

Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

README.DOC

February 2005

Newsletter

Volume 21.2

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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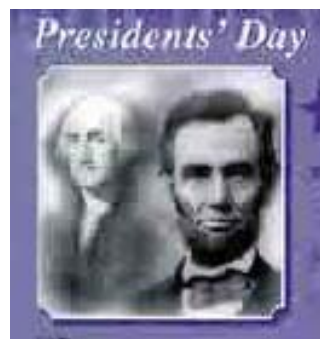
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Building Your Own Computer Pt. 1



Happy President's Day



Dixifun



Digital Creations for Everyone



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

**February 26th, 2005
 March 26th, 2005
 April 25th, 2005
 May 28th, 2005**

**Web Page
 www.ocipug.org**

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

**February 26th, 2005
 March 26th, 2005
 April 25th, 2005
 May 28th, 2005**

All OCIPUG members are welcome

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

**1st Tues Internet
 2nd Tues Hardware
 3rd Tues Windows
 4th Tues Dig Photo**

All SIG Groups start at 7:00pm



Building Your Own Computer

This two-part seminar explores the topic of building your own PC: Part I looks at the different components of a PC, and selection criteria for purchasing the best components for your individual purposes. This part of the Build your own computer will be presented at the General Meeting Feb. 26th

Part II not only walks you step by step through the process of building a PC, but also enables your group to have special pricing and support on everything you'll need to build a state-of-the-art, Intel technology based PC This part of the Build your own computer will be presented at a meeting to be announced.

Those who order the system will receive the following parts, which, if purchased separately from local retailers or integrators, could cost over \$1,400. Please note that the system includes the very latest high-performance technologies, including a Hyper-Threading processor, DDR2 RAM, SATA, RAID, PCI Express, HD 7.1 audio, Gb Ethernet, USB 2.0, and IEEE-1394. Don't make the mistake of trying to compare this system based only on GHz and GB to systems without HT Technology, RAID, IEEE-1394 support and with support for older technologies such as DDR



Don't forget to wear your OCIPUG badge to qualify for a free raffle ticket in the members only raffle!! Membership must be current also.

Dixifun



Digital Creations for Everyone

Description: Complete kit that contains software, acrylic key rings, and photo inlays. Use your PC and digital pictures to create cool key rings for the whole family. Design & create personal style photo key rings in minutes. Ready-to-use templates to assist in your design.

Contents: Software CD, 6 acrylic key rings, 18 photo inlays, 2 printer test sheets and alignment page. MSRP: \$12.99

Description: Complete kit that contains software, acrylic photo holder magnets, and photo inlays. Use your PC and digital images to create cool magnets for the refrigerator. Put everywhere. Design and create personal magnets in just minutes. Ready to use templates assist you in your design.

Contents: Software CD, 5 acrylic photo holder magnets, 12 photo inlays, 2 printer test sheets and alignment page. MSRP: \$12.99

There are several kits to choose from - everything from photo magnets to photo ID badges. These kits are a great way to keep your favorite photos on display all the time, take your photos with you, and organize your photos. Many unique and fun ideas and designs to keep you wanting to make more. Easy-to-use software means you can start creating right away.

There are several kits to choose from - everything from photo magnets to photo ID badges. These kits are a great way to keep your favorite photos on display all the time, take your photos with you, and organize your photos. Many unique and fun ideas and designs to keep you wanting to make more. Easy-to-use software means you can start creating right away.

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

March 1st, 2005

Internet

Mark Borison

1st Tuesday 7:00PM

March 8th, 2005

Hardware

No SIG This Month

2nd Tuesday 7:00PM

Ed Leckliter eleckliter@adelphia.net

March 15th, 2005

Windows - 3rd Tuesday 7:00PM

Robert Strader robert.strader@comcast.net

March 22nd, 2005

Digital Cameras / Scanning -

4th Tuesday 7:00PM

David Wintle allart@pac.bell.net

ACP Swap Meet

(800) 366-3227

www.acpsuperstore.com

Free Admission Free Parking

1310 Edinger, Santa Ana 8A to 2P

Exit the 55 at Edinger, go west location.

Mar. 27 (Sun.) May. 29 (Sun.)



Upcoming General Meetings

February 26th, 2005

March 26th, 2005

April 25th, 2005

May 28th, 2005



Computer Fair

(408) 778-5200

www.lacomputerfair.com



Orange County Fairgrounds

Feb.26th-27th

10-5

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|--|
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| SIG Coordinator | Robert Strader | 949-646-1475 | sigcoordinator@ocipug.org |

Minutes for the December 2004 OCIPUG Board of Directors Meeting, December 18, 2004



The December Executive Board of Directors (Board or BOD) Meeting of the Orange Coast IBM PC User Group (OCIPUG) was held on December 18, 2004, at the Costa Mesa Senior Center. President David Wintle called the meeting to order at 12:35pm, with eight of the nine officers and directors present.

At the December 2004 General Meeting, David reminded all attendees that the OCIPUG General and Board Meeting dates have been changed to the 4th Saturday of each month, with the January 2005 General and Board Meetings being on Saturday, January 22, 2005.

Secretary Frank Mastroly had previously e mailed a draft copy of the November 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting minutes to all board members for their review, with some minor corrections received and the corrected minutes e-mailed to all board members. In a motion by Treasurer Shirley England, seconded by Director Mark Borison, and carried, the corrected minutes of the November 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting as e-mailed to all board members were approved.

President's Report: — President David Wintle said that there was little to report except that we had just completed a very successful Christmas potluck after the December General Meeting. David also circulated sheets showing the proposed OCIPUG business cards, and solicited suggestions and corrections.

Secretary's Report: — Secretary Frank Mastroly reported that he gave Treasurer Shirley England a renewal check plus a donation from Irwin Haydock. Frank also reported that he gave letters from Past President Michael Moore to President David Wintle relating to Michael being charged for our FatCow web hosting renewal. David said that OCIPUG had also paid for this, and should Michael be charged he would be reimbursed.

Treasurer's Report: — Treasurer/CFO Shirley England distributed several sheets of financial data along with the statement that she now has all OCIPUG records in Quicken, with the fiscal year being September through August. She reported that she is now receiving the statements from CalNational Bank at her home. Shirley reported that she is reconciling all expenditures with the budgeted amounts, but found a discrepancy in facilities due to

expenses incurred in upgrading the present OCIPUG computer to permit use of a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard, and the building of the new computer using the processor and motherboard donated by Intel. These expenditures had previously been approved by the Board but had not been reflected in the budget. Secretary Frank Mastroly will forward to Shirley all board meeting minutes covering these two items.

Finally, Shirley has received the revised California Domestic Non-Profit Organization forms. She is working with former Treasurer Kevin Moser on how to fill out these forms. The \$20 filing fee is a budgeted item.

President David Wintle and Director Eugenia Frerichs conducted a financial review on November 23, 2004, and found no discrepancies.

In a motion by Past President Leonard Stein, seconded by Director Mark Borison, and carried, the treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

Committee Reports:

Program Committee Report: — Director/ Program Chairman Mark Borison reported that we had just been treated to a very entertaining presentation by Don Edrington, the PC Don (www.pcdon.com). Don's website has many interesting items, including music tracks that you can download for free. Currently there is no specific program scheduled for the January 2005 General Meeting.

Mark again asked for assistance in setting up programs. Mark, as well as several OCIPUG members, will be attending the APCUG/CES convention in Las Vegas in early January 2005 at which time Mark hopes to contact several vendors about making presentations to OCIPUG.

SIG Reports:

The upcoming SIG schedule is as follows:

- * Internet and Web Page Design (Mark Borison), 1st Tuesday of each month. As Mark will be at the APCUG/CES convention the first Monday of January 2005, on January 4 Vice President Robert Strader will conduct the SIG, the topic still TBD.
- * Hardware (Ed Leckliter), 2nd Tuesday of each month. On January 11, Ed will continue his new series on detailed discussions of PC components, with chipsets (core logic) being the topic for January.
- * Windows 9x/XP (Robert Strader), 3rd Tuesday of each month. On December 22, 2004, and January 18, 2005, Robert will continue his discussion of Windows Tip and Tricks. If any member has a Windows-related question, send him an e-mail and it can be discussed at the SIG.
- * Digital Photography and Scanning (David Wintle), 4th Tuesday of each month. On December 29, David will begin a series of discussions on Adobe Photoshop Elements 3, the latest version of the program that now incorporates the Photoshop Album program.

SeniorNet: At the December General Meeting, Dan Dickinson,

the Costa Mesa SeniorNet Learning Center Coordinator, announced that the Senior Center is signing up students for the next session of classes that will start on Monday, January 10, 2005. In addition to switching the days for the various classes around, the team has added a new class on Family Tree Maker, which will be taught by OCIPUG member Muriel Fitzsimmons on Wednesday afternoons. As usual, the SeniorNet team is always in need of new volunteers to coach and eventually teach a class. The only requirement to be a coach is to be patient with the students and simply watch to see that they are following what the instructor is saying. All those interested in joining the SeniorNet team are invited to come to the next team meeting on Thursday (note different day), December 30, 2004, at 3:00pm in the large classroom.

Community Service Report: — No report.

Long Range Planning Committee Report: — Director Mark Borison reminded all board members of the OCIPUG 20th anniversary, which will occur in March 2005, and will work with Past President Leonard Stein on this. This should also be coordinated with the Senior Center. Director Eugenia Frerichs suggested items to be included in a special edition of the Readme.Doc include such items as old articles, thumbnails of the covers of past issues, etc.

Facilities Report, Maintenance, and Improvement: — Vice President Robert Strader reported that he had finished assembly of the new computer using the motherboard and processor donated by Intel. At first he and member Ed Leckliter had problems getting it to boot properly (it would not recognize the PCI slots). However, they finally were able to download and install a new BIOS and get the PC to boot.

Operations (Policy and Procedures): — No report

Publications Report: — Newsletter Editor Mark Borison reported that the December 2004 Readme.Doc has been released.

Webmaster Report: — Nothing new to report.

Membership Committee Report: — OCIPUG is still in need of a Membership Committee Chairman.

Advertisings and Public Relations Report: — Director Mark Borison reported that he placed copies of an OCIPUG tri-fold in MicroCenter and CompUSA.

Sunshine Committee Report: — No report.

Old Business:

Treasurer Shirley England reported that she had gone to the CompUSA store in Mission Viejo to take advantage of their user group “early bird” Saturday morning promotion, but that the store manager was not even aware of it. President David Wintle reported that he had visited the CompUSA store in Fountain Valley the day before the promotion, but they too had not yet heard of it but were open on early Saturday morning per the promotion.

Past President Leonard Stein noted the importance of taking advantage of promotions and various discounts in obtaining raffle prizes. Treasurer Shirley England reported that she had received a reimbursement request from Leonard for raffle prizes.

For those wanting to take advantage of user group promotions on Gene Barlow’s User Group Relations’ site (www.ugr.com), the code is OCIPUG.

New Business: — None

Adjournment: — Moved by Director Mark Borison, seconded by Vice President Robert Strader, and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 pm. The next OCIPUG Board meeting will be on the 4th Saturday of January 2005, or on January 22, 2005, immediately following the January 2005 General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Mastroly, Secretary

President’s Message

Well here it is, the second month of the year. The month for lovers and friends, Valentine’s Day, when all the red and pink roses are sold. As members of a computer users group we must also learn to love or at least be friendly with our computers. I used the plural of computer, as anyone that has used a computer as long as most of us is bound to have more than one. For some reason we seem to keep the older one we replaced, replaced, replaced and so on. I guess because they seem like an old friend.

We tend to spend more time with our computer than most other things. We think about them even when we are not at their keyboard. I wonder how we can get more speed out of the computer. What program should I upgrade, do I need to add more ram, hard drives are getting less expensive should I get a bigger one. Now I know that no one has ever thought about these things except me. The point is we tend to keep things we like and are comfortable with. So why not give your computer a valentine gift. Go get a can of air and blow all the junk out of your keyboard. Get some monitor cleaner and clean the monitor screen you have put your oily fingers on it long enough, clean the prints off of it. Clean the keyboard keys while you are at it. Now for the best gift you can do for your computer to make it really happy, open the case and blow the dirt and lint out of the inside. Your computer will run cooler and last much longer. I think some of you will be real surprised at how much dirt, dust and lint is in your computer and computer fans. Don’t forget to support the SIG’s and attend the general meeting. Your support is most welcome. If you really want to shock the officers volunteer to help with the README.DOC, the website, meetings. Bring a friend, you will enjoy the meeting and club much better.

David Wintle
President

OCIPUG Hardware SIG - Meeting Recap

Meeting Date: February 8, 2005

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

Featured Topic(s): System RAM plus Motherboard Features
Beyond Core Logic (Chipsets): 2004-05 Update
Hardware Submissions - none
Random Access - some discussion regarding updating a Dell system by adding a USB 2.0 add-in card. Member may bring in his system for assistance during the April Hardware SIG meeting.

Next Meeting: April 12, 2005

(no March meeting - schedule conflict)

Next Meeting Featured Topic(s): Hard Drives and "Floppies":
2004-05 Update

Following Meeting: May 10, 2005

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): CD, DVD, and Other
Non-"Floppy", Removable-Media Drives: 2004-2005 Update

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

Top Ten Signs That You Are An Internet Geek

10. When filling out your driver's license application you give your IP address.
9. You no longer ask prospective dates what their sign is, instead your line is "Hi, what's your URL?"
8. Instead of calling you to dinner, your spouse sends email.
7. You're amazed to find out spam is a food.
6. You "ping" people to see if they're awake, "finger" them to find out how they are, and "AYT" them to make sure they're listening to you.
5. You search the Net endlessly hoping to win every silly free T-shirt contest.
4. You introduce your wife as "my lady@home.wife" and refer to your children as "client applications".
3. At social functions you introduce your husband as "my domain server".
2. After winning the office super bowl pool you blurt out, "I feel so "colon-right parentheses!"

..And the number one sign you are an Internet Geek:

1. Two Words: **"Pizza's Here!"**.



Mr. Modem's Desktop: Doing The Firefox Trot March 2005 • Vol.16 Issue 3 Page(s) 42 in print issue



One question that frequently arises from readers who have followed my recommendation to try the life-altering Mozilla Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.org>) browser is, "Now that I've tried it and I'm going to continue to use Firefox, should I uninstall Internet Explorer?"

I wouldn't do that for several reasons, not the least of which is that IE is tightly integrated with Windows; if you attempt to delete it, the headaches gained will not offset the minimal benefits derived.

Also, because Firefox doesn't support ActiveX, there may be occasions when you'll want to use IE to view a site that won't display correctly in Firefox. To avoid the arduous task of launching IE manually, download Mozilla's free IE View extension at <http://tinyurl.com/4wbc6>. With IE View, right-click anywhere on a Web page and select View This Page In IE.

Lastly, if you're thinking of making the spiritually enhancing switch to Firefox, purchase the Firefox Guidebook for \$11.95 from Mozilla (<http://tinyurl.com/3kva6>). Like a relic from a previous era—not unlike Mr. Modem, I might add—the Guidebook is an all-too-rare hard-copy manual, with an actual index and real pages capable of inflicting real paper cuts. Entering this no-scroll zone will flatten your learning curve and reveal features you never knew existed in Firefox.

This'll Keep You In Stitches!

If you're a wanna-be surgeon, or simply curious about medical procedures, OR-Live (<http://www.or-live.com>) is just what the doctor ordered. It features a surgical potpourri of live broadcasts covering all types of surgeries, from pesky abdominal aortic aneurysms (I hate it when that happens!) to hip replacements, to various cardiac surgeries. A splendid selection of information is available about the procedures so you can bone up in advance of each surgery, participate in discussion forums, and view archived surgeries. While not for the easily queasily, this site provides a fascinating glimpse into the everyday miracles occurring in operating rooms throughout the country.

Thwart Identity Theft

The Federal Trade Commission has created a universal form that victims of identity theft can use to alert retail stores, banks, and other institutions. Just fill out the form and provide it to any business where fraudulent accounts may have been opened. To obtain a copy of the FTC ID Theft Affidavit, visit <http://tinyurl.com/6zcmc>. Additional consumer and victim support is available from the good folks at the Identity Theft Resource Center, <http://www.idtheftcenter.org>.

Mr. Modem Mini Rant: Permission-Based Email

If you haven't bumped into permission-based email as an antispam "strategy," and I use the term loosely, it's only a matter of time. Conceptually, you can insulate yourself from spam by accepting email only from individuals to whom you grant permission. Pulleezee!

I can't think of anything more annoying than receiving a question by email, responding to it promptly, only to get an auto-generated "state-your-reason-for-contacting-me" form within which I'm supposed to request permission to email the person who contacted me in the first place! Hello? Memo to permission-based mail users: If you initiate email contact with anybody, it is YOUR responsibility to clear the way for a response. 'Nuf said?

Changing Settings? You Need Not Apply

Most of us have been instructed since birth that when we modify Windows settings, we are to click Apply, followed by OK to save our changes, and exit. Psssst! Don't tell anybody, but you really don't have to click Apply first. (Insert gasp here.)

The next time you make any settings changes and see the Apply and OK buttons attempting to entice you with their clickable charms, try exercising the patented Mr. Modem ABB (Apply-Button Bypass) and just click the OK button. It has the same effect as clicking Apply followed by OK. Honest.

Drivers' License Records Online

And finally, at the National Drivers' License Records Bureau Web site (<http://tinyurl.com/6p6no>), you can search an online database of more than 220 million U.S. drivers' licenses, including numbers, license-related information, and unflattering drivers' license photos. I knew I should have smiled. It gave me the heebie-jeebies when I first learned about this Web site, but stop by, look yourself up, and then let me know what you think: Should this information be available to anybody with Internet access? E-me at MrModem@smartcomputing.com.

Mr. Modem (Richard Sherman) is an author, syndicated columnist, radio host, and publisher. "Mr. Modem's Weekly Newsletter" provides personal responses to subscribers' computer and Internet questions, plus weekly computing tips, Web site recommendations, virus alerts, hoax warnings, and more. For additional information, visit <http://www.MrModem.com>.

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Setting Up A My Yahoo! Page

March 2005 • Vol.16 Issue 3

Page(s) 82 in print issue

by Alan Phelps



My Yahoo!, a popular home page choice, is an ideal launching pad for Internet exploration. With customizable content and blog support, the redesigned My Yahoo! page can bring together most of your favorite online news and information. If you've never tried My Yahoo!, now is a good time to check it out.

Sign Up

Start by pointing your browser to <http://my.yahoo.com>. A generic My Yahoo! page appears with a few news and related modules already loaded. Look for the Sign In link at the top of the page and click the small Sign Up link nearby. If you already have a Yahoo! Mail address, you can use that as your My Yahoo! login. Otherwise, create a new Yahoo! login by providing the requested information. There's no need to use your *real* first and last name if you don't want to, but you'll need to use an actual email address because Yahoo! will send a verification email before activating your account. When you're ready, click Continue To Yahoo! and click Get Started. The next window shows you the main categories of information you can use to populate your My Yahoo! page. Select (or deselect) the checkboxes to pick the categories you want. When you finish, click Create My Page, and you should see the My Yahoo! window. A large yellow rectangle at the top of the page describes some of the ways to customize your page. My Yahoo! basically combines different modules you can add, delete, or edit. By default, the page is divided into one large column on the left and a small column on the right. If you know that you're not going to be interested in some of the default modules, delete them by clicking the small X in the upper-right corner of each unwanted box. The modules will fade away, never to return (unless you choose to bring them back).



My Yahoo!'s redesigned, customizable news and information page makes it a great starting point for anywhere you go on the Internet.

Add Content

Rebuild a page by clicking Add Content (a tiny link in the upper-left portion of the page). On the next page, you'll see two ways to

add modules: First, you can enter keywords to search for relevant content; second, you can browse different topics by clicking links in the left column. Inside the categories, you'll find links to newspapers, Yahoo! content, and ready-made modules. Click the appropriate Add button(s) to include one (or more). If you're not sure you'll like something, go ahead and click Add because you can always delete it later. Once you've added a few components, click the yellow Finished button. The modules you picked now appear on your page, but they're probably at the bottom. To fix that, click the Change Layout link. Yahoo! presents the content of your page in two lists: one for the wide, main column and the other for the smaller side column. Click a module name in one of the lists and then click the Up and Down arrows immediately to the right to move the module above or below other modules. In addition, you can scroll down to change other layout options. Most significant is the two column/three column selector. If you have a large-sized screen, displaying three columns on your My Yahoo! page will give you more room to add modules. You also can choose whether the Yahoo! Search field should appear at the top or the bottom of the page. Again, click the yellow Finished button when you're finished making your changes.

Edit Modules

Back on your My Yahoo! page, pick a module and click the Edit button. A small menu of commands appears; among them are arrows for quickly moving modules up or down on-screen. The top command, Edit Content, lets you fine-tune the selected box. For example, choose Edit in one of the many news headline modules to open the Display Options window. Here, you can pick how many headlines you want in view at any particular time. From the drop-down menu on the second line, you can pick whether only the headline should show or whether the headline should be accompanied by a summary of the article. Note the checkbox at the bottom of this page that directs My Yahoo! to apply these same settings to all headline modules. By now, your My Yahoo! page is really becoming something that reflects your interests. Take some time to explore the other content options, too. If you tweak My Yahoo! enough, it will soon become your one-stop, must-see page.

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Photoshop World Conference & Expo



Peachpit is offering free Tech Expo passes (\$40 value), to the upcoming Photoshop World Expo, taking place at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, Las Vegas from March 8 - 10, 2005. Each Tech Expo pass admits two free on Wednesday March 9, 2005.

Your interested members can request a pair of passes by sending an email to photoshopworld@peachpit.com with their name and postal address. The passes are available on a first-come, first-serve basis, and Peachpit must receive all requests by February 25th.

Web Tips: Enhance Your Time Online

March 2005 • Vol.16 Issue 3

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A Tip For Cruise Tipping Problem: I'm taking my family on a cruise, and I can never figure out whom and how much to tip. Then when I figure it all out, I'm stuck with the wrong denominations to separate out.



Make your PowerPoint presentations stand out with some free background templates.

Solution: Tip-calculation software generally gives you a quick calculation of 15% to 20% of a total bill. But if you're looking for real precruise preparation help, sail on over to the Cruise Tip Calculator (<http://members.aol.com/CruiseTip>). This amazingly handy tool allows you to select from one of 10 cruise lines. Enter the number of days of your cruise and the number of passengers. The form then loads the staff members and cruise line's suggested daily tip amount. Finally, if you enter the actual amount you would like to tip each person, the form will calculate the denomination of bills you need to put in each tip envelope. All that's left is to enjoy your cruise.

Presentation Templates Aplenty Problem: I'm growing bored with the standard presentation templates that are included with Microsoft PowerPoint. How can I jazz up my presentations? Solution: If you do a search for "free PowerPoint templates," you will find a lot of sites that are actually commerce sites looking to sell you a collection of templates. Oftentimes, their free offerings are limited to a scant handful of templates. But if you're looking for high quality, high quantity, and absolutely no cost, check out the digital studio of Sonia Coleman (<http://www.soniacoleman.com/templates.htm>). She has posted 29 sets of free PowerPoint templates, each including a matching blank button.

Getting The Best Digital Prints Problem: I'm getting more and more into digital photography. But after I spend all this time editing my photos, my prints come back looking different than they did on-screen. Solution: If correct color is important to you, consider managing the color profile of the printer you use to get prints made. Most stores that offer to make prints from your digital camera, including Wal-Mart and Costco, have specific printer profiles you can use to match the colors you see with the colors you get. A good listing of these profiles can be found at Dry Creek Photo's profile database (<http://www.drycreekphoto.com/Frontier/FrontierDatabase.htm>).

You'll find instructions on using profiles, as well as a state-by-state listing of specific stores' profiles. The database also lists locations outside of the United States, including Canada and Europe.

www.kleimo.com/random/name.cfm) may be your best bet. This generator uses data from the U.S. Census to randomly offer up suggestions. But best of all, you can choose an "obscurity factor" from 1 to 99. Name generators are also great for writers looking for character names.

All The St. Patty's Day Parades Problem: I want to show some Irish cheer this year. How can I find a St. Patrick's Day parade near my town? Solution: Get out your green and get ready for the Web's most comprehensive listing of 2005 St. Patrick's Day parades (<http://www.aviso.net/dir/usa/irish/events/stpatrick.htm>). This site has a number of Canadian parade locations and even a small bunch from Japan, Germany, and South Korea.

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Proverbs

author unknown

Every once in awhile, you just have to sit back and enjoy a good giggle.

Here are some computer proverbs to brighten your day.

1. Home is where you hang your @.
2. The email of the species is more deadly than the mail.
3. A journey of a thousand sites begins with a single click.
4. You can't teach a new mouse old clicks.
5. Great groups from little icons grow.
6. Speak softly and carry a cellular phone.
7. In some places, C: is the root of all directories.
8. Oh, what a tangled Website we weave when first we practice.
9. Pentium wise, pen and paper foolish.
10. The modem is the message.
11. Too many clicks spoil the browse.
12. The geek shall inherit the earth.
13. Don't byte off more than you can view.
14. Fax is stranger than fiction.
15. What boots up must come down.
16. Windows will never cease.
17. Virtual reality is its own reward.
18. Modulation in all things.
19. Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him to use the Net and he won't bother you for weeks.
20. There's no place like your homepage.

Security

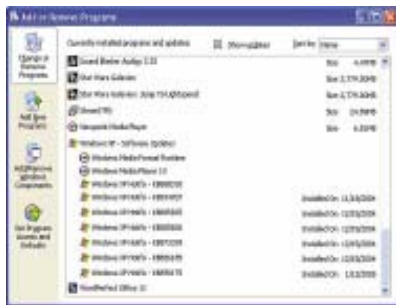
Quick Studies

April 2005 • Vol. 16 Issue 4

Enhancing IE Security

Whether checking the latest news, investigating a new product's features, or locating updates for your favorite application, Web browsing is one of the most popular ways people use the Internet. Each Web site's content is passed to a local Web browser, such as Internet Explorer, dynamically recreating the most recent view of every Web page. As with most Internet communications utilities, however, passing HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and other code via TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) opens avenues in your computer that can potentially be exploited by crackers and malicious Web site designers. Even Microsoft's regular security fixes haven't fully secured IE from attack. Fortunately, there are some common tactics to help protect you while Web surfing with IE.

If In Doubt, Update



Use the Add Or Remove Programs list to identify any updates or hotfixes currently installed on your system for Windows or its utilities.

As new exploits and vulnerabilities are identified in OSes (operating systems) and applications, software engineers work hard to develop patches or fixes to address the problems. Microsoft typically alerts Windows users when new updates are available, but you can always check for new updates using the Windows Update feature.

Simply open the Start menu and click the Windows Update icon (in some OSes, you'll find it in the left pane of the Control Panel window). When the Windows Update site appears in your browser window, follow the Express or Custom Install prompts to implement any necessary updates. Pay particular attention to any available IE updates. If you're not sure what (if any) updates have already been installed, it's easy to check for previous updates by opening Add Or Remove Programs from the Control Panel and scrolling to the end of the program list.

If you have Windows XP or Windows Me and a broadband Internet connection, you can enable the Automatic Updates feature, which directs Windows to download and install updates for you while you're online.

To activate Automatic Updates in WinXP, open the Start menu, click Control Panel, and click System (from the Performance And Maintenance category). Choose the Automatic Updates tab and select the Automatic radio button. (There also are other options you can select to simply download updates and/or have your system alert you when the updates are ready to install.) Be sure to click Apply and OK to save the setting change. WinMe users can activate the Automatic Updates feature by opening the Start menu, choosing Settings, clicking Control Panel, and double-clicking the Automatic Updates icon. From the dialog box, locate the Options heading, select the appropriate option, and click OK.



You can simplify the update process by letting Windows automatically download and install patches and updates for you.

Configure Risky Features

In addition to traditional HTML code, today's Web sites frequently include interactive features using various programming languages. Although such features allow for high-quality visual effects and detailed levels of user control, they also allow Web sites to perform more malicious tasks, such as installing spyware or Trojan horses on your computer, opening multiple unwanted IE windows, and so on. Disabling these features by changing IE's settings can often help protect your computer from malicious activity.

From IE's interface, open the Tools menu, click Internet Options, choose the Security tab, and click the Custom Level button. Look for the ActiveX Controls And Plug-ins heading and disable each of the ActiveX options you see. In addition, locate the Scripting heading and disable each of these options (especially the Scripting Of Java Applets option).

Web sites also routinely employ cookies, small text files that identify you to the site and/or track your browsing activities. IE automatically handles cookies, but it's easy to change some settings to exercise more control over cookies.

Open IE's Tools menu, click Internet Options, choose the Privacy tab, and click the Advanced button. Select the Override Automatic Cookie Handling checkbox and then opt to Accept, Block, or Prompt for cookies by selecting the appropriate option. For example, if you choose to block third-party cookies, IE will then refuse any cookies sent from other Web sites. As another example, if you want to prompt for first-party cookies, IE will ask for permission before sending cookies to any Web site. Click OK to save your changes.

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For added security, it's a good idea to delete any cookies that might reside on your system. Open the Tools menu, click Internet Options, choose the General tab, and click the Delete Cookies button in the Temporary Internet Files area.

One word of warning: Web sites frequently are designed around the use of ActiveX, Java, and cookies, so disabling one or more of these features may prevent Web sites from appearing properly in your browser window—this is, if you're able to access these Web sites at all. If you have trouble viewing your favorite Web sites, just repeat the directions we described in previous paragraphs, but select Prompt (rather than Disable) for each feature. That way, you can accept cookies, ActiveX controls, and scripts related to the sites you visit regularly but prohibit those items from your system for new or unknown Web sites.

Sly As A Fox

Of course, there is one other option available to security-conscious Web surfers: Start using another browser.

IE has been the dominant Web browser for many years, but Mozilla's new Firefox 1.0 (www.mozilla.org/products/firefox) has recently made quite an impression on Internet users. Firefox is free and an open-source application that supports popular plug-ins, such as Macromedia's Shockwave and Flash. Plus, Firefox provides integral pop-up blocking and doesn't download malicious ActiveX controls.



Block or prompt cookies to prevent IE from automatically exchanging potentially sensitive information with Web sites.

If you decide to use Firefox exclusively, it isn't difficult to uninstall IE by using the Control Panel's Add Or Remove Programs or Add/Remove Programs. In WinXP, you'll also need to click Add/Remove Windows Components from the left pane of the Add Or Remove Programs dialog box and follow the Windows Components Wizard's directions.

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Wednesday, January 19 12:00 AM ET

Microsoft's AntiSpyware Tool Removes Internet Explorer

By
Brian Briggs



Many Microsoft Windows users who downloaded the recently released AntiSpyware program from Microsoft, or had it installed through an automatic Windows update, woke up to a surprise. Unintentionally, the heuristics of the software detected Internet Explorer as spyware, and removed the program from their systems.

Microsoft has pulled the program from its website until the problem can be corrected. Elias Weatherbee, a Microsoft representative, said the program was "only in beta" and that "a fix was forthcoming."

"It shows how powerful our AntiSpyware program is," said Weatherbee. "Not only is it able to remove spyware from the system, but also the source of most spyware. Our competitors can't match that." A representative from Lavasoft, which sells Ad-Aware another spyware removal program, complained that Microsoft was using its monopoly and knowledge of the operating system to "offer features that others can't match." "Tough shit," said Weatherbee. Many computer users did not view this new "feature" positively. "I tried to check the weather this morning and all my little blue 'e' icons were missing. I couldn't get to the Internet at all. I guess I'll have to get a new computer," said Windows XP user Graham Newton.

Users of alternative browsers were happy to see Internet Explorer gone. Thad Freeman of the Mozilla Users Group said, "I've been trying for years to get rid of Internet Explorer. I never imagined that Microsoft would do it for me. I'm ecstatic." Microsoft technical support was advising customers to reinstall Windows to regain Internet access and to disable automatic updates. Symantec Antivirus Research reported that virus sightings were down by 95% this morning.

IRS and “Free File Alliance” Again Offer FREE Online Tax Preparation and Filing By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Board of Directors

It's that time of year again. Our mailboxes are brimming with W-2's, 1099's, and other ubiquitous indications of our daily financial lives. Preparing our forms 1040, 1040A, and 1040EZ are typically not our favorite annual right of spring. This year, the fine folks at the IRS and their partners, the “Free File Alliance” are again offering their free online federal income tax preparation and electronic filing services. Unlike past years, where only selected groups of people, such as students or military, could utilize the free services, this year there are free services available for almost all federal tax filers.

The main IRS website at www.irs.gov has at the top: “Free File - Ever missed a good thing and regretted it? Don't miss Free File.

Millions of eligible taxpayers can use Free File — a free online service that let's you prepare and file your tax return electronically. It's smart, free and fast. Don't miss it!”

According to the IRS, about 6.5 million people took advantage of the opportunity last year.

Eligibility determination for each service is the second step listed. Some of the 15 resources listed have a maximum “AGI” (adjusted gross income) ceiling. Others will only prepare forms 1040A or 1040EZ online, while some others will prepare taxes for residents of specific states. Other members of the Alliance will prepare and e-file taxes for free based on age, often under 25 or over 60, while others (such as H&R Block, TaxAct.com, and TurboTax for the Web) have no restrictions on who can use the free services, and are available to all. After the free preparer is selected, the user will be directed to a non-IRS website to complete the online preparation. The taxes are calculated, and proper forms are electronically filed with the IRS using a secured link. An acknowledgement is automatically generated via email notifying the filer that the return has been accepted or rejected.

The IRS notes that several of these companies also offer a fee-based online preparation service, and the only way to be assured to get these services for free is to link to them directly from the IRS Free File website, and not directly to the company websites. It should also be noted that these companies do not generally

prepare state income taxes for free, and that there may be a charge for preparing state income taxes, but users referred from the IRS site are under no obligation to incur any tax preparation expenses for the preparation and filing of federal income taxes, provided they were originally eligible for the services.

Electronic filing by these free resources, or other similar commercial resources, has several advantages, according to the IRS. Some of these benefits are that it takes less time to prepare online than on paper, refunds can be processed much faster, returns are more accurate (provided accurate information is entered), and acknowledgement of receipt is generated so you know the return has been filed, and other tangible and intangible benefits. The IRS also has a statement that the software used by the providers for the free service is “comparable” to the software used by these preparers for their commercial (paid) clients.

The IRS is well aware that not all taxpayers have internet access, so it is arranging for such groups as churches and community associations to provide the internet access so as to promote the widest possible use of the free service. The IRS is also supporting such volunteer groups as Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE).

Some individuals will justifiably question their personal privacy when entering this data onto a private company's website. The IRS has approved the security and privacy policies of the participating companies, and all of the providers must also have a recognized third-party privacy and security certification. Information provided to these companies can only be used for the preparation of income tax forms, and no other purposes not explicitly authorized by the user. The IRS will monitor all of the providers for compliance, and the companies are required to promptly alert the IRS if any privacy or security problems are encountered. The IRS has set up an email address with the Free File Alliance at helpdesk@speedymail.com, where anyone can get technical assistance about the Free File website, or resolve issues with any of the listed providers. Any user who is not satisfied with the selected free provider is free to try another provider that he may qualify for.

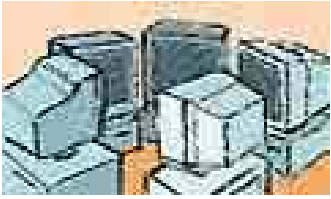
The Free File Alliance is a result of the IRS' Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, which in part has a goal that 80% of all returns are to be filed electronically (e-filed) by 2007, and requires the IRS to make available to taxpayers free online filing options.

Last year (2004) saw 6.5 million e-filed returns, and the IRS hopes to triple the number this year. That still leaves many millions more that will have to e-file in order to reach the 2007 goal. The 15 companies listed that are providing free filing services are a good step on the path of meeting the IRS' goals.

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.

Share & Share Alike

By Sandy Berger



One of the most useful technological advances for the home computer user is the wireless network. It came at a good time—it seems everyone is getting into the computer arena these days.

Kids are finding computers indispensable for homework, as well as entertainment. Dad is tired of giving up his surfing time, and Mom is thinking the only way she can get online is to get her own PC. A wireless network solves everyone's problem by allowing several computers to share an Internet connection, access common files, and use one printer and/or scanner. All this can be done sans tearing up walls.

I am often asked two questions about wireless networks. First, people are curious as to what equipment they need. And second, they question the security of wireless networks. This TechMates article will address both issues, in part by proposing an effective hardware and software duo.

Connect The Dots

To set up a network, you'll need a router and a WAP (wireless access point). These items are available as one piece of equipment, and the result is generally referred to as a wireless router. Check the prices when you decide what to buy. For instance, the D-Link DI-624 wireless router is \$85. For my testing, however, I used a router I already had and connected it to an 802.11g D-Link WAP (DWL-2100AP; \$109). The router is connected to my cable modem. The access point and my computer both connect to the router. A D-Link wireless Cardbus Adapter card (DWL-G650; \$59) provided the wireless access for my laptop. The card slides into the PC Card slot on the side of the laptop. If you are networking two or more desktop computers, you can purchase a wireless PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) adapter that installs easily into a desktop computer.

I installed the drivers on each computer using the wizard D-Link provides. All went well, and I was up and running.

I don't, however, want to make it sound too easy. Our good friend Murphy (if it can go wrong, it will) likes to hang around wireless networks, which is one of the reasons that I like D-Link equipment. D-Link provides 24-7 technical support, and my experiences with its support have all been pleasant and successful. D-Link also has a network configurator on its Web site, which helps you choose equipment. Head to <http://www.dlink.com> and click Configurator.

Safety First

Now for the security question. Wireless networks are notorious for weak security. When the first wireless version 802.11b came out, it used a type of security called WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy) that became synonymous with the word "WIMP" because it could be broken into so easily. Stronger security called WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) has since been implemented.

Yet, with software called LucidLink (\$99; <http://www.lucidlink.com>), you can beef up the security of your wireless network. It doesn't require security or networking expertise. Simply install the software on your PCs. The main computer gives permission for your other computer(s). The interface is fairly intuitive. In the version I tried (2.0), I had to set up the IP (Internet Protocol) address of the main LucidLink computer. This requires a bit of knowledge about things such as IP addresses and subnets. In the next few months, however, the company is planning on releasing a version that will find the IP address and configure the equipment. If you don't know much about IP addresses or don't want to bother with this, watch for the new version. LucidLink only works with certain D-Link and Linksys wireless equipment, so check for compatibility before you buy your hardware.

Without getting too technical, LucidLink uses a RADIUS security server that is well-known for its strength and stability. I subjected my LucidLink network to several security tests, and it passed with flying colors. The fact that the ICSA Labs, a highly regarded security-testing agency, gave LucidLink a thumbs-up gave me great confidence in the product.

If you want a wireless network, LucidLink is software you should investigate. Even average home users who keep sensitive financial and personal files on their PC should consider improving the security on any wireless networks they use.

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

Don't forget to wear your OCIPUG badge to qualify for a free raffle ticket in the members only raffle!! Membership must be current also.

◆ Tax Time

**From The DealsGuy for March 2005,
by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click,
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**



*I forgot to remind you previously
about the free version of Tax Act
for doing your Federal income tax
as well as state tax.*

Visit [<http://www.taxactsoftware.com>]. You can download a program FREE to calculate your Federal Income tax. This is the third year I have played with it and while there are a few things I would like to see improved, you can't beat the price. There is also a pay-version, which I use, for \$12.95 that is well worth the price since it gives you one free E-tax filing. The pay version will import last year's data into the new version, which saves a lot of time. You can also do your tax right on the Tax Act Web site if you prefer. All in all, Tax Act is a good deal.

You can also do your tax right on the IRS's own official Web site. I have not tried it, but Ira Wilsker wrote an excellent article on that and if it is not in your newsletter, check the APCUG Web site. I've seen other free options for doing your own income tax calculation, but I don't have that info handy.

Don't forget that AARP has hard working volunteers who will do your tax FREE if its not too complicated, such as if you have rental homes or apartments. Check with your local AARP chapter for the times and places. If you are unsure about whether they will do yours, take it to them and ask. The worst they can do is say sorry.

◆ Media Catalog Studio Announcement

This was sent to me in November of 2004. They offer a 15% user group discount. Check their Web site for more information.

For Immediate Release

Catalog and classify your media collection easy!
November 10, 2004 ManiacTools Releases
Media Catalog Studio 1.7

"Media Catalog Studio is a handy software application that classifies and tracks media files on hard-drives, floppies, external drives, CDs, DVDs and other storage media. Importantly, the information about the media files does not need to be entered manually. The program automatically detects MP3, WMA, APE, OGG, WAV, AVI, WMV, MPEG, Video and Audio CD files and inputs this information inside a database. Moreover, the software comes with CDDDB support, an online database that exports information about songs (Title, Artist, Album, Year) directly from the Internet.

"All data entries can be sorted by artist, album, year, bitrate, frequency, genre, category, rating, or any field/category. The search in the database can be conducted using multiple parameters, like file properties (name, size, etc), tag information or lyrics.

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I was going to take an old computer to our beach condo because even though it was old and slow, it would be plenty good enough for just checking my email and miscellaneous tasks. Then around Thanksgiving prices started dropping on new computers and I saw a Dell ad with a 2.2 gig Celeron processor, 256 megs RAM, CD-ROM burner, 17" monitor etc. for \$399 and a \$50 rebate, making it just \$349. That sounded great, so I went to the local mall with a Dell kiosk so I could ask questions, and ordered one. It also included free two-day shipping. It wasn't the latest and greatest, but actually a computer much more modern than my old one, and cheap.

A week later I saw a Dell ad with the same configuration, but also including a printer, for \$349 and no rebate. I still hadn't received the computer I ordered so I called Dell to cancel the original order and get the new deal. They said the original order was already shipped and I should have received it by now. After some conversation about what happened to the two-day shipping, they gave me a \$35 Dell store credit for the inconvenience of not having received it yet. Then I hit them up for the printer at no extra cost because of the new ad. After a little argument, and a five-minute wait for a consultation, they finally conceded and promised to send the printer free of charge.

Five days later I finally received the original computer package I had ordered and was pleased with it. I promptly sent for my rebate and three weeks later was amazed to receive \$60 instead of \$50. However, I still had not received the free printer promised. I called Dell again, gave the tracking number, and found the order had been cancelled, but was offered the option to talk to a human. I laid a guilt complex on Dell for the whole thing and after a pause, they again promised to send a free printer. Two days later a Dell printer arrived and when I opened the box, it was an all-in-1 machine, better than I had expected. Prices in ads have been higher since and I feel I got a great deal.

The two announcements below look like interesting products, but I have not tried either one.

Deals Guy cont from pg14

Media file lists can be customized to display information in any way or order. As an added perk, the program features an internal tag reader and editor for audio and video files, duplicates finder, and supports an option for storing pictures. In addition, the application creates Winamp and Windows Media Player playlists with a few mouse-clicks. The other great features are MS Excel export options and Media Tracker; a feature that shows the user where a necessary media file is located.

"Media Catalog Studio has received over a dozen awards for its usability, including the prestigious Five Cows rating at Tucows.Com, and Editor's Pick at MyMusicTools.com. The program is translated in all major European languages. A free version of Media Catalog Studio Lite 1.7 is available now; [<http://www.maniactools.com>]. The freeware Lite version supports up to 5 disks in database. An upgrade to a Pro version costs \$24.95 US Dollars/Euros for individuals and \$34.95 US Dollars/Euros for businesses and organizations. We offer a 15% discount to members of your user group. The discount coupon code is 4567841341 and is redeemable at [http://www.ManiacTools.com/soft/media_catalog_studio/discount.shtml]. If you have any questions, please contact Alex Pavlenko at [press@maniactools.com].

"Company Website

[<http://www.maniactools.com>]

Product Page

[http://www.maniactools.com/soft/media_catalog_studio/]

Download

[http://www.maniactools.com/media_catalog_studio.exe]"

◆ Here is an announcement for Fontonizer

I received this announcement in November of 2004 and they offer a 15% discount to user group members.

"Our company, Fast Reports Inc., would like to announce the release of Fontonizer for Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP. To get 15% discount for Fontonizer use Coupon Code 'UserGroupPR-FO' on register here: [<https://secure.element5.com/shareit/checkout.html?productid=168090>].

"Fontonizer is making big waves in web-design and publishing industries. While an average PC has about one hundred different fonts installed - marketers, designers, publishers, editors and print professionals often have collections with 5000 different fonts or more. With so many fonts, only very experienced professionals can match font name with its appearance. But Fontonizer is not merely a font viewer, though it comes with this function built-in. Fontonizer is a font organizer.

"With Fontonizer, any professional can easily classify fonts. First, one creates categories - like "Business Letter Body", "Groovy and Hip", "Classy", "Headlines", "Attention Grabbers", "Exotic", "Fine print", "Comments and footnotes", "Hand written", "Miscellaneous". Then, fonts are "placed" in these categories, so they can be easily located when necessary.

The best thing about Fontonizer is that it works with fonts that aren't currently installed on a PC. In fact, it works with fonts that are stored not only on hard-drive, but CDs, DVDs, flash-drives and External Drives.

"Even though the fonts may not be installed, you can write a word or sentence to see how it looks. If necessary, Fontonizer will automatically show a list of the same word or phrase visualized with different fonts. This way one can easily compare and find the font that is most appropriate for a certain occasion.

"Finally, Fontonizer comes with even more functions font professionals need. For example, the program performs installation /deletion /restoration of the deleted fonts. Plus, Fontonizer is capable of displaying "symbol table" of any font, even if it was deleted. With Fontonizer, professionals can experiment not only with fonts and sizes, but backgrounds as well. Fontonizer is distributed electronically over the Internet; a free demo version is available at [<http://www.fontonizer.com/>] for evaluation. The price of a single license is \$29 US Dollars for a single copy. Company Website [<http://www.fontutilities.com>] Product Page: [<http://www.fontonizer.com/>] Download: [<http://www.fontutilities.com/download/fo100.zip>] Buy Link: [<http://fontutilities.com/order.htm>]"

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>]. I have posted Web pages with announcements I received in 2004. Sorry they are not well organized, but what is there was a lot of work, as they all have to be edited. I have received some since then and will also post them one of these days.

New Google Maps Beta



There are many mapping services available—Yahoo, Expedia, Mapquest, and many others. So you may wonder what

anyone could offer that would be new. But Google's done just that. They use the same Navteq data as used by many other mapping services, but with a *much* nicer interface: You can grab the map and scroll within the display window without having to click-to-redraw the whole map; and the look is clean, uncluttered, and easy to assimilate. Plus, searching is a snap: You simply enter the whole address as a search term— no need to break it into separate fields such as number, street, town, zip, etc. You also can search for some place names, such as "White House," without having to know the address at all. It's not finished yet; there are bugs. Of course, it provides turn-by-turn driving directions, too. Man, those Google people are good!

INTERNET TALK

by

Frank Chao

(February 2005)

This is the 78th "Internet Talk" article for "The Bug Report", a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Liz and I hope that you have been able to enjoy some quality time with your computer, during the unusually rainy months of December and January.

CRAIGSLIST

Liz and some of her friends recommend that you take a look at Craigslist. It is a free, online community that is located at <http://www.craigslist.org>

A description of Craigslist can be found at: <http://www.craigslist.org/about/mission.and.history.html>
This Website has separate pages for many metropolitan areas throughout the world.

For each metropolitan area page, such as "Los Angeles", there are classified want ads of every description including "personals", employment, housing, real estate, and discussion forums for many subjects. There is an events calendar for each city area.

"Craigslist" is an advertising-free environment. The operators of this Website are planning to add in some fees for real estate ads but the sellers and buyers for all other categories can continue to post and answer ads for free.

Try it--you will like it!

GSBUG MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Joyce Oliver reports that as of January 5th, GSBUG has 144 members, which is 6 more than in November. During the 2004 calendar, 16 new members joined. Nine of these new members were referred by existing members.
Keep up the good work!

INTERNET NEWS AT REUTERS

To keep abreast of the latest news about the Internet, go to the following page at the Reuters Web site:

<http://reuters.com/newsChannel.jhtml?type=internetNews>

MICROSOFT WINDOWS ANTISPYWARE

"Microsoft Windows Antispyware" will be available for a limited time as a free "beta" download at <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.msp>

It has a real time, "background", memory-resident capability that can constantly scan your computer for spyware / adware / malware, even when you are not actively running the

"Microsoft Windows Antispyware" software as an active window. This feature is called "Real-Time Security Agent Protection" which is also known as "Security Agent Protection".

The free versions of Lavasoft "Ad-aware" and "Spybot Search & Destroy" do not have real-time, memory-resident capability so use of "Microsoft Windows Antispyware" along with Lavasoft's free version of "Ad-aware" AND "Spybot.." should give you a potent arsenal of software tools for eliminating spyware. During my testing of "Microsoft Windows Antispyware", I did not find it as aggressive in ferreting out cookies and registry entries as Lavasoft's "Adware" or "Spybot..". But since "Microsoft Windows Antispyware" has "real time" Security Agent that works in the background to constantly look for spyware, I will continue to use it in my home computer. The price is right !!

To use all three of these anti-spyware applications on a regular basis: You might scan your computer with Ad-aware on Mondays, Spybot.. on Tuesdays, and Microsoft Windows Antispyware on Wednesdays, etc.

Remember, no single anti-spyware software tool is powerful enough to keep all of the potential problems from harming your computer. There is just too much of that nasty stuff lurking on the Internet and attempting to arrive in one's e-mail messages.

"Microsoft Windows Antispyware" is based on code that was acquired by Microsoft when it purchased "Giant Company Software" in December. "Giant Company Software" 's anti-spyware / anti-adware products had been regarded as one of the best available.

"Microsoft Windows Antispyware" will probably cease to be free during the second half of the calendar year 2005 so you should take advantage of the "beta" version while it is available for free !

ADOBE ACROBAT READER 7

Version 7 of Adobe Acrobat Reader is now available for you to download and install for free.

The enhancements in this new version are described at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>

This new version of Adobe Acrobat Reader starts up and runs faster than the previous version so you should get it installed into your computer now.

For your information, this new version of Adobe Acrobat Reader will not run on Windows 95, 98, and Windows ME computers. It runs on "Windows 2000 Professional" computers that have "Windows 2000 Service Pack 2" or higher. It runs on all flavors and revisions of "Windows XP".

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ADWARE REPORT

Evaluations and comparisons of the most popular anti-spyware adware / malware software tools can be found at <http://www.adwarereport.com/>

MERIJN.ORG WEBSITE

If you are having problems with spyware / adware / malware, John Sullivan of GSBUG and Habitat for Humanity recommends that you go to <http://www.merijn.org/> to download and run HijackThis for free. "HijackThis" is a software utility that generates a list of software that is running in your computer. You can then analyze this list and get help with analyzing it at various online forums. John stated that for some of his colleagues at Habitat for Humanity, this complex way of eradicating spyware succeeded in totally eliminating spyware that Lavasoft "Ad-aware" and "Spybot Search & Destroy" detected but were unable to eradicate.

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. 101
PMB 305
Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Or sell your computer and take up golf instead !!

January 2005

NOOZ

NOOZ is sent to the President, APCUG Representative, Newsletter Editor, Webmaster and Program Chair of each APCUG-member User Group. We urge you to share the information in NOOZ by including it in your newsletter, posting in on your website, or e-mailing it to members of your group.

In this edition of NOOZ:

1. Board of Directors & Board of Advisors Elect Officers
2. Advisor Assignments
3. Annual Conference 2005
4. Region 11 Groups Win at Annual Conference
5. Getting to Know APCUG

1. The Board of Directors and Board of Advisors elected the following officers for 2005.

Board of Directors
President Susy Ball
Vice President Ash Nallawalla
Secretary Jim Evans
Treasurer Steve Peyrot

Board of Advisors
Chair Judy Taylour
Vice Chair Donna Sword
Secretary Charlotte Semple

2. Regional Assignments for 2005

Region 1 Melvin Weekley (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT, NY)
Region 2- Gabe Goldberg (NJ, DC, DE, MD, VA)
Region 3 Bob Kwater (OH, PA, WV)
Region 4 Clint Tinsley (AL, GA, NC, SC, MS, TN)
Region 5 Cheryl Wester (Florida)
Region 6 Bill James (IL, IN, KY, MI)
Region 7 Roger Tesch (IA, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD, WI)
Region 8 Sherry Zorzi (AR, KS, LA, OK, TX)
Region 9 David Steward (AZ, CO, NM, UT)
Region 10 Judy Taylour (CA <93000
Region 11 Ed Van Meter (CA >93000)
Region 12 Donna Sword (AK, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, WA, WY)
Region 13 Charlotte Semple (Canada / Mexico)
Region 14 Charlotte Semple (non-North America)

If you want to contact a Director or Advisor, their e-mail addresses are firstname.lastname@apcug.net (evanmeter@apcug.net)

3. Annual Conference January 3-6, 2005

Nearly 300 attendees participated in the first annual conference held in conjunction with CES.

The Monday afternoon Welcome Reception featured a keynote address by Yvette Marin, President of the National Cristina Foundation. Ms. Marin and Gene Barlow also presented certificates to the winners of the Jerry Award contest. In addition to the certificates, the winning groups will receive a financial award to help them with their project.

Several Roundtables were offered after the reception, and the first day of the conference ended with the 2nd Annual Chip and Dip Social.

Day two featured presentations and meals sponsored by AMD, CompUSA and Adobe. In addition to more Roundtables there was an event for spouses that included a desert-Hoover dam day trip, lunch, and photo shoot. Rounding out the day was a Friends of APCUG social.

Wednesday featured more Roundtables as well as presentations and meals by Smart Computing and Intel. The spouses had an opportunity to experience the Desert Passage at The Aladdin. The Vendor Faire and Buffet dinner featured the newsletter and website awards.

Cont. on Next pg.

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On our last day there were presentations and meals sponsored by Corel and Microsoft, as well as the Vendor Forum and Advisors Game Show. Rounding out the APCUG activities was the Annual Meeting and APCUG Looking Forward.

4 Region 11 Groups Win at 2005 Annual Conference

The Big Bear Computer Club won 1st place in the Jerry Awards contest New Project, Combined What & How Categories. Their project is computer training for residents of Big Bear Valley and they won \$1,500.

Project Description:

Members of the Big Bear Computer Club provide computer training, free of charge, to residents of the Big Bear Valley. The hands-on training includes Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel plus they have a help line with various club members manning the help line on such subjects as: Window for Beginners; Outlook Express; MS Word; Digital Photos; CD Burning; and Quicken. www.bigbearcc.org

WEBSITE CONTEST

The Orange County IBM PC Users Group won 1st place in the small group category (3-way tie) www.orcopug.org

WINNERS won 3rd place in the small group category (www.windowsusers.org), the Big Bear Computer Club received an Honorable Mention in the small group category, and the Los Angeles Computer Society won 3rd place (2-way tie) in the large group category. www.lacspc.org

The Channel Islands PC Users Group is in Region 10, but they are close enough to us to let you know they won 1st place for large groups in the Website contest (3-way tie).

NEWSLETTER CONTEST

The Orange County IBM PC Users™ Group won 2nd place (4-way tie) in the small group category and the Big Bear Computer Club received an Honorable Mention.

TUGNET won 2nd place (4-way tie) in the medium group category, the Los Angeles Computer Society received an Honorable Mention in the medium group category, and Synergize-I.T. received an Honorable Mention in the large group category.

Eighteen California groups received awards at the annual conference.

All of the contest winners can be found at http://apcug.net/Events/Fall2004/contest_05winners.htm

5. Getting to Know APCUG

In November 2004, 16 Directors and Advisors met face-2-face for about 13 hours over a weekend to plan the future direction of APCUG. The meeting was facilitated by Joel Strom. One of the results of the meeting was a new mission statement for APCUG: To facilitate communication among computer user groups, the community and the technology industry. How do the Board of Directors and Board of Advisors plan to accomplish the mission?

Communication Encourage and enable the exchange of information among computer user groups.

Promotion Increase the visibility of computer user groups and their value to the community and the technology industry.

Education Educate user group leadership in successful management techniques.

Community Service Assist computer user groups in the fulfillment of their community service mission.

Please see the attached document that further details how APCUG is accomplishing the above goals, as well as a few plans for the future.

APCUG is here to help your user group. APCUG directors and advisors — they are all former or current officers of user groups and are just an e-mail away.

***It's all about user groups
helping user groups and
APCUG is the focal point for
coordinating information for
all member groups.***

That's all for this NOOZ. Please let me know if you find this useful information to share with your group its a benefit of your membership in APCUG. If you have anything you would like me to include in NOOZ, just let me know.

Happy computing,
Judy Taylour, Chair
Board of Advisors

*Users Helping Users
1985-2005*

OLYMPUS CAMERA, FLASH DRIVES, AND CLIPMATE

By Dona Z. Meilach

Early in my computer writing career, beginning with CPM systems (who remembers those?) it seemed the hardest items to review were the spate of printers that rapidly came on the market, were updated, numbers changed, features expanded, etc. Today, digital cameras run circles around the challenge of reviewing the old printer market.

But there is help in the form of reviews, price, and feature comparisons on the Internet. You need time and patience to digest the infinite charts and what they offer. And, as soon you have a decision and hit the stores, bingo! Out comes another version.

Right now, I have the new (it was when I received it 3 months ago) Olympus C7000 Zoom digital camera with a 7.1 mega pixel rating. It's one of about 4 cameras with that high a rating. It's sleek, easy to use, and produces pictures anyone would be pleased to have for both amateur and professional shoots.

The 5x Optical by 6x Digital zoom gives it the oomph required for shooting close up...as close as 2 cm. in super macro mode. In normal macro mode, you can get sharp images as close as 8 cm. to your subject.

After admiring the compact 7.1 oz. unit made of rugged aluminum with a titanium finish, you'll be delighted at the easy to install rechargeable battery and the small battery charger that won't add much weight or bulk to your travel case. Thanks to Olympus' advanced TruePic TURBO image processor there's practically no wait for the image to load. The Olympus C 7000 Zoom offers 12 shooting modes and a range of manual controls.

There are also still and movie modes along with 12 selectable shooting modes. You can customize some of those modes to your specifications. There's an in camera red-eye setting and a slide show mode. The viewing LCD is 2" square so you don't have to squint to view or review any image.

The Olympus C7000 Zoom is such a high precision camera loaded with too many features to review here. I suggest you go to DCRP Review: Olympus C-7000 Zoom, by Jeff Keller at www.dcresource.com/reviews/olympus/c7000z-review. You'll also find prices from various distributors ranging from about \$450 to \$600.

LEXAR FLASH MEMORY

When my computer began acting flaky I decided I needed a larger flash memory unit than the 128 Vision-Tek Jump Drive I extolled in a recent column.

With no time to shop I bought the first one I saw with a decent size, reasonable price, and a rebate...a 1 gigahertz Lexar Jump Drive.

I had the tech support person at the store use it to back up files from the server that contained my files that they would hold for 30 days.

When it came time to restore files from the Lexar, I realized it needed a driver that had not come with the unit...no CD, no nothing. The plug and play setting on my WIN 98 system couldn't find a driver so I downloaded one from the Lexar Web site (none apparent for the unit I had but I got lucky and selected one that worked). The installation went well until the very end when I was notified I needed a specific .dll file. I thought I'd check the company's 24 hour 7 day a week interactive help they boasted about. After several 15-minute wait sessions, and a 3-minute wait on the phone that told me to check the Web site, I gave up and sent an email. My next day response told me to download the required .dll file but now where to get it.

It took me a while to find it, and then find where to put it to make the unit work. Why can't these processes be simple? And non-frustrating? Putting the Win 98 system back up required a 3-hour session with MSN via two high pitched fast speaking, thickly accented young women from India who had to shunt me to superiors when they couldn't fix the problem. One insisted I go to the Internet using a dial-up line that I no longer have. She was SURE that was the problem. It was only the Adelphia help desk, manned by an English speaking male, who knew what the problem was and had me fix it almost instantly.

All this turmoil and loss of 3 weeks working time convinced me it's time to buy a new computer. Admittedly, XP on the new system found the driver immediately for the Lexar Flash memory so that vindicates it...almost. Now that I have a new machine set up and humming, I don't feel like working at it.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE: CLIPMATE 6.

One by-product of a computer break down is the discovery that a favorite program has an update. CLIPMATE, the one add on program I find indispensable, keeps your deleted files, words, sentences, graphics, anything, then lets you paste them when and where you want. I was thoroughly happy with version 5.0 but couldn't resist loading 6.0 from Thornsoft Software. Unfortunately, I lost the necessary pin registration number but I don't mind buying the up-grade because it deserves to be supported.

Clipmate has so many neat features that are hard to describe without looking at the screen. So do yourself a favor and go to www.clipmate.com and download a 30-day trial version. Whether you use repeat paragraphs for writing, bookkeeping, eBay transactions, for anything, ClipMate is the one program that will make your life easier. The most you'll pay is \$29.95 and it's worth every cent. You'll laugh at the minimal capability of the Clip Board feature in WORD.

Dona Meilach is the author of over 85 books with 10 on computers. Her newest books are WOOD ART TODAY from SchifferBooks.com. And a new cookbook, THE 50 BEST PUDDINGS AND SOUFFLES from www.Bristolcookbooks.com. 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>.

Phishing Scams Lure Innocent Surfers

by Sandy Berger



Internet scams to steal personal information and perpetrate identity theft are at an all time high. Phishing is the scam that most often lures unsuspecting victims into the net. Phishing is an Internet term that is used to describe a scheme which an unscrupulous person used to “fish” for personal information like social security numbers, credit card numbers, passwords, and account information.

The “fishing” usually takes place by e-mail. First the scam artist carefully creates a bogus Web site making it look exactly like the real Web site of a bank, an Internet service like eBay or Hotmail, or another institution that most people trust.

Then he sends you an e-mail that looks like it is from the institution that he has decided to use as his lure.

When you receive his e-mail it will look just like it came from Citibank, Visa, eBay or another reputable institution. It will request that you verify your account information and give you a link to click where you can do that. Sometimes the e-mail will try to scare you by saying that your account will be terminated if you don't respond immediately. The link, however, does not go to the real Citibank or eBay, instead it goes to the bogus Web site that the scam artist has created. Since the Web site you are taken to looks so realistic, it seems okay to type in your personal account, credit card, and other information. When you do, the crook is saying “Got Ya!” since the information you type in is going directly into his database. He will then utilize this information to use your credit cards and to access other accounts that you may have unwittingly given him passwords for. In many cases, he will have enough information to actually commit identity theft, using your information, bank accounts, and credit cards as his own.

The e-mail that you receive will look very official. These scammers have deceived thousands of people into believing that the e-mail and Web sites are legitimate. The names of just about every major bank, retailer and e-mail provider have been used in the scams including US Bank, Suntrust, AOL, eBay, Well Fargo, Lloyds, Westpac, and Citibank.

The Anti-Phishing Working Group (www.antiphishing.org), an industry association that fights identity theft and fraud, reported 1422 unique phishing attacks in June of 2004 and shows such attacks increasing in numbers over the last several months. It lists Citibank as the organization most targeted by phishing attacks. The scope of these scams is very large. It involves millions of e-mail messages. The Anti-Phishing Working Group estimates that up to 5% of those receiving the bogus e-mail respond and put their personal information directly in the hands of a scam artist.

Phishing costs American consumers and businesses billions of dollars every year. It also causes the consumer a great deal of aggravation and time as they are forced to try to straighten out their financial accounts and take control of their own identities.

Don't fall for these phishing schemes. Banks and most legitimate businesses will never ask for passwords, credit card numbers, or other personal information in an e-mail. To ensure your safety follow these easy guide lines.

1. Don't click on any link that is requesting personal information. If you want to check out the request for information, contact the company through an authentic phone number.
2. Visit Web sites where you might give out personal information by typing in the URL into your address bar. Also always check to see if the exact same address is still in the address bar after you arrive at your destination.
3. Update your Windows and Internet browser software often. Hackers often use software vulnerabilities to help them create fake Web sites and security locks.
4. Routinely review your credit card and bank statements.
5. Protect your Social Security number. It is the key to your identity. Don't enter it online if you can possibly avoid doing so.
6. Report any suspected scams to the proper authorities.

You can report any phishing e-mail to the institution that is being victimized. You can also send phishing e-mail to uce@ftc.gov. If you feel you may have been victimized by a phishing attack, call the institution in question immediately and visit the FTC's site at www.ftc.gov/idtheft for information on what to do next. For more information visit the Federal Trade Commissions' (FTC) consumer help site (www.consumer.gov). Whatever you do, don't bite at a phishing scheme.

Sandy Berger is a nationally respected technology author and computing expert. Sandy's aim is to convey to others in easy-to-understand language what they need to know to take advantage of today's technology. Visit her at <http://www.compukiss.com>

Title Bar Tricks

Here are a couple of tricks with title bars of windows:

Double-click 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.

Security Tips

by
Sandy Berger



Whenever a deal sounds too good to be true, you investigate it thoroughly. You don't walk down dark alleys at night. You keep your wallet in a secure place. All of these security precautions may be second nature to you. No doubt that you also want to be safe and secure when using the Internet. Here are a few tips that you should get in the habit of following to protect you as you are surfing the Web.

Keep your software up to date.

Last year Microsoft issued more than sixty security advisories that indicated that the security of their software had been compromised. These are opportunities that hackers look for.

If you have Windows XP, your computer notifies you when a software update is available. Be sure to install these updates as soon as you are notified.

If you use a Windows operating system that does not notify you automatically, be sure to visit Microsoft's web site often or choose Start-Programs-Windows Update, which will lead you through the update process. If you use another operating system or Web browser, visit the manufacturer's Web site often and download any necessary updates.

Keep your Social Security number private.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes because computers and the Internet make stealing an identity from an unsuspecting victim easy. So don't be an unsuspecting victim! Your social security number is the golden key to your identity. Never keep your social security number anywhere in your computer. Never give it out over the Internet, even in a secure site. Some sites, like online banking, may require you to use your social security number as a password. Take a pass on any site or service that makes you send your social security number over the

Internet. Keep your identity secure by keeping your social security number as private as possible.

Install a firewall and anti-virus software

It doesn't take a genius or any high tech skills to hack a computer. Just go to any search engine and enter the words "hacking tools", you will be presented with a myriad of Web sites that will give you the necessary tools as well as in depth instructions. By the way, there are instructions for hacking Apple computers as well as PCs, so although Macs may seem more secure, they can still be hacked.

Hackers are looking for easy prey and an unprepared home computer user makes an unsuspecting target. Use a good anti-virus software program. Keep it running at all times, and keep it updated.

Broadband connections like DSL and cable Internet are more susceptible to hackers because they have an "always-on," static IP address that can more easily be accessed. Even dial-up users, however, can gain some added comfort by installing a firewall. Zone Alarm is an excellent free firewall program. Although both Symantec and McAfee charge a fee for their firewall programs, the added security of any of these programs is worthwhile for all.

Shop at Secure Sites

If you shop on the Internet, enter your personal information and credit card number only on a secure Web page. If you use Internet Explorer, a secure site will show a yellow padlock in a closed position on the toolbar at the bottom left-hand side of the screen. Netscape will show a closed darker colored padlock somewhere on the bottom toolbar. In both browsers, a secure site will have https: rather than http: in the Web site address at the top of the page.

Don't Fall for Phishing Scams

There are bad guys out there who are looking to steal your personal information. Read my article about Phishing Scams for more information.

Remember, better safe than sorry!

Sandy Berger is a nationally respected technology author and computing expert. Sandy's aim is to convey to others in easy-to-understand language what they need to know to take advantage of today's technology. Visit her at <http://www.compukiss.com>



SwissMemory Knife & USB Drive

by Sandy Berger



Looking for a unique gift for the computer buff on your list? Look no further than the Victorinox SwissMemory pocketknife. Yes, this is from Victorinox, the renowned Swiss manufacturer of the Swiss Army Knife who has been supplying knives to the Swiss army from more than 100 years. This little gadget is a Swiss Army Knife that is also a data storage device, which contains a fully functioning USB hard drive. The USB drive is made by Swissbit AG, a Swiss data storage company.

This amazing device is small and lightweight. At 2 1/4" long, 1/2" wide, and about 5/8" deep, it is not much bigger than many dedicated USB hard drive devices. Yet, it also contains a pair of scissors, a small knife, a file, a screwdriver, and a pen. When you press the red cross logo, it emanates a handy small red LED light for emergency illumination.

As with most other USB drive devices, no drivers are needed for any of the newer operating systems. The SwissMemory device works with Windows and Mac alike. Just plug it into a USB drive and a new drive letter will appear on your computer desktop. You can copy files to and from the device by using the copy command and also by simply dragging and dropping the files to and/or from the new drive that represents the SwissMemory device. When plugged into the computer, the clear housing of the USB drive shows a blinking green light. The light blinks quickly during data transfers so you can see that the drive is working.

You know that this entire device is well engineered just by the heavy red plastic housing and the number of individual tools that it contains. The USB drive is also well designed. With a simple twist, it can be removed completely from the knife. This is convenient when you might want to insert the USB drive into the computer and use the knife for other endeavors at the same time. You can also remove the USB drive when traveling by plane, allowing you to leave the knife part at home and still take your computer files with you. Another version of the SwissMemory device that is made for frequent fliers comes with only the USB drive, pen, and light. It would be useful to have both casings (the one with the knife and other tools as well as the travel version) available with the USB device. I would love to be able to slip the USB drive into the travel version when I need to get through airport security and to slide it back into the regular knife when I

return home or when I retrieve the other casing from my checked luggage. Alternately, I would be happy if Victorinox would include some type of plastic casing or cover for the drive to protect it when it is removed from the knife for travel. The USB device itself has a gold plated USB head to help resist corrosion. The SwissMemory device comes with USB extension cable and instruction guides and also has a key chain loop.

The SwissMemory device comes with Swissbit's SecureLOCK software pre-installed. You can use this software to create private password protected partitions on the device. This software also has a useful repair utility for erasing and repairing the drive.

The SwissBit is a USB 2 device that also works with USB 1.1. It comes in 64MB, 128 MB and 512 MB versions. It's portable, lightweight, rugged and multifunctional. It's a cool computer gadget and a real Swiss Army Knife all in one. It doesn't get much better than that!

SwissMemory Knife & USB Drive

Manufacturer: Victorinox

Company URL: no

Price: \$80.95 128 MB version. Others from \$63.95 to \$159.95.

Date of Review: November 30, 2004

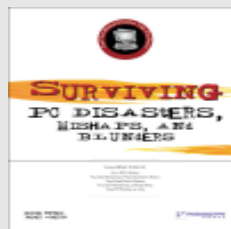
Sandy Berger is a nationally respected technology author and computing expert. Sandy's aim is to convey to others in easy-to-understand language what they need to know to take advantage of today's technology. Visit her at <http://www.compukiss.com>

New from Paraglyph Press

distributed by O'Reilley

Surviving PC Disasters, Mishaps and Blunders

This engaging and very accessible guide covers the types of problems all PC users will likely face at one time or another-so don't be caught off guard without it. The authors calm the fearful with easy to follow solutions and a humorous style. (Let's fact it-at some point all disasters, mishaps, and blunders appear humorous once you've gotten past them!) For a PC that is smashed, hacked, in flames, has come down with a nasty virus, or just isn't working as it should, this book covers it all with helpful tips to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.



Nothing strikes horror into the heart of a PC user faster than the words "Permanent Fatal Error" or seeing a PC that was working perfectly well seconds before melt down and send bizarre error messages. The book is cleverly organized by disasters, mishaps, and stupid blunders that can occur as you use your PC.

The user group discount code DSUG is good for 20% off this Paraglyph Press title distributed by O'Reilley. www.oreilley.com/catalog. Use the code for 20% off all Paraglyph Press titles.

2005 International Consumers Electronic Show

Intel helps Consumers Enjoy the Digital Home Lifestyle

Reprinted from Intel User Group site

At the 2005 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES 2005), more than 110,000 people from 110 countries learned how Intel and its partners in the consumer electronics industry are paving the way for the digital home. Attendees were amazed by the convergence of PC technologies and consumer electronics (CE) devices that has put Intel at the center of the digital home, and enabled consumers to

upgrade their senses with fun, new ways to experience digital media.

Intel® technology is an essential ingredient powering the digital home because the latest Intel® processors enable high-performance PCs that connect to

digital devices throughout a home. By combining Intel technology-based PCs with broadband Internet and a home wired or wireless network, consumers can see more, hear more and do more than ever before. They have the freedom to use devices like TVs, stereos, portable media players and digital cameras in new ways that are easy, fun and more imaginative. CES 2005 participants saw how it's done, as well as how Intel's advanced consumer electronics components and designs help create a pervasive digital media environment in the home.

The supercharged, global tradeshow in Las Vegas, January 6-9, 2005, was one of the last opportunities for professionals and consumers to hear a keynote by Intel CEO Craig Barrett before he assumes his next role at Intel. Barrett leaves behind a rich legacy that has seen Intel rocket to the forefront of the digital home revolution. Building on Intel's place as the world's largest chip maker, Barrett has helped usher in major technology innovations like the high-performance Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology† and Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology. These technologies are the essential ingredients that enable consumers to enjoy entertainment—music, movies, digital photos, and more—the way they want around the home or on-the-go.

Experience the Digital Home Lifestyle

At CES 2005, Intel demonstrated how it has helped make the digital life more simple, smart, connected and fun for consumers today. Through hands-on exhibits and exciting multimedia presentations, participants experienced why the intelligence, computing power, and storage capabilities of today's PCs, in combination with the digital media trend, gives consumers the ability to enjoy entertainment in a variety of new and exciting ways.

For instance, consumers can quickly transfer photos from a digital camera to a PC for editing and then to a large-screen connected TV for viewing so they won't have to huddle around a small PC monitor. It means consumers can use a PC to purchase and download a movie from an Internet service and send that movie to a variety of places in the home to watch it. It means they can customize and control the way they want to experience digital media, using new products like remote-controlled Entertainment PCs—the media command center of your digital home. Plus, thin and light notebooks designed for a mobile lifestyle and handheld devices such as portable media players (PMP) make entertainment on-the-go easy.

All these technologies and more were showcased at the Intel booth at CES 2005. Here's a glimpse [PDF, 415KB] of some of the essential Intel products bringing PC features to consumer electronics both in and out of the digital home.

The PC for Your Living Room

The new Entertainment PC powered by the Intel Pentium 4 Processor with HT Technology with a TV tuner and Personal Video Recording software is a remote-controlled PC that connects to the TV and stereo, providing music, TV show and movie recording & playback capabilities using a TV menu. It sits in your living room and looks like a stereo component, but acts like a computer for multi-purpose entertainment.

Set Yourself Free with Entertainment to Go

Imagine having your music, photos, movies and games always at your fingertips. Play your favorite tunes while working in the garage, let the kids watch a movie in the car and share your photos with friends on the couch. With Intel's best notebook technologies, Intel Centrino mobile technology is the essential ingredient that makes notebooks the way they ought to be: powerful, multimedia computers that go where you go+. Movies Go with You Using Mobile Media Devices Intel® Mobile Media Technology-powered handheld multimedia devices are enabling consumers to enjoy all of their digital music, movies, pictures and videos in the palm of their hand. A perfect companion to a digital home PC, portable media players, PDAs, MP3 players and cell phones provide the ultimate convenience in digital media portability. Intel® Mobile Media Technology is making it happen by bringing Intel computing power to handheld devices.



Firefox: A program popularized by open source programmers

by Linda Gonse,

Editor, Nibbles & Bits

Orange County IBM PC Users' Group

www.orcopug.org

The latest version of Firefox, an open source program, formerly Mozilla, and before that, Netscape Navigator, was released to popular acclaim near the end of 2004 from



www.mozilla.com. Many people, tired of security problems and perpetual patching of Internet Explorer, have begun to make the switch to Firefox. I was one of them. It was an easy transition to import my bookmarks, favorites, and other items, and set up housekeeping in it.

But, it was a real surprise to find free “themes,” a change of appearance for Firefox.

Feeling the exhilaration of discovery, I downloaded Nautipolis, Red Cats, Gray Modern, and Littlefox, and others; finally settling on Littlefox. Then, I discovered “extensions.” Extensions are little programs, originally called applets, that run from within Firefox. Their specialized capabilities add to the functionality of Firefox and quickly become features you just can’t live without. There are about a dozen I use, including: Weatherfox, QuickNote, Titlebar Tweaks, SpoofStick, CopyPlainText, and Tabbrowser Extensions.

One extension that makes my online life simpler is called QuickNote. It allows me to copy and paste from browser pages into a tabbed notepad available right in the browser. It saves me from opening Word or Notepad and working back and forth from one of them to the browser window.

Fascinated with the free extensions, I tracked down QuickNote’s creator, Jed Brown, to ask him to tell me how he got started and why he wrote the program. Also, QuickNote had earned five stars as a popular Firefox item, I wondered if Jed thought it might end up being incorporated into Internet Explorer.

He said, “I became involved with Mozilla back in the 90s. I was a frequent user of what was then the Mosaic browser when the World Wide Web had just begun. Netscape was born from Mosaic and I was instantly a user of Netscape Navigator. “Once the “browser wars” began, I was a devoted Netscape user who really loathed how Microsoft used their OS dominance to

spread use of their browser. Unfortunately, after Netscape released its 4.0 browser, MS was right on their tail and produced an even better and more standards-compliant browser.

“Despite the better browser, I was loyal and stayed on NS as long as I could. Around the time when Netscape 5 was going to be released (1998 I believe), they decided to open-source their browser. That sparked my interest and I got my hands on the code as quickly as I could. Once the open source community realized that the NS code was a huge hack and badly organized, they decided to start from scratch and create what was to be the fastest most compliant browser ever. This was too good to be true.

Unfortunately this was no easy endeavor and would take over three years to get even close to a final product. In the meantime, Internet Explorer was the superior product (over NS 4.x) and was becoming the browser of choice for many — including myself. “I wasn’t hacking on any of the code, but I did start testing the releases from the first public beta release. Since that day, I used this new engine and code base as much as I could, but always had IE there for sites that did not work in the new, young and untested engine.

Once Mozilla had matured (version 0.8) and became usable on a daily basis, I switched over and said goodbye to IE for good.

“The folks at Netscape had a brilliant idea called XUL that would allow them to write the interface to the browser once, and allow it to run on any platform possible. This meant Mozilla looked the same on Windows, Mac, Linux/ OS 2, etc. This same technology allowed authors like myself to start creating programs that would live on top of the Mozilla platform and extend its functionality (now called “Extensions”).

“As a high school student back then, I started a project called “QuickNote” that would allow easy access to a notepad-like sidebar for easy note taking. “While my extension was popular and used amongst many Mozilla users, Mozilla was plagued with bad interface design decisions from Netscape and AOL who later bought Netscape, so it really never hit it well with anyone but “geek” users. A few talented programmers at Netscape (Hyatt, Blake, Goodger, etc.) realized this and in their free time started a new project based on Mozilla, but much more simple, that was meant to be only a browser instead of a full suite like Mozilla was. This eventually turned into what Firefox is today.

“Thanks to Firefox (formerly Phoenix and Firebird) much more attention was brought to it and a much larger user base. More interest in Mozilla, XUL, and extension development arose. This has led to over 200 extensions made for Mozilla applications, and has brought together programmers from around the world, like myself, to join in and help make Firefox/Mozilla better.

“For example, QuickNote was a project I was doing by myself in my free time. But now many different users contribute code and translation. A Russian programmer, Nickolay Ponomarev, has joined with me and contributes to QuickNote on a regular basis.

Cont. on next pg.

Firefox: Cont. from pg. 24

The whole idea of multi-platform and open source software is amazing as it has brought thousands of people together under one cause, despite language and cultural barriers. This in part, is thanks to Mozilla and its example that open source software can be just as good — and in this case — better, than priority software.”

We asked Jed what he sees for Firefox in the next couple of years?

He said, “I think we will see a continuous trend in the growth of Firefox users. Once Microsoft won the browser wars, it dismantled its IE team, and left users high and dry. Firefox is filling this void, bringing a new and fresh idea to the World Wide Web and making it the place it should have been (virus/popup/spyware free) years ago.

“I also can see more and more companies embracing Firefox in their internal networks and products they offer to their users. Google, Amazon and many others are already starting.”

We also wondered if Mozilla/Firefox will survive and grow through the efforts of the open source community. Or will Microsoft will gobble up talented program writers such as Jed, and IE will remain dominant?

“Mozilla/Firefox will definitely survive, and be vital for the years to come,” Jed said. “Microsoft is far behind with Longhorn and even when it ships it will take years to get users to migrate over. In the meantime Firefox will continue to see growth in users on multiple platforms, and be extremely important to the survival of Linux as a desktop alternative. Sure MS will copy features and do its best to find exploits in Firefox. No software is perfect, but I believe the very nature of Mozilla and Firefox appeals to users and gives the Web freedom from control from one sole company. As time goes by, I think the average user will begin to understand this and realize the importance of alternative products and that they are superior in many aspects.

“The other huge benefit that Firefox has as a browser and Mozilla, in general, as a platform, is their mutiplatform nature. As a programmer, I can create any application or extension based on Mozilla and easily make it work on every platform that Mozilla/Firefox runs on. This allows users to use any system they like, perhaps Unix/Linux at work, Mac OS on their laptop and Windows XP at home, and yet feel no difference when it comes to surfing the web and using the applications/extensions built on Mozilla. Microsoft has no real answer to this (although .Net tries) and it is a huge selling point to both users and corporations.”

(You can email Jed at contact_me@jedbrown.net, and look for programs he has written for Firefox at Mozilla.com.)

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Don't take the bait offered by phishers

**Al Winchell,
President
Southwest Florida PC Users Group,**

Wouldn't you know. Just about the time you think your inbox is safe, along comes phishing (rhymes with fishing) — a new bad boy with a rather ingenious new e-mail fraud. Phishing schemes usually arrive as e-mail spam or pop-up windows. But phishing scams are more than just unsolicited and annoying spam. In fact, they're designed to surreptitiously obtain your credit card numbers, passwords, account information or other personal information by convincing you there's a legitimate reason to give the information to them.

A phishing scam begins with a malicious user sending out millions of fraudulent e-mail messages that appear to come from popular Web sites or from sites you trust, like your bank or credit card company.

The e-mail messages and the Web sites where they send you look official enough to deceive you into believing they're legitimate. So convincing are many of these e-mails that many of the unsuspecting recipients respond to the e-mail's requests for credit card numbers, passwords, account information or other personal information.

Often, an Internet bad guy will put a link (hyperlinks are usually blue and underlined) in an e-mail that appears to go to a legitimate Web site. In reality, the link will take you to a scammer's site or, perhaps, a pop-up window that looks exactly like the official site.

These Web site forgeries are called "spoofed" Web sites. When you arrive at a "spoofed" site or access a pop-up window and unwittingly enter personal information, it'll be transmitted directly to the person who created the "spoofed" site. That person can then use this information to purchase goods, apply for a new credit card or steal your identity.

Be careful.

◆ Never respond to requests for personal information via e-mail. Microsoft and most legitimate businesses will never ask for passwords, credit card numbers or other personal information in an e-mail.

◆ Always be suspicious of e-mail from your credit card company, bank, online payment service or any Web site with which you do business.

◆ Don't follow hyperlinks from the e-mail to suspicious Web sites. These links may take you to a "spoofed" site that potentially can send all the information you enter to the bad guy who created the site. Instead, when you receive an e-mail from your credit card company, bank or online payment service, type their URL directly into your address bar.

◆ Before you enter any personal information on a Web site, always make sure the Web site is using encryption to transmit the information. Look for an "s" after http (https) and a locked padlock in the lower right of Internet Explorer. Here's wishing you a Good Boot.

TECH NEWS**January 2005****By Sue Crane,****Vice President / Editor****The Big Bear Computer Club****www.bbcc.org**

The search engine wars get more interesting by the week. Google is partnering with some of the world's most prestigious universities to make it easier for Web users to scan the schools' vast library holdings.

The collaboration of Google and research institutions that include Harvard, the University of Michigan, Stanford and the New York Public Library is a major stride in an ambitious Internet effort.

The goal is to expand the Web beyond its current valuable body of material and create a digital card catalog and searchable library for the world's books, scholarly papers and special collections. Meanwhile, Yahoo is adding local traffic information to its maps service, including roadwork and accident reports as well as the approximate speed at which traffic is proceeding along specific roads. The service, part of Yahoo Maps, will offer accident reports and road construction information for about 70 U.S. metropolitan areas. The service will also provide driving speed information for about 22 of those areas. The traffic information is layered on top of a map at the user's request. Icons are used to indicate accidents or construction, while color codes are used for the speed information. And America Online is testing a Web-based e-mail service that will compete with Yahoo Mail, Microsoft's Hotmail and Google's Gmail. the beta service for America Online's free Web-based e-mail is available to AOL subscribers only. But it will eventually be offered to the public for free.

With a floating screen, Mitsubishi's Scopo due next year will truly be a portable computer!. This headset with an eye-sized, eye-level LCD creates the illusion that a 10-inch display is in front of the viewer. The Scopo comes with a belt-carried unit with a CPU to process images and video. It can be attached to a cell phone, video player, or other device

Two Japanese companies, Toshiba and Memory-Tech, say they've developed the world's first DVD that can be played on both standard and high-definition DVD players, using the HD-DVD format. HD-DVD has the backing of the DVD Forum.

You can get anything on eBay — except justice. That's what one disgruntled litigant found when she snarkily offered a New York City judge for sale on the popular auction site. Even though the highest bidder offered more than \$100, she found out the hard way that crime just doesn't pay. And the judge was not amused

Residents of 13 western states can check all three of their credit reports for free at AnnualCreditReport.com. The Midwest will come on stream on March 1, the South on June 1, and the East on Sept. 1. Previously, you had to buy this information from the three credit reporting companies: TransUnion, Experian and Equifax. The three reports can vary. That's why all three, and not just one, are available.

Check your credit report online at:

<https://www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/index.jsp>

The California Energy Commission unanimously approved standards to be phased in beginning in 2006 that would require household appliances including televisions, VCRs, DVD players and cell phone chargers, to run on one to three watts. Even when idle, such appliances now typically gobble up two to 10 watts. Commissioners estimate that compliance with the new guidelines will save commercial and residential power customers more than \$3 billion over 15 years.

iBrattleboro.com is at the forefront of Web publishers delivering local news. What's is that they are relying on local residents. The idea is that citizen-generated content lowers costs and creates more loyal audiences. One intriguing experiment started in May when the Bakersfield Californian launched a community Web site called the Northwest Voice (www.northwestvoice.com). The site has no paid writers except for a lone editor. It employs only four people full-time, gets most of its content from readers. Last month, the J-Lab Institute for Interactive Journalism at the University of Maryland announced a \$1 million grant program to fund what it calls "micro-local" Web news experiments around the country. Funded by the Knight Foundation, each initial grant will amount to \$12,000 and go to nonprofit groups creating community news sites.

Microsoft is setting an example for customers as they introduce a second security measure for their internal networks: smart cards for every employee. By the end of 2005, tens of thousands of telecommuting Microsoft employees will be issued the cards, which will be required to log on to the company's networks.

President Bush signed a new four-year ban on state and federal taxation of Internet connections. The latest version of The Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act expands the original dial-up definition of access to include DSL, cable modems and wireless Internet connections. The bill blocks states from differentiating for tax purposes between dial-up and broadband hookups.

Intel's products for the digital home and digital office in 2005 will give consumers and IT managers more capabilities than just raw performance, and the company plans to highlight those products. Earlier this year, Intel canceled two single-core desktop and server designs and announced plans to accelerate the development of dual-core processors. Intel is planning to design and market its desktop processors in platforms, similar to the way the company brought the Pentium M processor, a new mobile chipset and new wireless capabilities to customers as part of the Centrino platform. Intel expects to bring 64-bit capabilities to its desktop processors in the first half of 2005 (Microsoft's 64-bit Windows XP operating system is scheduled to ship in the first quarter of next year). In 2006, Intel will bring out the Bridge Creek and Averill platforms for the digital home and digital office.

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These platforms will feature Intel's security and virtualization technologies that it highlighted at recent Intel Developer Forum conferences. Microsoft's next update to the Windows operating system, code-named Longhorn, will be required to take advantage of the hardware-based security and virtualization technologies that Intel plans for 2006.

A report from U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP), a nonprofit group that sets standards for the drug industry, says that as more hospitals have implemented automated systems for administering drugs the number of errors associated with them has risen. Kenneth Kizer of the National Quality Forum says: "Technology offers great opportunity to reduce errors, but it's not a panacea. You can't just throw a computerized system in and expect that everything's fixed. It has to be done right. The technology is only as good as the people who use it."

Microsoft next year plans to host its first developers conference dedicated to the Microsoft Office System, underscoring the company's strategy to make Office a foundation for customized business applications. The conference will take place Feb. 2 through 4 in Microsoft's home town of Redmond, Wash., and will feature Microsoft chair Bill Gates as its keynote speaker. The company said Monday that it expects about 800 developers from independent software vendors, consulting partners and corporate customers to participate.

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Gmail

By

Dr. Herbert A. Goldstein,**Editor, Sarasota PC Monitor****Sarasota FL PC Users Group****www.spcug.org - pcug@comcast.net**

Gmail is a new, free, web based email service from Google, the people who brought us that remarkable search engine. Gmail, as offered today, is an experiment in a new kind of email. Similar to Hotmail, it has some important differences. Its foundation is the concept that emails need never be deleted, and you should always be able to find any message at any time by searching for it. There are several major reasons

why Google's concept of how email should work is suspect. You get one gigabyte of storage space for your Gmails. No other Internet Service Provider offers even one-tenth of this amount. With this quantity of space available, deleting mail seems less urgent.

In Outlook, when you delete an email message, it really isn't deleted. You're simply transferring it to another folder. Deleting it permanently from that folder requires confirmation on your part. Outlook doesn't make you go to the Recycle Bin to finish the job, but some Internet Service Providers aren't so considerate. With Gmail it seems much easier to let the messages accumulate, and use the search feature to find what you want when you need it. Even if you decide to delete the message, it may not be gone. Google says that deleted messages will remain on the system, and they will be accessible at the company's web site for as long as Google cares to keep the information.

Because of a new law in California, Google was forced to admit that the company will be pooling any information you give them from any of their services. They will keep this information not only as long as they wish, but they reserve the right to give it to whomever they wish. Don't worry, however. Google probably has confidence that its intentions are good. Its corporate motto is "Don't be evil". It says so in their corporate IPO filing to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Upon close examination, Google's privacy policies aren't any different from Amazon, Microsoft, and others. Their good guy image derives from their unconventional corporate culture coupled with their astonishingly successful search engine. Most people have no idea what's in the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, and why should they? Most people aren't legal scholars. One of the Act's provisions says that after 180 days, emails are no longer protected. Their status reverts to just another record in a database. Any level of government, from local to national, can force Google to release your records armed with nothing more than a subpoena.

More Tips

Can't get to your Start Menu? ... There may be times (like when you are in the middle of a software installation) you need to get to your *Start Menu* or *Taskbar*. If it looks as though it is unavailable, try holding the *CTRL* key down and pressing the *ESC* key once. This should cause your *Start* button to appear and you can use it normally. This is also great when someone has accidentally *moved* your *Taskbar*.

Alt+Enter ... Displays the *Properties* of a selected object. It is the same as if you right clicked a file or shortcut and chose *Properties*.

F10 ... Activates the *Menu Bar* in most active programs. You can then use the right and left arrow keys to move to the different menu items. If *F10* doesn't work, hold down the *Alt* key and press the letter *F* on the keyboard. This is a great trick to know when your mouse goes on the fritz.

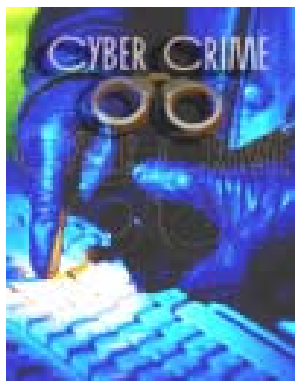
Legal Bytes: Cyber Criminals - Who and Why?

by John Brewer

Oklahoma City Computer Club

eMonitor, January 2005

www.ccokc.org



Why do some individuals have the need to engage in cyber crime? I refer specifically to those people who write code that damages networks and the computers connected to those networks.

According to a recent article in Internet News: "Tracking virus writers — and more importantly, gathering evidence against them — is a thorny problem for law enforcement agencies worldwide. While the number of arrests made and sentences handed down make 2004 the best year yet for catching cyber criminals, it won't have a noticeable effect on eliminating virus writers, according to the Finnish security firm F-Secure."

F-Secure states there were three "primary security-related trends in 2004: a massive increase in phishing attacks; the introduction of open-source botnets and for-profit virus writing."

Phishing is the term used for fraudulent emails that seek to obtain information from the recipient. This information is used for nefarious purposes including identity theft.

An article on MSNBC.com states that consumers are susceptible to phishing. The anti-spam firm MailFrontier Inc. showed 1,000 consumers examples of so-called "phishing" e-mail as well as legitimate e-mail from companies such as eBay and PayPal. About 28 percent of the time, the consumers incorrectly identified the phishing messages as legitimate. Now that is a frightening statistic, as 28% is a high rate.

A botnet is generally a trojan that has penetrated security safeguards and is resident on a computer. When that computer connects to the Internet, the botnet will connect to an IRC

channel. Then other infected computers connect to the channel and a botnet is formed. The person who created the botnet, often called a "botmaster" or "botherder," can then control the computers that are connected to the botnet. For example, the botnet could be used to launch a denial of service attack on an innocent Website or computer.

The major viruses in 2004 consisted of Bagle, MyDoom, Netsky, Sasser, Korgo and Sober. Three of these were designed for specific crimes according to F-Secure.

The intent of MyDoom and Bagle and its many variants was to create spam proxies. These viruses caused damages in the millions of dollars and created denial-of-service attacks on Microsoft.com and SCO.com.

According to F-Secure, at one point MyDoom.A was responsible for 10 percent of all e-mail traffic. Both viruses used the Mitglieder proxy trojan. Officials at F-Secure suspect the two viruses may have been written by one group of writers. Bagle.A downloaded the Trojan from a Web site, and it was installed through a backdoor in MyDoom.A-infected machines.

The Korgo virus was designed to grab credit card and banking information, according to F-Secure. Similar to the Sasser worm, the virus targeted Windows 2000 and XP machines, scanning random IP addresses for PCs with a vulnerable, unpatched Local Security Authority Subsystem Service (LSASS).

Internet News reports it is difficult to trace and apprehend the cyber criminals. "If there's an increase [in arrests and indictments], it's very, very slight," said Paul Bresson, a spokesperson for the FBI, about his agency's efforts to combat virus writers. "We tend to devote our resources depending on the volume and scope of what's out there, and if there's a lot out there, we devote more resources." The international nature of the Internet means many criminals can leave a long, convoluted trail that crosses national boundaries with ease, even if law enforcement agencies cannot. Despite actions by the Federal Trade Commission to promote cross-border communications and aid, there are still blind spots where virus writers can flourish.

Mikko Hypponen of F-Secure says that whenever he speaks with law enforcement contacts about tracking spammers or virus writers and it leads to places like Romania or Belarussia or Lithuania, "you hear this sigh from the investigators, because they know it became that much harder to gain local cooperation." "The bad guys know how to re-route their spam and their viruses and their hacking through six, seven, eight different countries and go through places like China and South Korea and some obscure island in the South Pacific just to make it hard for the authorities to track them," Hypponen says.

As an example, he points to a recent case where a Russian factory was hit with a virus by a hacker group operating out of Kuwait. The virus, after gaining access to the machines, started downloading more code from a Web site registered in a small island off the coast of Africa. The actual Web server, however, wasn't there; it was registered through Sweden to Jordan. From

Cont. on next pg.

Cybercriminals Cont.

Jordan, the infected machines in Russia downloaded code that connected them with an IRC chat system operated in chat.cnn.com — CNN's chat server in the U.S.

Hypponen said it was a relatively easy matter for his company to call CNN and the ISPs in charge of the Web server to blunt the effects of the outbreak, but it's something police would have had a tougher time accomplishing.

"If the Russian factory would have called the cops," he said, "how likely would it have been for the Russian police to first of all successfully track the virus around the globe and how likely is it that they would have been able to prosecute the Kuwaiti offenders?"

Sarah Gordon, a security expert at Symantec, has engaged in extensive investigation of the personalities of cyber criminals. "All those years of research and contact have revealed that many myths about virus writers are just that. The stereotype that virus writers are all young teenage boys with no social life, hiding in their basement is not accurate," she said. In contrast, she said, most virus creators are typical for their age, are on good terms with friends and family and are often contributors to their local community.

"Whatever the reason for writing a virus, all these groups share a common blindspot, says Ms. Gordon, which is that they have no conception that what they are doing can affect the wider world. "They do not connect the impact of what they do on the computer with the impact on another person," she says. "But, once they realize that it can have an impact on other people, they age out of it and stop."

Her research has shown Ms. Gordon that there is a real difference between virus writers and hackers. While virus writers are usually socially adept, many hackers are not. "When you see a complex virus," she says, "it's come out of the hacking community." In her experience many malicious hackers have a borderline criminal view of the world and do not share mainstream ethical norms. Their judgment processes might be different," she says, "as well as their perception of risk and reward."

In my humble opinion, I find it difficult to excuse this sort of behavior, regardless of the reason.

John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to Johnb@jnbrewer.com.

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Ask The Expert - Bluetooth
by Joe Schmitt Bits & Bytes Online,
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What is this "Bluetooth" I keep hearing about and do I need it?



Whenever something like a mouse or keyboard is connected to your computer, there are protocols and standards in place so that the computer can talk to the keyboard and it operates properly. The same scenario also applies to anything that connects to a computer or other electronics around your home. Your TV needs to know how the cable signal is formatted so that you get the sound and video. Bluetooth is a wireless protocol that allows electronics to communicate. Bluetooth goes beyond your computer to integrate electronics across a wide spectrum. Bluetooth operates on two levels. The first is that all Bluetooth devices operate on the same radio frequency and speak the same language. Secondly they all share the same procedures in exchanging data and verifying the data is received. That is sort of like being able to speak the language and know the customs so no one misunderstands. Bluetooth a standard developed and employed by close to 1,000 different companies. This protocol would allow you to take a cell phone, get into a car with a Bluetooth radio and transfer the call to the stereo so your hands are left free. Later you could take that same phone and possibly transfer contact information from the phone to a computer. This is just one example. Bluetooth can be found in phones, keyboards, PDA's, and even stereo headphones. It could potentially show up anywhere you have a wire to connect two devices now.

Is this something you need? Just like anything else with computers, the answer depends on whether or not it meets your needs. Do you need a Bluetooth keyboard or mouse? Not if the wires don't bother you. Could you use it to link your PDA or Pocket PC to the computer? Yes and that might be the most likely scenario that Bluetooth would aid you in. If you are the type of person that likes portable gadgets as much as your computer, Bluetooth may be something to take a serious look into. For more information on the standard itself and some of the products that use it, check out the following sites: www.bluetooth.com and www.bluetooth.org

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Publication Deadline

Material for the **March** issue must be received on or before

March 15th, 2005 by
mborison@yahoo.com

Publication Guidelines

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

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

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