

# Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

# README.DOC

January 2004

Newsletter

Volume 20.1

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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## January 31, 2004 Program

A 45-minute PowerPoint presentation plus You can get Smart Computing delivered to your door every month, plus unlimited access to their Web site, all while earning free memberships to Smart Computing for our group! Visit their User Group Offers page to learn more.



Lee's Otsubo's presentation is easy to understand the concepts of the digital camera and how the whole process works.



### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Orange Coast IBM PC User Group  
Costa Mesa Senior Center  
695 West 19th Street  
Costa Mesa Ca, 92627

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

31 January	2004
28 February	2004
27 March	2004

**Meetings of the Executive Board will be held after the General Meeting 12:15-1PM**

31 January	2004
27 February	2004
27 March	2004

All OCIPUG members are welcome.

**Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings are held monthly as follows:**

1st Tuesday	7:00 PM - Internet
2nd Tuesday	7:00 PM - Hardware
3rd Tuesday	7:00 PM - Windows
4th Tuesday	7:00 PM - Digital Photo

# Program January 31, 2004



## Who is The Digital Photo Guy?

<http://www.thedigitalphotoguy.com/index.html>

The Digital Photo Guy (TDPG) is an engineer turned sales/marketing executive who has spent over 35 years in high technology and finally decided to do what he enjoys. TDPG now spends his time researching digital camera technologies and techniques so he can present the most up-to-date and useful information to digital camera users. This information is offered via free workshops at timeshare resorts, PC user groups, computer clubs, RV parks and cruises.

## Smart Computing

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

Smart Computing has compiled a comprehensive presentation for user groups. The 45-minute PowerPoint presentation covers everything you want to know about Smart Computing, including information on the magazine, our Web site, the User Group Program, and much more.

Smart Computing is devoted to the betterment of the user group community by supplying users with the most viable computing and technology information available and providing ongoing support for user group events.

Troubleshooting advice to help you avoid long waits for tech support  
Tips and tricks to help you master your operating system  
Hands-on reviews of the latest hardware and software  
Step-by-step instructions for thousands of computing tasks  
Up to 70% savings off the newsstand price



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# SCHEDULES AND REPORTS OF EVENTS

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)

(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:

**6 January 2004**

### Internet / Web Publishing

1st Tuesday 7:00 PM

Michael Moore and Mark Borison 714-535-0608  
president.bod@ocipug.org

**13 January 2004**

### Hardware

2nd Tuesday. 7:00 PM

Ed Leckliter

eleckliter@adelphia.net

**20 January 2004**

### Windows

3rd Tuesday 7:00 PM

Robert Strader 949-646-11475  
robert.strader@comcast.net

**27 January 2004**

### Digital Cameras / Scanning -

4th Tuesday, 7:00PM

David Wintle 714-548-7994  
allart@bacbell.net

**3 February 2004**

### Internet / Web Publishing

1st Tuesday 7:00 PM

Michael Moore and Mark Borison 714-535-0608  
president.bod@ocipug.org



Advanced Computer Products, Inc.  
1310 East Edinger Ave.  
Santa Ana, CA 92705



## OCIPUG Hardware SIG -

Meeting Date: December 9, 2003

There were 10 attendees (including SIG Leader, Ed Leckliter)

Featured Topic(s): Your New System (2003 Update): Planning Phase (the beginning of an updated five-meeting planning, sourcing, and hands-on assembly series)

Hardware Submissions - None

Random Access - there were only 1-2 questions posed verbally, notes not recorded.

Next Meeting: January 13, 2004

Next Meeting Featured Topic(s): Your New System (2003 Update): Sourcing Your Components

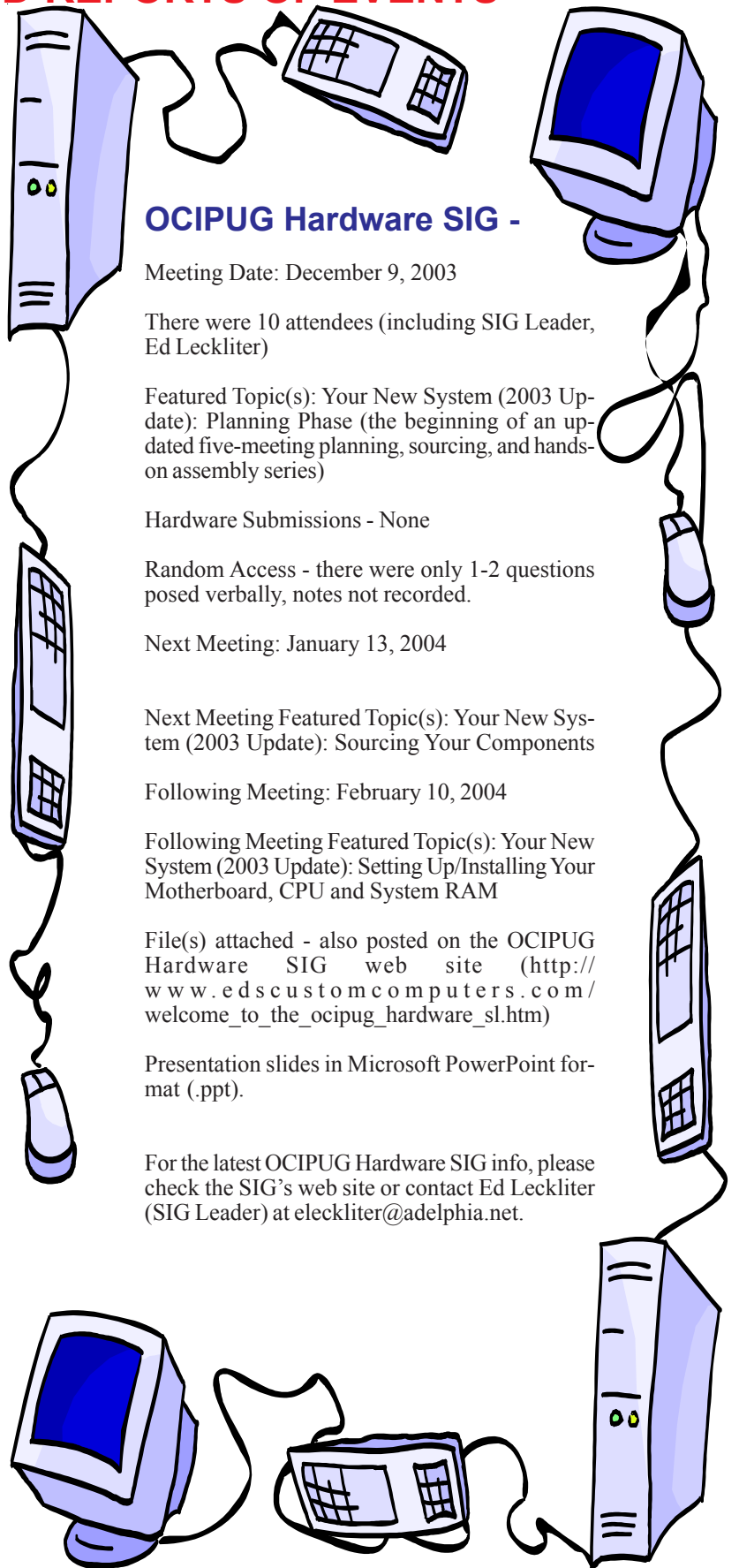
Following Meeting: February 10, 2004

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): Your New System (2003 Update): Setting Up/Installing Your Motherboard, CPU and System RAM

File(s) attached - 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 [eleckliter@adelphia.net](mailto:eleckliter@adelphia.net).



# PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By:  
Michael Moore



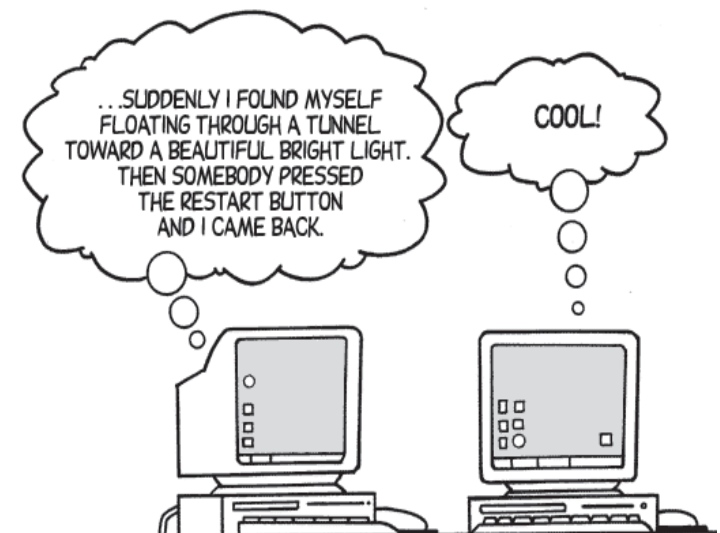
Hello and welcome to 2004. Let me first start off by thanking everyone who attended our Annual OCIPUG Holiday Potluck, and especially those who assisted with the setup before and cleanup after the event. The meeting started with an interesting presentation by Don Edrington, "PC Don" and the ensuing feast, was enjoyed by all. As many of you may have noticed, while I was able to attend this event briefly, I was not able to share in all of the good food that was brought by the membership. As luck and a case of intelligent planning, would have it, I had a dental appointment scheduled for the same day as our meeting, and was on a liquid diet preceding the appointment. It certainly was apparent that those in attendance did have a good time and it was a fitting end to 2003. Try to attend our Christmas Party in 2004, as it is the only time during the year where we get to sit down, kibitz and break bread.

Now on to 2004, I know it's been a while since I've filed a report. The reason for this being, concurrent with my acceptance of the presidency of OCIPUG and utilizing the same aforementioned astute planning, not to mention the fact that I am probably the only User Group President in the known universe using Win ME, my new position has consumed a larger portion of my time than I could of anticipated. There are several people, I would like to thank at this time. Let me start by thanking Mark Borison, who shortly after I took office in September, stepped forward, and offered his assistance to me. Currently Mark has taken on the following tasks for the club: 1. Co-SIG leader with me for the Internet SIG 2. Webmaster 3. Program Director and most recently Newsletter Editor, when our esteemed Past President and Newsletter Editor Bob Walker, tendered his resignation prior to our December Meeting. so this January Readme.Doc will be his last edition as editor. Thanks Mark for your present efforts and Bob for all you have done for the club in the past. Any help some of you members could extend in these areas would be appreciated, and Bob ...don't think we won't be tapping your incredible talents!

I would also like to thank Past President Leonard Stein, who when, I had to reluctantly accept the resignation of Cheryl Wester, due to an increasing workload, and not enough time to function as Treasurer, graciously accepted the task. The same holds true with Director and Hardware Sig leader Ed Leckliter, who upon realizing that we were experiencing some problems with keeping our website updated, he provided the board with information on a hosting service that he uses for his own personal website, called FATCOW. Fatcow.com (<http://www.fatcow.com/>), offers a number of features that were previously unavailable to us. These features include 100 free email accounts and increased storage space, and other features that will be implemented at a later time. Between Ed, Mark, and myself we have successfully transferred the information from our previous server over to Fatcow's. When taking over the position of Webmaster, Mark had told me that he would like to re-vamp our existing web site, and add a lot of features and resources previously not available on our previous site. Look for the new site, which will be up prior to our general meeting this month. I would like to ask for everyone's assistance when it comes to the content of both our Newsletter, and our new website. If you have ideas or articles for the newsletter, or ideas or content for the new ocipug.org website, I ask that you please forward your ideas to Mark at [webmaster@ocipug.org](mailto:webmaster@ocipug.org), or myself at [president.bod@ocipug.org](mailto:president.bod@ocipug.org),

I can't stress this enough, that OCIPUG IS YOUR CLUB and it will only be as good as you want it to be. Provided that you give us some feedback (what you like about the club, what you don't like, etc) please do not hesitate to let us know, our contact information is generally inside the cover of the Readme.Doc. The information is there for your benefit, please use it. As with most clubs, OCIPUG has seen a decline in membership, and attendance to both its General Meetings, and more importantly Special Interest Group (S.I.G.) meetings, I for one know that the S.I.G. leaders constantly put in a lot of time and effort to provide the membership with timely and practical information for you to be able to use your Personal Computers' in ways that you never dreamed possible. But all that effort is going to waste, if the membership doesn't take the time to come to these meetings. The SIG meetings are an excellent opportunity for you to get individual answers to the questions and problems that you encounter with your computer. That being said lets all work together to make 2004 the best year in OCIPUG's History as we head into our 20th year culminating in an Anniversary Celebration, hopefully to be held in the spring of 2005. In the spirit of this, enjoy this month's Readme.Doc. including the reprinted article by Past-President, Dr. John Goodman, covering Bill Gate's historic address to the combined membership of OCIPUG and NOCCC, which originally appeared in the Jan. 1989 Readme.Doc., V5 Number 1, on Jan. 10th 1989, exactly 15 years ago this week. I think you will find it of interest and in the next 12 months or so we will be taking a look back at some of these events that helped to shape the development of the PC as we know it now, chronicling the significant contributions that our organization made in the pursuit of it's true purpose which is to SHARE IT WITH OTHERS!

Respectfully, Michael Moore  
OCIPUG President



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## To Upgrade or Not to Upgrade!

By Timothy Everingham, TUGNET  
teveringham@acm.org

To upgrade or not to upgrade, that is the question. Whether it is nobler to upgrade the computer you have or to put aside the invested fortune of your current computer and get a new one. Or yet do you even need to put your cash into computer hardware. Even Shakespeare didn't have to deal with these questions, which in recent years have become even more complicated to answer.

Where you should start is by determining what your present and future needs and wants are going to be. Don't try to project over five years. I am not talking about what hardware you may drool over, but what you will want or need to do with your computer. Will it be word processing; web surfing; email; burning CD and DVDs; database or list management; software development; photo, graphics, video editing and creation; or something else. Then you look at the application software that will accomplish those tasks. Also look at how long will your current application software and operating system(s) be supported by the manufacturer (Windows 98 will no longer have support and patches available after December 31, 2003). Also, if you have software that is known to be troublesome, like Windows ME, the need or desire to upgrade it should be considered. Then you look at the system requirements to run these applications: hardware, operating system, and other supporting software (software that is required to be installed on your system in order for your application to run).

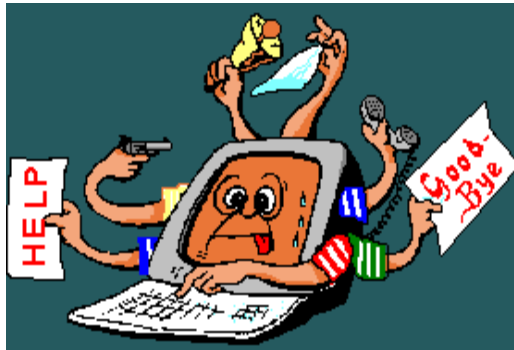
Remember that the companies want to sell you the software or hardware, resulting in the minimum software requirements listed being as low as possible and may not reflect real world conditions. If you have a system that is exactly listed as the minimum system requirements (it is the minimum system requirements if only one is listed) consider that this product will run extremely slowly and crash at times. Some manufactures list both minimum and recommended system requirement, and you do not want to be too far below the recommended requirements. Also, some system requirements listed do not change the RAM requirements for different operating systems. They list as minimum RAM the one for the oldest operating system. A program may run on Windows 95, 98, 98 SE, ME, 2000, and XP; but the amount of RAM needed in reality is more for Windows 98, 98 SE, and ME than Windows 95 and more for Windows 2000 and XP than Windows 98, 98 SE, and ME.

There are some general guidelines. If you have a Pentium II computer, AMD equivalent or older and are doing anything else than word processing, simple web surfing and email you are looking at having too many things needed to upgrade for it to be worthwhile. With Macintosh or notebook computers, upgrade options are more limited than desktop PCs so, unless it is fairly new, you should be looking at getting a new computer. Also, you have to look at how many of your computer's components are close to or past their expected lifetimes. If your computer's components are five years or older, your computer is living on borrowed time. Where the upgrade option looks better is with Pentium 3, Pentium 4 or Athlon-based desktop computers. However, software activation has made this more complicated. With activation the software takes a snapshot of your computer's hardware configuration.

If you try to run it after doing too many upgrades the software decides that it is not the same computer; violating the software license and shuts itself down. You then have to go to the software manufacturer and try to convince them that the computer you upgraded is not a new computer. The most famous of the programs that includes this feature is Windows XP, but there are a growing number of application software packages that also have this feature.

Of course this has bred a lot of fear, uncertainty and doubt (FUD) about upgrading computers, which the people who sell new computers are happy to take advantage of. If you do a combination motherboard (main circuit board) and processor replacement, activation should be a problem for you.

If your current computer fits your system's requirements of your expected needs and wants, congratulations; you are done without having to spend any money.



However, if you still are considering upgrading, the next thing you want to do is get out your motherboard manual (may be contained in computer manual). It will tell you what components can be installed on it. If you can't find your manual, there is likely to be a PDF of it on the manufacturer's website. While you are there check to see if there are any BIOS updates available that may give the motherboard new features that you may need. If the motherboard does not support the processor; type, speed or amount of RAM; or the type of plug-in card (AGP, PCI, EISA, ISA) you want to install, you will have to install a new motherboard that will. For drive (IDE, ATA, SATA, SCSI), IEEE 1394 (Firewire), and USB interfaces you can get plug-in cards instead of getting a new motherboard.

Upgrading your RAM is probably the thing that can be most effective in putting off the need to buy a new computer. The others would be a new video card and a new hard drive.

Installing a CD or DVD R/RW drive is also a good option in order to backup things on you hard drives and being able to take data and media files off your drives that you use infrequently.

Don't forget to calculate your power requirements and have the case be able to fit the motherboard. After you make up a list of your proposed upgrade parts, add up the cost of them. Then compare this cost to the cost of a similar system to what your upgraded system would be. If you are doing a lot of upgrading you will find that the totally new computer will be close to or cost less than the cost of upgrading (there is a discount for buying an entirely new computer rather than just the parts of one). If you find yourself in this position you should lean toward buying a new computer. With this type of consideration you should also be looking at how you will transfer data and applications from your old computer to your new one (remember software activation issues).

With AMD releasing their Athlon 64 bit desktop processors, one of the issues in upgrading or buying a new computer is "will I need a 64 bit processor." For most people the answer is not until the later part of this decade. To get the most out of a 64 bit processor you need 64 bit applications running on top of a 64 bit operating system. Of course if you have a Mac G5 system running Panther (Mac OS 10.3) and some of the recent versions of the high level Apple content creation applications you are already there,

but for the PC world only 64 bit applications programs now are very high level server based or scientific applications.

There is 64 bit Linux, but the Windows XP version is still in beta and won't be out until spring 2004. There will be 64 bit versions of some games in 2004, but do not look until 2005 for a significant amount of 64 bit software for Windows XP. Because there will be a lot of 32 bit computers around for a while there should be plenty of 32 bit software. The 64 bit Athlons and what rumors say Intel is developing as a 64 bit desktop processor will be able to run 32 bit applications well, which should also keep the 32 bit software market healthy for quite a while. So unless you are a high level gamer, run high-level scientific or content creation applications, or run Macs you should wait on getting a 64 bit processor computer. Making the decision on whether to upgrade your current computer or buy a new computer has become more complex than it was a few years ago. A systematic step-by-step approach is appropriate. First determine your needs, then what will support filling those needs, and then weigh the costs of upgrading or buying new. May the wisdom of the Great Elizabethan Bard be upon you, resulting in a fruitful bounty of computer buying.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is Vice Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH and is also on the Management Information Systems Program Advisory Board of California State University, Fullerton. In addition he is the Vice President of the Windows Media Users' Group of Los Angeles. He is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, computers, video, audio, and entertainment/media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada plus Australia, England, & Japan. He is a member of TUGNET. Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>

## Essentials for that New Computer

By Ira Wilsker

According to preliminary sales figures, computers were among the most popular items purchased this holiday season. Straight out of the box they may be a joy, accompanied with confusion, and some mild fears. Experience and familiarity will resolve most of the confusion, but some common essentials may help eliminate many of the fears.

Almost all new computers straight from the box were most likely manufactured prior to the release of the latest security patches, and will require the downloading and installation of all critical updates. Likewise, most computers recently made to order will not have the latest operating system updates. If operating system software was purchased separately, it also will not be up to date. It is imperative that once set up, if internet access is already established, that the user of a Windows computer, immediately goes to [windows.update.microsoft.com](http://windows.update.microsoft.com) and download and install at least the critical updates listed. Other non-critical updates listed may be downloaded and installed when desired, but the critical updates must be installed immediately.

Another absolute essential for that new (and old, too) computer is antivirus software. While many new computers come with a limited time trial version of some antivirus product installed, there is no necessity to renew that particular product when it expires.

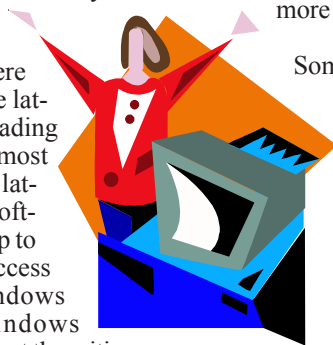
There are many excellent titles available, often at spectacular prices after rebates. In the retail market, the sales leaders are Symantec's Norton AntiVirus (often bundled with other Symantec Norton titles), and Network Associates, McAfee Antivirus (also often bundled with other McAfee products).

Many other excellent titles are available either at retail from the local stores, or for download. If holiday bills are a pressing problem, one of the free antivirus products may be appropriate. One commercial bundle, including antivirus, firewall, and popup killer is Computer Associates eTrust EZ Armor Security Suite, available for a limited time as a free (for personal use) download. This full featured commercial product (\$50) is currently being made available for free download from [www.my-etrust.com/microsoft](http://www.my-etrust.com/microsoft) as a promotion cosponsored by Microsoft's security division. The free download includes a year of free updates. Once the year is up, the user will have the option of renewing for another year at the then current license fee.

Other free (for personal use) antivirus software is Avast available from [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com), and AVG downloadable from [www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com).

With today's risky cyber environment, a firewall has also become an essential product for new (and old) computers. A firewall isolates your computer from hacker attacks over the internet, and also provides some protection from Trojans sending out information. While often bundled with antivirus software, many times it must be installed separately. Commercial firewalls from McAfee and Norton are available locally, as are other firewalls. There are also several excellent firewalls available for free (for personal use) by download. My personal choice is Outpost, available from [www.agnitum.com](http://www.agnitum.com). The single most popular firewall in use is Zone Alarm, [www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com).

Also essential is a good anti-spyware program to protect your personal privacy and security. One of the most popular and highly rated spyware detection and removal programs is Spybot Search and Destroy, available for free download from [www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org). This program also includes an "immunize" function that will offer some protection from much of the spyware that is common on the net. The leading commercial spyware protector is PestPatrol, available for download from [www.pestpatrol.com](http://www.pestpatrol.com). As with antivirus and firewall software, anti-spyware software is frequently updated by the publisher, and updates must be downloaded and run frequently in order to maximize protection. One proviso; never purchase anti-spyware software from popup ads or spam mail, as they are often fraudulent or of low quality, and only encourage more spamming.



Something often neglected with that new (or old) computer is power protection. The electricity coming into our homes is often "dirty", with electrical noise and power fluctuations, and these events may damage the sensitive electronics in our computers. At a minimum, a good surge suppressor (not a simple power strip) is a necessity to protect the computer and its peripherals from electrical damage. Surge protection is measured in "joules", and the more joule capacity, generally the better the protection. Even better is a good quality "UPS" or uninterruptible power supply, which in addition to providing clean power to the computer and its peripherals, can also safely power the computer for short periods of time in the event of a brownout or power failure, allowing for a safe and orderly shutdown, without losing data or damaging equipment. If a UPS is in your future, make sure it has enough power for your system. All surge suppressors and UPS devices should also have a UL1449 rating, an indication that it meets minimal feature and safety standards.

Internet access has become almost universal, and has switched from a geek luxury, to almost everyone, necessity. Generally avoid the "deals" that are often preinstalled or bundled with new computers, especially for some of the overpriced national services.

## Computers from the Very Beginning Monitors

By Charlie Paschal

Editor/Publisher, Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia,  
SC Columnist, The (Columbia) State newspaper, SC

Just as understanding computer memory can be confusing, so can understanding a computer display, one of the most important parts of a computer.

The display, which also can be called a monitor, is connected to a computer by a cable that attaches to a video card inside a computer. Troubles with a display can be traced to the cable, the card inside the computer, software that drives the card, the display itself or some piece of equipment nearby.

Monitors can be found in various sizes and shapes but even the best of monitors can be made to look bad if any of the other parts and pieces are not working correctly or of poor quality. A monitor is only as good as the video card in your computer and the software that runs that video card and monitor.

### Let's focus first on the monitor.

Of all the parts and pieces that make up a computer system, the monitor is one part that you shouldn't scrimp on. If you plan to have a computer for a long time, then buck up and spend the money for a good one. Although you may buy a new computer, you can always use your old monitor on it — especially if you buy a good quality monitor.

### In that purchase, there's a lot to consider.

Although you can find monitors less than 17 inches in size, I don't recommend buying one. Since some very cheap systems come with smaller monitors, it's something you should guard against when looking at buying a system that comes with a monitor.

Resolution and dot pitch are very important when it comes to monitors. A computer screen is made up of dots and these are measured in dot pitch. In this case, you always go with the lowest number, with a cutoff of 28 dot pitch. Anything larger than that will give you a grainy display. More expensive models come with a dot pitch of 24.

Resolution is another measure of a monitor. Common resolutions include 640x480, 800x600, 1024x768 and 1280x1024. Even if your monitor can do higher resolutions, if your video card can't, then you won't be able to use them.

Why should you care about resolution? By using higher resolutions, you can fit more on your screen. A Web page viewed at 640x480 displays very little information. By boosting your resolution to 800x600 or 1024x768, you can fit more pixels on the screen, thus increasing your viewing area. Another feature to check before buying a monitor is its refresh rate. Although many makers claim their monitors are able to display higher resolutions, these are often delivered at a rate lower than 72Hz, meaning that your eyes will see flicker. This is hard on your eyes and will make your eyes tire quicker than a higher refresh rate.

In today's world, the hot item is a "flat panel" LCD monitor; but, just because it's hot and the salesmen are pushing it, doesn't mean you should buy it. Although many of us lust after a flat panel, there are drawbacks:

\* Small type often doesn't look good on one. If you're considering one, be sure to look at some small type faces in the store before you buy it. If a salesperson is handy, get them to start Wordpad (or Word) and make the type nine- or 10 point. Be sure to check around the edges of the LCD to see if the image blurs on either side.

\* Often, an LCD is "fixed" to a certain resolution, such as 1024x768. Be sure that you like the way icons and type appears on screen before buying. If the type is too small (or too large), try another resolution. If the type appears jagged or blurry, then the LCD might look best at one resolution.

\* Color is not rendered sharply by less expensive flat panels. If it's a bargain basement flat panel, the color on a normal CRT probably will be better. The availability of these flat panels mean that the CRT monitors — the old style larger monitors — are getting less expensive. About a year ago, I purchased a 21-inch Sony (almost top of the line) for less than \$500 off the Internet. It has beautiful color, is capable of rendering higher resolutions at a high refresh rate. The push to flat panels also has opened up a huge market for used monitors since many people are replacing the older CRTs with this new style of monitor. Because of this, I've found used 17-inch monitors for less than \$80 and 19-inch monitors for about \$125.

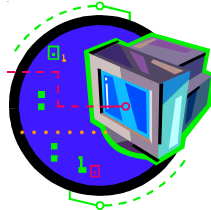
Bottom line: A good rule of thumb for monitors is at least a 1024x768 resolution at 72Hz, no dot pitch larger than 26 and no smaller than 17 inches. Unless you've got a space problem (CRTs are much larger than flat panel monitors), I'd stick with CRT monitors rather than a flat panel, which will cost less in the future as manufactures ramp up production of them. You can bet on that.



"Didn't you get my e-mail?"

## Inhuman Computers

by Elizabeth B. Wright  
Oklahoma City PCUG



Older-model automobiles, airplanes and boats could be cajoled, sweet-talked and occasionally reasoned with. That's why many people gave their cars, aircraft and water craft names (usually women's names) and made them part of the family. But that is mostly because they operate by virtue of the internal combustion engine principle. (I'm talking about the days before computer chips replaced some of the mechanical functions of vehicle operations.) Also cars often take on the personality of the owner, much like pets do.

Computers, on the other hand, have no soul, no compassion, and certainly no desire to please. The computer is amoral (not immoral, except in the hands of some people), totally insensitive to invective or other forms of oral communication, cannot be humiliated by ridicule or strengthened by praise, and most certainly doesn't respond to human reasoning. The occasional kick only makes them more intransigent (and, they break, easily).

But your computer can sometimes be tricked. Since they have no sense of humor or sense of belonging, they do not understand that they can be replaced easily, usually by a superior, yet cheaper, machine. So they are not really trying to cooperate when you succeed in outsmarting them, they just honestly don't know any better.

Computers crash in ways that lead you to believe there is absolutely no way to recover any of your most valuable information. But one of the best tricks of the trade is to just (in the words of a long ago Oklahoma City weatherman) "turn the d\_\_n thing off". Given an overnight rest, many computer crashes can be mitigated, at least for the short term, long enough to move your stored data to some other media, or even to another computer. Along with giving the machine an overnight rest, it is often advisable to unplug it from the electrical outlet after turning it off, to further enhance the rest period. I am not suggesting that this is an infallible procedure, but I personally have had it help more than once, and have talked with a lot of other people who have had similar luck.

Another trick, and this one is rather obvious, is to have more than one hard drive. Storing your important documents on both drives helps with recovery should one drive fail. Again, the computer doesn't care whether it has one hard drive or a dozen. As long as it knows the drives are there, you can pretty much do your own thing. You wouldn't necessarily have two engines in your car, but two or more hard drives is a good idea. Help is out there to recover your data if one of the drives is still functioning, even if it isn't the boot drive.

Trick number three: Although the computer doesn't tell you so, it does like a cool and hopefully dust-free environment. It doesn't know it needs this, but when it decides to roll over and play dead, it is often because it is suffering from heat exhaustion. The newer the computer, the hotter it will get while it is on. Since many people now leave their machines running 24/7, the heat problem can become critical. Internal fans are the beginning, but keeping the computer in a relatively cool part of the room is also important.

Keeping it in the vicinity of the heat ducts during cold weather is not a good idea. That just causes the internal cooling equipment to perhaps not be able to handle the job adequately.

Trick number four: Dirt and other stuff (bugs for example) can get into the computer case; it doesn't hurt to have someone who knows how to do it clean out the insides of the shell. I don't advise doing this if you aren't really technically adept as those small parts are so sensitive that you could do a lot more damage than just leaving it dirty.

Trick number five: In spite of how you might think you are communicating with your computer with fancy screen icons, word commands and pictures, the computer only knows two commands. They are "on" and "off". Most of the on/off switches are in those tiny chips, but the more you can think in terms of how little the computer actually understands, the more you can see why confusing it with conflicting programs can overwhelm its ability to function. More and more of us are wanting to use the latest and most sophisticated programs on the market, but just be aware that each new addition has the potential to cause your computer to become unstable. PLAN AHEAD!! BACK UP YOUR WORK!!

Elizabeth Wright is a member of the OKCPCUG and a regular writer for the eMonitor.

## New Year's Computing Resolutions

By Ira Wilsker

Good grief! I don't know about you, but I tend to keep new years' resolutions about as well as I can stay on a diet. These resolutions may make us feel good, and indicate our good intentions, but the likelihood of our keeping them is often remote. Hopefully, we can keep some resolutions about our computing, and implement them on a permanent basis, making our time spent with our computers more enjoyable and less aggravating.



"Backup Backup Backup" are the three most important words in computing. Murphy's First Law of Computing is "A properly backed up hard drive will never fail; but a hard drive that does not have a current backup will always fail at the most inopportune time". There have been several reviews of backup hardware and software in this column over the years, and all worked ok to some extent, but there is one irrefutable fact about backing up your hard drive. That is that you need a current backup, period. At least weekly, backup critical data files so that if your hard drive or computer fails, you can restore your programs from their original CDs, and then restore your data files from the backups.

It would be even better to make a full backup (everything), and then periodic incremental backups (only those files new or changed since the last backup). Most backup software has this as a feature. Since almost all recent computers have a CD burner, and blank CDs are cheap, there is absolutely no excuse for being wiped out by a hard drive failure or a virus.

The basic software that comes with CD burners or preinstalled on factory computers with CD burners is totally adequate to copy critical data files to a CD. Each blank CD holds over 600 megabytes of data, so it will only take a few to do a backup right now. If an external hard drive or DVD burner is available, there is no excuse for not having comprehensive backups. If Murphy is correct, and you do have current backups, then you have nothing to fear.

If you have been a regular reader of this column, you could already guess my next mandatory resolution for all computer users? Keep your antivirus software updated on at least a daily basis. Viruses, worms, and Trojans are getting nastier, more sophisticated, and capable of doing more damage than those in the past. Contemporary computer worms can easily steal your identity and send your highly personal information to unknown individuals with larceny in their hearts. Other viruses can destroy the critical data on your computer, hijack your internet connection and attack the national infrastructure, or commit other heinous acts. There is absolutely no reason not to have current antivirus software installed. Price can not be an issue, because there are still several freeware titles available from AVG ([www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)) and AVAST ([www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)). Recently Microsoft and Computer Associates (CA), announced that for a limited time the \$50 CA antivirus and firewall suite can be downloaded for free (for personal use) from [www.my-etrust.com/microsoft](http://www.my-etrust.com/microsoft), and includes a year of daily updates. Other popular retail antivirus products, such as McAfee's VirusScan, and Symantec's Norton Antivirus, are currently available for nominal prices, after rebates; they may even be free (after rebates) when purchased as a bundle along with some of the major income tax software. Once installed be absolutely sure that the antivirus software is updated at least on a daily basis.

"Practice Safe Hex" is a comprehensive computing term meaning be careful on the internet, especially with email and while browsing. This includes never responding in any way (including .remove me, requests) from spammers, and instantly deleting any spam email. This also includes never opening any email of suspicious origin, or with suspicious attachments. This especially means be very suspicious of email attachments from acquaintances, as most modern viruses and worms hijack address books and send themselves out randomly selecting a "to" and "from", email address from the victim's address book, also meaning that such email did not really come from the apparent sender. This method of human engineering makes it attractive to open the infected email, as well as makes it difficult to track the real source. Be suspicious even if antivirus software is installed and updated, as many of these new viruses spread rapidly, often infecting computers faster than the antivirus publishers can post updates. Other forms of "safe hex" include killing spyware (Spybot Search and Destroy, free at [www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org)), and using a firewall to keep intruders out of your computer. Outpost ([www.agnitum.com](http://www.agnitum.com)) and ZoneAlarm ([www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com)) are available free for personal use, and are excellent quality. It is also imperative that the operating system security patches are installed ([windowsupdate.microsoft.com](http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com)).

Another variant of safe hex that warrants a resolution is to stop forwarding hoaxes and urban legends. These can be harmful, so check out any interesting stories or reports at [urbanlegends.about.com](http://urbanlegends.about.com) or [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) before forwarding them, even if they were sent to you by a reputable person.



## Users still need to know more about popular, new DVD technology

by Linda Gonse, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group

DVD writers and recordable DVDs are a fairly new entry into Personal Computerland. Consequently, most of us still need to know what to look for in a DVD writer and how to record DVDs.



Almost everyone knows that a DVD is a type of optical disc that looks like a CD, but has a significantly larger storage capacity.

What you might not know is that the capacity of a DVD may vary depending on different physical formats technology, ranging from 4.7 GB to 17.1 GB. And, while CDs are recorded only on one side, some DVDs such as DVD-RAM, support two layers per side and are rewritable up to 100,000 times. (This type of DVD is enclosed in a plastic case similar to a floppy disk which protects its surfaces and provides a label area.)

Another reason DVD drives are growing in popularity is that they can read most CD media as well. With such impressive features, it isn't surprising that DVDs are expected to become the next CD-ROM. In many cases, manufacturers are even building new PCs with DVD drives instead of CD drives.

The DVD "started in 1994 as two competing formats, Super Disc (SD) and Multimedia CD (MMCD). DVD now is the result of an agreement by both camps on a single standard to meet the requirements of all the various industries involved," according to Deluxe Global Media Services (formerly Discronics). But, media formats still split into two groups: + (plus), or - (known commonly as minus; manufacturers may refer to it as dash). The quality comparison is close, and some DVD players will recognize both, while other models will only accept + or -.

Although there are many aspects of DVDs that we still need to learn, one of the basic questions people inevitably ask is, "What do the letters in DVD mean?"

The letters originally stood for Digital VideoDisc. As the technology gained in importance to the computer world, the word "video" was dropped, and the media and the technology was simply D-V-D. Later, it was given the name Digital Versatile Disc by the DVD Forum, which sets DVD standards. Most people just say D-V-D.

In addition, "The Burning Question," by Don Labriola, a detailed, comprehensive look at DVD recording with reviews on 23 products, is in the October 28, 2003 issue of PC magazine; it's also online at <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1306042,00.asp>. For an excellent overview of DVD technology and disks, history, specifications, formats, DVD-5, -10, -9, -18, hybrid formats, file systems, copy protection, and DVD Forum, go to [http://www.discronics.co.uk/technology/dvdintro/dvd\\_intro.htm](http://www.discronics.co.uk/technology/dvdintro/dvd_intro.htm).

Note: This is the manufacturers' description of the Jackrabbit DVD writer/player.

The DVD writer is a Philips Jackrabbit JR32RWDVK, "Smart, Mobile, Multi Purpose, DVD Player, CD Rewriter / DVD Read Combo, Audio MP3 CD Player. The first "All-in-One" device that converges your Home and PC environments."

## PRESS RELEASE:

### EPSON PRINT ACADEMY 2004 TO GIVE ADVANCED AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS TWO EXCITING WAYS TO LEARN EXPERT TECHNIQUES, TIPS AND INSIDER SECRETS TO CREATE SPECTACULAR DIGITAL PRINTS.

Epson Adding Unique Online Component to Successful Traveling National School Program.

12/20/03 - (12/16/03) Advanced amateur photographers and photo enthusiasts across the country will soon have two new programs in which they can learn from the pros how to use the latest digital technology to create the highest quality prints. Based on the success of last year's program, Epson is offering the Epson Print Academy 2004 traveling school, as well as adding the Online Experience, a new web-based course to provide even more educational opportunities.

Print Academy 2004 will travel to 30 cities on weekends beginning Jan. 31 for half-day sessions, with multiple programs offered in several cities. The program will feature all new content from last year's program, enabling participants to learn more creative solutions from master photographers and printmakers, watch live demonstrations of the latest digital imaging equipment and learn valuable tips and techniques they can use right away to improve their photography and printmaking.

Digital printing expert Vincent Versace will lead the Epson Print Academy, demonstrating in person how to get the best results from the newest digital printers, ink and paper technology from Epson. Other leading photographers who are members of Epson's elite Stylus Pro program will share their expertise and give testimonials, including Hollywood celebrity photographer Greg Gorman, acclaimed former National Geographic photographer Bruce Dale, award-winning travel photographer Bob Krist and noted advertising photographer Jack Reznicki.

In addition to the traveling school, Epson is offering the Epson Online Experience. This unique video streaming program will be hosted by award-winning photographer and musician Graham Nash. The Online Experience is a 90-day self-paced program beginning Jan. 31 in which participants will have access from the comfort of their homes to approximately 60 digital printing tutorials, plus as an exciting insider's perspective on how some of Epson's Stylus Pro photographers create their magic. The tutorials will cover digital photography techniques from capture through printing, including such topics as monitor calibration, printer driver set-up, creating panoramas and framing. Participants will also be able to follow Jay Maisel as he shoots aerials from a helicopter over the Statue of Liberty, view a New York City fashion shoot with Douglas Dubler, and follow John Shaw as he looks for the perfect light in Moab, Utah.

Epson is offering these programs to address the continuing demand for education on digital photography and printing to show photographers how to get the maximum results from a broad range of digital cameras and scanners, including those of the highest quality.

"The response to last year's Epson Print Academy was overwhelming and showed just how hungry people are for education about how to get the best prints from their digital equipment," said Dan Steinhardt, marketing manager, Epson America Inc. "Since then, so many people have been asking us when we were coming back to their area. So we are glad to offer a new traveling school this year. And by expanding the Academy to include an online component, even more photographers of different skill levels will be able to benefit from the insider secrets that make for breathtaking photographic prints."

The registration fee is \$59.95 for the Epson Print Academy 2004 traveling school and \$29.95 for the Online Experience. Photographers who register at the same time for both programs will receive a \$10 discount. More information about the Academy, including a schedule, registration fees and a registration form, is available online at [www.epson.com/PrintAcademy](http://www.epson.com/PrintAcademy).

#### About Epson

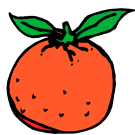
Epson offers an extensive array of award-winning image capture and image output products for the consumer, business and graphic arts markets. The company is also a leading supplier of value-added point-of-sale (POS) printers and transaction terminals for the retail market. Founded in 1975, Epson America Inc. is the U.S. affiliate of Japan-based Seiko Epson Corporation, a global manufacturer and supplier of high-quality technology products that meet customer demands for increased functionality, compactness, systems integration and energy efficiency. Epson America Inc. is headquartered in Long Beach, Calif.

SOURCE: Epson America Inc. <http://www.epson.com/PrintAcademy>



We'll be giving away a new Epson Stylus Photo 2200 at every Print Academy 2004

# A LOOK BACK AT THE HISTORY OF OCIPUG



README.DOC

Volume 5 Number 1

January 1989 Exactly 15 years ago

## BILL GATES COMES TO ORANGE COUNTY

By John M. Goodman

It was a chilly winter Tuesday evening, the sidewalks were slick from a recent shower, and the sky looked like more could come soon. Not my idea of ideal weather to go outside unless you had to. So, why were the people around me all walking purposefully onto the Orange Coast College campus with such obvious excitement?

**Bill Gates, founder and CEO of MICROSOFT, was coming to town, and they were going to see and hear him. This was to be the first joint meeting of the Orange Coast IBM PC User Group (OCIPUG) and the North Orange County Computer Club (NOCCC).**

I arrived over an hour early and found a lot of OCIPUG and NOCCC members already there, hard at work. The auditorium had an impressive array of presentation equipment on the stage, and a very professional looking sound system at the back was set up to monitor and record the proceedings. The large screen rear-projection EGA display, operated through MICROSOFT 80386 equipment on a table to the side, presented very effectively slides at podium commands, as well as demonstrating real-time the features of a new "MS-Word" version.

Dave Lorenzini prepared a multi-page checklist days in advance to list the many, many volunteers from both OCIPUG and NOCCC whose tasks would make for a smooth performance.

Peggy Smith (Tim's widow) and some of her friends braved the cold at a table outside the theater, to sell copies of "Programmers at Work" from MICROSOFT PRESS. These books were autographed by Bill Gates and donated by him to OCIPUG. Proceeds from their sale will be added to the Tim Smith Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Volunteers greeted VIP guests and directed them to reserved seats, or handed out programs to other guests. With walkie-talkies, others directed late-comers to parking across Fairview Avenue.

Through Dave Carroll, "SLIDE-LINK" prepared slides locally to welcome the audience, acknowledge sponsors, and to introduce each of the speakers for the evening. An impressive flower arrangement was placed at the base of the podium.

To aid audience comprehension, and to make more useful video tapes of the program, a professional "signer" stood at the side of the stage for over two hours, translating for the deaf every comment of the speakers. Her body language fascinated us all!

The planning committee felt that the auditorium would overflow with all-out advertising, but more than just OCIPUG and NOCCC members certainly needed to know of the event. The committee thus publicized modestly, yet evidentially struck a good balance: the theater was comfortably full, but no one was turned away. A fair guess would be that 800 people attended.

To start, Dave Lorenzini declared that we were on board for a Journey Into the Future. After introductions and comments by the Presidents of both OCIPUG and NOCCC, Peggy Smith introduced Bill Gates.

Despite his focus on the future, Mr. Gates first gave us an insight into his and Microsoft's history, and the history of the personal computer in general. He encountered his first computer in the 7th grade, on a time-share terminal to a mainframe. In 1971 when Intel's "8008" appeared, Bill found a challenge, by classmate Paul Allen, to write a "Basic" interpreter for the 8008 "impossible." With the advent, three years later, of the INTEL "8080," Bill dropped out of college to accept the challenge. His success led to the first commercial "Basic" language for a microcomputer, the MITS "Altair 8800."

With the avowed purpose to revolutionize computing so that there would be a computer on every worker's desk and in everyone's home, Bill and Paul created MICROSOFT CORPORATION. Between hardware and software, Bill chose to emphasize software, because "I did not like to create things that stopped working" a remark loudly applauded by all in the audience. Now, 13 years later, Bill noted that only a small part of his original vision has been realized: 20% of office desks have computers, but less than 5% of households do. He viewed present market share in descending order as (1) Business Offices, (2) Work at Home, and (3) Home Computing.

When, a few years later, IBM introduced a personal computer to use the INTEL "8088," it was with fairly low expectations, but realizing that fast response to an opening market was needed. With a new division, IBM management departed from its usual in-house restrictions, buying component sub-assemblies from non-IBM sources. They chose to use a disk operating system originated by MICROSOFT. This choice of generally non-proprietary elements opened the door to marketing of compatible microcomputers, first by COMPAQ and then by others, both in the United States and overseas. Overseas manufacturers, in particular, "loned" IBM's PC, XT, and AT units, often with illegal "bios-ROM". This industry-standard, created by default, quickly obsoleted CPM and other systems based upon earlier 8-bit microprocessors. APPLE COMPUTERS survived, and today Apple's "MacIntosh" has about a tenth of the market of DOS machines. Machines using AT&T's UNIX have a still smaller market share. There are now over 25 million personal computers capable of running PC-DOS and MS-DOS programs.

Again and again, Mr. Gates returned to the concept of market share. Volume makes things practical, and even cheap, that would otherwise be economically impossible. He pointed out, however, that the first 13 customers for MICROSOFT BASIC went out of business within 18 months. Unprecedented success in sales of the INTEL "80X86" microprocessors established a fast-paced market for PC-DOS and MS-DOS, and for DOS-based programs. The promise of doubling performance with each new "80X86" version, yet retaining compatibility with existing programs, drives this marketplace. New hardware keeps appearing from other companies to work with these new chips; Mr. Gates in particular mentioned video displays, but could have easily pointed out new disk drives and memory chips. MICROSOFT actively participates in the design of these new components, even making and selling successfully such hardware as the MICROSOFT "Mouse." A third of all personal computers sold include a mouse.

Mr. Gates stressed that hardware advances are fundamental in getting the new systems to do what is asked, but better hardware alone is not enough. With PC-DOS and MS-DOS, with "Windows," and with OS/2 and "Presentation Manager," MICROSOFT has been a key player.

He regards DOS as far from dead, and expects important applications for DOS to continue for at least the next 12 years. But a significant number of people (again, volume!) will need something much more powerful in the near future. In 1991, Mr. Gates estimated that DOS will still be used by over 50% of all PC's, OS/2 will be used by 25% or more, and the "Macintosh" OS and UNIX operating systems will be used by the rest.

The key features of OS/2 are its management of large memory, its support of multitasking, its graphical user interface (Presentation Manager), and its new approach to LAN support (LAN Manager).

According to Mr. Gates, Microsoft's involvement in application software is increasing rapidly, to result in a much faster company growth than that of the industry as a whole. He divided application programs into general purpose: word processors, spread sheets, and group productivity, and "mission critical," such as airline reservation systems. MICROSOFT has become a major player in general purpose applications, but will not be much involved in mission critical ones - again, a matter of the number of copies expected to sell.

Next, Mr. Gates traced the evolution of the graphical user interface from its origin in the work at XEROX PARC (Palo Alto Research Center) in the early 70's to the introduction in 1984 by APPLE COMPUTERS of the "Macintosh." Microsoft's "Windows" has extended the graphic interface at the rate of

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### **Bill Gates' Vision: "...a computer on every worker's desk and in everyone's home."**

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some 80,000 copies a month, and IBM has recently defined a further step with its "System Application Architecture" (SAA). OS/2's "Presentation Manager" is its first appearance on a PC.

For Gates' vision of computers on every desk and in every home to be realized, he said two things must happen. First, a three-tier architecture of computing must be developed. Second, information data bases must be available for broad use.

In three-tier architecture, (1) mainframe computers will handle the largest databases, (2) servers will access data for workstations, and (3) users will have workstations. With different needs, software in each tier will be different. Only the user interface need be at an individual workstation, with the ability to formulate queries for the server to process. The server will access databases in the mainframe and send back to the individual workstation answers in a suitable read-out.

Information databases for broad use is the application which Mr. Gates thinks will best make sense for the home computer. He can visualize CD-ROM based products on all subjects which would allow anyone to access billions of bytes of useful information easily and inexpensively.

At this end to his formal presentation, Mr. Gates demonstrated a beta version of MICROSOFT "Word," Version 5.0. He cautioned that possible bugs could end the demonstration at any time, but assured us of its full functionality by its announced release next month. After a display of quite impressive features, the demonstration DID end suddenly.

Paul Curtis announced that "Tonight our Random Access will be hosted by Bill Gates, and I can't think of a better source for answers to your questions." Indeed, in the Random Access Mr. Gates clearly knew what each questioner had in mind and responded to it concisely, but in depth. He responded to arcane jargon in kind, but afterward confessed to me that

"I worry that they may think I am just snowing them." His concern is understandable, with such issues as "referential integrity," or "SQL versus DB2.

### **Questions asked and summaries of his answers follow:**

#### **(1) Will Microsoft be introducing database applications?**

Not as they exist now. The SQL server, which MICROSOFT is developing with ASHTON-TATE will serve part of that need. New versions of "Basic" with database extensions will serve the rest.

#### **(2) What about the APPLE lawsuit?**

This is without merit for three reasons:

{A} XEROX invented the technology, not APPLE.

{B} What is claimed as apple's property is actually not protected under current law.

{C} MICROSOFT and APPLE negotiated an agreement on all of this years ago. A real problem with the APPLE suit is that it has confused people and thus has slowed down the development of non-Macintosh graphical applications.

#### **(3) Why does MICROSOFT not support commodore's "Amiga"?**

There aren't enough of them.

#### **(4) How do MICROSOFT C products compare with Borland's?**

MICROSOFT has two C-compilers, QUICK-C and C-5.1. The more expensive C-5.1 has better sales than QUICK-C because it is so powerful. PASCAL is the only PC language in which MICROSOFT is not the leader at this time.

#### **(5) What is "embedded Basic"?**

This will be an object-oriented version of "Basic", to be embedded into other programs so that users who wish to do so can customize applications in a way which is standard, rather than, for example, having to create individual program macros.

#### **(6) What are viable home applications for computers?**

**The three which most people talk about are**

(1) Interactive Databases,

(2) Home Terminals for home shopping, etc), and

(3) Home Control.

Bill Gates was enthusiastic personally only about interactive databases. He saw the real competition for PC's as television, and since PC's can be interactive entertainment, he thought the PC would draw people away from TV.

#### **(7) Even if my PC is cheap, how can I afford all that software for my home use?**

You have a couple of choices. Feel free to bring your work software home to use it there, provided that you make sure no one can use it at work at the same time. Or, buy a cheaper package for home use. MICROSOFT "Works", as an example, combines many very good functions in one inexpensive bundle. Not perhaps state of the art, but certainly as good as one could buy 3 or 4 years ago.

#### **(8) Do you have a vision of the social impact of computers?**

"If we did, what would we do with it?" [My favorite of his answers!] Mr. Gates went on to say if PC's could lure people from TV and get them more involved with interaction and feedback, this would be good for them.

After formal questions ended, Mr. Gates met people personally and answered yet more questions. One which interested me particularly was "What do you do with your time, and how do you keep current?"

Mostly, he told us, he writes and reviews program specifications, reads a lot, and talks to professors at universities. Also the seven "Architects of MICROSOFT" report directly to him, and whenever they disagree he hears them out, and then decides the issue. He has a "Macintosh II" and a 386 computer, both at home and in his office. Although he said "Everyone sends me each new software package! Other than for electronic mail, Bill Gates spends about 3 hours each week using a computer.

The ultimate "power user" turns out not to USE a computer that much after all!

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## **Legal Bytes: File Sharing - The Pot Continues to Boil**

*By John Brewer*

*Oklahoma City PC Users Group*

Napster took the cyber-community by storm. The concept of file sharing across the Internet, in spite of the inherent risk, became very popular. The computer literate generation thought that sharing MP3s over the Internet was fun and harmless. The big guns in the media industry thought otherwise.

The July article of Legal Bytes explored the current assault by DirecTV on defendants who are accused of possessing equipment that permit interception and decryption of the digital television transmissions of DirecTV.

Reps. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich) and Howard Berman (D-Calif) have introduced a new bill in Congress that would impose a prison term and a fine for uploading a single file to a peer-to-peer network. They said the bill is designed to increase domestic and international enforcement of copyright laws.

Wired News reported the introduction of the congressional proposal. "The bill, called the "Author, Consumer and Computer Owner Protection and Security Act of 2003," or ACCOPS, would allocate more money to the Department of Justice to investigate copyright crimes: up to \$15 million a year, compared with the current budget of \$10 million. The bill would also enable information sharing between countries to help in copyright enforcement abroad.

"The bill "clarifies" that uploading a single file of copyright content qualifies as a felony. Penalties for such an offense include up to five years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine. In addition, filming a movie in a theater without authorization would immediately qualify as a federal offense.

"We're giving notice that this is something we want specific attention paid to," said the aide. "The current law is very general."

"ACCOPS also mandates that file-sharing websites must get consent from consumers to search their computers for content or to store files. In addition, those who provide false information when registering a domain name could also be charged with a federal offense.

"Last year, Rep. Berman introduced a bill that would protect copyright holders from liability if they impaired or disrupted the unauthorized distribution of the unauthorized distribution of their content on P2P networks. The bill is still being debated. "

Wired News further reported that "Jason Schultz, a staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, called the bill "a sign of desperation" by the recording industry and Hollywood as they try to hold on to their business models.

Schultz said ACCOPS shows that the recording and movie industries "don't care what kinds of collateral damage they create. Sufficient laws are in place to punish those who violate copyright law," he said.

Schultz stated, "the poorly written bill sets up an unnecessarily wide dragnet. It criminalizes the placement of any copyright work on a computer network. If you have a file stored on your computer and your computer is connected to a publicly available network, you may not even know that you are committing a felony, but this law could put you in jail."

"There have been hearings, year in and year out, and consumers have not complained about anything that is going on in this bill," Schultz said. "The only people complaining are the content industry folks. The content industry is asking the public to fund this kind of an effort against themselves."

This is a fight that will not go away. The rhetoric gets very intense. Are file swappers a national security risk? Apparently there are members of Congress who think so. In a recent meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee for the US Congress, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) gave his personal opinion about file sharing. According to a report on MSNBC, Hatch said, "By the end of the session, the only committee member in attendance, chairman Orrin Hatch-himself a songwriter who sells CDs on his personal Web site - zeroed in on what really bugged him: people sharing copyrighted songs on the Internet without paying for them. Then he ran an idea by one of the panelists: what if you had a system that could detect whether people were getting songs without paying for them and could warn those infringers that what they were doing was wrong?"

And then, if they didn't stop, the system would remotely "destroy" their computers. "No one's interested in destroying people's computers," said the panelist. "Well, I'm interested in doing that," said the senator. "Warn them, do it again, and then destroy their machine! There's no excuse for anyone violating our copyright laws."

Is it possible that the equivalent of a cyber cruise missile would target the offending computer and blow the computer to smithereens? I never knew that P2P file sharing could be life threatening.

The MSNBC website also states that the RIAA (the Record Industry Association of America) sent out hundreds of subpoenas recently to individuals and Internet service providers. Carey Sherman, president of the RIAA, says the time for patience is over. "We've reached a point where we have a legitimate marketplace for downloading music, and we want to give it a chance," says Sherman, referring to the spiffy services like Apple's iTunes Music Store, the new Buy.Com store and subscription services like Rhapsody. But the game is just starting, and the best way to make sure that these services come up with compelling innovations is to match them off against the Kazaas of the world, which are far from perfect (the quality is erratic, they put spyware on your computers, they're loaded with porn). You can compete against free - ever hear of bottled water?"

Eventually, there will be a variety of legal digital music that one will be able to download over the Internet. Until then, the maneuvering of the "powers that be" is fun to watch.

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. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to johnb@jnbrewer.com.



## Take Rest Breaks, Exercise To Prevent Computer Ailments

By Ken Fermoye

Between us, my wife and I offer a catalog of physical ills caused by long hours of working on computers: repetitive stress injury (RSI), neck pain, backaches and vision problems. Liz underwent surgery twice for carpal tunnel syndrome and still has frequent wrist and hand pain.

I have suffered from aggravated neck and back injuries. My vision has deteriorated from 20 years of staring at a monitor, although admittedly age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and cataracts have been more damaging.

The sad truth is that if we knew 15 years ago what we know now, these problems need not have occurred. Or if they had, they would have been less severe. Even sadder is that prevention of many computer-related ailments is neither difficult nor especially time-consuming.

Frequent rest breaks are vital, says my chiropractor, Kurt W. Rice, who is also my son-in-law, God bless him. (He has helped me more times in recent years with neck and back problems than I care to remember!)

The breaks needn't be lengthy. Dr. Kurt recommends that we get up from our chairs every half-hour or so, stretch our backs and walk for a minute or two. Other experts offer different opinions about frequency and duration of breaks but all agree that they are vital.

Sitting and working at a computer creates more tension and stress on muscles, nerves, tendons and joints than most of us realize. Our bodies fight gravity every minute that we're seated. Breaks alleviate this tension and stress.

To prevent the dreaded carpal tunnel syndrome, during your break let your hands go limp at the wrist and wiggle them vigorously in what some call "the clerk & typist exercise."

Some people use voice recognition programs to cut down on their need to use a keyboard and mouse. I find that difficult; after more than 50 years of banging away at typewriter and computer keys, dictation comes hard to me. Now that voice recognition is improving and more reliable, however, I've resolved to use it more often. A major benefit is that you can use a microphone or headset while standing or even lying down. I plan to try dictating drafts, then to rewrite and edit as necessary from the keyboard.

Vision experts warn that we should take "eye breaks" even more frequently. Every 10 or 12 minutes, look away from the monitor at objects 10 to 12 feet away. When I'm working with a word processor or any other program that allows me to increase type size easily and temporarily, I do it. Working with 14- instead of 10-point type prevents squinting and straining to see my work. It also allows me to sit up straight, not bent over the keyboard, and you can always reduce point size before printing or sending e-mail.

I mentioned my neck and back injuries earlier. The neck problems began about 17 years ago. I was riding my bicycle when a large tree limb broke off and fell on me. (Fortunately I was wearing a good helmet or the freak accident might have killed me.) That caused some damage, which increased with age and was aggravated by working on computers and long-distance cycling. The pain got so bad I could not turn my head to either side more than 12 or 15 degrees. Dr. Kurt came to the rescue, with manipulation, ultra-sound and heat packs. He recommended several simple exercises, which I try to do regularly.

My back injuries were computer-related. The first came when I installed a second drive in one of our machines. I crawled under a desk to get at the computer case. After removing all the cables, I tried to lift the box and slide it out to where I could work on it, not waiting to shift to a position that would give me more leverage.

Bad move. I heard a pop and was in instant agony. It took several weeks of Dr. Kurt's ministrations to recover from that one. I injured it again in October 1999 after conducting my monthly desktop publishing/word processing SIG. I took a computer and 17-inch monitor out of a car trunk with a high lip that made it impossible to lift them properly. I had to bend and lift with my back?and pop, there it went again! This time, recovery took even longer.

I mention these details to make a point. The first instance was pure accident. No way could I foresee that a brittle, rotted pepper tree branch would break off and fall just as I pedaled under it. The second injury occurred because I didn't take time to position myself properly. The third case was avoidable too; I should never have tried to lift heavy objects out of that particular car trunk. Trouble is, I forget my hard-used back is more vulnerable now than it was even 20 ago, and I think many of us who have reached senior citizen status do the same.

I just caught myself in a no-no a few minutes ago. I wanted a book from a built-in shelf high and to the right of my home office workstation. I started to reach up, twisting my back at an awkward angle. Various muscles prepared to scream in protest, so I did what I should have done in the first place. I moved my chair out of the way, got a step stool I keep folded behind the door, set it firmly in place and climbed up to find the desired book. It took a few extra minutes, but it kept me from aggravating my previously-injured back.

The book, by the way was Zap! How your computer can hurt you, and what you can do about it. Written by Don Sellers (edited by Stephen E. Roth). You can find Zap! and the condensed version, 25 Steps to Safe Computing, also by Sellers, at [micronite.com](http://micronite.com). Either book would be a good addition to your library.

Meanwhile give yourself, and your body, a break'at least once every half-hour!

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# Online Information for the Elderly & the Disabled

By Steve Rosenthal, Secretary,  
Space Coast PC Users Group, Cocoa, Florida

On Tuesday, July 22, 2003, Kim Komando ([www.komando.com](http://www.komando.com)) had a link to a site that is of major interest to EVERYONE approaching retirement, Social Security, and/or who is permanently disabled for any reason. The site is sponsored by the National Council on the Aging, and hosted by AOL's GovernmentGuide.com. It is called <http://benefitscheckup.org> (do not add "www"), and is a comprehensive guide and list of any and all programs that are available to the "older generation," i.e. adults who are ready for Social Security or on permanent disability. This is a "must see" site for anyone with questions of importance about their benefits at or near 65.

The opening page has several choices: 1) How to Use the Site, 2) Tips, 3) Sponsors, 4) Support for N.C.O.A. (National Council On Aging). The first place to go on the site would be the "Benefits CheckUp" button, which will take the reader to several pages that ask important and pertinent questions about the individual, spouse and any dependents living in the household. There is a second button that takes the reader to a page for prescription drug information and savings.

I would suggest starting with the Check Up button, and going through the questionnaire, filling out ALL the questions as accurately as possible. The reader will need information on: A) State & Zip Code, B) Dates of birth for individual and spouse, C) Type of residence, D) Length of time living there, E) Veteran status, F) Employment History as it refers to governmental employment, G) Prescription Medication List (very important), H) Current income and their sources, I) Current Expenses.

Get this information together BEFORE entering the site, as it will speed the process of "filling in the blanks." The reader has only 20 minutes to answer all the questions, before the site "times out," meaning the reader will have to start all over from the beginning.

Once the reader has started the questionnaire (Click the "Click Here" button), there are about 35 or so questions, on approximately 10 different pages, some of which will require detailed information on medications, household income, work status, marital status, and the like.

A detailed questionnaire on current medications will probably take the longest, so it is advisable that a current list of medications be written out and by the computer when answering this part of the questionnaire. Not all drugs are listed; some are listed as generic meds.

After filling in all the information, the site will then take a minute or so to assess the input, and select a list of sites and contact addresses/ phone numbers for applications for various programs that would be valuable to the individual, assist limited income individuals who need help with their bills and even suggest further research for available programs for the retired and limited income families.

The federal government offers tax breaks and some private companies offer reduced price medicines for individuals and families on fixed incomes, which help retirees and the disabled cope with month-to-month living expenses and "survival."

As far as I can tell, none of the information is stored — it is erased after the 20-minute time period has elapsed. It doesn't appear to be "collected," and if it is, it would only be for statistical purposes, since the site does not ask for a name, address, phone number, Social Security Number, or any other personal identifying information directly traceable back to the individual. Answering the questions honestly simply retrieves information for the reader. In total, there are about 40 questions, and the most comprehensive is the one about prescription meds.

With ALL of your personal information at hand, it should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey, and another minute or two for the site to retrieve the pertinent information for your specific situation. The results will vary according to each individual's input and can list a few or several sources for further printing out the final results, as names, addresses, phone numbers and web sites can be extensive and comprehensive, depending on the individual's answers to the questionnaire. Examples of the results may include:

1) Golden Access Passport, 2) Food Stamp Program, 3) Medicare Counseling through the SHINE organization, 4) Real Property Tax & Other Exemptions, 5) Homestead Property Tax Deferral (for FLA residences in particular), 6) Earned Income Tax Credit, and other qualifying programs, depending on income status.

These are by no means the total list; you will get a list that applies directly to YOUR specific needs and income level. Anyone with a computer can access this information, and if you don't have a computer at home, your local library (or even a neighbor, friend or family relative) can access the site, fill in the required information, retrieve the results, and print out the information for you to follow up via letter or phone call.

The Internet is chock full of, and a FANTASTIC source of information if you know where and how to look for it. This particular information might take an individual months to collect separately, but on the Internet, it took only 20- 30 minutes to gather, print, and store in a file that can be referred to over and over again.

I was able to download the PDF file with ALL the information in text form, which I can then read at my leisure or constantly go back to as a reference source. Anyone who is interested in available benefits should access this site, and do the questionnaire for themselves. Again, the name of the site is <http://benefitscheckup.org> and is available 24/7.

Take advantage of what the Internet has to offer; you'd be surprised at the wealth of information available. If you need further information, my Email address is [stever43@bellsouth.net](mailto:stever43@bellsouth.net). Feel free to contact me, and I will do my best to help you find the information you are seeking. Good luck with your search, and use the Internet to its fullest capacity, you'll be pleasantly surprised at what it has to offer.



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Material for the **February 2004** issue must be received on or before **January 25, 2004**

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 rwalker820@msn.com and newsletter coordinator  
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2. Mail a 3.5" disk so as to be received by the deadline by the Newsletter Coordinator at the OCIPUG mailing address above.
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