

Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

README.DOC

October 2004

Newsletter

Volume 20.10

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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General Meeting Oct.30th



Happy Halloween



Gene Barlow



The Perfect Backup Approach



Orange Coast IBM PC User Group
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Costa Mesa, California 92627

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

OCIPUG Web Page: www.ocipug.org

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

30 Oct.

20 Nov.

18 Dec.

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

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

20 Nov.

18 Dec.

**All OCIPUG members
are welcome**

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

1st Tuesday Internet

2nd Tuesday Hardware

3rd Tuesday Windows

4th Tuesday Digital Photo

All SIG Groups start at 7:00pm

October 30th General Meeting

User Group Relations

User Group Relations is proud to represent Acronis, WhiteCanyon, Spearit Software and selected other PC vendors to the user group community. These vendors offer some very exciting and useful products that can help you better use your personal computer. They also value their user group customers and provide a full line of support programs to these groups.

Organization Products

When you first buy your computer system it is setup with one large c: drive for all of your files. This is the easiest way for the manufacturer to setup your computer, but it is far from the best way for you to arrange your computer. With the tools in this department, you can tailor your hard drive to your own best use. You can also setup and run more than one operating system on your computer if you choose. These products will even make it easier to migrate to a new operating system or to a brand new computer. Most users will find that these products are some of the most important tools you could add to your computer.

Acronis Disk Director Suite 9.0:



Acronis Disk Director Suite 9.0 brings together the most popular disk management functions in a single suite. Included are Partitioning, Multibooting, Disk editing, and Partition recovery utilities. Reorganize your PC for better performance and data safety. Resize, copy and move partitions without losing your data. Install and boot multiple operating systems. Automated and manual modes for beginning and advanced users. This excellent product does everything that the PartitionMagic product does and then some. A real winner that all serious users should have on their PC.

(List Price: \$63) User Group Price: \$34

BackupProducts

This department shows you the products to help you safely backup your hard drive. Backing up your hard drive is one of the most important things you should do on your computer to safeguard it from hard drive crashes and destructive viruses.

We offer the following excellent products in this area. These are the finest backup products available. Pick the one that best fits your system and needs.

Acronis True Image 8.0: The complete disk imaging, system backup and restore for workstations and home PCs. Acronis True Image 8.0 allows you to create an exact disk image for complete system backup providing the most comprehensive data protection. The disk image file includes all the computer data including the operating system, programs, data, e-mails, pictures, MP3s, and the like. After a system failure you can restore the entire system or simply replace lost files and folders from your disk backup. This is a must have program for your PC.

(List Price: \$63) User Group Price: \$34

Backing Up Your Hard Drive: is our new training CD that focuses on what you should do to backup and protect your hard drive.



Discovering your Hard Drive is an educational CD.

You place it in your CD reader and it comes alive and starts to inform you about your hard drive.

Understanding your Hard Drive

- ◆ Upgrading your Hard Drive
- ◆ Organizing your Hard Drive
- ◆ Managing your Operating Systems
- ◆ Moving to a New Operating System
- ◆ Backing Up your Hard Drive

Get your copy today and start to learn about your hard drive. This may be the best investment you will make to better understand your computer.

User Group Price: \$14

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

Nov.2, 2004

Internet - 1st Tuesday 7:00PM

Mark Borison webmaster@ocipug.org

Nov. 9, 2004

* Hardware - 2nd Tuesday 7:00PM

Ed Leckliter eleckliter@adelphia.net

Nov. 16, 2004

Windows - 3rd Tuesday 7:00PM

Robert Strader robert.strader@comcast.net

Nov. 23, 2004

Digital Cameras / Scanning - 4th Tuesday 7:00PM

David Wintle allart@pac.bell.net

*** In Nov. Steve Shiffman will be presenting a special Networking SIG while Ed is out of the country.**



Upcoming General Meetings

October 30th

Gene Barlow

November 20th

Ink Dot Lady

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

December 18th

Annual Pot Luck Feast



Annual APCUG Conference



Thanks to the many of you who have already registered for this year's annual conference in January 2005 at the Stardust Resort and Casino. If you have not registered, I want to remind you that although the Early Bird Registration ended September 15. If you register between now and December 1, the fee is \$100.00. After December 1 the fee is \$150.00. It pays to register early! When you register, be sure to click through the complete process of registration and check out the APCUG Logo Merchandise.

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OCIPUG Hardware SIG: Meeting Recap

Meeting Date: October 12, 2004



There were 11 attendees (including SIG Leader, Ed Leckliter)

Featured Topic(s): Network Hardware: How It Works - Part 1 of 2 (Steve Schiffman). The regular "New Hardware" section was done by Ed.

Hardware Submissions - none

Random Access - no questions submitted.

Next Meeting: November 9, 2004

Next Meeting Featured Topic(s): Network Hardware: How It Works - Part 2 of 2 (Steve Schiffman). The regular "New Hardware" section will be done by Ed.

Following Meeting: December 14, 2004

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): CPUs: Update (12 '04)

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)

Presentation slides in Microsoft PowerPoint format (.ppt). [NOTE: There are no slides for the portion of the program provided by Steve.]

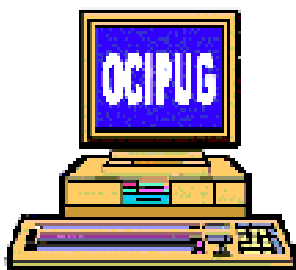
For the latest OCIPUG Hardware SIG info, please check the SIG's web site or contact Ed Leckliter (SIG Leader) at leckliter@adelphia.net.

Mark's Meanderings

Mark Borison
Editor README.DOC
Webmaster & Programs
OCIPUG

Well, it's been a difficult month for me and I am writing these words sitting in an apartment on Rush St. in Chicago. As some of you may well know during the course of last's months General Meeting I received a call from home informing me that my 92 year old Mother was showing some symptoms of having had a stroke. I left the meeting and upon arriving home found the paramedics and the fire dept. there and my mother's speech was somewhat slurred, so it was decided to transport her to Hoague for an examination to determine if she had suffered a stroke. At the hospital upon enduring all the tests, it was determined she had experienced an episode that often precedes a stroke and she was having difficulty swallowing. She was admitted, did have a stroke the next night, was eventually moved to Mesa Verde Nursing Home and back to the hospital a few days later where she peacefully passed away the next day, with my nephew Michael, her caregiver Marcella, Rabbi Mintz, and myself present. It actually was quite remarkable as she drew her final breath as the Rabbi finished. Her life was a true success story of a young Russian girl of 10 who came here not knowing a word of English who graduated from U. of Illinois at 20 or 21 went on to get her Masters degree at Northwestern while working and helping to raise a child she adopted when her sister died in childbirth. She got married had 2 children, my sister Lenore and I, endured the death of her spouse in the early 50's and went on to become the Director of Northwest Mental Health Center in Chicago, finally retiring in 1993 at the age of 81 with 60 years in her chosen field.

Any volunteer work I have ever done was essentially because of her influence, she always stressed the act of giving of yourself without motive and I have tried to do so. The reason I came to Orange County was to try to make her final years more comfortable and at the same time to do what I could to help others at the same time. I have done what I could if I felt it was beneficial to the community, although at times with OCIPUG I have wondered if the efforts were worth it as I often see a minimum of cooperation and that has been disappointing at times. Since my Mother passed away, my reasons for being in Orange County have changed and I am considering coming back to Chicago because I have a place to live there whereas I have been living at my sister's here. I guess my point is essentially that if I were to leave soon and no one had stepped forward, OCIPUG would have no one to update the webpage, publish the RMD, or arrange for programs. This needs to be addressed! OCIPUG does many positive things in disseminating information about computers and how to use and maintain them. This needs to continue and more members need to be involved. It is a wonderful opportunity to help, don't deny yourself this chance to both give and receive.



OCIPUG
Orange Coast IBM
PC User Group

The Perfect Backup Approach

By Gene Barlow

User Group Relations

Copyrighted: August, 2004

Backing up your hard drive is the most important thing that a user should do on a regular basis. Unfortunately, few users take the time to do this important process or even understand what the best way to backup their hard drives is. This article will show you the perfect approach to backing up your hard drive and tell you which hardware and software products to use to accomplish this approach.

I'm always amazed to find that almost everyone runs an Anti-Virus software product on their computers, but that only about 10% of users understand what backing up their computer is all about and do it on a regular basis. While Anti-Virus software is important to run, it is not fool proof. Fast moving viruses today can attack and destroy your hard drive before you even download the description of the new virus. A solid backup is the only real safeguard against a virus attack.

So, why don't more users make good backups of their hard drives? Until the past few months, backing up your hard drive was cumbersome, time consuming, and unpleasant. Users preferred to risk losing their entire hard drive rather than take the time and effort to do regular backups. All of that has changed in the past few months, where today backups can be taken automatically without much effort. All you have to know is the secret of how to do it, and your computer can be safe and secure.

Backup Hardware: The first step to having a successful backup is choosing the right backup hardware to use to save your backups to. For years, users have been burning CDs for their backups. This approach was full of frustrations and problems. First, it seems that creating a backup and then burning it to many CDs would overtax most computer systems. If anything went wrong, the entire backup process would cancel, leaving you with several burnt CDs, but not a complete backup you could count on. Worst than that, the backup might appear to complete, but the CDs were corrupt and would not restore properly. Thank goodness, CDs have been replaced with a much more reliable backup media.

A couple of years ago, external hard drives entered the computer marketplace in large numbers. Today, a good external hard drive is the ideal backup media to use. Instead of sitting by your computer for hours to feed it another blank CD while it is backing up your hard drive, all you need to do is to attach your external hard drive and then go watch TV or take a nap. Your backup will be taken automatically without your being involved. No more drudgery of making backups to CDs.

Why are external hard drives the ideal backup media? First, they are large enough to backup your main hard drive on one device. You do not need to backup to multiple CDs, so the whole process can be automated and you do not have to be around to

feed the blank CDs. Second, backing up to an external hard drive is many times faster than burning CDs. An external hard drive is almost as fast as the internal hard drives on your computer. So, the backup completes in much less time. Third, external hard drives are much more reliable at saving your important files. CDs can easily become scratched or flawed and not protect your important backups. Finally, external hard drives are relatively inexpensive to buy and use. Everyone can afford an external hard drive today.

What should you look for when buying an external hard drive for backup purposes. External hard drives come in two basic flavors – USB2 and Firewire. One is just as fast as the other and both will do the job of backing up your main hard drive. You will need to attach the external hard drive to your computer using either a USB2 port or a Firewire port on your computer. Most computers today come with a USB port on them, so these are the more popular type of external hard drives. The thing to watch out for is if your computer has an older USB1 port on it instead of the faster USB2 port. If you have an older USB1 port, you can still attach and run your USB2 external hard drive, but it will run at the slower USB1 speed. If this is your case, you can add a USB2 port to your computer for a small price.

The external hard drives come in a couple of sizes – miniature and standard drives. The miniature external hard drives have a 2.5 inch laptop computer hard drive inside a small case. These drives are small enough to fit in your pocket and light to carry. They do have a couple of disadvantages to them that you should be aware of. First, they only will hold 20GB, 40GB, and 80GB of backup files. This may not be big enough to backup your 300GB main hard drive. Second, you pay quite a bit for the small size of these miniature drives. The 20GB drives will cost you \$160, the 40GB drives are \$200 and the 80GB drives are over \$300. So, you end up paying for the small size.

If you can tolerate a slightly larger external hard drive (about the size of a college text book), you can get much more capacity for less money. These standard sized external hard drives start at about 80GB and go up to 300GB and larger. An 80GB or 120GB external hard drive is an excellent size for most backup needs. If you watch for sales on these drives, you may find an 80GB hard drive for under \$100. I have seen them as low as \$69. The 120GB external hard drives will be more expensive, but can be as low as \$99. So, watch the ads in your local paper and you may find a great deal on external USB2 hard drives.

Backup Software: The second part of having an ideal backup approach is using the right backup software product. Backup utilities come in many different types. I'm going to share with you the secret of finding the best backup utility to use with your external hard drive. You need to look for one that offers incremental backup images as one of their features. Why is this feature so important? Let me explain.

Older backup utilities would backup individual files. These utilities were slow since they had to use the operating system to find and retrieve each file separately. We have hundreds of thousands of files on our hard drive and so working on

individual files one at a time is very slow. If each file was compressed individually, to save space on your external hard drive, the backup process went even slower. A better backup utility will backup your entire hard drive (a partition at a time) and does this at the hard drive sector level. These types of backup utilities create backup images of your hard drive that you can save to your external hard drive. To conserve space, these images are compressed to about half their normal size which permits you to keep many backup images on your external hard drive. Size and speed are very important factors in your backup approach as you will see in a minute.

While an image backup utility is a major step in the right direction, it is not the ultimate solution. You need the ability to do incremental backup images and not just full backup images. With full backup images, you still end up backing up your entire hard drive each time, even if only a small portion of the drive has changed since you last backed it up. So, the images contain a lot of repeated files that do not need to be backed up. With the incremental backup image approach, only the changed sectors on a hard drive are backed up and not those parts of the hard drive that has not changed since the last backup. So, the incremental images are much smaller in size and are completed much quicker than a full backup image.

A little calculation at this point may help you understand why the incremental backup image feature is so important. Let's say you have a 120GB main hard drive that is a third full. That means it has about 40GB of files on it. A full condensed image of this hard drive would be about 20GB in size (with a compression of about 50%). That means that you could store about four separate backups on your 80GB external hard drive. Using the incremental backup image approach, you may be able to store 30 or 40 separate backups on the same 80GB external hard drive. Because you can keep more incremental images on your external hard drive, you can make your backups more frequently than if you were limited to only four full backups. This means that your backups would be more current with the incremental image approach versus the full backup approach. This means less lost files since the last backup. This is of major importance when considering a backup approach.

How to Backup your Hard Drive: To complete this article, let me suggest how you would do your backups using an external hard drive and an incremental backup image utility. For the average user, I would suggest that you set up a regular schedule to make your backup images. I would make a full backup of your hard drive at the beginning of the month and then an incremental backup image at the end of each week that follows. So, you would have one full backup image and 3-4 much smaller incremental backup images. At the beginning of the next month, make another full backup image and follow this again with weekly incremental images. Save all of these images on your external hard drive and don't delete any of the older images until you start to run out of space on the drive. If you have a very active computer system, you could make a full backup at the beginning of the week and incremental backup images at the end of each day. Most users will not need to do the backups this frequently, but some may want the extra protection of more frequent

backups. Either way, the approach is the same, just the frequency is changed.

Finally, let me share one additional secret with you on this ideal backup approach. There have been a couple of enterprise software products that offer the incremental backup image feature, but there is only one consumer backup utility that I am aware of that offers the incremental backup image feature and that is Acronis' True Image product. This excellent backup utility was awarded PC Magazine's Editors Choice award as the best backup imaging utility on the market. PC World calls True Image as the leader in the field of incremental backup images.

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Page(s) 38-39 in print issue of
Smart Computing

Backup Headaches Solved

Answers To 10 Common Questions

by Bill Eager



Backing up your system is a task we all know we should tend to more often than we do. But let's be honest, there's always tomorrow. The consequences of not backing up your vital data, however, can be disastrous. Taking steps to protect your data is not as complicated as it may seem, and the results can turn what could have been calamitous into a minor headache.

Question: How often should I back up my computer or data files?

Answer: The answer depends upon how rapidly you create new files or make changes to existing files. If you do a lot of work every day, daily backups are a good idea. Remember, your computer can go down at any time, and you could lose anything you haven't backed up. Eight hours of work is a lot to do all over.

Question: Do I need to be concerned about virus protection issues for my backups?

Answer: Yes. It is possible to back up a file that contains a virus. You definitely need to have the latest antivirus software and virus definitions. You can use this software to scan and evaluate the files you have stored on backup media. Then, clean or delete files that contain viruses.

Question: Do I need to back up my program files and my data files?

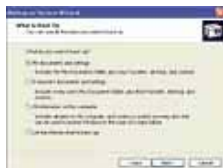
Answer: This is a matter of personal preference. **Program files** (files that contain the executable parts of the program and are necessary for it to run) are large, and you should have CD-ROMs of your original program files. If your computer dies, you can always reinstall the software, but the individual data files

(such as documents, pictures, music, and PowerPoint files) are often irreplaceable. To make things easier, many users save all of their data files in subfolders in the My Documents folder and then back up all of these files. If you have enough backup space, there's nothing wrong with **mirroring** (making a backup copy of everything on your system) your hard drive.

Question: I don't have backup software. Does Windows XP Home include any?

Answer: Yes, but you have to install it. The WinXP Backup utility is not included in the default installation of WinXP Home Edition, nor is it listed in Add/Remove Programs. However, the utility is on the CD that comes with WinXP. Place this CD in your optical drive and browse to `E:\VALUEADD\MSFT\NTBACKUP`, where *E* is the letter of your CD drive. Double-click `NTBackup.msi` to install the program.

The disc will add the Backup utility to the System Tools group, which you access by going to Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and Backup. When you launch the utility, a wizard helps you through the process of backing up or restoring files.



The Windows backup wizard helps you tailor your backup.

Question: Will WinXP Backup/Restore restore things such as my system settings and bookmarks?

Answer: Absolutely. Using WinXP Backup/Restore, it is possible to back up everything on your hard drive, including your bookmarks, Desktop configuration, and system settings, as well as make a system recovery diskette. You will also have a chance to select advanced backup options that enable you to determine the type of backup you want to perform. Options are Normal (backs up selected files and marks each file as backed up), Copy (backs up selected files but doesn't mark them as such), Incremental (backs up files only if they were created or modified since the previous backup), Differential (same as Incremental but doesn't mark files as backed up), and Daily (only backs up files that were created or modified that day).

Question: How do I use my backup media to restore my system when it does crash?

Answer: Backup software will have specific instructions on the procedures for a full backup. Check the software's users manual to learn what you have to do. If you aren't using backup software, you can reinstall your software on a new computer (or your existing computer if it is repaired and requires reinstallation) and then copy all of your data files from the backup media.

Question: My backups are taking too long, and I'm using a ton of CDs. How can I speed this along?

Answer: The best way to both save space and increase speed of backups on CDs is to compress your files and/or folders. You can

purchase compression software, or if you have WinXP, that OS (operating system) has a way to compress folders, subfolders, and files. For example, you can compress all of the files and subfolders in your My Documents folder.

Go to Start and right-click My Documents (or any other folder you'd like to compress). Select Properties from the pop-up menu. Click Advanced on the General tab. Select the Compress Contents To Save Disk Space checkbox and then click OK.

WinXP will compress all of the files in this folder, as well as any files you add to the folder. The files are automatically uncompressed and will launch normally when you open them.

Question: How can I use an extra hard drive as a backup system?

Answer: Second hard drives are an inexpensive way to back up files and programs. You can purchase an internal or external hard drive, but external hard drives carry some advantages. They are small, have tremendous amounts of space, are relatively inexpensive, and transfer data rapidly with USB (Universal Serial Bus) 2.0 ports and/or FireWire. Iomega offers a series of portable and removable hard drives called REV (about \$400, depending on the model; <http://www.iomega.com>). They provide 35GB of storage, which, when compressed, increases to 90GB.

Another manufacturer, AcomData, offers the RocketPod (about \$200; <http://www.acomdata.com>). RocketPod also lets you choose USB 2.0 or FireWire for data transfer. The RocketPod comes with a tremendous 160GB of hard drive space. If you add an AcomData DockPod (pricing not available at press time), you can stack multiple RocketPods. They seamlessly relay power and data signals, making it easy to add additional storage/backup space as you need it.

Question: How can I use a portable backup system to keep data with me?

Answer: Portable backup solutions are another great way to back up your data and transfer it among PCs. There are two types of portable memory, USB drives and hard drives. USB flash drives have less storage capacity than portable hard drives and are more expensive, but they are smaller and more durable because they don't incorporate any moving parts.

SanDisk offers the Cruiser Titanium USB 2.0 Hi-Speed flash drive (\$199.99; <http://www.sandisk.com>), which provides 512MB of backup space. This pocket-sized device features a titanium-coated metal casing, capable of surviving a force of up to 2,000 pounds. It comes bundled with Cruiser PocketCache software, which enables you to perform regular backup of PC files and directories. CruiserLock software provides a security application to protect your data files, enabling you to encrypt or decrypt individual files to prevent unauthorized viewing.

If you want a lot more backup space, consider the Digitalway MPIO HS 100 (\$199; <http://www.mpio.com>), which provides 1.5GB of storage. The size of a deck of playing cards, MPIO is a moderately priced mobile backup product. It combines the capacity of a hard drive sans taking up much physical space. It is capable of fast data transmission (38Mbps [megabits per second]) via USB 2.0.

Question: Is there a way to use an online service to back up my files?

Answer: There are several reasons to consider online backups. Online storage is off-site. If you lose everything in your physical location (due to a fire, for example), the off-site backup will still be intact. Online backups can include encryption during transmission and on the servers. Online storage means you can access, upload, or download your files from any location.

If you decide to use an online service for backup, seriously consider high-speed Internet access. DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) and cable modems offer speeds up to 1.5Mbps, which will help you upload and download the enormous amount of data required to back up a hard drive. With a 1.5Mbps connection, an 8MB file would take about 43 seconds to upload or download.

Cont. from p.

The same 8MB file would require about 20 minutes to upload using a 56KB dial-up modem.

Iomega has an online backup service called iStorage (<http://www.iomega.com/istorage>). Archive data to your online storage account or download files to your laptop, desktop PC, or PDA (personal digital assistant). The service uses SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) 128-bit encryption. The iStorage desktop software backs up your critical data. Prices range from \$2.49 a month for 50MB to \$17.95 a month for 1,000MB. For other online backup options, consider FilesAnywhere (<http://www.filesanywhere.com>), CapSure (<http://www.capsure.com>), and Xdrive (<http://www.xdrive.com>).

. In The End

Backing up your system is vital, and now that you have some options for making the process easier, go ahead and make those backups. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

DONA'S COMPUTER CAPERS

By Dona Z. Meilach



GIFT IDEAS GOOD AND BAD: GAMES, CAMERAS AND MISCELLANY

Computers have sped up the concept of vintage. It used to be that vintage anything was 50 years before the current. Any one who was around in the early days of computers reveled in the games available such as Pacman and Donkey Kong and their me-tto versions. But when graphics sophistication boomed, those games rapidly became passé.

Would you believe they are coming back as "vintage games?" As players age and 80's nostalgia reinvigorates interest in old

games, an industry that has focused on the present and future is digging into its past. "Retro's very popular now," said Perrin Kaplan, vice president for marketing and corporate affairs at Nintendo of America, which is introducing a classics game line. "We are part of the initiative that's happening across fashion, music, and otherwise."

With retro fashion and furniture becoming the trendy trend, even T-shirts with logos of past games are popular. Atari T-Shirts are reappearing because one company purchased the Atari name 3 years ago.

Nintendo sees the \$ signs register by reissuing games that cater to nostalgia. Look for their Game Boy set that includes replica versions of Donkey Kong and six other titles that used to play on TV sets through the Nintendo systems in the mid 1980s. A set of five games will sell for about \$20. A similar Nintendo offering recently sold one million games in Japan in eight days.

Who is buying these games? People who don't have the patience or taste for today's shoot them up games. People who were nurtured on these early games are anxious to show them to their children and grandchildren. They can just sit back with their joysticks and do something uncomplicated. Said one man, "I beat my brains out all day at work, I want to relax and veg out with a simple game that I know how to play."

Some people have hung on to their classic games and the machines that run them. A Microsoft game developer confesses that he owns 16 versions of Pac-Man, and will "still stick quarters into a Pac-Man machine when I see one at an old soda shop or burger joint."

So, dig out your old floppy disks and, if you can, find a machine that will convert them to today's media. Or just wait until the new "retro" versions are available and put them on your Christmas wish list. Chances are you'll get them.

THE CONCORD CAMERA NEW IS NICER AND A GREAT GIFT

With digital cameras among the tech equipment most people have on their Christmas lists, I want to call your attention to a neat little, inexpensive, hard working, hi res 5 megapixel camera, the Concord EYE-Q 5062AF. This palm sized unit, about the size of a deck of cards, has a big 1.8 LCD screen plus enough features to keep most casual and wanna-be photographers. It's a great gift for anyone who is getting their feet wet in digital photography and even for those who have had other inexpensive units and are ready to upgrade. This little gem lists for under \$200. but with all the discounts around you can easily find one for much less.

The unit has a 16 MB Internal Memory so holds from about 8 to 28 images depending on the mode; Fine, Normal or Economy. You can add a memory card in the slot that will up the number of images significantly. The only problem is that the unit is powered by 2 double-A batteries and, while convenient, their life diminishes rapidly. If you're traveling anywhere, you'll have to take along a stash of batteries. It can use rechargeable batteries.

The unit is intuitive with an easy to use menu and a thumbnail play back. It can also take a 30 second video with sound. Once your images are in the camera you can upload them to your PC using the software provided, or send them directly to your PC via a SUB cable. If you have a printer with a USB input, you can send the images directly to your printer.

Images taken in fine mode at the 5 MP resolution come out beautifully. For more information on:

The Concord EYE-Q 5062 AF and the other cameras in this Concord family, go to www.concordcam.com. They are introducing new products with different features at a rapid clip.

DELIGHTS AND FRUSTRATIONS

As new products appear, one would hope they would get easier to use and generate fewer frustrations. Of five items I've installed over the past couple of weeks, four were a snap and one is determined to give me an ulcer. The good, first;

1) was the Concord Camera mentioned above. Once I figured out all the buttons and read the manual, I was a Maven. Only thing I didn't like was the lag between shots, but the quick shooting mode compensated.

2. Tops on my list is my new Canon I860 bubble printer. I had been so unhappy with an old Epson that I shied away from another color printer. Canon did everything right beginning with the packing and the installation instructions. I had it up and running in about 10 minutes after I plugged it in and it works like a charm.

3. The Vision Tek Hi-speed Xtreme2 GO drive (flash drive). I wanted to wear the jewel-like unit around my neck on the cord provided but the stringing unit had frayed ends and I couldn't restring it. Heavily knotted beading wire pulled through the hole. It did function at its reported high speed very well and if I hadn't read the NY Times article about it being a fashion accessory, I would have no complaints. The 128 MB unit sells for \$24.99. Higher capacity units are aggressively priced with some rebates. See www.visiontek.com

4. Before I could use either of the above, I had to buy a USB HUB. The Belkin \$19.95 four-port hub is practical and handsome on my desk. Its clear Lucite case is fun. Thankfully, there is no software to install. A great gift for anyone who has several devices that require USB ports. www.belkin.com or from your computer supply store.

5. The Sony Clié almost produces an allergic reaction when I pick it up. It's my second one...traded in the first using the insurance I luckily bought for the inexpensive model. When it crashed, I returned it and got the more expensive (\$200) PEG TJ127 with color and a camera (the first model had been phased out). The on screen manual is impossible to use with inadequate and terrible directions. The procedures needed to upload and download files are logic defying and require multiple steps. I've had semi-good luck with on-line help but as I write this I am on the phone for at least a half hour waiting for return directions because the keyboard doesn't appear when it should.

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Dona Meilach is the author of over 85 books with 10 on computers. Her 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. Dona's Computer Capers may also be found at <http://www.smalladdictions.com/Skateboard>.

Lightbulb Jokes

How many IBM engineers does it take to screw in a light bulb? None. They just let Marketing explain that "Dead Bulb" is a feature.

How many IBM PC owners does it take to screw in a light bulb? Only one, but he'll have to go out and buy the light bulb adaptor card first, which is extra.

Two. One to do it, but one to check the new bulb for viruses first.

How many IBM tech writers does it take to screw in a light bulb? 100. Ten to do it, and 90 to write document number GC7500439-0001, Multitasking Incandescent Source System Facility, of which 10% of the pages state only "This page intentionally left blank", and 20% of the definitions are of the form "A consists of sequences of non-blank characters separated by blanks".

Just one, provided there's an engineer around to explain how to do it. **How** many Microsoft engineers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

None. They just define darkness as an industry standard.

How many Microsoft employees does it take to change a light bulb?

One - but Bill Gates must inspect every single bulb and socket before the operation is started.

Eight: one to work the bulb and seven to make sure Microsoft gets \$2 for every light bulb ever changed anywhere in the world.

How many MS tech supports does it take to change a light bulb? "The light bulb doesn't work? You must be using a non-standard socket."

How many operating systems are required to screw in a light bulb?

Just one-Microsoft is making a special version of Windows for it.

How many Windows programmers does it take to change a light bulb?

472. One to write WinGetLight BulbHandle, one to write WinQueryStatusLight Bulb, one to write WinGetLightSwitchHandle...

How many Windows users does it take to change a light bulb?

One, but she/he'll swear up and down that it was JUST as easy for him as it would be for a Macintosh user.

How many Macintosh engineers does it take to screw in a light bulb?

None - it has to be done by a local authorized dealer.

The New, the Best, and the Worst Collected by Pim Borman, Editor and APCUG Representative, Southwest Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

Alternatives

As we all know, Microsoft software is used on 90% of the world's desktop computers. Over the years Microsoft has managed to include Internet Explorer with the Windows OS sold with almost every new computer. Microsoft Works or the more expensive Microsoft Office programs are bundled with most systems, at extra cost, but hidden in the total cost of a new computer. As a result, earlier successful programs such as Netscape, Word Star, Word Perfect, Database II, and Lotus 1-2-3 are still only used by a few dedicated fans. To this date it is almost impossible to buy a computer from a major manufacturer without pre-installed MS software. Most recently Dell has started to sell some computers with Linux-based Linspire pre-installed, but in Europe only. Dell is also offering some computers without any operating system in the US, allowing the buyer to install the OS of his choice. Some small, lesser known manufacturers also sell Microsoft-free computers. Still, it will take years, if ever, to overcome the domination of MS in the desktop computer market.

Microsoft has historically emphasized ease of use (with varying success) and addition of new features to program updates to keep the customers coming back for more. Now that it has become painfully obvious that the programs also should be resistant to tampering by malicious individuals, it is probably too late to correct the many vulnerabilities, given that there are millions of lines of code involved to be critically reviewed. SP2, a major security update for Windows XP, has now become available. Previewers describe it as a major security improvement for Windows XP and Internet Explorer 6, but the virus and worm kiddies will undoubtedly find new ways to bring down the system. SP2 reportedly introduces dozens of potential incompatibilities with your hardware and software. Also, the size of the update is between 100 and 300 MB, depending on the updates already installed on your computer. Such a download is not feasible for those with a telephone modem; it is expected that Microsoft will make the update available on CD, but the question remains: how many users will go to the trouble to get the update and install it? And how long will it take before most of us are up-to-date?

Since MS Windows and its programs are the fat and juicy sitting ducks preferably targeted by virus artists, a good way to protect yourself is to get away from it and to choose alternate software, not susceptible to common worms and viruses, and not targeted by script kiddies. The following are some possible choices.

Since most of the nastiness enters your computer through Internet Explorer and Outlook Express, choose alternate programs. Many users are changing to the free Mozilla Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>), an open source browser and e-mail program for Windows, Linux or the MAC OS.

The browser is quite similar to Netscape and receives high praise from most users, who prefer it to Internet Explorer. Version 1.0, now forthcoming, also performs pop-up blocking and protection from spyware. Another popular choice is Opera for Windows or Linux (www.opera.com), also a free download, although you must pay \$29 to get rid of an advertising banner at the top of the page. I prefer Mozilla in Linux because it is less cluttered.

MS Office programs, especially Outlook, Word and Excel, have also been targets of hackers, making use of their macro features to cause haywire. WordPerfect Office 12 from Corel (www.corel.com) includes a word processor, the Quattro Pro spreadsheet, and the Presentations multimedia slide shows similar to MS PowerPoint. It costs \$300 and is almost fully compatible with MS Word documents.

StarOffice 6.0 Office Suite from Sun Microsystems (www.sun.com/software/star/staroffice/6.0/) includes word processing, spreadsheet, graphics, presentation and database programs. It claims full compatibility with MS Office and costs \$75. It is available for Windows, Solaris and Linux operating systems. I tried it several years ago, when it was still free, and didn't like the way it took over my computer, including rearrangement of my desktop.

Finally, a promising newcomer is the free, open-source OpenOffice.org, currently at version 1.1.2. and also from Sun Microsystems (www.openoffice.org/). It is derived from StarOffice, with omission of code licensed by Sun from third-party sources. It is available for Windows, Mac OS, Linux and Solaris operating systems. In addition to the MS Word-compatible OpenOffice Writer it includes spreadsheet, database and presentation programs. I have been using the word processor in Linux and find the compatibility with MS Word formats quite good. It also supports saving and mailing documents in PDF format and supports mobile device formats like AportisDoc (Palm), Pocket Word and Pocket Excel.

The best way to avoid Microsoft-targeted worms and spyware altogether is not to use any Microsoft products at all. Apple Computer's Mac Operating System is based on Unix and the Macs are therefore immune to PC viruses. The exceptions are MS Office for the Mac programs that are susceptible to the same malicious macros aimed at PCs. The Mac OS does not run on Intel or AMD cpu-based PC clones, so you'll have to buy a new, expensive Apple computer to achieve trouble-free online communications. You may still need your PC for programs and games that are not available on the Mac.

A better alternative is to install one of the new, inexpensive, user-friendly Linux distributions on a separate partition of your hard drive, or on an older computer if you have one. I have used Linspire (www.linspire.com) now for a year on an old laptop. It connects by Wi-Fi wireless via my router to the Internet and to my printer. I use the Mozilla browser and OpenOffice.org Write for browsing and correspondence, and everything works flawlessly. I have transferred genealogy and checkbook data to corresponding Linux programs. I can play more solitaire programs than I know how to, including two versions of FreeCell. Many other games are available, including the addictive arcade games BreakOut II and Frozen Bubble. I even managed to install a free

version of the anti-virus program f-prot (www.f-prot.com/) that protects Linux systems as well as Windows, but for lack of Linux viruses I have no idea if it works or not. There is a harmless virus-like test file on the f-prot Web site that I downloaded to test f prot. It worked as advertised. A longer discussion of my experiences with Linspire can be found in the July-August issue of the P-See UrGent (<http://swipcug.apcug.org/archive/pdfs/.pdf>)

So there you have it. Maybe it is better to switch than fight!

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 article to you.

Why this is a good time to do a SECURITY AUDIT

**This message provided by Panda Software (www.pandasoftware.com).
Reprinted with permission.**

Take this time to check and enhance your various security measures. Companies and institutions regularly run security audits or inspections ensuring that their security procedures are in place, properly functioning and up-to-date. Individual computer owners should do the same. Here is a simple checklist of items that you should confirm and certify that they are in place.

1. Antivirus current with the latest virus signature files.
2. Firewall in place and up-to-date to prevent intrusions.
3. Anti-spyware current with latest spyware files.
4. Anti-spam up-to-date to prevent junk mail.
5. Change passwords on a regular basis
6. Backup your files regularly.

You can use this address to get a FREE for 3-months copy of Panda Platinum 7.0 (www.pandasoftware.com/microsoft/english.htm)
(From the Big Bear Computer Club newsletter, Bearly Bytes)



<http://www.pcpitstop.com/default.asp>

At PC Pitstop you can help you get your PC in top form running fast, stable and secure. PC Pitstop runs diagnostics on your PC to identify things that might help improve performance. The process is fully automated, private and safe. After the diagnostics run, they will give you tips for improving all kinds of things. Best of all, the service is free!

There diagnostic tests are safe, passive evaluations of your system. The test will not change any settings on your PC. As for privacy, They have adopted a stringent policy that protects any personal information you give us.



Only in America

1. Only in America..... can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.
2. Only in America..... are there handicap parking places in front of a skating rink.
3. Only in America..... do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.
4. Only in America..... do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.
5. Only in America..... do banks leave both doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.
6. Only in America..... do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.
7. Only in America..... do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place.
8. Only in America..... do we buy hot dogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight.
9. Only in America..... do we use the word 'politics' to describe the process so well: 'Poli' in Latin meaning 'many' and 'tics' meaning 'bloodsucking creatures'.

From The DealsGuy for November 2004, by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click Greater Orlando Computer Users Group



I can hardly believe I've been writing this column for ten years now and have never missed a month. I never dreamed it would end up being so widely used. It all started when a group of us from Central Florida Computer Society traveled to attend the 1994 FACUG fall conference in Cocoa, FL. During our travel time, the president at that time (Miguel McCormick) told me the group was getting many special offers and he didn't have time to announce them at meetings. He asked if I would mind putting them together as an article for the newsletter if he channeled them all to me. Hesitantly, I agreed since Miguel has always worked hard for the group, but I knew nothing about writing articles.

I received much criticism for the first column from the desktop publishing SIG I attended in an effort to help me improve it. They said nobody would read it the way I was writing it. I was having no luck understanding techniques to improve it when e-mail arrived from two editors, because of newsletter exchanges, asking if they could reprint it. Since many offers were time sensitive, I offered to put those editors on a list. I originally sent the column to editors individually for some time because I knew nothing about BCC or CC, or even how to attach a file to e-mail. That first column had 22 special offers in it. I also started giving it to Space Coast PC UG since I was also a member there. Surprisingly, the third editor to ask for the column was from Portland, Oregon PC UG and I was then published from coast to coast, but in just three newsletters. After three months of trying to improve it, with no success, my friends in the DTP SIG finally remarked that since it seemed to be working, just forget improving it.

A few editors feel that this is the "deals" column and should only contain deals, nothing else. Two editors have always felt the column is over worded. They insist that all you need is the name of the product, the price and ordering procedure, thus reducing it to about three paragraphs. I've always felt that those editors were missing what seemed to make it work. I often get feedback from my personal comments. Most editors feel differently and often e-mail me that their readers enjoy the column however I write it, which is always good to hear.

One problem lately is with myself. I don't devote the additional time required these days to dig up deals and I also get turned down more, along with just no response even though I had talked to them at a show. Items I find in UG newsletters, and suggestions sent by editors, help. I still have a few leads that I plan to follow up, but I'm writing the column from month to month, seeing where it leads. I also use occasional unknown products now that I receive announcements for, if they offer a discount. I still get a lot of support from many editors wanting me to continue. Many editors depend on the DealsGuy column, and for a very few, my column is the heart of their newsletters along with the group's member news. One thing seems certain though, and that is that the DealsGuy column is on borrowed time.

You need a tough skin to do this job because there is no way to please everybody. Complaints seldom come from the readers though, and those that do are usually because of a problem. However, editor's complaints sometimes lead to changes. Interesting that for the last few years though, the DealsGuy column has not been published in the original newsletter that started it all.

I'm presenting two great items that could be Christmas gifts, even for you. I'm excited about them both and you'll love them.

Lets Understand The Darn Weather Better

I love this item and was able to put together a deal just in time for Christmas (what a great gift). I can't adequately describe this full-featured weather station so check their Web site. [<http://www.peetbros.com>] I am just now learning everything about mine. It's certainly full featured and I'm having great fun. I installed it just hours before our latest hurricane, Jeanne, and spent more time checking the Ultimeter 100 data than checking the storm. It offers about any type of data and display you want and recorded my highest wind gust at 66 mph., 9/26/04, at 10:05 AM. I could have shown it in other units, as with all the data. Data can also be accessed by phone line. I'm now working on a better mount and location for my rain gauge. Ultimeter 100 can be set to continuously scan wind speed, wind chill, temperature, today's rainfall, time and date, or just certain data. It also shows the wind direction. An alarm can be set for the danger of an impending flash flood if your area is prone, or for other possible situations. A 9V-battery backup retains your data in the event of a power failure. Pushing a button will give you highs or lows for any of the last seven days, or for long term.

This deal is a scoop since they are introducing a new feature, which is a "serial text" interface that works with your computer to view the weather station's accumulated data. Simply connect the serial cable, start Windows HyperTerminal on your computer, then by pushing buttons on your weather station, quickly view data from the Ultimeter 100 system's memory for various time periods and format it as you like on your computer. The feed updates each minute.

For just \$199.00 you get the "Ultimeter 100" weather station (MSRP \$199.00) bundled with an indoor temperature sensor (MSRP \$12.95) and a 15' serial computer interface cable (MSRP

\$20.00), both of which are normally optional. The unit does include the anemometer wind vane and other necessary cables. There are other peripherals such as a self-emptying rain gage and “The Weather Picture” (a large digital display that can be read across the room), extensions for the cables and more.

The Ultimeter 100 is the only product offered with the bundle, but obviously they have other models and accessories to offer. Please mention the code “DealsGuy” when ordering this special \$199.00 bundle. E-mail them at [peetbros@peetbros.com], or call them at 1-866-446-1216 or 1-321-206-6214. Shipping varies according to the dollar amount, but orders between \$200 and \$299 will cost \$15.75 S&H. FL. residents should add 7% tax. If you’re not convinced, call for their beautiful 10-page brochure that tells it all.

Your Badge Says It All

You may have seen digital badges at computer shows, as I have, and they took my eye. I bought one and have enjoyed mine. People comment when they see it since it really stands out. It scrolls your message, which can be up to 118 characters, in red LCD letters. You can vary the scrolling speed. Get more details at [<http://www.bannerbadge.com>] There’s a video there of the Banner Badge scrolling a message, but in person, it looks much better than on that video according to my screen. You can order either a black or red one, and it comes with the programming kit. There is an optional USB-to-serial adapter, and the “Buddy” that will program it without your computer. The digital badge is a real eye-catcher and lots of fun.

Originally I purchased mine from another company and tried to make a deal with that company, but with no success. I consider them the losers. I later found this company, Banner Badge, in another show, and with much better prices. The Banner Badge guys were happy to give my readers a deal, which is 10% off the posted prices on the Web site. Unfortunately there’s no way to enter a price code for the DealsGuy price when ordering so you’ll need to e-mail them at [info@bannerbadge.com] or call them at 1-772-571-9944, and be sure to mention DealsGuy to get the 10% discount. What a great Christmas gift! Don’t forget to order extra batteries at their low prices.

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]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product announcements that I received over a period of time in 2003. More will be forthcoming when I get the ambition.

Tech News

By Sue Crane,
Vice President / Editor,
Big Bear Computer Club, California

Sony plans to launch a new camcorder in November that can record and play back high-definition video. The device, part of the company’s Handycam line, records and plays back video with a resolution of 1,440 pixels by 1,080 lines, the highest in any consumer camcorder. It also features a 3.5-inch, wide-screen LCD display. Sony claims an image in the display can be enlarged up to four times its original size without any loss of resolution. The HDR-FX1 camcorder will sell for about \$3,700.

Intel Corp. President Paul S. Otellini demonstrated new chips scheduled for release next year that simultaneously run tasks such as burning CDs and playing video games. We’re not writing video game reviews for kids who play five hours a day. We’re writing for the grown-up who may play five hours a week. Hoping to increase the 5-hour adult gaming average, **Perpetual Entertainment** will develop the first major online game based on Paramount Pictures’ ‘**Star Trek**’ for a monthly fee.

High-resolution images of 21 original Shakespeare texts, in 93 different versions, are now available on the British Library Web site. Viewers can read the plays in the same format that Shakespeare himself and the actors who performed his plays for the Globe audiences did. <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>

Sun Microsystems and Microsoft next month plan to provide more details on work they are doing to make their products interoperable. The goal is to have an event and to demonstrate interoperability. The settlement ended a bitter legal dispute between the rivals that started in 1997.

A Japanese telecommunications equipment maker has come up with a tricky way to hide audio speakers in houseplants. The Ka-on, which means “flower sound” in Japanese, consists of a magnet and coil at the base of a vase that can be hooked up to a CD player, stereo or television set. When flowers are placed in the vase, the sound vibrations move up through the stems into the petals and leaves, filling the entire room with music. The vases and amplifiers come in several sizes, priced from \$46 to \$460, and the device has an added bonus — the vibrations discourage insects and make the flowers last longer. Gerberas and sunflowers work especially well as speakers.”

Adware company Claria (formerly Gator) has quietly settled litigation brought by Wells Fargo, Quicken Loans and other online businesses, who charged that its pop-up ads violated their trademarks. In recent months, it also has quietly settled with UPS, Hertz, L.L. Bean, Tiger Direct and Six Continents, and still faces a lawsuit from retail florist Teleflora. WhenU.com has a case pending filed by Wells Fargo and Quicken Loans on the same matter and Google currently involved in two cases lawsuits from American Blind and Wallpaper and Geico.

“Wireless sensors have moved out of the labs,” said Intel spokesman Kevin Teixeira. “The technology is being figured out.” the battery-powered, wireless sensors sometimes known as “smart dust” are here, and they’re making their way into our lives. Some take pictures. Others are sensitive thermometers. There are even tiny sensors that can detect gunmetal and tanks. Analysts and researchers predict that networks of these tiny monitors may eventually link refrigerators, printers, car keys and other everyday objects to the Internet, allowing you to keep track of your stuff remotely.

A U.S. Senate committee approved bills intended to fight computer spyware and to protect wireless phone customers from potential privacy problems associated with a wireless phone number directory. the SPY BLOCK Act would prohibit the covert installation of software on computers and prohibit installing software that automatically collects and transmits information about the user without permission.

Stamps.com is in active discussions with the U.S. Postal Service regarding whether or not to continue its personalized postage stamp pilot program. The stamps cost about twice the price of a regular stamp. The market test was supposed to end Sept. 30. Now the U.S. Postal Service will decide whether to continue with the program or not.

Microsoft US is now charging for a Hotmail feature that allows users to access their e-mail using the Outlook and Outlook Express e-mail clients. Microsoft is making the change because the feature is being abused by senders of spam.

Vivisimo, founded by three former Carnegie-Mellon computer scientists, is hoping to challenge Google’s dominance in the search field with a new search service that clusters results into categories to make them easier to sort through. The launch of Clusty comes on the heels of Amazon’s introduction of its A9 search service, which also organizes information as it retrieves it. “Search will look more like the magazine business than the soda market,” predicts Oren Etzioni, a computer scientist at the University of Washington who sits on the Vivisimo board. “The competition has shifted from crawling the Web and returning an answer quickly to adding value to the information that has been retrieved.”

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Title Bar Tricks

Here are a couple of tricks with title bars of windows: Doubleclick a window’s title bar to maximize it (if the current window supports maximizing). Double-click the window’s title-bar again to restore the window to its previous size.

Right-click on a window’s title bar to bring up a list of options. These will probably include such things as: “Close” and “Minimize;” but windows such as the “DOS Prompt” will give other useful options.

INTERNET TALK

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

(October 2004)

You are reading the 74th “Internet Talk” article for “The Bug Report”, a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). The month of September has been hotter than usual. Hopefully, you were able to find a cool spot for yourself and your computer.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR GSBUG

Joyce Oliver reports that as of September 12th, our membership count is 153, which is 1 less than last month. If your membership has or is about to expire, please renew it to help GSBUG’s finances. In the long run, you will be helping yourself.

SOCAL FREE NET

As promised, I tested my new Internet dialup account at SoCal during the month of September. They provided me with totally-free Internet access at an average of 41.2 kilobits per second. Their modem connections were as reliable as Netzero and Juno. Unlike free Internet dialup from Netzero and Juno, “SoCal..” does not have an advertising bar. Nor do they have any time limits of any kind, as compared to the 10-hour per month limits imposed by Netzero and Juno. Obtaining an account with “SoCal..” was easy and it took me less than two minutes at their Website. Unlike Netzero and Juno, “SoCal..” does not provide you with any software for setting up a “dial up networking” connection in a Windows computer. Instead, you must use the “Network Setup Wizard” in Windows XP, the “Add Network Place” icon in Windows 2000, or the “Make New Connection” icon inside “Dial-Up Networking” in Windows 95 or 98.

Unfortunately, this free Internet Service Provider (ISP), does not have any dialup phone numbers that are local calls for most GSBUG members. Their list of phone lines is located at:

<http://www.socalfree.net/service.htm>

As of September 13th, their list of phone numbers is as follows:

All the numbers for our free service end in FREE (3733):
 213-227-FREE — Los Angeles (DA01), CA
 310-949-FREE — Avalon, CA
 323-390-FREE — Los Angeles (DA11), CA
 323-623-FREE — Los Angeles (DA14), CA
 323-624-FREE — Montebello, CA
 323-625-FREE — Los Angeles (DA06), CA
 562-369-FREE — Long Beach, CA
 619-364-FREE — San Diego, CA

619-747-FREE — Jacumba, CA
 619-774-FREE — Dulzura, CA
 619-868-FREE — Campo, CA
 626-368-FREE — San Gabriel Canyon (Azusa area)
 626-370-FREE — Pasadena, CA
 661-620-FREE — Canyon Country, CA
 714-629-FREE — Santa Ana, CA
 760-551-FREE — Ramona, CA
 760-661-FREE — San Marcos, CA
 760-785-FREE — Brawley, CA
 805-274-FREE — Ventura, CA
 805-851-FREE — Fillmore, CA
 818-685-FREE — Van Nuys, CA
 858-233-FREE — La Jolla, CA
 858-234-FREE — San Diego (Rancho Bernardo), CA
 858-236-FREE — Poway, CA
 858-237-FREE — San Diego (Mira Mesa), CA
 858-297-FREE — Del Mar, CA
 858-364-FREE — San Diego (Rancho Peñasquitos), CA
 909-661-FREE — Ontario, CA
 949-963-FREE — Saddleback Valley, CA

If one of these phone numbers is the local calling area, you can now use “SoCal Free.net” to make a free, unlimited, dial-up connection to the Internet.
 Congratulations !

213-227-3733 is located in downtown Los Angeles.
 323-390-3733 is located in Koreatown a.k.a.
 “Los Angeles 11” telephone central office.
 323-623-3733 is located in Hollywood a.k.a.
 “Los Angeles 14” telephone central office.
 562-623-3733 is located in Long Beach, California.

For most GSBUG members, who live in the South Bay area of Los Angeles, the Long Beach phone line will be the closest one to their homes. This phone line will be a local call for some Carson, Lomita, Torrance, Redondo Beach, San Pedro and Palos Verdes residents. To find out if this 562-623-3733 Long Beach line is a local call for your residence, phone your local telephone company’s customer service center.

Most of you know that using a non-local phone line for a dial-up modem can make your local phone company wealthier at your expense. For most residential telephones, your local calling area consists of all telephones that are connected to all local central offices that are less than 12 miles from the local central office that your telephone line is connected to. However, some of the competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs) offer extended local calling areas. If a specific phone number of SoCal’s is not in your phone’s local calling area, you might consider signing up with a CLEC that puts that specific phone number into your local calling area.

The main URL for SoCal Free Net is
<http://www.socalfree.net>

Click on the “Support” button for step-by-step instructions for making a dial-up connection to your specific version of Windows.

Finally, please do not confuse “Socalfree.net” with the “Los Angeles Free-Net”. They are not the same. There is no relationship between these two Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

WEATHERBUG

Weatherbug provides software than can turn your computer into an up-to-the-minute warning device for alerting of weather events such as tornados, hurricanes, and lightning storms.

You can download their free software at
<http://www.weatherbug.com>

INTERNET TIME SYNCH FOR XP

If you are running Windows XP, it has the ability to synch the clock in your computer with Internet time servers:

- Step 1: Double-click on the clock inside the system tray on the right or bottom of the gray Windows task bar.
 - Step 2: Make sure that the date is correct. (If it is not, the time synch process will fail.)
 - Step 3: Click on the “Internet Time” tab.
 - Step 4: If there is no checkmark in the box next to “Automatically synchronize with Internet time server, click on box to put a check-mark inside of it.
 - Step 5: Click on the “Update Now” button.
- If the time synch fails, use the pull down list-arrow to change to the other default time server and repeat Step 5.

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
2. Leave me a voice message at
 (310)768-3896.
3. Send “snail” United States Postal Service (USPS) mail to

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

Or sell your computer and take up sewing instead !!

Another Helpful PC Utility

by Ira Wilsker

Golden Triangle PC Club

From the September, 2004 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter

PC utilities are programs that can enhance your computing pleasure and efficiency by improving the operations of your computer. I am always on the lookout for interesting software that is both useful and reasonably priced, but above all is a great value that provides significant benefits to the user.

An excellent multifunction utility is TuneUp Utilities 2004 (www.tune-up.com) published by TuneUp Software International, of Darmstadt, Germany. This is a feature-rich and comprehensive suite of utilities that can perform a variety of beneficial tasks. Upon opening the program the user is greeted with an attractive menu that lists and explains the available tasks that it can do. On the left side of the menu are the categories of tasks available, including Customize & Analyze, Clean up & Repair, Optimize & Improve, Administer & Control, and File recovery & Destruction. On the top right corner are three links for Rescue Center, Update Wizard, and an icon for help and other functions.

When **Customize & Analyze** is selected, a variety of choices is available, including system control, a startup manager, system information, and WinStyler.

System Control lets the user change Windows to suit personal preferences by changing the look and feel of Windows. The startup manager shows the programs that are loaded when the computer is booted, along with a brief description of those programs, and an intuitive checkbox that allows the user to exercise control over what loads. This is much easier to use than the integral msconfig utility included in some versions of Windows. If utilized along with the PacMan startup information at www.sysinfo.org, the computer will boot faster, run better, and have fewer software conflicts, making the startup manager a very useful utility. The system information icon shows in great detail the hardware, software, drivers, settings, and other technical information about the computer. This information is useful in identifying drivers for updating, repairing the computer, getting tech support, and other functions. WinStyler allows the user to manage and change the icons used, as well as to repair icons and the cache of icons used by Windows.

Clean up & Repair has two valuable utilities, a disk cleaner and a registry cleaner. The disk cleaner can identify junk and other useless files on the hard drive, giving the user the opportunity to delete them, and free up space on the hard drive. The registry cleaner can identify obsolete and invalid entries in the registry, and repair or delete them. By periodically cleaning up the registry the computer will boot and run faster with fewer software errors.

This is a much more effective utility than the scanreg included in some versions of Windows.

Optimize & Improve includes three utilities, a memory optimizer, a registry defragger, and a system optimizer. The memory optimizer frees up memory which is intended to improve system performance by deleting obsolete data from memory. Registry defragging corrects physical errors and compresses the registry by reordering the data and removing empty spaces. A defragged registry takes less memory, and improves the boot and shutdown time of the computer. The system optimizer modifies internal settings in Windows to improve system performance. Some settings, if properly set, can significantly improve performance when surfing the web. Other settings speed up the video and other functions in the computer. When properly configured, which may be an automated process, not just is performance improved, but the system becomes more stable with fewer lockups and other problems.

Administer & Control allows the user to monitor and control what is actually running on the computer, including programs and libraries that may not be apparent to the casual user. Sometimes some programs do not always totally close when exited, leaving some parts running, depleting system resources. Another function in this section is a registry editor, which allows the user to manually edit the registry. The user can do this with almost no risk, as the software automatically makes a backup prior to any changes that can easily be restored, if desired. We all have installed and then uninstalled software, and sometime have difficulties with the uninstall process. The uninstall manager is better at deleting unwanted programs than Windows Add/Remove Programs function.

Many of us periodically create files that may be considered sensitive or proprietary, and would not want others to be able to recover those files at a later date. The File recovery & Destruction section includes a digital shredder which ensures that sensitive files which are deleted can not be recovered, improving computer security. Many of us also have deleted files that we later wanted back; this software has an undelete function that recovers recoverable file which have been deleted, even after emptying the recycle bin or trashcan.

The rescue center icon, which appears on all menu items, allows almost any action taken to be undone if we change our mind. All of us have made changes and regretted it later, and this function can be a lifesaver in those circumstances.

Since this software is updated periodically, the update wizard automates that function allowing for the latest revisions to the software to be downloaded and installed.

A free trial version of the software can be downloaded at www.tune-up.com, and a registration key can be purchased online for \$40. I found this to be a very useful program, and recommend it highly.

Thanks for the question; this is a very helpful tool!

With Southeast Texas being at the intersection of Hurricane Alley and Ground Zero, disaster planning has become a more serious activity for all of us. The Lamar University Department of Nursing, and Entergy have recently released a CD, Disaster Preparedness Planning for the Special Needs Population. This free CD contains interactive video and audio on a variety of important topics including local emergency management information, evacuation routes, a disaster preparedness supply checklist, transportation and shelter issues, medical equipment concerns, patient transfer concerns, dealing with pets, and special needs database software. Much of the information is also available on a companion website at www.disaster-research.us, and inquiries and requests for the free CD can be emailed to smithrwmd@sbcglobal.net.

How do I make a copy (picture) of my Desktop? Can I do this in Windows XP without having to purchase a separate program?

Yes! You should have a "Print Screen" or "Prt Scn" button towards the top right of the keyboard. Press this key and a picture copy of your "Desktop" should be placed in the clipboard (hidden storage space). Then open up the free "WordPad" (or another) program that comes with Windows XP. From WordPad's menu, choose "Edit", "Paste". Save or print your picture. This can be a helpful tool when trouble shooting a PC. Great question.

Does Windows XP not come with "Scandisk" like my Windows 98 PC use to have?

Yes, however it is called "Error Checking". It is used to search your hard drive for physical errors. To get to it:

- Left click on "Start" (bottom left of Desktop).
- Left click on "My Computer".
- Right mouse click on the device (C: drive) that you want to check for errors.
- Choose "Properties".
- Click on the "Tools" tab.
- Click on the "Check Now" button from the "error checking" area.

You probably want to run this utility once a month but also consider running "Disk Cleanup" from the "General" tab after "Error-Checking" and "Defragmentation" from the Tools" tab after Desk Cleanup". You will find that these 3 utilities will keep Windows XP running smoother. Thanks!

Monthly Questions And Answers For Windows XP

Please remember when reading these questions that there is more than one way to do most Windows XP tasks. The suggested answers below are one easy solution.

What do you think of Service Pack 2 for Windows XP; should I install it?

My beta test of it shows some issues with SMS and network issues. I have not run into any problems for home PCs. My suggestion is to wait a month after its release to see if any major issues are found. If none are found, I would then go and install it. Service Pack 2 has many new advanced security features that are important to Windows XP. This is an important question and update. Thanks!

My Windows XP does not have the program icons on the right of the "Start" button that I see on other Windows XP. Did my version just not come with it?

You are talking about the "Quick Launch Bar". All versions of Windows XP include this feature that allows you to add icons to the area so you can launch a program quickly with out having to have an additional icon on the desktop hiding your wallpaper. Your "Quick Launch Bar" is probably just turned off. To turn on the "Quick Launch Bar":

- Right mouse click on an open space of the "Start Bar" (at the bottom of your Desktop screen).
- Left mouse click on "Toolbars".
- Left mouse click on "Quick Launch" so that a check appears to the left as shown in the picture.

Identity theft statistics

The rate of identity theft soared nearly 80% over the past year, affecting 3.4% of all adult consumers, The Gartner Groups said in July. Fully 7 million U.S. consumers were victimized by identity thieves during the year ending in June. The growth rate in identity theft from 2002 to 2003 is staggering, according to Gartner analyst Avivah Litan.

However, for various reasons, ID thieves face only a one-in-700 chance of being caught, Litan said. Most identity crimes are not committed on the Internet, but by information stolen by someone you know, pickpockets, and U.S. mail interception. But Litan said, The Internet plays a large role in payment fraud. Thieves go after high volumes of credit-card numbers, then sell or barter those numbers through chat rooms..

Source: TechWeb News, 7/21/2003

PC Today Cover Stories

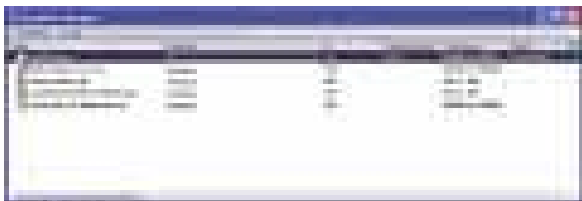
November 2004 • Vol.2 Issue 11

Browser Showdown:**Netscape Navigator vs. Internet Explorer**

Netscape's cookie manager makes it easier for users to get a handle on the information Web sites are collecting about them.

The Netscape vs. Internet Explorer battle has been going on almost since the “dawn” of the Internet. Netscape Navigator hit the scene in 1994, basically defining the Internet as we know it. Growing out of the NSCA (National Center For Supercomputing Applications) Mosaic code, Netscape quickly became the most widely used browser at the time. Though there were a number of other browsers built from NSCA licensed code, Netscape was the largest. Back then browsers cost money, from around \$50 and up, depending on the vendor. Then on Aug. 24, 1995, Microsoft launched Windows 95 with an integrated Internet Explorer 1.0. Although the first version of IE wasn't a big hit (though Windows 95 sure was), it started a technological, philosophical, and legal battle. Largely ignored by Internet users, IE1.0 was a dud. People still used Netscape. However, at the time, Microsoft did what it does best: It got into a product genre and improved it. Like Windows itself, it wasn't until IE version 3.0 that people started to take notice.

Many users liked what they saw. Microsoft IE3.0 supported multimedia, fledgling Java applets, style sheets, and Microsoft's own proprietary ActiveX components. And not the least of which—Internet Explorer was free. Over the past eight years, and the three versions since then, IE gained the lion's share of the browser market; if a free product can claim that. During that time, either from habit or Microsoft loathing, some users stuck with Netscape, but most web surfers went to IE, especially with new home and corporate users. Internet Explorer was easy to use, it was included in OS, and it was licensed as America Online's main browser. Netscape attempted to keep up by improving its product and adding features in hopes of winning back its audience. Unfortunately, in its rush, Netscape released several bloated and buggy versions, which resulted in more people jumping ship.



The Download Manager is especially helpful for tracking where your files land on your hard drive..

IE Under Attack

However, in the past year, IE has come under attack. Not by Netscape, but by spam, spyware, hackers, and viruses, which all were taking advantage of flaws and vulnerabilities in Windows and IE. Microsoft has been fighting back with patches and updates, but the relentless flood of problems has prompted many corporate and private users to look elsewhere for a less troublesome browser. In the meantime, Netscape hasn't been sitting on its hands. Netscape improved its Mozilla code; a new “gecko” engine, shared between Mozilla 1.4 and Netscape 7.2, offered better performance than previous versions and features that IE hasn't even dreamed of. In addition, the move by many to Linux also boosted Netscape's user base. Like Internet Explorer, Netscape is available in Windows and Mac versions, but also in a variety of Linux distributions.



Netscape's sidebar offers quick access to different features, such as Search, Bookmarks, or History.

Downloading and installing Netscape uses an installation technique similar to what Microsoft uses for IE. You first download (or run from the Web) a small (less than 300KB) installation program. Depending on the features you choose to install, Netscape then downloads and installs the browser and other features. A full install tips the scales at a little more than 52MB on Windows. Like IE, you can choose a full or custom install of Netscape.

Netscape offers more options than IE, so there's more to choose from if you select the custom installation. One irritation that we found was Netscape's adoption of parent company AOL's penchant for putting useless icons and menu items, such as Netscape's \$9.95 ISP offer on your system without asking. Thankfully, Netscape refrains from AOL's habit of putting CompuServe, WinAmp, and other installation folders in your system's C:\ directory without asking.



For the average user, Netscape, like Internet Explorer, installs using a small file that downloads and installs the entire suite.

Performance Improvements

One big complaint that users of earlier versions of Netscape had, and rightly so, was with Netscape's performance, especially startup. Netscape 7.2 has improved generally in that area and because part of Netscape is kept in memory when not in use, it loads more quickly each time you launch it. When Netscape isn't available on-screen, it parks an icon in the System Tray. You can right-click and close the browser if you want to free up space on your system. We found Netscape's performance in displaying Web pages to be on a par with IE6, occasionally loading pages faster, other times slower. Though not a rave, it is a real improvement over earlier versions of Netscape.

Netscape's interface has a smooth, modern look by default. It supports different themes, though only the sculpted modern look and the classic flatter face are available.

Designers intended to have IE's Explorer Bar offer a more convenient way to access common tasks and content. Although you can access your browsing history or your Favorites list, search the Internet, or play media, the Explorer Bar is only a single task window.

Netscape's View Source windows display HTML in a format usually reserved for development tools.

Netscape introduced its My Sidebar in version 6. Unlike IE's Explorer Bar, My Sidebar gives users more options. My Sidebar was designed to offer users a convenient way for accessing common tasks and content, such as the Search or Favorites features. IE only lets you view one feature at a time. Netscape's tabbed My Sidebar offers as many as nine standard tabs, as well as a link to third-party tabs you can download from Netscape's Web site. The standard tabs offer the usual History, Search, and Bookmarks selections, as well as your AIM Buddy List. Click Customize and choose from more than a dozen other tabs, such as FedEx, CNN, or MapQuest. Some tabs are no longer available, such as Linux Freak News and the standard version of CNN (it provides an update link though), but there are enough of the staples. Want more options? Click My Sidebar Directory and choose from dozens of third-party tabs, such as a Time Zone converter or an eBay finder tool. Unfortunately, a number of the third-party tabs are dated, with some not working.

A small part of Netscape remains in memory once you have used it, so performance is improved when you want to use the program again.

Most people, when they surf the Web, don't just open one Web page; they have multiple browser windows open at one time. With IE, this means separate instances of IE. Windows will automatically make a group once you run out of space on the toolbar, but it is still difficult to get back to the browser window you want. Netscape shares an idea the Opera browser pioneered: a tabbed interface. By default, clicking a link brings up a page in a separate browser similar to IE, but if you right-click the page, you can open it in a new tab instead. This proves to be a cleaner and more convenient way of opening multiple pages. You can also

configure a key combination that will save you time opening tabs.

Netscape's Bookmark Manager is a breeze to use.

One of the most irritating things you may encounter on the Internet these days are those pop-ups. Although useful on some sites, most pop-ups are just a Web site equivalent of spam: useless advertisements requiring a "whack-a-mole" session with the mouse to close the ads. Making matters worse, the minute you close some pop-ups, two more will appear. Well, good news: Netscape has a configurable pop-up blocker that, by default, blocks all pop-ups (except for a preconfigured list from Netscape). With some sites, such as online banking or postage sites where pop-ups are required, you can configure the blocker. Although Netscape's Pop-up blocker was unique when we first looked at it, Microsoft added a pop-up blocker to IE6 with its Windows XP Service Pack 2 release.

Easy configuration

Netscape offers a unique configuration feature under the Tools menu with a set of five managers. The Cookie, Password, Popup, Download and Form managers offer an easy and better way to configure and personalize your browser. For example, Internet Explorer can configure cookies through the Privacy option, but Netscape's cookie manager lets you view individual cookie information. While managing a lot of cookies individually is pretty overwhelming, you can make all the cookies disappear with a single click, just like in IE.

Netscape's Password Manager is also very cool. The first time you type a password into a Web page, Netscape asks if you want to store it in the Password Manager. You have the option of never saving the password on that site, which is handy when other people have access to a computer or public kiosk. You can't view or edit passwords once you store them, but you can view and remove the username and associated site from the list—something you can't do in IE. Unless you put the site on the Never Ask Me Again list, which is another option, Netscape will ask about storing the page the next time you access the site. We found this helpful when we changed our eBay password. In Internet Explorer, on the other hand, we had to overwrite the wrong password a couple of times before IE figured out the stored password was different.

Although IE and Netscape can fill in forms automatically, Netscape's Form manager offers a clean way for viewing and editing forms and information. In IE, users only have the ability to clear form or password data.

The Netscape's pop-up blocker, which is turned on by default, can be configured with the Pop-up manager. Similar to the new WinXP SP2 pop-up blocker, you exempt sites from blocking, such as online banking where you need a pop-up logon.

The Download Manager keeps track of the progress of downloads, such as shareware, software updates, or PDF files (Portable Document Formant) files. You can configure this list to display the file name, speed, elapsed time, source, and destination of the downloaded files, as well as progress. You can pause or resume a download, but if you exit the browser you

must start the download from the beginning. Because finding a downloaded file is sometimes a problem for some people, the Download Manager provides you with Launch and Show File Location options for easier retrieval.

In general, we found most settings in Netscape were easier to locate and understand than in IE. The Preferences dialog box (which you can access by opening the Edit menu and clicking Preferences) in Netscape puts most settings right up front. Want to block images or set how many times an animated GIF (Graphic Interchange Format) image cycles? Just scroll the list, expand the Privacy & Security category, and select the Images category.

Configuring Netscape's security settings, such as script blocking, is also just as easy. Managing scripting in IE can be an all-or-nothing proposition. With Netscape, you can allow scripts and disable security-related scripting behaviors, such as changing Status bar text, manipulating windows, or using cookies. In IE you need to select Internet Options from the Tools menu, select the Security tab, click the Custom Level button, and then scroll down and try to find the appropriate settings. The options in Netscape are relatively easy to understand, as opposed to figuring out what IE means when one of its options reads Initialize And Script ActiveX Controls Not Marked As Safe. IE does, however, let you set some options to prompt you when a Web site or script tries to use certain features.

Other Helpful Features

Context-sensitive Help is available at almost every turn in both programs, as well. When you access specific subjects in the Help section, IE and Netscape give you a list of categories broken into detailed topics. In IE, you need to click each topic to read it, but in Netscape, you can click one topic in a category, read it, and then scroll up or down the page to read about other topics. This is a timesaving feature that lets you quickly refer to other topics when necessary. On the downside, unlike IE, Netscape's Help index doesn't let you search for keywords to pinpoint a subject or category you need help with.

Both browsers also have a feature that lets you view the raw HTML code for Web pages and email. If you are using IE, open the View menu and click Source. Navigator users will click View and Page Source to view the HTML code. A separate window opens and displays the coding for that particular page. You can use this view to see how the Web designer coded something to make the page appear the way it does, or you can use the code to check the authenticity of an email message. IE displays the code in Windows Notepad, while Netscape uses a viewer that displays what developers used to call a "pretty print" treatment: formatted and color-coded HTML tags and date. Netscape's viewer makes coding a little easier to read and follow, if you understand how HTML codes work.

A feature we miss in IE that Netscape provides is a built-in HTML editor. Although maybe not as feature-packed as DreamWeaver or FrontPage, Netscape's Composer window is a good, basic HTML editor. It's great for doing a quick tweak or building complete Web sites. To access Composer, open the File menu and select Edit Page or click anywhere on a Web page and type CTRL-E. Unfortunately, this could encourage plagiarism and

copyright infringement, but there are legitimate uses for this feature. In the editor, you can view the page in Normal (WYSIWYG), HTML Tag, Source, or Preview modes. Oddly the Source mode is not color coded like the Page Source option in the View menu. Once you're done editing the code, you can publish the page, although you need security rights to the site you're uploading to. This feature won't appeal to everyone, but developers and hobbyists might find it useful.

Another example of Netscape's attention to detail is the View Page Info option. Open the View menu and click Page Info, or right-click any page and select Page Info. The Page Info dialog box appears several tabs: General, Forms, Links, Media, Security, and Privacy. We found this dialog box helpful for checking for hidden form fields on phishing Web pages. IE offers a View Privacy Report option and a few properties for a page.

Like most earlier versions, Netscape 7.2 includes an email and newsreader client, which are functionally similar to Internet Explorer's Outlook Express. Netscape's Preferences dialog box (open the Edit menu and click Preferences) lets you change settings for your mail, newsreader, or browser from a single spot, while IE and Outlook Express are essentially separate components. By default Netscape email and newsgroups are configured to show messages in a preview panel, the same as IE. However, unlike IE, you cannot enable Preview for newsgroups but not mail. Outlook Express has the leg up because it lets you turn the Preview feature on or off for the newsreader and individual folders, as well.

Netscape's Email Spam controls are enabled by default. In our experience using this feature, it caught about two-thirds of the spam delivered to our test inbox. Outlook Express lacks a junk mail filter completely, although upgrading to a full Office version of Outlook 2003 will get you a strong spam catcher. Although Outlook Express lacks junk mail or spam filters, it does have the ability to set up filtering rules. Netscape also provides filtering rules that let you control spam or organize your email. Setting up a filter is easier in Netscape than in IE, due to a better interface.

One of the early problems on the Netscape vs. IE battlefield was compatibility of Web sites. Some Web sites did not appear the same in both browsers. Some sites were (and still are today) designed for one or other of the browsers and not both.

Take Your Pick

Overall, Netscape offers a lot of features in a nice freeware browser. With the tabbed interface, built-in pop-up blocker, and a slew of information and developer features, it is definitely worth a try. If you have little use for email and newsgroups, then take a look at the Mozilla Firefox beta (currently version 9). Shedding the Netscape/Mozilla bloat, Firefox is a lean and mean sports car of a browser. Internet Explorer with WinXP SP2 enhancements, such as the pop-up blocker, Add-on Manager, and improved security is also still a good choice, especially if you need to access Web sites that use ActiveX components. Nontechnical users may find IE more comfortable. With Microsoft's introduction of Service Pack 2 and its more restrictive security by default, you'll have a safer browsing experience.

by Jay Munro



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(OCIPUG)

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Material for the **Oct.** issue must be received on or before

Oct. 15th, 2004 by
mborison@yahoo.com

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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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- * 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.
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Southeast Corner of 19th and Pomona**

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

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