahoo.com         |
| Programs            | Mark Borison   | 714-963-8296 | mborison@yahoo.com         |
| SIG Coordinator     | Robert Strader | 949-646-1475 | robert.strader@comcast.net |

## Minutes for the June 2004 OCIPUG Board of Directors Meeting, June 26, 2004



The June Executive Board of Directors (Board or BOD) Meeting of the Orange Coast IBM PC User Group (OCIPUG) was held on June 26, 2004, at the Costa Mesa Senior Center. President Michael Moore called the meeting to order at 11:35 am, with seven of the eight officers and directors, Webmaster/Newsletter Editor Mark Borison, and Member/Former President Bob Walker present.

Note that there are presently only eight members of the OCIPUG Board of Directors, as Past President Leonard Stein is also serving as Treasurer/CFO. The meeting quorum requirement remains at five.

Secretary Frank Mastroly had previously been e mailed a draft copy of the minutes of the May 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting to all board members for their review, with no comments and/or corrections received. In a motion by Director Ed Leckliter, seconded by Director Red Davidson, and carried, the minutes of the May 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting as e-mailed were approved. In addition, in a motion by Director Ed Leckliter, seconded by Director Red Davidson, and carried, the minutes of the April 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting as taken by Director Ed Leckliter and e-mailed to all board members by President Michael Moore were approved.

**President's Report:** — President Michael Moore reported that he had received a telephone call from InReach relative to our paying for renewal of the website hosting subscription. Apparently InReach has been unable to locate the letter faxed to them informing them that we did not wish to renew with them. There was considerable discussion as to our course of action, with Michael agreeing to contact InReach to obtain a copy of our signed agreement to determine if we owe any cancellation fees.

Michael reported that OCIPUG now has an agreement with the Costa Mesa Senior Center to use the Center's copier with an OCIPUG code. OCIPUG will be billed quarterly at 5¢ per copy.

Michael then formally announced that due to personal and job uncertainties he must tender his resignation as President. He had previously e-mailed to all board members his intention to resign. Vice President David Wintle will assume the position of President effective with the July General and Board meetings. Michael gave to David his copy of the key to the OCIPUG computer cabinet, a CD containing copies of all e-mails that he had received as President on the OCIPUG website, and all material related to our website. Finally, all e-mail sent to [president.bod@ocipug.org](mailto:president.bod@ocipug.org) will now be routed to David's home e-mail address and that APCUG will be advised of these changes.

**Secretary's Report:** — No report.

**Treasurer's Report:** — No report, as Treasurer/CFO Leonard Stein reported that he did not have the final information, and thus there will be both a June and July report at the July Board meeting. In the future we will be receiving our bank statements at the Senior Center. For the present, all OCIPUG mail will either be left in the computer room or slipped under the door. Director Red Davidson feels that the OCIPUG mail should be in a locked box that the Treasurer has the key to. This will be explored further.

### Committee Reports:

**Program Committee Report:** — Program Chairman Mark Borison reported that in July Bob Walker will be presenting two tutorials on using Photoshop Elements. In August there is the possibility of a presentation from Smart Computing Magazine. If not, Cheryl Wester will be the presenter. In October we plan to have Gene Barlow who now represents Symantec as PowerQuest (of Partition Magic fame) was recently acquired by Symantec. Bob Walker suggested that Mark take our meeting schedule with him to the SWUG conference in San Diego to line up vendors for future presentations.

### SIG Reports:

The upcoming SIG schedule is as follows:

Internet and Web Page Design (Mark Borison), 1st Tuesday of each month. On July 6, Mark will continue exploring web sites of interest as well as conduct a Q&A session. Mark reported that he has started a message board on the OCIPUG website. Mark is also soliciting ideas for future Internet SIG topics.

Hardware (Ed Leckliter), 2nd Tuesday of each month. On July 13, Ed will discuss trouble shooting and BIOS settings. As always, members are invited to bring in any hardware they want installed. Finally, the password problem on the OCIPUG computer has been resolved.

Windows 9x/XP (Robert Strader), 3rd Tuesday of each month. On July 20, Robert will continue to cover Windows tips and tricks. If you have any questions or problems, send them to Robert via e mail for discussion at the SIG. At the June SIG Robert installed Windows XP on Mark Borison's computer.

Digital Photography and Scanning (David Wintle), 4th Tuesday of each month. On July 27 David cover getting the pictures from the camera into the computer, as well as conduct a Q&A session.

**SeniorNet Report:** — Secretary frank Mastroly reported that the present session of classes started the Monday prior to this meeting. One change has been the addition of a 4-week Computer Fundamentals class for absolute beginners. We have also stopped teaching any Windows 98 classes. The new computers received from IBM are fully operational. When these computers were set up, the decision was made to not partition the 40GB hard drives, and thus Windows XP Professional is the only installed operating system (no dual boot with Windows 98). As usual, the SeniorNet team is always in need of coaches, with the only requirement being to follow what the instructor is saying and seeing to it that the students are following these instructions. One of the selling points of the SeniorNet program is to have at a minimum one coach for every two students. A particular need is coaches for the Digital Photo/Photoshop Elements class which can use additional roving coaches.

**Community Service Report:** — Work in progress. There were no Tim Smith scholarships awarded this year.

**Long Range Planning Committee Report:** — No report.

**Facilities Report, Maintenance, and Improvement:** — Director Ed Leckliter reported that he has all of the hardware required to install the 802.11g hookup between the OCIPUG computer and the projector as well as the blue tooth keyboard and mouse. Installation is planned for this coming Tuesday, as this being the 5th Tuesday there will be no SIG.

**Operations (Policy and Procedures):** — No report.

**Publications Report:** — Newsletter Editor Mark Borison reported that the June Readme.Doc was released this week. Mark will be submitting three copies in color of each of the past three issues of the Readme.Doc for the APCUG SWUG newsletter competition. In addition, Mark is working with Vice President David Wintle to resolve some graphics problems he is having in converting his PageMaker originals into Adobe Acrobat PDF files.

**Webmaster Report:** — Webmaster Mark Borison reported that he is continually making revisions to the OCIPUG website based upon comments received. Mark has added search capability to the site. As for the message boards, the plan is to have separate boards for each SIG if usage warrants. Director Ed Leckliter inquired about the need for someone to monitor the various discussions. Also, the question was asked if the messages will be automatically routed to the respective SIG leader. Both of these can be done if need be.

**Membership Committee Report:** — No report. It was again noted that OCIPUG is in need of a Membership Committee Chairman who, per the bylaws, cannot be an officer or director. Directors Red Davidson and Ed Leckliter stressed the need for one person to be responsible for tracking membership renewals

and for sending out renewal reminders. Bob Walker will update his membership roster and e-mail it to Vice President David Wintle. Secretary Frank Mastroly will e-mail to Bob and David all information he has relative to recent membership renewals. David Wintle asked if the membership roster can be stored online, but it was pointed out that this presents a security issue.

**Advertisings and Public Relations Report:** — No report.

**Sunshine Committee Report:** — No report, as committee chair Director Sandi Tierney was absent. However, she had previously communicated with President Michael Moore about sending cards and flowers to member Irwin Haydock and his wife who are both ill.

**Old Business:** — Treasurer Leonard Stein reported that he received a voice mail message from APCUG saying that they were able to get liability insurance for \$300, or one-third of what we are paying. Leonard will follow this up.

**New Business:** — None

**Adjournment:** — Moved by Director Ed Leckliter, seconded by Director Red Davidson, and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm. The next OCIPUG Board meeting will be on Saturday, July 31, 2004, immediately following the July General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Mastroly, Secretary



## OCIPUG Hardware SIG

### Meeting Recap

Meeting Date:

August 10, 2004

**T**here were 14 attendees (including SIG Leader, Ed Leckliter) Featured Topic(s): Hardware Show & Tell - Session 1 of 2

Hardware Submissions - Henry Guttentag brought in his system, requesting help getting a second hard drive installed. Henry had already physically installed the drive. Ed configured (jumpered) the second drive as a "slave" (the other drive was already configured as a "master"). Ed then connected the data cable (center connector) and the associated power cable. Upon reboot XP recognized the second drive. Henry wanted two partitions on the added drive. However, on examination, it was found that the drive already had two, roughly equal size partitions set. NOTE: Since each partition was larger than roughly 32GB, when Henry decides to format these partitions as FAT (his plan), he will need to boot the system to a Win 98 boot disk, FDISK to remove the current partitions, partition the "new" partitions to the desired size, and then format the partitions from within the Win 98 (DOS) session. This cannot be done from within XP as that OS will only allow the NTFS file system to be used for formatting such large partitions.

On the side (concurrent with the meeting), we assembled a breadboard system using the motherboard and CPU donated by Intel (part of the deal for Dave Wintle presenting three "presentations in a box" on Intel products over the last few months). These items will be transferred to the club's main meeting room computer. Leonard Stein, Bob Strader, and Ed Leckliter provided the rest of the components to bring up the system. The primary reason for building up the system was to test the ability of the new hardware to support the recently club-purchased bluetooth, wireless keyboard and mouse (we'd had problems getting it to sync with the current main meeting room computer set up). Ed set up the hardware at the beginning of the meeting and Bob Strader installed XP and XP SP1 during the meeting. At the break Bob installed the bluetooth software and synced up the mouse and keyboard. Everything worked fine. [We will now try to find time to upgrade the "real" system.]

Random Access - no questions submitted. We adjourned early.

Next Meeting: September 14, 2004

Next Meeting Featured Topic(s):

Hardware Show & Tell - Session 2 of 2

Following Meeting: October 12, 2004

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): Steve Shiffman will make the first of two presentations on Networking. The regular "New Hardware" section will still be done by Ed.

File(s) attached - PowerPoint presentations are also posted on the OCIPUG Hardware SIG web site

([http://www.edscustomcomputers.com/welcome\\_to\\_the\\_ocipug\\_hardware\\_sl.htm](http://www.edscustomcomputers.com/welcome_to_the_ocipug_hardware_sl.htm))

Presentation slides in Microsoft PowerPoint format (.ppt).

For the latest OCIPUG Hardware SIG info,

please check the SIG's web site or contact

Ed Leckliter (SIG Leader) at [leckliter@adelphia.net](mailto:leckliter@adelphia.net).

## President's Message

**W**ell those that were unable to attend the SWUG Conference earlier this month missed a lot of good food and information. There was 27 Vendors plus some of the heavy hitters. There were 14 or so members that attended from OCIPUG. Seminars and workshops were held in the morning, afternoon, between and during meals and were very informative. I'm sorry that everyone in OCIPUG was not able attend but sometime later, probably the first quarter of next year, we will be able to show the group a video of the highlights of the conference.

Now to get on to business pertaining to OCIPUG. As you know, we had an election this month and the results will be released at the general meeting Saturday, August 28, 2004. Once again, may I request volunteer participation in the various workings of the club? The membership elects the officers, but that is not the end of the help needed to make this club work. There is a committee working on revising the By-Laws to make them more in-line with the current size of the club. By modifying the By-Laws, we can reduce the number of persons needed to run this user group. The club will still need other people to serve on various committees. With a 2 or 3 person committee we can achieve a much better consensus on programs as well as the newsletter.

We also need a Membership committee to help track the members and work with new members. One of the user groups I spoke with is generating 3 to 5 new members a month, and has been doing this for the past 6 months. It sure would be nice if we had 18 new members in the next year. That would only be three new members every 2 months. We are currently at 70 plus members of which about half have their dues current. Remember paying your dues are your responsibility, the club tries to remind you when they are due. In case you forgot look on your name badge, the month and year you joined is there.

We would like to do some other things at the general meetings however, that will require some participation from the membership. We are getting a good turnout at the SIG's and general meeting, but we do need some more help in running the club. This is your club it will only be as good as your participation.

Hope to see all of you at the meeting.

**Dave Wintle**

**President**

**Orange Coast IBM PC User Group**

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## GOOGLE PRICE SET AND STOCKS ARE ON SALE

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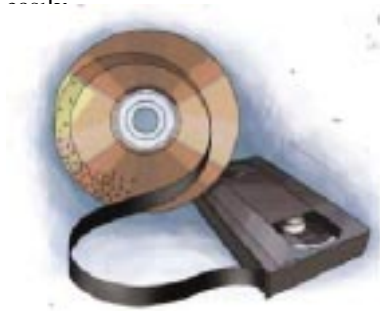
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This week Google officially went on sale on the NASDAQ. The price started out at \$85 per share and hovered around \$105 for most of the first day. Sure, Google will probably be a hot stock, but the real reason to buy it is for its cool symbol (GOOG).

## Preserving (& Editing) The Past

This month, Tech Mates will delve into the video arena with two great products for creating and working with videos, as well as converting VHS tapes to DVD.

Many of us have shelves of old videotapes filled with all types of video memories. Unfortunately, these tapes start to disintegrate after as little as 10 years. One answer to this problem is to copy the content of those aging videotapes to DVDs. The HP DVD Movie Writer dc3000 provides an easy way to preserve all of your precious videos. The Movie Writer is an external writeable DVD drive that also has built-in analog capture and MPEG-2 (Moving Picture Experts Group-2)-encoding capabilities. It will digitize those analog tapes and write them to DVDs quickly and



DVD Movie Writer dc3000  
\$399 • HP (888) 999-4747  
<http://www.hp.com>

Easy Media Creator 7  
\$99.95 • Roxio  
<http://www.roxio.com>

Directions are clear, and installation is uncomplicated. Connect the unit to your computer with the included USB (Universal Serial Bus) cable. Cables are also included for hooking your VCR directly to the Movie Writer. After you install the software, the analog-to-DVD conversion can be started with the press of a button on the DVD unit. This brings up the HP Transfer Wizard that walks you through the process. Everything is automated and easy to follow. The Wizard does everything from copying the videotape to creating a cover for the DVD case. The processing is somewhat time-consuming. Transferring one tape can take an hour or more. However, because no user intervention is required, you can simply start the procedure and walk away. Once the digital conversion is complete, you can edit the video to your liking. The included ArcSoft ShowBiz DVD software will help you perform basic video-editing tasks.

The Movie Writer also functions as a writeable CD/DVD drive. It can use CD-Rs (CD-recordables) and CD-RWs (CDrewriteables), as well as DVD+Rs/+RWs (DVD+recordables/+ rewriteables). This makes it useful for backing up data, archiving photographs, and creating music CDs, as well as for delving into video creation. Veritas' RecordNow is included for creating music and

data discs. The included Simple Backup program will help you back up data, and CyberLink PowerDVD will allow you to play DVDs. There are a variety of different ways to copy VHS tapes to DVDs, but the HP DVD Movie Writer dc3000 is one of the easiest and is especially suitable for a neophyte computer user.

**Sandy's Tip:** The minimum processor needed for this product is an Intel Pentium III processor running at 800MHz with Windows 2000/XP, but I recommend that you have at least a Pentium 4. Install the latest Windows service packs. This product will work with USB 1.1, but I recommend that your computer have USB 2.0 ports for better performance.

### Fine-Tune Your Work

Once you start working with videos, you can have a lot of fun editing video clips, creating transitions, and adding music. Roxio's Easy Media Creator 7 is a suite of programs that will allow you to enjoy creating and editing CDs and DVDs. Once you have gotten your feet wet with the basic software that came with your DVD drive, this suite will let you take the next step. The included programs include VideoWave 7 for video editing and processing, PhotoSuite for photo editing, and DVD Builder for DVD creation. There is also a Creator Classic for creating CDs and a Drag To Disc, which makes it easy to copy information onto discs. This group of programs was formerly called Easy CD/DVD Creator, but this new package includes better integration of the components. It also has sound editing, automated video production, and DivX encoding. The programs all have a new interface, which is standardized across all the applications, making the entire suite easier to learn and the various tasks easier to accomplish. For the first time, the package includes a launch pad, which lets you start the various program modules by choosing either a task or a program name. The launch pad also lets you keep track of the projects that you have created.

Video editing is fast becoming a popular hobby for computer owners. I invite you to jump right in. I just finished using the Roxio suite to edit a video of my two grandchildren. I am one proud grandmother. Proud of them for being so cute and proud of myself for accomplishing this fun task.

**Sandy's Tip:** Defrag your hard drive before you start working with videos. A fragmented hard drive can cause video software to crash. ??

**BY SANDY BERGER**

Sandy Berger is a nationally respected technology author and computing expert. Sandy's aim is to convey to others in easy to understand language what they need to know to take advantage of today's technology. Visit her at <http://www.compukiss.com> or email her at [SandyB@smartcomputing.com](mailto:SandyB@smartcomputing.com).

# DONA'S COMPUTER CAPERS

By Dona Z. Meilach

## 2004? THE YEAR OF CENTRINO? BUT NOT COMDEX

When I first heard of Intel's Centrino at a User Group session last year I wondered why the word made no sense and thought that INTEL would have trouble foisting it on the public. Such is the case. Figuring out what it meant to me as a user took some research and concentration.

Centrino is a shorter name for Centrino Mobil Technology from Intel Corp. It consists of a series of several new electronic chips and cards used in laptops. Intel claims that you will see many benefits and is touting them in a heavy barrage of print and TV ads. It makes notebooks able to "unwire," or detach, from a power line and a modem or an Ethernet network cable; you can check e-mail or surf the Web using wireless networking.

There are three things involved: 1) Intel Pentium M processor, 2) Intel 855 chip set 3) Intel Pro/Wireless 2100 card. The Pentium M is the laptop's CPU (vs. Pentium 4 or Pentium 3), the 855 chip set supports the graphics memory, and the Pro/Wireless 2100 card connects the laptop to a wireless network.

Though Centrino has been on the market since summer of 2003, consumers have been slow to adopt it. Most notebooks equipped with Centrino or Pentium M have been purchased by businesses. Intel's aim is to shift consumers toward Centrino notebooks.

Despite Centrino's stated benefits—which also include long notebook battery life, consumers' may not be so concerned with weight and battery life. Larger notebooks, used as replacements for desktops, are growing in sales and people don't necessarily need the lighter notebook portability all the time. Models such as Hewlett-Packard's Pavilion zd7000, are relatively inexpensive, but offer screens of up to 17 inches and processor speeds of up to 3.2 GHz, matching many of the desktops they replace. These features increase a notebook's size and weight and decrease battery life, but many buyers don't seem to mind, PC makers maintain.

Some people, often second- or third-time notebook buyers and frequent travelers, are among those opting for Centrino notebooks. The chip bundle has gradually increased its sales so that 10.8 percent of notebooks sold at retail last December had the Centrino chip.

Intel has to convince original equipment manufacturers to add the Centrino capability. It has to make laptops with Centrino's compatible price-wise with those that don't have it. Now they are priced about 20% higher. If Centrino stays 20 percent or more above the average price for a notebook (at retail), it might be a tough sell. Though Dell, IBM, Toshiba, Hewlett-Packard, and others are offering Centrino chips in new notebooks. Today,

however, the least expensive Centrino is the Dell D500 Latitude. But, according to one reviewer, it's fine for using on the road but expect download time to be slow...almost as slow as dial-up.

The average selling price for a Centrino system in December was \$1,658, compared with an average of \$1,334 for a notebook without Centrino sold in the same month. Desktop-replacement notebooks often start at around \$1,200. Gateway's "200" notebook with Centrino and a 14.1-inch screen starts at \$1,399, and HP's Compaq Presario x120 P1us with Centrino and a 15.4-inch wide-angle screen, starts at the same price, before a \$100 rebate at this writing.

In time, consumers will likely grow more sophisticated. Today's desktop-replacement notebook buyers may be looking for less weight the next time around, which could make them more likely to adopt Centrino.

Meanwhile, faster versions of the Pentium M processor will come out. While clock speed isn't the best measure of performance, higher speeds attract consumers' attention. Centrino notebooks may also drop in price by the end of the year hoping to cash in on year end buying and sales.

## COMDEX CANCELLED

For those of us who have tramped the halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center for the past 25 years, it was a sign of the times to learn that this normally humongous convention was cancelled this year. Or "postponed" according to the show's organizer, Media Live International.

There was a time that the Comdex convention brought about 200,000 people to Las Vegas who cursed the jacked-up hotel prices, the long lines for taxicabs, the crush of people walking the aisles, and the outstretched hands requesting "yet another t-shirt."

Some of those t-shirts may have outlasted Comdex but everyone isn't a casualty of the high-tech down scaling. The big companies, like Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and Sun Microsystems, are budgeting their convention dollars more carefully. They are showing up at smaller, more focused venues for their specific markets, or they are renting hotel suites instead of convention booths.. Those who did sign up were planning to market to other vendors, not to end users. End users go to the Consumer and Electronics show in early Jan. and also in Las Vegas.

Don't cry for Sheldon Adelson, who was the original Comdex investors and bought the Sands hotel in Las Vegas for a display area adjunct. In time, he demolished the Sands and built his Venetian Hotel on the same grounds. Now he is expanding into Macao, the former Portuguese colony that became part of China in 1999. It's the only Island in China that permits gambling. He is planning another Venetian there, and eventually Macao will be a satellite Las Vegas even boasting hotels like the Bellagio and New York, New York by Adelson and other developers.

One thing we know about computers...just wait a few seconds and change will happen.

Dona Meilach is the author of over 85 books with 10 on computers. Her just released newest book is WOOD ART TODAY from Schiffer Publishers. <http://www.schifferbooks.com>. Put her name in the search box. Other computer organizations interested in running this column should contact the author. The column is also available as a free E-zine. Subscribe DCC: Contact [Dmeilach@msn.com](mailto:Dmeilach@msn.com). Dona's Computer Capers may also be found at <http://www.smalladdictions.com/Skateboard>.

## INTERNET TALK

by  
Frank Chao  
Greater South Bay PC Users Group  
(GSBUG)  
(August 2004)

I would like to extend to you a warm welcome to the 72nd "Internet Talk" article for "The Bug Bulletin", a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Your computer and an it's Internet connection can entertain you and uplift your spirits by playing songs while displaying the lyrics for you to sing along with. Here is how it can be done for free:

### SING ALONG MUSIC SOFTWARE !

"Karaoke" is a combination of two Japanese words. It means that a melody is played without the vocal lyrics. The words for the lyrics are shown with a bouncing ball or other visual marker to prompt you to sing a specific syllable.

The history of "karaoke" can be found at:

<http://entertainment.msn.com/artist/?artist=129641> and  
<http://www.pocketsongs.com/MainPages/karaokehistory.asp>

Before the Japanese re-invented it in the late 1970's, bandleader Mitch Miller actually did it on his "Sing Along with Mitch" television show in the early 1960's.

See:[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitch\\_Miller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitch_Miller)  
[http://www.tvacres.com/music\\_bands\\_mitch.htm](http://www.tvacres.com/music_bands_mitch.htm)

You can now do karaoke with your computer by downloading free software and files from the Internet:

Start by downloading and installing one or more "karaoke player" software applications: "WinKaraoke 1.5" is available from: <http://www.francisli.com/wink/> "GoSing" is available at: <http://www.gosing.com> "Kplay" is available at many Websites including:[http://www.mrfreefree.com/go/free\\_karaoke\\_software/20640/](http://www.mrfreefree.com/go/free_karaoke_software/20640/)

"VanBasco's Karaoke Player" is available at:  
<http://www.vanbasco.com>

You can download one or all of the above players. They all will get along with each other if they reside in the same computer.

Next, download \*.kar, \*.mid, or \*.midi files that can be played by the player software: The "Diversi-Tune Midi Files" page is located at <http://www.divtune.com/dtmid.htm> "Chris Reed's Karaoke Home Page" is at:<http://members.aol.com/creed90952/>

3701 song files are available at: <http://www.karaokebash.com/>

"Christine's Broadway Karaoke" page is at:  
<http://pages.ivillage.com/simplice/music.html>

Many pop and rock songs are available at:  
<http://www.sitevip.net/karaoke/> and <http://www.findmidis.com/>  
"Kevin's Midi Karaoke" page is located at:  
<http://www.angelfire.com/ab/socrpal13/>  
"Steve Harding's Website" is at: <http://www.steveharding.com/>  
"Rat's Karaoke Page" is available at  
[http://www.zevzek.com/karaoke/kar\\_files.php](http://www.zevzek.com/karaoke/kar_files.php)  
A page entitled "English Music" is at:  
<http://www.terravista.pt/AguaAlto/2679/inglesaseng.htm>  
An interesting mix of files is available at:  
<http://meltingpot.fortunecity.com/trinity/120/midi.html#karaoke>  
A page of French songs is at:  
[http://iquebec.ifrance.com/lupel/kar\\_enfant.htm](http://iquebec.ifrance.com/lupel/kar_enfant.htm)

Finally, start up one of the karaoke players. Load in a song file and sing along with the displayed lyrics for the rest of the day !

### MEDIA FILE FORMATS

In addition to the above-mentioned karaoke file formats, there are many additional audio and video file formats. At excellent description of the various video file formats can be viewed at:  
<http://www.uwm.edu/~elsmith/videofileformats.html>

At excellent description of the various audio file formats can be viewed at: <http://www.uwm.edu/~elsmith/SoundFileFormatResearch.html>

### TRAVEL TIPS

To schedule a ride between any place in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and Los Angeles International Airport go to <http://www.primetimeshuttle.com> or <http://www.supershuttle.com>  
See you later !

### FREE INTERNET AND FREE ANTI-VIRUS

I continue to receive e-mail messages and phone calls from GSBUG members about whether there is free Internet access and anti-virus software are available. The answer continues to be "yes and yes". For details see  
<http://www.netzero.net>  
<http://www.juno.com>  
<http://www.grisoft.com>  
<http://www.avast.com>  
the homepage of "Alwil Software".

All of these fine companies offer both free and non-free products so do not give them your credit card number if you want the free versions of their products.

## FREE INTERNET AND ANTIVIRUS IS HERE TO STAY !

"United Online" which owns Juno and Netzero has been making steadily-growing profits since September 2003. You can see their sound financial statements at <http://www.irconnect.com/untd/pages/financials.shtml> They have survived and prospered while most of their competitors have not.

Grisoft and Alwil Software have both been in operation since 1991. Both companies were founded in the Czech Republic. Grisoft is now incorporated in both the Czech Republic and in Delaware.

See <http://www.avast.com/eng/company/awards/index.html> for the awards that have been bestowed on Alwil Software

See [http://www.grisoft.com/us/us\\_firma.php](http://www.grisoft.com/us/us_firma.php) for the awards that have been attained by Grisoft.

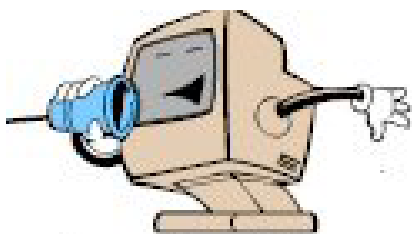
## WAYS TO CONTACT ME:

If you have any questions or problems, I can be contacted by the following methods:

1. Send me e-mail at: [fchao@pacbell.net](mailto:fchao@pacbell.net)
2. Leave me a voice message at (310)768-3896.
3. Send "snail" U.S. Postal Service mail to

**Frank Chao**  
**4001 Inglewood Ave., Ste. 101**  
**PMB 305**  
**Redondo Beach, CA 90278**

**Or sell your computer and take up sailing instead !!**



## The DealsGuy for Sept. 2004

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Last month I wrote a little about the American Water Works Assn. Show and here's more about it this month. I briefly watched the "tapping" contest, which was fun. There was seating for a small audience and the competition teams came from all over the world. There was a 20' length of approximately 8" steel pipe mounted on pedestals and it was capped and pressurized with water at about 45 psi. When a three-man team was ready, a signal was given and they were to quickly install a special tapping device around the pipe tightly, then drill and tap a hole, then install an outlet valve on that 8" pressurized steel pipe. At the same time, one of their team was cutting a 6' length of 1" copper tubing, forming a proper bend, and connecting one end to a pressure gage mounted on a stand, and the other end to the newly installed valve when the tapping device was removed. When they pressurized the gage, it stopped the clock. This procedure must end up without any leaks.

Improper bending of the copper tubing, any leaks, and a couple of other rules, if infringed upon, were assessed an extra seconds penalty to determine the official time. A Hawaiian team performed the fastest time I saw in 1 minute 55 seconds. I can tell you that there were hands and elbows flying everywhere for those sessions. Unfortunately, I only got to watch a few contestants, but it was held every day of the show. When I watch our own local utility workers, there are never any record times. In fact, I worry about the quality of the shovel handles they are leaning on.

## I Was Impressed

This is only human interest, but it is something that I felt should be passed on. We just finished working an event that greatly impressed us. It was not a trade show, but was the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod 2004 Youth Gathering. It is only held every three years, but what an event for the youth. There were over 37,000 attendees from 38 countries including USA (most were from USA), and, of course, they were mostly youths. I was somewhat wary of trying to work with a group that was mostly kids, but was very pleasantly surprised. All of us working the event remarked to each other on the great attitude, manners and camaraderie of those kids.

In one building was a so-called Café where they met (all 37,000) each morning for their prayer event, and in the convention center on our side there was a large area set up for recreation. It was filled with a small carnival and games of all types, along with crafts and many other things for young people. Games even included volleyball and a large twister square. They had a ball for five days and so did we. There was not one incident that I heard of and everybody involved had a wonderful time. What a great job those parents must have done at raising them. My hat is off to those folks. I have not heard of other churches hosting

such great events, but they certainly should. When I was complimenting one of the volunteers, she said for me to come join them some time because they know how to party, and it is always good clean fun. From my observances, I can attest to that, although I was high-fived so many times that my hand eventually began to sting a bit. Those kids mean it!

## News From Binary

I have not heard from Binary Research for two years, but this was recently sent to all user groups. If you did not see it posted on my Web site, here is their information. “Universal Imaging Utility: With the UIU, you can create an image file that is deployable to any computer, regardless if it’s a Dell, Compaq, HP or even a white box. No longer will the release of software updates and patches mean endless updating of numerous cloning images. The UIU also eliminates the burden of hunting for Plug-and-play IDs and the frustration of the post-cloning Blue Screen. Finally, you can create hardware-independent image files with any cloning utility. Try the UIU and see for yourself how truly effective it is. [<http://www.binaryresearch.net/UIU.htm>] (The various prices are on the Web site, but I saw no specials.)

“Death2Spam: With all the hype surrounding Anti-Spam/Anti-Virus products, how do you separate the gibberish from the truly useful solutions? For starters, you can try it on your e-mail account. Binary Research is excited to present Death2Spam, a third-generation Anti-Spam/Anti-Virus utility with a true accuracy rating that puts other Spam products to shame. Death2Spam exceeds 99% accuracy in both Anti-Spam and Anti-Virus filtering. Because it employs an adaptive, probabilistic Anti-Virus engine, D2S does not require any signature updates, meaning there is no lag time while you wait for your AV vendor to update for the latest threats. [<http://www.binaryresearch.net/Death2Spam.htm>]” (I only saw corporate prices on the Web page, but you can look for yourself.)

## Let This Do The Checking For You

Formula Software has introduced a new product that is interesting. I have noticed that people use Excel for many things. It is not just a pretty spreadsheet for a CPA. For example, if you use it to formulate price sheets, how do you know you have the latest one if you keep updating them? I guess the date and time would help, but Formula Software has introduced “Excel Compare 2.0” to help resolve this problem. It can compare them, and with the results you will have the information at your fingertips. You can find out more about the product and download a demo version at [<http://www.formulasoft.com/>].

I won’t take the space to better describe it here, but take a look and see if it suits your purposes. It is for Windows (95, 98, NT, ME, 2000 or XP) and if you would prefer to purchase it, they have offered user group members a 30% discount off the \$34.95 retail price of a personal license (\$39.95 business license) by using the discount coupon code 45GT-88RR-UZ67. Purchase links are:  
Business License

[<https://secure.element5.com/shareit/checkout.html?productid=167952&cartcoupon=1&COUPON1=45GT-88RR-UZ67>]

Personal License

[<https://secure.element5.com/shareit/checkout.html?productid=167951&cartcoupon=1&COUPON1=45GT-88RR-UZ67>]. The discount codes are imbedded in the URL.

## Nab That Spam

I have complained about spam and Paul Witheridge says I should try POPfile to conquer that problem. He claims it is 99% successful for him and best of all, it is free. Download it at [<http://sourceforge.net/projects/popfile/>]. I have not tried it since I have another philosophy about spam filters. After it has filtered your e-mail, you will probably take a look at what it filters out to make sure it didn’t remove something you would have wanted. If I have to look it over anyway, I might as well just do it all in the first place. However, Paul says it is easier and quicker to look at the filtered e-mail, and with the amount of spam I am now receiving, I may try it. Be aware that there are limitations. It does not work with Web based mail as the name POPfile suggests. Anyway, I’m including his suggestion for your perusal. I thought the Web site was confusing, but I’m told the help file in the software is much more understandable for setting it up. There is also a good help forum at [[http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum\\_id=213100](http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=213100)].

Paul says K9 is another popular software — smaller, simpler, less capable than POPFile, but quite popular, and also free. Check it out at [<http://keir.net/k9.html>]

**That’s it for this month.** Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. 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](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting NEW Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product announcements that I received over a period of time. More will be forthcoming when I get the ambition.

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## WINDOWS SERVICE PACK 2 AVAILABLE

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The long awaited day has come and Microsoft has released its second service pack (a bunch of fixes bundled together). The service pack is only available for Windows XP and it can only be installed if you have automatic updates checked in your system settings. Before you jump on it though, you may want to wait a few months. Researches are already finding problems with the new set of updates and patches.

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## Get Rid of Spyware and Popups

By Ira Wilsker,  
APCUG BOD;  
Columnist for The Examiner, Texas; Radio  
Show Host and Police Officer

Next to spam mail and viruses, one of the most irritating facets of web surfing is the annoying popup ads that so many of us receive. What many may not be aware of is that about 80% of the popups that we get while online, and many that may also appear if we are offline, are generated by spyware that is unknowingly installed on our computers. Spyware are software programs that typically install without our knowledge or informed consent, and may also be a part of a program that we purposely installed. Spyware, as its name connotes, is software that often gathers information on our surfing habits and may send that information to third parties. At its worst, spyware may also be used to gather personal information from our computers, including passwords, user names, and other information, and send it to persons unknown who may illicitly use that information to empty our bank accounts, charge goods in our name, and commit other various forms of identity theft. Spyware can get on our computers by visiting some unethical websites, or by installing some downloaded or commercial software. Several forms of spyware can infect our computers via viruses and Trojans. Among the most notorious sources of spyware are popular file sharing utilities such as Morpheus and KaZaA. Some of the “cookies” or small text files placed on our computers by some websites can also be used to create personal profiles on us, and distribute that information to third parties. It should be noted that some software titles will no longer function if their attached spyware is deleted, as the spyware is intended to provide a continuing revenue stream for the software publisher.

Fortunately, it is generally easy to detect and kill spyware, or otherwise render it inert. It should be understood at this point that as a general rule, even the best antivirus programs, while effective at detecting and preventing virus and Trojan infestations, are generally ineffective at dealing with spyware. Firewalls, if properly installed and configured, can prevent many spyware types from sending information from the computer, but many spyware programs utilize known security weaknesses, and other vulnerabilities in our operating systems. Contemporary thought is that we all need a good anti-spyware program properly installed, configured, and updated, every bit as much as we need updated antivirus software and a firewall on our computers.

One of the top rated anti-spyware programs is the recently updated “Spybot Search and Destroy”, version 1.3, available for free (donations encouraged) at [www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org) and other major download sites. Spybot can detect and destroy over 13,000 spyware products, and immunize our computers from future infection by almost 1800 types of spyware. Spybot can also prevent some pesky websites from changing our “home” or browser startup pages, and make it difficult for spyware to write itself into our Windows registry. An integral utility makes it easy

for Spybot to check for, and install the periodic updates necessary to detect and kill the latest types of spyware.

Another popular anti-spyware utility is “Ad-Aware”, available for download at [www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com). The free version of Ad-Aware, the “Standard Edition”, is possibly the most widely used anti-spyware program, with over 42 million copies downloaded since July, 2003. Ad-Aware comes in several versions ranging from the “free for personal use” Standard Edition, the \$27 “Plus” edition, and the \$40 “Pro” version. Ad-Aware frequently releases updated “reference files” which contain lists of newly created or revised spyware information.

A popular commercial program, which is a “Swiss army knife” type of program comprising many different utilities, including an excellent spyware (parasite) detector and killer is the “SpyHunter” included with System Mechanic, version 4. System mechanic is available locally at retail (about \$49), and for download at [www.iolo.com](http://www.iolo.com). A fully functional 30 day free trial version is available for download. As does its free standing competitors, System Mechanic’s SpyHunter also checks for updated spyware listings, and installs them seamlessly. SpyHunter has been proven to be an effective spyware detector and killer, and the other utilities included in System mechanic make this a most useful program.

While not directly marketed as an anti-spyware product, “STOPzilla” is a very effective spyware remover that specializes in those spyware products that produce about 80% of the annoying popup ads that we may get while surfing the web. A recent update to STOPzilla also includes an integral utility that can detect and kill most other forms of spyware, including tracking cookies. With almost daily automated updates, and excellent 24/7 free tech support, including toll-free numbers, STOPzilla is available for \$30 at [www.stopzilla.com](http://www.stopzilla.com).

One of the most comprehensive spyware detecting and killing programs on the market is PestPatrol (\$40), available at [www.pestpatrol.com](http://www.pestpatrol.com). This is an excellent program that can both detect spyware, and block many types of infection. PestPatrol has an integrated utility that enables all parts of PestPatrol to be updated on a regular basis in order to maximize the detection and removal functions. PestPatrol offers a free online scan that will detect, but not eliminate, almost all known forms of spyware.

While there are several other decent anti-spyware programs available, one caveat is appropriate here. There are some unethical purveyors of some anti-spyware programs that use spam emails, popup ads, and deceptive sales practices, including telling you that your computer is infested with spyware, and charging a fee to remove it.

Any of the titles referenced above will do a reasonable job of reducing popups, and securing your computer from spyware, provided they are frequently updated and run.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of

## Can you really buy popular “software at rock bottom prices” online?

by Linda Gonse,

Editor of Nibbles & Bits, ORCOPUG

Orange County IBM PC Users' Group

Probably you, and millions of others, have received e-mail offers with subject lines similar to these:

Unbeatable software deals  
Amazing prices on software

Take 95% discounts on Adobe, Microsoft, Corel products from Putnam's Stuff Store

Receive discount ticket on Corel, Adobe, Microsoft software from Koenig's Stuff Store

Get software at rock bottom prices

What's more you may have seriously considered purchasing the programs described in the e-mails at prices that you've only seen in your dreams.

Here's an example in one message:

Looking for inexpensive high-quality software?

We might have just what you need.

|                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Windows XP Professional 2002          | \$50 |
| Adobe Photoshop 7.9                   | \$60 |
| Microsoft Office XP Professional 2002 | \$60 |
| Corel Draw Graphics Suite 11          | \$60 |

These amazing prices are not legitimate. They represent the work of software pirates who are trolling for customers, or illegal sales. Do not take the offers at face value. Stop and ask yourself how it is possible for programs that sell for hundred of dollars to be discounted for a fraction of their usual retail cost. Certainly, these products are not even selling at wholesale, much less for these unbelievable prices. And, if the companies did offer programs at these prices, you would be reading about it in your newspaper, or hearing about it on television or radio, or in your user group.

A Washington Post article said, “The U.S. software industry loses at least \$13 billion a year to piracy, according to the Business Software Alliance (BSA) estimates. The group, which represents some of the world's largest software companies, including Microsoft, Adobe and Autodesk, does not know how much money the industry has lost to online piracy.”

Still, user confusion about piracy prevails. Microsoft, attempting to educate software buyers, has posted a document that points out warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software.

(Unfortunately, most of the warning signs apply to software already purchased.)

Microsoft's warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software:

Prices that are “too good to be true.”

Products that are missing key elements such as user manuals, Certificates of Authenticity, or end-user license agreements. Pirates often sell only the CD-ROM and jewel case without retail packaging. Look for the Certificate of Authenticity on the retail box.

On all new machines, with the release of Windows 2000, the COA label is found on the tower of the computer. If you acquire a new computer and it doesn't have the COA label on the tower, you should question whether the software loaded on the machine is genuine.

Software or components that appear to be of poor quality including:

\*\*Back-up disks or CD-ROMs with handwritten labels.

\*\*Poor imitations of security features such as edge-to-edge hologram etched into Windows 2000 and Office 2000 (first service release) CDs, or poor imitations of the hologram found on the hub of the Windows 98 CD that shows the word “genuine” when tilted in the light

\*\*Low quality print, letters that aren't evenly spaced, etc.

\*\*Products marked with phrases that do not describe the transaction, including:

“For distribution with a new PC only”

“Special CD for licensed customers only”

“Not for retail or OEM distribution” or “Academic price – not for use in a commercial environment”

Note that counterfeiters often use these types of phrases to fool consumers into believing that they are getting genuine product that was over-stocked or otherwise deserves to be discounted.

Consumers dealing with software vendors over the Internet should also beware of:

\*\*Companies or individuals unwilling to verify their identity or full business name or provide a physical street address and telephone number for follow-up after the transaction has occurred.

\*\*Online distributors unwilling or unable to provide adequate or satisfactory descriptions of their return, service or warranty policies.

\*\*Online distributors that offer unusual inventory explanations (e.g., special deals with the software publisher, liquidated inventories or acquisition through bankruptcy sales).

\*\*Vendors offering software products at prices and in packaging inconsistent with offerings through legitimate retail channels.

\*\*For Microsoft software, software components being sold solely as a CD housed in a jewel case or as a loose or individual end-user license agreement, because these items are not distributed in this form through legitimate channels.

Save your money and your time when you receive “rock bottom” software offers. There are no unbelievable “deals” out there on name-brand software.

Let this be your guiding mantra: If it sounds too good to be true—on this you can rely—just walk away and say no, you can't buy!

## Hardware The Hard Way

### eBay Saves Money, Costs Sanity



**M**y notebook's hard drive was as stuffed as a wall-mounted rainbow trout and nearly as dead. I needed more storage space, fast, before my drive spun its last. With USB (Universal Serial Bus)-enabled external drives selling for \$140 and more in local stores, I figured I'd try to save a few bucks by buying my new hardware through an eBay auction. I found the perfect product in an 80GB 7,200rpm Western Digital hard drive with High-Speed USB 2.0 compatibility. The auction was ending soon, so I placed my bid, and an hour later, I was the proud owner of a \$92 drive. Little did I know, my winning bid opened a Pandora's box of hardware miseries that proved it doesn't always pay to use technology to buy more technology, especially when there are humans involved in the transaction. The TakeOn eBay, large capacity, high-speed external hard drives were selling for between \$90 and \$150. Like any budget-conscious buyer, I checked out the cheaper drives first, and because I was in a rush, I viewed auctions that were due to end within a few hours. The drive I found was a trusted brand hovering at a reasonable price, and the seller had a very good feedback rating. Most comments about the seller glowed about fast transactions, and I took these as reassurance that I was dealing with a conscientious user. This was my first mistake. I paid instantly via credit card and a PayPal account, as this was the only payment option listed for the auction. That was mistake number two. After waiting more than a week for the drive, I contacted the seller (a 16-year-old from New England) for an explanation. His brief reply indicated that he would send the drive soon. I waited. I received more excuses. And finally, after three weeks, the seller sent this ominous reply, "Well I am in the process of closing my eBay account cuz [sic] i [sic] always involved [sic] in a fraud." Protect Yourself You might ask why eBay didn't protect me from this crooked, inept seller. Perhaps a better question is: Why didn't I do a better job of protecting myself? In part, eBay's user rating system was to blame. At a glance, the seller's rating was nearly flawless, but it turns out that although he was prompt in paying for items he'd won, he wasn't as adept at selling, yet the feedback system doesn't differentiate between transaction types. Still, my biggest mistake was paying before ironing out details with the seller. This was not a great idea, especially because the shipping terms weren't spelled out in the item's description. Paying before contacting the seller gives the seller leeway to do whatever he pleases with your merchandise. He can ship it right away, or he can sit on it for two months. There were plenty of other clues that something was awry. Had I taken the time to closely review the item, I would've

saved myself a lot of trouble. The Western Digital product link in the description did in fact lead to the specs for an 80GB hard drive—an internal hard drive. And the photo that the seller provided in the auction wasn't of a hard drive—it was a photo of box containing a hard drive enclosure. Ah, the humiliation. It's Only Money, Right? With a botched eBay auction, the best way to resolve the problem is by working things out with the seller. In this case, that wasn't an option. I called my credit card company and began the tedious task of reversing the purchase, glad for the fact that at least I hadn't paid with a check. On eBay, there's only one way to buy new hardware: Carefully. Take extra time to review every item you bid on, and interact with the seller beforehand. Otherwise, you're better off paying more for an item offline. by Nathan Chandler Send insights and insults to Nathan at [nathan@smartcomputing.com](mailto:nathan@smartcomputing.com)

### ODE TO A SPELL CHECKER

Eye have a spelling checker,  
it came with my pea see.  
It plainly marques four review  
miss stakes I can knot sea.  
I strike a quak and type a word  
and weight four it two say  
weather I am wrong or write.  
It shows me wright a weigh.  
As soon as a mist ache is maid  
it nose bee four two long  
And eye can putt the error write,  
its rarely ever wrong.  
Eye have run this poem threw it  
and i'm sure your pleased to no  
Its letter perfect all the weigh  
bee cause my checker told me sew!

### Clear the AutoComplete history in Internet Explorer.

Internet Explorer has an AutoComplete feature that suggests possible matches for entries you type into such things as Address bars or online forms. Once you begin typing in information, AutoComplete gives you suggestions of what you might be typing in. If a suggestion is a match, you can select it and press ENTER. However, at some point you may need to clear out the AutoComplete history.

1. Open the Tools menu and click Internet Options.
  2. Select the Content tab.
  3. Click the AutoComplete button.
  4. In the AutoComplete Settings dialog box, click the Clear Forms button.
  5. Click OK to confirm you want to clear all previously saved form entries except passwords.
146. Click OK again.

## How Does One Track The Origin of Spam?

By John Brewer,  
Oklahoma City PC Users Group

Spammers are ingenious people. They hide the origin of the spam and are masters of obfuscation. Recently, litigation has been filed under federal law. It is interesting to investigate how the spammers were identified. A recent article in the New York Times turns on the light regarding this method of tracking.

“The government’s first criminal case under a new law outlawing some types of spam e-mails was based on low-tech investigative methods: Authorities followed the money. Investigators said Thursday they tracked defendants by purchasing a weight-loss product for \$59.95 and waited to see who collected the money.”

“The cyber scam artists who exploit the Internet for commercial gain should take notice,” said Jeffrey G. Collins, the U.S. attorney in Detroit. Federal law now makes it a felony to use falsehood and deception to hide the origin of the spam messages hawking your fraudulent wares.”

Court papers described a nearly inscrutable puzzle of corporate identities, bank accounts and electronic storefronts used to send hundreds of thousands of e-mail sales pitches for fraudulent weight-loss products. The FTC said angry consumers forwarded more than 490,000 e-mails from the operation from January until April — more than from any other spam outfit worldwide during the same period. Beales called it a dubious distinction.”

CNet News reported that “according to court documents, the four men are accused of generating hundreds of thousands of different e-mails that hid their identities and advertised a weight loss patch. The e-mails were sent out under a variety of company names, including AIT Herbal, Avatar Nutrition and Phoenix Avatar, identified collectively as the Avatar Companies. The e-mails were allegedly sent to millions of e-mail accounts over the course of several years.”

However, the CNet article also reported that the federal law has not eliminated spam and that the volume of spam has actually increased since the implementation of the law. “Despite the existence of Can-Spam, companies that monitor the volume of junk e-mail believe that the legislation has done little to discourage the distribution of spam. E-mail service company MessageLabs reported that more than 67 percent of all e-mail sent in April 2004 was considered spam, up from 59.9 percent in February and 52.8 percent in March, when volume temporarily dipped. The Feds bringing the heat against these spammers and their clients is a great victory for everyone who’s been victimized by spam,” said Mark Sunner, chief technology officer for New York-based MessageLabs. “At the same time, with spam volumes increasing 30 percent since the Can-Spam law went into effect, there is a whole new contingent of spammers in operation. These contemporary spammers are now dressing up their messages so they appear to be legitimate. In spite of effective

lawsuits, complaints and arrests, spammers are still finding ways to beat the system.”

The Federal Trade Commission announced in an April 29 news release that “that the deceptive claims violate the FTC Act and that the spoofing and failure to provide an opt-out capability violate provisions of the recently enacted CAN-SPAM Act. At the FTC’s request, U.S. District Court Judge James F. Holderman entered a Temporary Restraining Order requiring an end to illegal spamming and deceptive product claims and freezing the defendants’ assets.

In addition, the FTC announced a second action against an Australian company, Global Web Promotions Pty Ltd., an Australian company that the FTC alleges is responsible for massive amounts of spam in the United States.” Global Web not only advertised a diet patch similar to the one in Phoenix Avatar, it also claimed its human growth hormone products “HGH” and “Natural HGH” could “maintain [a user’s] appearance and current biological age for the next 10 to 20 years.” Experts cited by the FTC dispute the claims, and the FTC alleged the claims are false. The products do not contain growth hormone of any sort, according to papers filed with the court. The products are shipped to consumers from within the United States. The diet patch was sold for \$ 80.90 and the HGH products cost \$74.95.

“In both cases, the FTC introduced as evidence thousands of examples of the defendants spoofing a wide array of victims, including AOL, Microsoft Network, and other companies and individuals. Spoofing involves forging headers on e-mail to make it appear that they came from an innocent third party. Undeliverable e-mail is returned to the innocent victim, often flooding their servers and interfering with normal operations. This process not only is prohibited by the CAN-SPAM Act, it also has worked real hardship on innocent businesses.”

“The FTC charged Global Web Promotions Pty Ltd., Michael John Anthony Van Essen, and Lance Thomas Atkinson with violations of the FTC Act and the CAN-SPAM Act. The FTC has filed a motion requesting that the Court issue a Temporary Restraining Order barring further illegal spam and stopping illegal sales and shipment of products. The Global Web Promotions Pty case was brought with the assistance of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the New Zealand Commerce Commission.”

Finally, it looks like some spammers may be headed for the slammer. No one will be disappointed and maybe prosecution of slammers will give future spammers pause to think about their activity ... or will they just become more clever in their pursuit of the dark side?

**John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor’s and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace.**

**There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this**

Five Habits Of Successful PCs  
Roadside Assistance  
Commentary by Dave Methvin



**Dave Methvin is chief technology officer of PC Pitstop, a free site that automatically diagnoses and fixes common PC problems. Contact Dave at [dave@pctoday.com](mailto:dave@pctoday.com)**

If you have a PC, you're going to have some PC problems. Those problems take many different forms, but fortunately there are some universal things that you can do to make the prevention, diagnosis, and cure a lot less troublesome. With that in mind, I've put together this list of rules that will take your PC from broken down to fixed up with minimum sweat and swearing.

## 1) Easy Fixes First

Whenever your PC starts to act sluggish or strange, go through this simple list of quick things that you can check without much trouble:

- ◆ Are the system date and time set correctly?
- ◆ Have you scanned for viruses and spyware?
- ◆ Have you defragmented the drive lately?
- ◆ Did you install new applications or hardware?

If you need a memory jogger about what software is installed and you have Windows Me/XP, the System Restore feature may be able to help. Open the wizard and access the calendar with boldface dates; if a restore point was the result of an application's installation, you'll see it there. (Click Cancel after you've browsed around because you don't actually want to restore.) Another trick that works, this time on all Windows versions, is to look at the dates of the folders in the Program Files directory. These will usually be the date that the application was installed, although some programs constantly update their folder information.

For slow performance, you can perform a quick check in WinXP using Task Manager. Right-click an empty spot on the System Tray and select Task Manager and then click the Processes tab. Click the CPU tab twice to sort the list in descending order of CPU usage. On a normal system, the System Idle Process should take up almost all the time, indicating that your system isn't doing anything. If you see some unknown process using up a lot of time, you should investigate it at once. Armed with the knowledge

of what you did lately, you can often back out of changes to see if things get better

## 2) It's Rarely Hardware

Maybe it's human nature to blame what you can see: the hardware. Yet the majority of day-to-day computer problems are the software's fault. There are certainly some obvious hardware problems, such as when the system won't even power up or a nearby lightning strike causes a power surge. Clearly, if your hard disk is making loud scraping sounds and the system won't boot, then the drive has probably bitten the dust. But if the system consistently boots and runs Windows to show the Desktop, the basic hardware is usually okay.



There is one exception worth mentioning. Sometimes a system is erratic if the power supply is on the verge of failure. The symptoms are that your PC locks up or reboots at random times while you are using it. (Note, however, that software is much more likely to cause this symptom.) You may be able to detect a failing power supply by booting into your system BIOS (Basic Input/Output System). See if it has a PC Health or other power monitor screen. The voltages from the power supply should all be within +10% and -5% of the rated voltage.

In any case, it makes sense to work on the problem a bit before trying a hardware fix. The best way to diagnose a hardware problem is to swap the suspected hardware with a replacement you already have, but most people don't have PC replacement parts lying around the house. There's no reason to go through the cost and hassle of replacing a power supply or other component only to find out the problem was due to something like spyware.

## 3) Less Software, Less Trouble

There are so many megabytes of free software out there on the Internet that you could spend all your time just downloading and installing it. (Maybe you know some people who do.) The problem is that all software-free or at a price-costs something in memory and CPU usage. Software can also do a lot of damage to your system if it's not well-written. Background programs are particularly bad because they can change the behavior of your PC in ways that don't obviously point out that it's the one causing the problem. For example, an ad blocker might remove nonadvertising content on a Web page, leaving you puzzled as to why you and your friend aren't seeing the same thing on the site. Most likely you're going to blame Internet Explorer, but it's really that extra, unwanted software that's the culprit.

What software have you installed lately? Take a look at the dates in your Program Files folder to get a good idea. Whenever you decide to add another feature by adding software,

first make sure you don't already have that feature in some other program. Fish around through the settings of the applications you have and see what they can do. Internet Explorer has a built-in ability to remember passwords on Web sites, for example, but people sometimes use intrusive and bulky software such as Claria's Gator ([www.claria.com](http://www.claria.com)) just to remember a few passwords. Similarly, many programs that promise increased security are simply changing the values in IE's Internet Options settings. You can do that yourself; there's no reason to install more software for that.

#### 4) Paranoia Pays

There are a few pieces of software that are almost mandatory nowadays. Up-to-date virus and spyware protection can prevent a lot of headaches and heartaches in addition to protecting your privacy. Don't forget to stay up-to-date with software patches for the software you already have. Windows makes that easy with Windows Update, but you should also check for updates on other applications that you use regularly to see if they have released any security-related fixes.

You might also want to consider installing a software firewall for more protection, although I prefer to use a hardware firewall and skip the additional software. (See rule No. 3.) The upcoming Windows XP Service Pack 2 offers quite a bit of protection through its improved built-in firewall and significant improvements to Internet Explorer, so consider upgrading as soon as it's available.

#### 5) Prevention Beats Cure

It seems like all toddlers want to discover that stoves are hot by touching a hot stove. Don't find out about PC disasters the same painful way. At the very least, copy your most important data to a CD-R/RW whenever you've made significant changes. USB (Universal Serial Bus) flash drives are another inexpensive way to back up and move data from place to place, but those cute little keychain dongles are easy to misplace; don't trust them with your only copy of anything.

Another good thing to do is to go through the programs and procedures described here and see what your system looks like when things are working properly. Learning in the middle of a crisis is always a lot more difficult, and it's tough to bring your system back to normal when you don't know what "normal" looks like.

#### Utility Of The Month: System Information

In the spirit of No. 3 in this month's column, you cannot download this month's utility. That's because it's already on your system. It's called System Information, and you can find it in your System Tools folder. (Access the System Tools folder in different ways in different Windows versions, but it's located in the Accessories folder.) Specific features vary depending on your version of Windows-it's been around since Windows 98-but it offers plenty of information about what's going on inside your computer. A few examples include what sort of CD-ROM drive you have, what system drivers are installed, and Internet Explorer's Internet Settings.

## Smart Computing

by Sandy Berger

At a recent PC User Group meeting, my presentation was followed by a question and answer period. One of the first questions was, "What is the best computer magazine?" I almost surprised myself by the speed with which I answered Smart Computing. No uncertainty, no second-guessing. In my opinion Smart Computing is by far the best magazine for novice and intermediate computer users.

The sub-title of the magazine In Plain English, pretty much says it all. This is a magazine that presents the reader with much needed information that is easy to understand. While many computer magazines are written for geeks and IT professionals, Smart Computing is geared toward the mainstream computer user. It covers topics that computer users are interested in and gives tips and information that most computer users constantly seek. The direct, plain English approach makes the magazine readable as well as likeable.

Smart Computing is well designed with type large enough for aging eyes and just enough white space and graphics to make it a pleasure to leaf through the pages. Best of all, there are few ads, allowing the pages to be filled with good, solid information instead of the usual barrage of commercial notices. Every month, this publication has a special focus. It may be "Wireless Computing," "A Faster Internet," or "Get Rid of Spyware." In any case, it is usually a topic that is a sure "Need-to-Know" for the typical computer user. Each month there are also categories such as PC Operating Instructions, General Computing, and Plugged In. Quick Studies offer helpful tips for using different programs. Product reviews are geared toward helping the normal computer user become an informed consumer. There is something for everyone. Whether you are new to computing or a seasoned veteran of home computing, you are sure to find useful information.

At the end of my User Group Q&A, another question was posed, "Why should I subscribe to a magazine when most of the computer information I need can be found on the Internet for free?" That's an easy one. Even though technology has made great strides, you still can't comfortably curl up on the sofa with Internet information. On top of that, searching for that information can be a real pain. That is true even if you know what to search for. Each month Smart Computing provides you with just what you need to know in one portable package that you can carry to the dentist's office, peruse on the patio, or study on the sofa. It doesn't get much better than that!

As an added bonus, paid subscribers to the Smart Computing can access thousands of archived articles, participate in Smart Computing chat rooms, and post questions on the highly popular

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**Make Your PC A Player What You Need To Play DV D Movies On A Computer**

So you want to watch a DVD movie your PC. It sounds so easy; your PC has a DVD drive, so you should be able to just pop in a disc, and you'll be off to the movies, right? Perhaps, but it isn't always that straightforward. To watch DVDs on your computer, you will need three things: a DVD drive, software to play the DVD, and the appropriate codec (compressor/decompressor). A codec is software that does the work of decompressing and decoding the information on a DVD. Popular DVD player software includes Windows Media Player (free; <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia>), CyberLink's Power-DVD 5 (\$49.95; <http://www.gocyberlink.com>), InterVideo's WinDVD 6 (\$69.95; <http://www.intervideo.com>), and Ulead System's Ulead DVD Player (\$29.95; <http://www.ulead.com/dp>). The latter three of these players include codecs, so all you have to do is install one and you're ready to go. With WMP (Windows Media Player), things aren't so simple, and we'll explain why.

**Windows Media Player Specifics**

In recent Windows versions, WMP is accessible from the Start menu by clicking All Programs, Accessories, and Entertainment. Choose About Windows Media Player from the Help menu to find out what version you have and, if necessary, download a newer version from the Windows Media site. At the time of this writing, version 9 is the most current, and version 10 is in beta testing.

By itself, WMP can't play DVDs because it doesn't include a DVD codec. But with a third-party codec installed, WMP will handle the job just fine.

Actually, you may already have a DVD codec installed on your PC. It's likely that the software that accompanied your DVD drive included one. In addition, many disc-burning and video applications include a DVD codec.

To find out if there's a DVD codec installed on a Windows XP system, choose Run from the Start menu, type `dvdupgrd /detect` in the field, and press ENTER. A window will display to indicate whether a codec is installed.

Please note that one DVD codec is good, but two isn't better.

codec, make sure you remove the first one using the Add/Remove Programs utility in the Control Panel before installing a new codec.

If you don't have a codec yet, you can download one for about \$15. Your choices include InterVideo's DVD XPack (\$14.95; [http://www.intervideo.com/products/custom/ms/windowsxp/media\\_pack.jsp](http://www.intervideo.com/products/custom/ms/windowsxp/media_pack.jsp)), CyberLink's Power-DVD SE (\$14.95; [http://www.gocyberlink.com/english/products/powerdvd/winxp\\_plugin.asp](http://www.gocyberlink.com/english/products/powerdvd/winxp_plugin.asp)), and Sonic Solutions' CinePlayer DVD Decoder Pack (\$14.99; <http://www.cineplayer.com/decoder/default.htm>).



Windows Media Player will play DVD movies after you install a third-party codec (compressor/decompressor).

With the correct codec installed, playing a DVD is easy: Just launch WMP and insert the disc in your DVD drive. If the DVD's content doesn't start automatically, choose the DVD from the playlist and click the Play button. WMP's features for watching DVDs are plain but sufficient; the player lets you watch your movie in a window or use the full screen, switch among languages and subtitles, and access other basic tools.

**Don't Cut Corners**

Software publishers must pay a licensing fee to implement a DVD codec; therefore, they must charge you for the expense somehow, even if they pass this cost on to you as part of the price you pay for a DVD drive or third-party software. Don't waste your time looking for a free codec online; you aren't likely to find one that's legal, trustworthy, and/or easy to use.

A few free DVD codecs are available, but they're more trouble than they're worth. For example, Cliprex DS (<http://www.cliprex.com>), a free DVD player and codec, is laden with adware (software that monitors your activity in order to display targeted pop-up ads) and possibly spyware (software that records your computing activity for the purpose of sharing this information with an outside source). Other software, such as Jon Johansen's DeCSS program, can do the job but isn't licensed by

the DVD Copy Control Association (<http://www.dvdcca.org>) and could get you into legal trouble. If your system needs a DVD codec, save your pennies and purchase one of the reliable codecs we mentioned earlier.

We also should tell you that there is an exception regarding the software codec requirement: Although most DVD drives utilize software codecs, some systems use a hardware decoder. For those systems, an add-on card performs the decoding so a software codec isn't necessary. As long as the proper hardware drivers are installed and listed in Windows' Device Manager, the hardware decoder will take the place of the software codec. Hardware decoders are rare, though; today's PCs are more than fast enough to do the work by using software codecs, so special hardware isn't needed.

### Third-Party DVD Players

CyberLink PowerDVD includes a codec and several advanced playback features.

To make your PC movie experience shine, you'll want to use a third-party DVD player instead of WMP. The third-party programs we recommend include advanced features for home theater movie buffs. In addition, you won't have to worry about finding a codec because each of the third-party players we suggest includes its own.

PowerDVD 5, for instance, has superb audio features (with support for surround-sound PC setups), can show subtitles in two languages at once, and can bookmark your favorite scenes. WinDVD 6 supports DTS Digital Surround Sound and is optimized for watching movies on notebooks (by extending battery life). And Ulead DVD Player can simulate surround sound on a two-channel speaker system and deinterlace screen images for the clearest video playback.

Free downloadable trial versions are available for all three of these programs, so test drive each of them before making a purchase.

### DVD Regions

Now that you're able to watch movies on your computer, you may want to view movies from other parts of the world. Well, there's a DVD specification called Region Coding that prevents this (and divides the world into eight regions). For example, DVD player software won't play a Region 2 (Japan, Egypt, Europe, South Africa, and Middle East)-coded DVD on a computer that's set to Region 1 (United States, U.S. territories, and Canada). If you try to watch a DVD from a different region, you'll see an error message or a black screen.

Your DVD drive will probably let you switch regions a set number of times (usually five), but after that, it will remain locked into a particular region. Therefore, changing the region in this manner is not a good solution for people who want to regularly watch movies from different countries.

After your PC has everything it needs, you can make some popcorn, place a disc in the DVD tray, turn down the lights, and watch a movie in your home office. Or, as many frequent fliers have found out, it's so convenient to just toss a few DVDs into your notebook's bag and enjoy a film or two during your next airline flight.

by Kevin Savetz

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## Discover Your Inner Producer Get Straight Answers To Your CD & DVD Questions



The compact disc burst upon the scene in early 1980s, and by 1984, the new technology had ushered in a brave new world of audio: an entire "record album" on a shiny disc only 5.25 inches in diameter, with all of its tracks programmable and randomly accessible and digital sound that's startling in its clarity. PC and peripheral makers were quick to jump on the bandwagon, promptly releasing computers with CD drives and, only a few years later, introducing recordable CD drives. DVDs followed in the '90s, with computer manufacturers and suppliers hedging their bets by releasing machines that included DVD drives in a number of competing formats and many (now, most) that would play multiple formats, just in case no one format emerged as the clear winner. (And sure enough, that turned out to be a wise move because the DVD format war still rages on.) It's now a digital world, and much of that digital data resides on optical discs. We use CDs and DVDs for software, music, data transfer, backups, and more. Floppy diskette drives are becoming a rarity, with many PC makers opting out of them altogether. After all, what's a 1.44MB floppy compared to a 650MB CD or a 4.7GB (or more) DVD? The thing is, it was all supposed to be so simple. Treat them well, and optical discs should last for many years. After all, there's no bending, less worry about scratches, less handling (no need to flip them over to play the other side), and less susceptibility to heat. And to top it off, we get to experience that gorgeous audio and video fidelity. Just place a disc in the drive tray, push a button, and relax as you listen to your favorite tunes, watch that classic movie, or create your own blockbuster. What could go wrong? Plenty, as it turns out. Although the mechanics of recording data and stamping CDs and DVDs are mature and well-understood, the actual user interface that lets home and small-office users create optical media is still in its infancy. Computer manufacturers and software publishers have been scrambling to create that compelling "killer app" that will help the uninitiated

create various types of discs while attempting to shield them from the complexity of the process. Even though things have improved quite a bit, they're not there yet. As a result, confusion reigns. People aren't always sure how to create the disc they really want, so they end up bewildered and frustrated, and questions abound: Is it a CD or an MP3 disc? Why can't I back up data to my CD-R (CD-recordable) drive? Why won't the CD I just made play in my car stereo? If I can record on both of them, what's the difference between CD-R and CD-RW (CD-rewriteable) media? Can I make video CDs, or is that just for DVDs? Which one of these competing DVD formats should I use? Why does my computer crash when I'm trying to make a CD? And the list of questions goes on and on. It's enough to make one give up on the whole business of creating and using optical media with a computer. But don't do that just yet. There are really only a few major tasks that most home and small-office users really want to undertake, and only a bit of straightforward background is needed to successfully create and/or use CDs and DVDs. In the rest of this section, we run through those tasks and show you how to create optical media backups and audio CDs, transfer your records and tapes to CDs, and create DVD-based videos. In addition, we give you several pages of optical-related Q&A, designed to provide even more answers to those . . . uh, burning questions. So read on; we'll see if we can clear up some confusion and minimize that frustration. *by Rod Scher*

## Q&A With Howard Rheingold

Prolific author, editor, philosopher, and critic, Howard Rheingold has been called The First Citizen of the Internet. He decided to ditch his typewriter in the early days of covering Xerox PARC and found a new direction in life upon connecting a phone to his PC. Perhaps Rheingold might best be described as one of the world's first digital anthropologists, studying how we create the virtual world and what it does to us in return.

### *Q Tell us about your latest book, "Smart Mobs."*

**RHEINGOLD:** Smart mobs are groups of people who use the Internet and mobile communications to coordinate and organize collective action. That's everything from teenagers who all show up at the mall at the same time because they've been exchanging text messages to citizens who demonstrate and bring down governments, as they did in the Philippines, or get out the vote and tip elections, as they did in Korea. In a larger sense, this is really about the merger of the mobile telephone, the personal computer, and the Internet. When you combine media, sometimes you get something new that has its own properties. I think that the unique characteristic of this new medium that's emerging from the merger of these prior technologies is the ability to organize collective action on new scales in new places with people who weren't able to organize before.

*Q You probably saw the news story a while back about grade schoolers turning in papers written in SMS shorthand rather than regular English because that's how they think words are actually spelled. What's your take on that?*

**RHEINGOLD:** Language is something that

grows from the way people use it. At least they're writing things and not just being passive recipients of media.

### *Q What is the difference between a technology user and a technology consumer?*

**RHEINGOLD:** The industry and the medium around the personal computer weren't created by the existing computer industry. It was created by 19-year-old dropouts like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates and a lot of other users who found ways to create uses for the technology, from the spreadsheet on. Those were really invented not by companies but by individual users. What is the Web but millions of people putting up Web sites? Those were not created by some central authority or some company but by a lot of people. Those are users. They are actively shaping the technology. Now, in the old days when there was one telephone company and three television networks, people were passive consumers of what someone else created for them. The question about new technology is whether the attempt by existing companies to protect their business models by legislating or even changing the way the technology works is going to limit innovation to only people who work for those companies. The arguments about digital rights management and trusted computing, about the extension of copyright law, about the way wireless spectrum is regulated, those are essentially about innovation. In the future, is a 19-year-old dropout going to be able to use handheld technology to create a new industry or is he going to have to work for an existing company in order to be able to innovate?

*Q You've written that, in contradiction to the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the cable companies and telcos have successfully petitioned the FCC to no longer have to carry traffic from competing networks. This obviously opens the door for the likes of Comcast, Time Warner, and Verizon to censor content from their competitors; does it also enable them to censor according to ideology?*

**RHEINGOLD:** Well, we've seen that when the rules were changed about the ownership of radio stations, instead of owning a hundred stations, you could become a Clear Channel and own thousands. Clear Channel already has censored the content that it allows to be broadcast according to their political views. I don't see why that wouldn't apply to anyone else who has that power. The point is not what the ideology of the censoring party is, but whether they have the power to do it.

*Q Do you think that ISPs will take steps like that in America or have they already?*

**RHEINGOLD:** Well, they can be forced to. The recording industry is more and more trying to force ISPs to police what people do with their networks. What if the FBI had made the telephone company responsible for anyone who had committed a crime using a telephone? Where would that technology have gone? **Subscribers can see [www.cpumag.com/cpuaug04/rheingold](http://www.cpumag.com/cpuaug04/rheingold) for more content.**

*William Van Winkle began writing for computer magazines in 1996. He was first published in 1990, the same year he took his first job in 20 computers. He and his family live outside Portland, Ore.*

**Laughter in Bloom:  
One-Man Tribute  
to Jack Benny  
Costa Mesa Orange Coast Lions Club  
Presents Tribute as a Charity fundraiser**

**Mark Borison  
Readme.Doc Editor  
OCIPUG**

**Eddie Carroll  
as  
Jack Benny**  
A Special  
One-Man  
Tribute  
Tickets  
By Phone  
714-545-0318  
Internet  
www.cmoclions.org

**Plummer Auditorium**  
201 E. Chapman  
Fullerton CA  
Sunday September 26  
4-6 pm

**\$45.00 \$35.00 \$25.00**

Carroll's vivid portrayal of Benny's reality and humanity has placed him in the same company as Hollbrook's "Mark Twain"...Whitmore's "Will Rogers"...and Robert Morse in "TRU"

**LIONS CLUB**  
BENEFIT FOR  
LOCAL CHARITIES

**P**ast President, Bob Walker of OCIPUG who is the current President of the *Costa Mesa Orange Coast Breakfast Lions Club* will be presenting an afternoon of fun and fond memories at the Plummer Auditorium in Fullerton on Sunday Sept. 26th at 4pm. This fundraiser for local charities is called: *Laughter in Bloom*, a special One Man Tribute to the Legendary Jack Benny Starring Eddie Carroll, himself a veteran stage & T.V. actor who has also been the voice of Jiminy Cricket for more than 30 years. Eddie Carroll's one-man show...*"JACK BENNY/LAUGHTER IN BLOOM"*, goes beyond mere imitation of Benny's familiar catch phrases and mannerisms.

It's a captivating afternoon of theater that has Jack Benny himself leading us on a fascinating tour of his rich and colorful life and illustrious career that spanned six decades...from vaudeville to films, from the Broadway Stage to radio and television, to concerts and personnel appearances.

Carroll, who researched and penned the show himself, spent months preparing for the role and perfecting every facet and nuance of Benny's persona...from his walk, body language and gestures, to his voice, timing and delivery. "I didn't want to just imitate Benny or do an impression", says Carroll. "An impression is basically a caricature with overly exaggerated vocal traits and gestures. My goal as an actor was to re-create Benny's honest reality and the true humanity of the man." As a result, Carroll's performance is no stand-up comedy act or routine, but an award winning, Broadway-quality theatrical presentation that is in the

same class as Hal Hollbrook's "Mark Twain", James Whitmore's "Will Rogers", Robert Morse's "Tru", and Frank Gorshin's current production of "Say Goodnight Gracie".

As one critic wrote..."Carroll doesn't just do Benny... He IS BENNY. Before your eyes he truly becomes the beloved comedian, capturing his endearing nature, dwelling in his spirit, as well as his shadow."

The show opens with a short film of some of Benny's funniest TV moments and ends with a freeze-frame of Benny in his typical pose. As the image slowly fades to the strains of "Love In Bloom", Carroll is illuminated on stage left, in the same pose we have just seen on the screen. By the time Carroll takes center stage, the audience has made the transition that Jack Benny is truly there in person. For the next hour and forty minutes, the audience is transported on a nostalgic journey as they learn of Benny's childhood as Benjamin Kubelsky growing up in Waukegan, IL...his personal struggles and failures, and eventual success in Vaudeville and meteoric rise in radio and television. He also shares insights into his personal life and hilarious anecdotes of cast-mates and other stars that fill the theater with heart, warmth, great memories and wall-to-wall laughter.

Jack Benny was more than a show business legend. He became an American Institution and enjoyed more audience identification than any other entertainer. Even today his classic trademarks are still recognized and known to millions. With his incomparable approach to comedy, no one could steal his material or copy his style or timing. He was a class act who stood alone and was respected and revered by his peers. In a recent poll, he was voted as America's most loved comedian and one of the top five entertainers of all time.

When a man can leave as much of himself as Jack left us, then he can never truly be gone. He simply becomes... Immortal

The show came about primarily through the efforts of Walden Hughes, who is a DJ on Yesterday USA Radio Network, <http://www.yesterdayusa.com/>. Bob and Walden hope to coordinate more events of this type as fundraisers, with a number of legendary performers mentioned as possible participants. Anyone wishing to purchase tickets to this event can do so online through [www.cmoclions.org](http://www.cmoclions.org), their new website (quite good) or talk to Bob or email him at [rwalker820@msn.com](mailto:rwalker820@msn.com)

**JACK BENNY**  
*Laughter in Bloom*

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## Magazines on the Internet

By Sandy Berger

The Internet has welcomed the magazine world with open arms. Almost every print publication has an online version or entry point of some kind. Yet each magazine seems to offer differing amounts of information in different formats. The magazine publishing industry is testing the Internet waters with a wide variety of approaches.

The method taken by a publication can vary from having only an ordering page online to posting the entire print magazine on the Web. Some magazines share special selections from the printed edition. Others only preview future articles and attractions. Some make their online version really unique by presenting information that is completely different from that offered in the print version. Other magazines restrict information; a non-subscriber cannot access articles, which are reserved for print subscribers.

Because no standard approach has developed, online publications continue to feel their way trying to find out what business plan works for them. Consumers rejoice! This exploratory phase of online magazine evolution is offering plenty of great free stuff. Many of the magazines and much of the information that readers previously paid for is now available for free. Yes, readers of all ages can benefit. All they have to do is a little research to find out what is available, what is free, and what is fee based.

In an effort to reduce that endless flow of printed magazines to my mailbox and shorten the stack of magazines piled on my coffee table, I took a look at several of my favorite magazines to see how their online editions differ. I was truly amazed at the variety of online publications.

### Smart Computing Magazine

This is my favorite computer magazine. It is the magazine for the average computer user. The information is easy-to-understand. It is nicely illustrated and there are fewer ads and more information than most other high-tech magazines. This is one magazine that I suggest you subscribe to. You must be a subscriber to access the online magazine. However, when you subscribe, you get access to their substantial online archive of past issues. Smart Computing Magazine offers a risk-free trial offer so you can see if you like the magazine. Don't worry though, you are sure to love it!

### Consumer Reports

The Consumer Reports Web site offers complimentary articles, or free highlights as they call them, which are written specifically for their Web site. These special features include information on everything from housecleaning strategies to chain saws. Free information is available including details about manufacturers and helpful selection hints. Yet this Web site is stingy with their free information. Only Consumer Reports subscribers are given access to any of the popular Consumer Reports ratings. Articles from the print issues are available online only to subscribers.

### PC World

The approach taken by PC World is much more generous. To see the entire print publication online, all you have to do is click the Magazine tab. This online publication is a real bonanza for great free information and extras. As a bonus, readers can access 4,000 software program downloads. Each day PC World posts approximately one dozen new stories pertaining to technology, free to online visitors. Often the site will highlight special features written exclusively for the online version. Some things like the Top 10 and Top 100 charts, which PC World is known for, look much better in their print version, but all of their print information plus many extras are available online.... a plethora of free information.

### Discover Magazine

Another magazine that has its entire magazine content online is Discover Magazine, one of my favorite scientific journals.

Online articles at the Discover Magazine Web site are grouped so you can use the table of contents to check out the current issue or archived issues. You can also search for articles and select articles by featured topics. Thanks to Discover Magazine's easy-to-follow indexing, you can peruse the magazine's entire database based on your interest, from archaeology to technology. Another exciting find for free information.

### TIME

One of America's all time favorites, TIME, has developed an impressive presence on the Internet. At TIME.com, readers will find a list of the current cover stories as well as copies of articles in the current edition. The full content of each weekly issue is posted on the Sunday after its publication and is fully accessible and searchable. You can read the past two week's content for free but will need to purchase access for any archive articles older than two weeks. The current cost is \$2.50 for a single archive article, \$4.95 for a twenty-four hour pass, and \$9.95 for an archive pass that is good for one month. If you are presently a TIME magazine subscriber, you can read the past fifty-two weeks for free and even receive discounted pricing on articles older than fifty-two weeks. If you are TIMEly in accessing this magazine, you can get a lot of current content for free.

### PC Magazine

Yes, I admit it. I'm a technophobe, so I'm going to tell you about yet another technology magazine, PC Magazine. Like PC Worldou without spending any money. You must scroll down the page and to find the Current Issue listed on the left menu bar. Right under that is a link to Previous Issues. Click on either of these and you will find that all the information from the print version is available for free.

PC Magazine has taken their online version one step further. They recently instituted an exciting new digital format. Once downloaded, the digital magazine looks just like the print magazine. Just flip through the pages instead of playing around with the Back

and Forward icons. The digital version has expanded search capabilities and provides instant interaction with advertisers. See a product you like? Just click on the ad and you'll be at the manufacturer's Web site where you can get more information. This digital version is not free. PC Magazine offers a subscription to the print version only, the digital version only, or a combination of the two for a reduced rate. While not a freebie, this new format is so cool, that it may just catch on. With a fast Internet connection and a flat panel monitor (easier on the eyes), it has many advantages over the print version.

## List of Online Magazines

Why not check out your favorite magazines to see if there is an online version (I bet there is) and find out what information is offered via the Internet? Try typing in the name of the magazine in your browser address line. There is a good chance you might find it easily. If you need more help, use this convenient site, Magazines A to Z, that offers an alphabetical list of over 1,300 online periodicals.

By using your computer and the online edition of your favorite magazine, you can keep up with the world's happenings, the fashion world, or a special interest. You might even find that you can save some money on magazine subscriptions and make some room on your coffee table.

## Rumor unfounded: Microsoft service pack 2 will not support pirated versions by Siles Bazerman ORCOPUG

Reprinted from the August 2004 issue of Nibbles & Bits

I have been using SP2 RC2 for several weeks now, but have held off writing about it until several issues were resolved. It has become obvious that the rumor of Microsoft allowing any computer running Windows XP to install SP2 were just that, rumor. Microsoft has decided that it is more important to prevent upgrades to "pirated" versions than to prevent the spread of viruses. Trojans and spyware. Not only will the new Windows update v5 not recognize these keys, but it also blocks out a number of perfectly legitimately purchased CD keys or more accurately Product Identification keys. Most of these are on Dell computers. This figures as the original pirated Windows XP was a Dell volume license edition and presumably the other CD keys came from the same source.

However, it did my heart good to see that one of Usenet's self proclaimed experts, whose answer to almost any Windows XP problem involving patches or upgrades is to accuse the poster of having a pirated copy of Windows XP and telling them to buy a legitimate copy, had the exact problem on one of his three computers. Microsoft is working on the solution, but I am sure that the hackers and crackers out there will have the solution first. They almost always do.

Microsoft has announced that the full released to manufacture (RTM or Gold) will be available in August. I would look for the

download to be online late August to early September. It will be installable over SP2 RC2 according to sources within Microsoft. If you do want to uninstall RC2 be sure that the show upgrades box is checked in Add or Remove Programs.

I have already heard comments about waiting six months after RTM to install SP2, but most of these have come from people running sans SP1. SP2 is mostly about security but also includes the following revised sections:

*Data execution prevention, DCOM Security Enhancements, Filter for Add or Remove Programs, Setup, Download, Attachment, and Authenticode Enhancements, Internet Explorer File Download Prompt, Outlook Express E-mail Attachment Prompt, Add-on Install Prompt, Group Policy Internet Explorer Settings, Script repositioning of Internet Explorer windows, Zone Elevation Blocks.*

Of course, it still will not protect users who insist on downloading everything they see offered for free or insist on clicking yes on pop-ups without reading. /Build an idiot proof program and nature will build a better idiot.

Are there any problems with this service pack? Yes, a few but most seem to be system or individual program specific. Outside of the PID problem, the biggest complaint is that third party software is not using the built-in hooks in this pack. Most software developers will not release patches for this until RTM is firm. They fear last minute changes will negate all their work, so they wait. Remember, this happened with Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 98SE and Windows Me.

See you next time.

## Hotmail to offer 2GB in September

By [Fuad Abazovic](#):

Wednesday 18 August 2004, 21:17

**H**AVING TWO MB of memory space in your hotmail account is not something to be proud of as you can barely receive anything using that. Yes, Hotmail became useless as a primary mail client for many users. Many people including business people have MSN accounts since MSN or Windows Messenger is accepted widely as a communication application. Many including yours truly, never used it much for mailing unless it was the only way. Since Gmail arrived late to the show, Ye Vole had to do something about it as the Googly people offer you nice gigabyte of storage - more than enough for most. Vole has to beat that and will give you a full two gigabyte for your mail, pictures and whatever you want to keep there. The send and receive limit for attachment files will get up to an amazing 20 MB.

Microsoft promises that it won't bug you with graphical ads and there will be no more account expiration, you don't have to log on every 30 days to keep the account active. It will save you from a re-activation process.

23 Maybe Microsoft has some more surprises for us. Let's hope so



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Publication Guidelines

**(OCIPUG)**

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**Publication Deadline**

Material for the **Sept.** issue must be received on or before **Sept. 15th, 2004** by **mborison@yahoo.com**

**Publication Guidelines**

All material submitted will be published *exactly* as submitted, but may be subject to editing at the *Editor's* discretion. We reserve the right to refuse any material submitted for publication. Send all submissions as follows:

1. Send via Internet e-mail to: editor Mark Borison mborison@yahoo.com
2. Mail a 3.5" disk so as to be received by the deadline by the Newsletter Coordinator at the OCIPUG mailing address above.
3. Hard copy to Editor at the OCIPUG mailing address above.

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- \* Subscription to OCIPUG's monthly newsletter, *Readme.Doc*, with up to-date information on meeting schedules as well as the newest software and hardware.
- \* Free monthly General Meetings with speakers from industry and academia describing advances in technology.
- \* Free Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings/seminars to exchange tips and tricks and to solve problems.
- \* Free technical support from knowledgeable fellow members via telephone and/or e-mail.
- \* Pleasure in helping your fellow member solve their problems.
- \* Camaraderie with those of similar interests.
- \* Discounts from vendors on software, hardware, and other items.

*Meetings Location*

**Costa Mesa Senior Center  
695 W. 19th St  
Costa Mesa, Ca  
Southeast Corner of 19Th and Pomona**

**Orange Coast IBM PC User Group  
695 W. 19th St  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627**

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