

Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

README.DOC

Jan. 2005

Newsletter

Volume 21.1

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

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Happy New Year

Microsoft Media Center 5 Demo



News & Views from CES O'Reilley Hacks/Other Goodies In the Raffle

During 2005 OCIPUG

will be Celebrating 20 Years of
Service to Orange County
Computer Users
Users helping Users



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



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



OCIPUG Web Page: www.ocipug.org

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

January 22nd, 2005

February 26th, 2005

March 26th, 2005

Web Page

www.ocipug.org

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

January 22nd, 2005

February 26th, 2005

March 26th, 2005

**All OCIPUG members
are welcome**

**Special Interest Group (SIG)
meetings**

are held monthly as follows:

1st Tuesday	Internet
2nd Tuesday	Hardware
3rd Tuesday	Windows
4th Tuesday	Digital Photo

All SIG Groups start at 7:00pm

Dec. General Meeting Notes

At our Dec. General Meeting, Don Edrington aka PC Don kept meeting attendees enthralled by showing them many useful resources on his website: <http://pcdon.com>. There are a ton of resources ranging from free virus and spyware protection to a great collection of downloadable "spyware free" classic tunes. Don who writes computing advice columns for newspapers in San Diego and Fallbrook, also has over the past few years compiled an online autobiography titled The Shy Guy from Hollywood High in which he recounts a number of interesting adventures & encounters that are both interesting and humorous. In addition he has a free newsletter issued twice a week in which he explains in understandable terms how to use your computer safely avoiding many of the difficulties that "Newbies" have to deal with.

We are indeed quite fortunate to have a resource like Don Edrington right here in Costa Mesa and we thank him so much for agreeing to present prior to our Xmas Party for the 2nd year in a row. I hope this develops into an OCIPUG tradition, it certainly was a great way to kick off our 20th year of service to Orange County in the tradition of Users Helping Users.

**Nobody is a better example of this than
Costa Mesa's Own PC Don**

Jan. Meeting

Our esteemed President, Dave Wintle will be presenting a demo about Microsoft's Media Center. We also expect that our learned attendees of APCUG/CES will inform us about what they thought was interesting at these events that took place in LV earlier this month. Time permitting we will take a look at a few of the hacks in the O'Reilly books in our raffle. Meeting starts at 8:45am with Open Access with Ed Leckliter. Also there will be various goodies from the events in Las Vegas, so be there or be square!

Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 is an operating system that enables you to enjoy the best in home entertainment, personal productivity, and creativity on your home PC in an easy, complete, and connected way. With Media Center Edition 2005, you can store, share, and enjoy all of your photos, all of your music, all of your home video, and even recorded TV in one sleek

and easy to use place.

Computers powered by Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 are called Media Center PCs. They are complete Windows XP-based PCs enhanced for home entertainment. These computers represent the evolution of home PCs into digital media hubs that bring together your entertainment choices and allow you to access them with one remote control.

Media Center PCs are complete entertainment PCs because they include:

- Mid- to high-end processors
- Adequate memory for most computing and entertainment needs
- High-capacity hard disks
- CD-ROM/DVD drives¹
- Advanced graphics and audio capabilities
- Networking connectivity

Each new Media Center PC may include the following components to enhance your entertainment experience:

- **A Media Center compatible remote control** that keeps all of the entertainment on your computer within easy reach and complements the keyboard and mouse.
- **A remote infrared (IR) sensor** that enables the remote control to communicate with the computer and also controls your cable or satellite set-top box.
- **An advanced graphics card** for displaying the best TV experience on your computer monitor.
- **A TV tuner¹** that captures your television signal from a cable, satellite, or antenna source.
- **A hardware encoder** that enables you to record TV shows from cable, satellite, or antenna to your computer's hard disk.
- **A TV output** that allows you to display Media Center content on a television connected to your computer.
- **A digital audio output** that allows you to integrate digital audio from your computer into an existing home entertainment system.

**Computer Fair
Orange County Fairgrounds
Jan.22nd & 23rd**

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
Jan. 25th 20045

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

Feb. 1st, 2005
Wireless Networking - 2nd session
Steve Schiffman
1st Tuesday 7:00PM

Feb. 8th, 2005
Hardware - 2nd Tuesday 7:00PM
Ed Leckliter eleckliter@adelphia.net

Feb. 15th, 2005
Windows - 3rd Tuesday 7:00PM
Robert Strader robert.strader@comcast.net



Upcoming General Meetings

January 22nd, 2005

February 26th, 2005

March 26th, 2005

Comp-USA

Everything's on sale at CompUSA stores!
Pay just Cost +7% on items from the following categories:
Saturday, January 22nd from 8:00am - noon

- Desktops
- Notebooks
- Digital Cameras
- Home Entertainment
- Monitors
- Printers
- Digital Camcorders

Plus: Get 10% off instantly on everything else in the store!

President	Dave Wintle	949-548-7994	president.bod@ocipug.org
Vice President	Robert Strader	949-646-1475	vicepres.bod@ocipug.org
Secretary	Frank Mastroly	714-960-9472	secretary.bod@ocipug.org
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Director-2004-5	Morris Fier	949-646-8292	Director3.bod@ocipug.org
Director-2004-5	Sandi Tierney	714-648-2218	Director4.bod@ocipug.org
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SIG Coordinator	Robert Strader	949-646-1475	sigcoordinator@ocipug.org
APCUG Rep	Robert Strader	949-646-1475	apcugrep@ocipug.org

OCIPUG Hardware SIG**Meeting Recap****Meeting Date: December 14, 2004**

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

Featured Topic(s): CPUs: 2004-05 Update

Hardware Submissions - Bob Strader brought in the “new” OCIPUG meeting room computer which he had assembled from the motherboard and CPU provided by Intel and other components purchased using funding from the club. He asked Ed to check it out as it was running much slower than the current (“old”) meeting room computer. In the process of checking the system out, Bob demonstrated the Bluetooth mouse/keyboard combo and the wireless gateway - in combo these eliminate the need for cabling between the computer cabinet and the projector. Ed noted that the BIOS version was P20. On checking the Intel website and finding that a P25 version was available, Ed downloaded and installed it using Intel’s Express installer. Upon rebooting the system, it hung on the initial start up screen. As we had run out of time, Bob will investigate further offline.

Random Access - no questions/responses recorded.

Next Meeting: January 11, 2005

Next Meeting Featured Topic(s): Core Logic (Chipsets): 2004-05 Update

Following Meeting: February 8, 2005

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): System RAM plus Motherboard Features Beyond Core Logic (Chipsets): 2004-05 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).
Handout in WordPerfect format (.wpd).

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

OCIPUG Hardware SIG**Meeting Recap****Meeting Date: January 11, 2005**

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

Featured Topic(s): Core Logic (Chipsets): 2004-05 Update

Hardware Submissions - none

Random Access - Kevin Moser asked what “90 nm technology” means. He noted that he had reviewed the subject on UMC’s site - UMC is one of the world’s largest foundries - and was still confused. Ed was unable to help.

Next Meeting: February 8, 2005

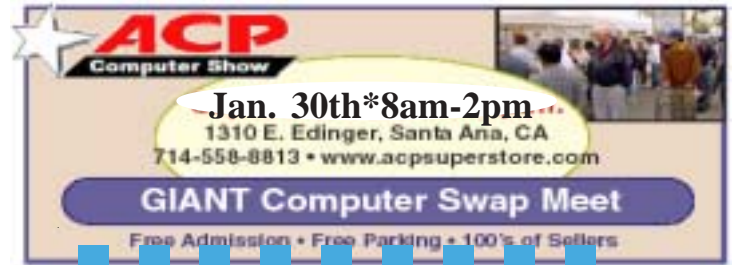
Next Meeting Featured Topic(s): System RAM plus Motherboard Features Beyond Core Logic (Chipsets): 2004-05 Update

Following Meeting: March 8, 2005

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): Hard Drives and “Floppies”: 2004-05 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.

**Members only Raffle**

Be sure to wear your badge to the meeting as there will be a special members only raffle prize for all members who wear their badges and are currently paid members.

**Be sure to get your
free ticket at the meeting**

Minutes for the November 2004 OCIPUG Board of Directors Meeting, November 20, 2004



The November Executive Board of Directors (Board or BOD) Meeting of the Orange Coast IBM PC User Group (OCIPUG) was held on November 20, 2004, at the Costa Mesa Senior Center. President David Wintle called the meeting to order at 12:25pm, with eight of the nine officers and directors, and Kevin Moser present.

Secretary Frank Mastroly had previously e mailed a draft copy of the October 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting minutes to all board members for their review, with no comments or corrections received. However, several corrections were noted in the meeting. In a motion by Treasurer Shirley England, seconded by Director Morris Fier, and carried, the minutes of the October 2004 Executive Board of Directors Meeting were approved as corrected. Secretary Frank Mastroly will e-mail the revised meeting minutes to all board members.

President's Report: — President David Wintle started the meeting by distributing new and corrected officer badges as prepared by member Robert Walker. David also circulated a proposed format for new OCIPUG officer business cards, letterhead, and expense reimbursement form, and solicited suggestions and corrections.

David stressed the need for the club to know in advance any extraordinary expenses. For instance, David pointed out that OCIPUG is charged approximately \$1.25 for each copy of the Readme.Doc printed at the Senior Center for distribution at the General Meetings.

Secretary's Report: — Secretary Frank Mastroly reported that he received a renewal check plus a donation from Irwin Haydock at a SIG during November. Frank also reported that he gave the current bank statements to Treasurer Shirley England. Finally, the raffle proceeds from the November 2004 General meeting were \$29.

Treasurer's Report: — Treasurer/CFO Shirley England reported several items as follows:

- ◆ Shirley was able to obtain a listing of our checking account activity covering July through October 2004 from CalNational bank.
- ◆ Shirley distributed a sheet showing our current checking account balance as of October 13, 2004, and our money market account balance as of September 30, 2004, as these are the most recent data she had.
- ◆ Shirley distributed a detailed summary of checking account

activity from July 31, 2004, through October 13, 2004. In the future, she intends to keep a record of the names of members, new and renewal, if that is provided at the time of receipt of the membership deposits. This will be a backup for the current membership list. It will be itemized in the Quicken check register.

See Old Business for additional items related to the Treasurer's report.

In a motion by Vice President Robert Strader, seconded by Director Mark Borison, and carried, the treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

Committee Reports:

Program Committee Report: — Program Chairman Mark Borison reported that we had just been treated to a very informative presentation by Cynthia Hunter, The Ink Dot Lady (www.theinkdot.com) who discussed in considerable detail the subject of refilling ink-jet cartridges and presented the latest information the major printer manufacturers do not want you to know. Her presentation also included demonstrations on how to refill the ink cartridges made by several OEMs. Ms. Hunter also donated a training CD for our raffle.

Mark Borison added that the December General Meeting will be on Saturday, December 18, 2004 (one week earlier than usual due to the Christmas holiday) at which he is trying to get Don Edrington, AKA the [PC Don](#), to make a presentation as he did last December. This will be followed by our annual Potluck Brunch. More details on the meeting and potluck will be issued later.

Mark again asked for assistance in setting up programs, and currently does not have a program for January 2005. However, 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. Mark started by saying that he is considering dropping this SIG due to low attendance, but will wait until early next year before making any decision. On December 7, Mark will continue exploring web sites of interest as well as conduct a Q&A session.
- ◆ Hardware (Ed Leckliter), 2nd Tuesday of each month. On December 14, Ed will begin his new series on detailed discussions of PC components, with processors (CPUs) being the topic for December.
- ◆ Windows 9x/XP (Robert Strader), 3rd Tuesday of each month. On December 21, 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 November 23, 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.

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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 Friday, December 3, 2004, at 3:00pm in the large classroom.

Community Service Report: — No report.

Long Range Planning Committee Report: — No report.

Facilities Report, Maintenance, and Improvement: — As previously reported, we have received a motherboard and processor from Intel that, per agreement with Intel, must be installed on the club's computer and cannot be auctioned off or used as a raffle prize. After much consideration it has been decided to build a new computer using these components. Vice President Robert Strader will coordinate this project. As previously approved by the board, this will require the purchase of Windows XP Professional, a new hard drive and a CD/DVD writer. Member Kevin Moser said that he has a spare chassis that he can donate for this project.

Operations (Policy and Procedures): — No report

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

During the November General Meeting, President David Wintle announced that OCIPUG e-mail addresses have been established for all OCIPUG officers, directors, and SIG coordinator of the form 'position'.bod@ocipug.org. These are published in the Readme.Doc and posted on the OCIPUG website. When an e-mail is sent to any of these addresses, it is automatically forwarded to the individual holding that particular position.

Webmaster Report: — Webmaster Mark Borison reported that the OCIPUG website is working properly. See Publications Committee report for information on the OCIPUG e-mail addresses for all board members.

Membership Committee Report: — The club is still in need of a Membership Committee Chairman. In the interim, Secretary Frank Mastroly is updating the roster file he received from member Robert Walker using the most recent renewal data.

Advertisings and Public Relations Report: — Director Mark Borison reported that this is a continuing work in progress.

Sunshine Committee Report: — No report.

Old Business: — In addition to her Treasurer's report, Treasurer Shirley England brought up several items:

- * After discussing the issue of fees with the bank, Shirley was able to have them waive any check or deposit fees because we are a non-profit organization. Both our checking and money market accounts are now free of any such charges. The account numbers are unchanged.

- * Shirley requested permission to have the bank statements sent to her home rather than to the Senior Center. In a motion by Past President Leonard Stein, seconded by Vice President Robert Strader, and carried, her request was granted. President David Wintle will write a letter to the bank requesting this change in mailing address.
- * Shirley reported that our APCUG dues (\$50) and our FatCow web hosting account renewal (\$99) have been paid.
- * Shirley brought up the topic of a financial review and our 2004/2005 budget categories. She will run a monthly tabulation by category for comparison with the budgeted amounts. To aid in this, President David Wintle provided Shirley with a copy of the budget for 2004/2005.
- * The bank charged our checking account a \$5 miscellaneous fee for the check that was returned due to the account on which it was written being closed.
- * Shirley distributed a copy of an e-mail she received from Marshall Boslow relative to the status of his membership. The Secretary will follow up on this.
- * Shirley prepared an inventory of the Sentry Safe and one box of records. She said that the canopy used for the OCIPUG booth at the ACP Swap Meet was missing. This was OK, as previous board action had approved the disposal of this canopy. The revised inventory was signed and approved by Shirley and Past Treasurer/CFO Leonard Stein. There are still boxes of OCIPUG records on the floor next to the 5-drawer cabinet in the large classroom, as the two two-drawer filing cabinets have yet to be purchased.
- * Secretary Frank Mastroly gave Shirley three renewal checks that had been mailed to the Senior Center. In addition, Past Treasurer/CFO Leonard Stein confirmed that the renewal (family) check received from Robert Walker was deposited.

At the conclusion of her report, the board expressed its appreciation for the professional manner in which Shirley England is approaching her office of Treasurer/CFO.

Director Mark Borison reported that he was able to reestablish our relationship with Microsoft Mindshare, and already received a copy of Front Page 2003, with more software expected in the near future.

New Business:

Director Mark Borison suggested that the club should consider having printer paper and ink cartridges included among our raffle prizes to attract more interest. We should also be on the lookout for items that are free after rebates.

Adjournment: — Moved by Past President Leonard Stein, seconded by Director Mark Borison, and carried. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm. The next OCIPUG Board meeting will be on Saturday, December 18, 2004, immediately following the December General Meeting and Potluck Brunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Mastroly, Secretary

Presidents Message

By David Wintle, President

Orange Coast IBM PC Users Group

Well, The holidays came and went and we have started another year. It seems like yesterday that everyone was worried about the crashes of all the computers with the new millennium, but they didn't.

It seems as if the advances we have had in the last 4 years equal the advances in the computer fields for all of the last decade. With all the talent we have in this computer club we need to have a few more presentations by members. This year we are looking forward to more presentations by members as well as vendors.

This month we would ask that those that attended APSUG and CES give us a sense of what went on at these two presentations. We will have a presentation about Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 and some of the new items from Microsoft. Microsoft has a new person handling the user groups now. We are receiving more support from Microsoft with this new contact. The club can still use some help in doing a few of the things that you all like to see happen. We need input such as articles for the Readme.Doc and the website.

The SeniorNet computer classes could also use some coaching help. The classes this time are nearly filled to capacity and we need one coach for each 2 students. The main classes we need coaching help in are the beginners classes. The students in these classes for the most part have never even turned on a computer.

If any member has anything they wish to see happen in the club please tell an officer or email the request to an officer. If you are experiencing problems, please attend the SIG's, remember this is your club and the officers are here to try to make it work and be more enjoyable for all. We need your help and input to achieve this. Help make this a better year. Wishing you and yours the very best for this coming New Year.

APCUG and CES 2005

Cheryl Wester

OCIUG

APCUG Advisor Region 5

The APCUG conference was probably one of the best events I have ever attended. We had innovative round tables and marvelous sponsors and meals. Let us not forget the fellowship. How great to be able to spend several days hanging out with nothing but a lot of geeks. I wasn't even criticized for wanting to play with computers.

Some of the roundtables were on public speaking, maintaining members, cyber crime, PowerPoint, and how to get more youthful members to join. We had wonderful speakers and great meals from AMD, Smart Computing, Intel, Microsoft, Adobe, and Corel. A new edition to our sponsors was CompUSA. They had an excellent luncheon and discussed how they hoped to increase business and work with User Groups. Intel was impressive in

sharing how technology changes and what to expect in the future. An impressive PowerPoint kept us listening and wanting more. A big thank you goes out to all our sponsors.

All the new photo programs had me wanting to buy them all and try them out. The feature that was my favorite was the quick fix feature. I don't have a lot of patience in fixing photos and this was great. I also have tried ordering pictures online from Sam's Club and picking them up. This was a feature that I wasn't aware of until I heard the Microsoft presentation. All I did was click order prints when I was in My Pictures on my computer and follow the directions.

I found the vendor forum to be excellent this year. It was great to see how they want us to help them, and suggestions were made for us to promote our vendors more. They are a wonderful asset to our community and we definitely don't want to lose them. One of the suggestions was to have a "train the trainers" session where someone was educated in more detail prior to doing a "presentation in a box." The vendors also requested detailed directions to the meeting and a contact person. Map Quest is not always correct and often there are better ways to get to a location. Another request was for recommendations for hotels and motels in the area. A list could easily be prepared for your club in different price ranges and sent as part of a speaker packet.

As a new advisor for Region 5 in APCUG, I really saw the conference through different eyes. I honestly had not realized how much work and effort went into planning this. A big thank you to all that put this together. Caryl Hall and her group did a terrific job.

I am looking forward to going to many more of these in the years to come. Plans are already being made for 2006 and 2007. It takes a lot of work and a lot of volunteers and time to pull this off. Plan on being involved as much as possible. I know that the more involved I am that the more I enjoy participating.

CES 2005, WOW. This was quite the place to be. As a gadget goddess I am always interested in what is new and different and I found it all. I literally drooled my way through several halls of innovative and interesting items. For three days I watched exhibitors show their wares. I saw wonderful cameras, played with the SPOT watches, checked out the new Palm devices, and examined SmartPhones and Pocket PCs.

The crowds were tremendous but it was will worth it. The Microsoft area was marvelous and I was able to see many of the new and innovative products they had to offer. I even won a SPOT watch and can't believe how impressive it is. I have all the movies from the local theaters on it, check out the local weather and the weather in North Dakota, where my son is. I also get news updates and the California lottery. It even changes the temperature data based on where I am. On top of all of that it is a watch and is accurately set by satellite!

The latest phone editions in the Windows Mobile devices are wonderful. I was able to watch Dale Coffing and Jason Dunn (both Microsoft MVPs) show off the latest and greatest. My husband had to drag me from that area or I would never have left!

The cameras and printers were great. After CES we even bought a new CANON printer that we had seen demonstrated. It has quickly become our favorite printer.

I am already looking forward to attending both next year. It was a great way to start the new year. I hope to see all of you in 2006 at the conference.

10 Steps to Happy Computing

by
Sandy Berger



◆ Back up regularly

Remember when using a computer, Murphy's Law always applies. "Anything that can go wrong will." Hard drives crash and computer mishaps occur regularly. Protect your data by always having a backup copy available. With writable CDs, it's easier than ever to make a copy of your important files. Don't forget to back up your e-mail data as well.

◆ Use a surge protector

Lightning, power surges, and power anomalies can damage your expensive computer equipment. Make sure that you have a good surge protector and that all your equipment is plugged into the surge protector. Don't forget that a surge protector should be used for any telephone or cable lines that are connected to your computer. Special surge protectors that accept telephone and cable lines are available.

◆ Install an anti-virus program and update it regularly

Viruses are rampant in today's computer world, and they are dangerous. Get a good anti-virus program. Make sure that it is running at all times. Verify that it is updating automatically or update it manually on a regular basis.

◆ Download and install updates

Security holes in the Windows operating systems are constantly being unearthed. Once a hole is found, it makes your computer vulnerable. You must install all the patches that Microsoft issues to correct the security problems. Set your computer to automatically install the patches or check the Microsoft Windows Update Center regularly. (Click on Start, All Programs then Windows Update.) Although security glitches are not as common in Apple computers, Mac users should still check the Apple Web site occasionally for updates.

◆ Install a firewall

If you are using a broadband Internet connection like cable or DSL, a firewall is a must. In today's world of hackers, even dial-up users should consider using a firewall to stop intruders from accessing their computer and their personal information. A firewall can be installed by using a firewall software program. Symantec and McAfee both have good firewall programs. You can also try Zone Alarm, a free program that is available at www.zonealarm.com.

◆ Check for spyware

Spyware is invisible software that invisibly piggy-backs on software or files that you download from the Internet. It is aimed at tracking Internet habits, stealing passwords and accessing personal information. This nasty stuff is now appearing everywhere. Get a good spyware detection program and run it on your computer to find and delete spyware. Two free programs are [Ad-ware](#) and [Spybot, Search & Destroy](#)

◆ Don't buy from spam

Spam is ruining e-mail communications and causing a lot of frustration and aggravation. We can try to control it and legislate it all we want. The bottom line is that if no one ever viewed or bought anything from spam, it would slowly disappear. Don't click on any item that is in an unsolicited e-mail, and whatever you do, don't purchase anything from spam.

◆ Defrag

To keep your hard drive in tip-top condition you should occasionally use the defrag utility. This will speed up your computer and is especially important if you work with large files, such as video files. To access the defrag utility, click on Start, All Programs, Accessories-System Tools and Disk Defragmenter.

◆ Don't propagate chain letters and/or hoaxes

Chain letters and hoaxes also clog up e-mail. In spite of what the e-mail may say, bad luck will not come as the result of not sending a chain letter. If you think an e-mail may be a hoax check it out at [Computer Incident Advisory Capability \(CIAC\)](#) before you send it to your friends.

◆ Clean up occasionally

Eliminating some of the junk that accumulates in your computer can speed up your computer and make finding things easier. If you use Windows Me or XP you can use the built-in clean up utility by going to Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools and Disk CleanUp. This utility will help you empty the trash, delete temporary files, and compress old files. You should also delete old files or copy them to a CD to archive them. The New Year is also a good time to revise or implement your file organization method. Decide in advance where you will keep your 2004 files and create new folders to keep them in.

Free Newsletter <http://www.comp-u-kiss.com>
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Consumer Electronics Show (CES)

CES is 1.5 million square feet of convention dedicated to anything and everything electronic.

Computer related devices are just the beginning. CES has floors dedicated to audio equipment, video equipment and even kitchen appliances.

High Tech Swiss Army Knife!

Swissbit introduced their improved 'Swissmemory USB Victorinox', a great high tech edition to the enduring Swiss Army Knife. This model houses a 512 megabyte flash (detachable) drive. They come in sizes 64 megabyte through 1 gigabyte.

Charge your batteries in 8.5 minutes...

Just released this week. This little device can recharge 2 AA batteries in under 9 minutes! Their web site is www.sakar.com, but I couldn't find their link to this product yet...keep an ear out on our show for more information!

Microsoft Smart House

Here is a full size house built in the parking lot at the convention center. Look for all the photos from this house in our blog. Scary, but cool. — sent from Rick's Treo

Tech News

by Sue Crane,
Vice President / Editor,
Big Bear Computer Club, CA.

U.S. dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster says “blog” topped the list of most looked-up terms on its Web site during the last 12 months. The word will now appear in the 2005 print version of Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, defined as “a Web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments and often hyperlinks.” However, Oxford University Press says “blog” is already included in some print versions of its Oxford English Dictionary and has entered mainstream usage. According to an Oxford U. Press spokesman, “Now we’re getting words that derive from it such as ‘blogosphere’ and so on.” According to the Pew Internet & American Life project, a blog is created every 5.8 seconds, and blog analysis firm Technorati estimates that the number of blogs in existence now exceeds 4.8 million.

CDW, a national technology solutions provider recently announced that its Tech Twister technology makeover contest. The company’s teaming up with IBM, Intel and Linksys to offer small businesses a chance to win a complete technology makeover. Tech Twister is open to any small business with five to 100 employees. Go to CDW’s Web site and fill out the online application to enter the contest http://www.cdw.com/Webcontent/land/page/techtwister_110804.asp. All entries must be completed and received by 5pm PST on February 15, 2005. The winners will be chosen during the months of December 2004, January 2005 and February 2005.

In a sign that wearable technology is gaining greater acceptance, the Gap on Thursday introduced a fleece jacket with a built-in radio for kids. The Hoodio has a control keypad located on the sleeve and a hood that conceals the speakers. Xybernaut sells a wearable, 1.9-pound computer with an 8.4-inch touch screen. And MP3 players are now in sunglasses. Oakley’s Thump line is available in seven combinations of lenses and colors. The shades have earphones and lenses that flip up and down. Meanwhile, NanoHorizons has developed socks containing silver and gold nanoparticles, which kill foot odor and bacteria.

NanoDynamics has come up with a golf ball that can correct its own flight path so it flies straighter than conventional balls. The design of the ball—and the materials it’s made of—serve to better channel the energy received from the club head and thus correct a wobble or slight drift. The company believes the ball complies with the rules of the United States Golf Association. It will provide samples for testing and USGA approval in January or February. Earlier this year, Easton Sports announced it was developing a set of bike components made from carbon nanotubes that would be stronger and lighter than conventional parts. And Other companies have developed nano tennis balls that don’t lose air and golf shafts constructed with nanomaterials.

During the string of hurricanes that hit the U.S. last summer, satellite phones were often the only reliable means of

communication, because they use orbiting satellites rather than landlines and cell towers to transmit signals.. “They cover such a broad area, I can use it anywhere,” says one Iridium customer. “The call may get unclear, but if you wait about five or six seconds, it gets better. A cell phone would just drop the call.”

Microsoft’s new small business software gives you financial info at a glance. Looking to offer small businesses an integrated approach to accounting, contact management and general productivity, Microsoft announced that a beta version of its newly announced small business management product is now available for testing

Kawada Industries in Japan, has been putting the final touches on a large biped Robot that can do what no humanoid its size has done before: lie down, get up, and help a human carry light loads, like suitcases and briefcases.

Passwords will soon be a thing of the past according to Microsoft Chairman, Bill Gates. Gates predicted that people will soon rely on other ways of verifying their identity. “A major problem for identity systems is the weakness of passwords,” Gates said. “Moving to biometric and smart cards is a wave that is coming, and we see our leading customers doing this.”

Japanese electronics giant TDK has developed a tough new coating named Blu-ray that makes DVDs scratch-proof. In a test conducted by CNET News.com, a DVD treated with TDK’s coating survived a determined attack with a screwdriver and a Sharpie permanent marker with no effect on playability.

Researchers at the Toho University School of Medicine in Tokyo have found that long hours spent in front of a computer screen may increase the risk of glaucoma in near-sighted people.. The research is based on a study of 10,000 workers in Japan, with results correlated to data on how many hours were spent on the computer and pre-existing visual problems, such as myopia. Scientists said they believe the optic nerve in myopic people might be more vulnerable to computer-caused stress.

Watch for hefty increases in annual subscription rates for antivirus software as major Security companies encourage subscribers to upgrade to full Internet Security Suites which include firewall, anti-spam and anti-spyware as well as antivirus.

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.

New SD Card Design

San Disk just announced an innovative SD card that has a hinge and will open to fit directly in a USB port.

New use for your CD burner

A HP engineer invented a way to burn images and text as labels on to your CD. It requires a specially formulated CD or DVD blank, but after you burn your CD, you eject it, turn it over, then ‘burn’ your label. Look for it on almost all new HP desktops and coming soon to their laptops as well.

Get Off Your RSS!

By Nathan Matias

February 17th 2004

Did you ever look at the daily reads list from a well-written Weblog? Some of those lists are insanely long, often containing more sites than most people read in a month! The crazy thing? When you read these Weblogs, you see their authors reacting and debating with many other Weblogs and sites. How do people keep track of it all? How can anyone manage to hold down a job while still checking so many sites so frequently?

They aggregate.

Most Weblogs (including the SitePoint Weblog, publish content through RSS as well as HTML. Unlike HTML, which defines document layout, RSS merely records raw documents in XML. Software can then download the RSS feed and format it as needed.

Thus, RSS provides:

1. an easy way to syndicate content to other sites
2. a layout-independent way of serving content

Sites like SitePoint use it for more than Weblogs. Even the main articles are syndicated. New and interesting uses for RSS are constantly popping up from traditional publications like the BBC, Wired Magazine, and Yahoo! News, to other information sources, like the State of California's Emergency Digital

Information Service

RSS aggregators will download the latest RSS feed from the sites you specify, displaying the latest articles, postings, and news items. Here's the cool part: by listing all the articles from all the sites in one place, aggregators free you to read or reject articles quickly. Normally, you might load a site only to find that there are no new postings. With an aggregator, you see the new postings as they come up.

Many aggregators will also list comments attached to main news items and blog posts. When you start browsing the world in RSS, your whole way of using the Web changes. Instead of pages and search engines, the Web becomes a world of interconnected ideas, a sphere of discussion linked in real, meaningful ways.

Here's a quick rundown of popular RSS aggregating software.

Desktop Aggregators

If you want to keep track of many Weblogs at once without having to open a million browser windows, then you need one of these tools.

Windows

SharpReader is a great, free RSS tool that will display your favorite news and blogs in a variety of layouts, including a nifty threaded view for discussions. If you run a blog yourself, you can even install a WYSIWYG blog editor plugin. The editor works with blogger- and metaWeblog-compatible software. Spend your life in Outlook? News Gator might be just the thing for you, but it'll cost you a few dollars. This tool integrates RSS feeds into Outlook.

OS X

If you're a Mac enthusiast, you have several options. MulleNewz will give you easy access to news feeds from the Dock. Others swear by the winner of the OS X Innovator of the

year (2003) award, NetNewsWire, a commercial RSS/Weblog tool, or its freeware baby brother, NetNewsWire Lite.

If you want an Open Source solution on OSX, read the section below on browser-based readers.

GNU/Linux

Numerous RSS aggregators run on GNU/Linux, but Straw wins easily. Keeping track of recent postings is easy with its simple, powerful, email-like interface.

Mobile Phones

If you're so addicted you need to read RSS articles on the go, check to see if your phone will run MobileRSS. Don't have the latest phone? Well, maybe that's a good thing...

Blogging Tools

Participating in the Weblog world is twice as much fun as reading. These tools combine Website editing features with RSS newsreading:

Radio FM provides a great Windows application for editing your blog and reading newsfeeds. Simple, fast, and convenient, it's worth the money.

If you're looking for an open source equivalent, try Python Desktop Server, a Radio Userland clone with a Web interface. Tinderbox, a great OS X hypertext/bloggging tool, includes an RSS aggregator. In Tinderbox, you can connect RSS documents with your notes, TODOs, flowcharts, and blog postings.

Browser Based

If you don't want to install a new application or clutter your desktop with yet more windows, try one of these browser plugins:

News Monster is a fabulous RSS tool for Mozilla. This cross-platform tool does everything you'd expect, and more! The Monster tightly integrates with Mozilla, and it can track postings and discussion threads. News Monster will even help you find new Weblogs by finding out what blogs are read by the authors you read.

An RSS Reader Panel also exists for Mozilla's lightweight Firefox browser. Rather than implement a new dialog, this nifty plugin works within the bookmarks toolbar, creating an automatically-updating set of bookmarks to new articles.

Web Based

If you jump from computer to computer, or you want to synchronize your newsfeed reading between home and work, installing a Web-based RSS reader is the best way to go.

Feed on Feeds is an easy-to-install PHP script that should work on most Web servers. Simple, but in a good way.

Amphetadesk is a more sophisticated, cross-platform Perl solution that includes a built-in Web server for those without Web hosting.

Integrating Into Your Site

If you want to include an RSS aggregator in your Website or Web application, check out these articles on SitePoint:

- Use Custom Tags to Aggregate RSS Feeds into JSP-Based Web Apps
- PHP and XML: Parsing RSS 1.0

Conclusion

To enter the world of RSS is start reading content again.

Aggregators provide a great way to keep in touch with what's going on without losing touch with the real world. Enjoy!

100 YEARS AGO

The Year is 1904

This may boggle your mind! The year is 1904, one hundred years ago. What a difference a century makes! Here are some US statistics for 1904:

- The average life expectancy in the US was 47 years.
- Only 14% of the homes in the US had a bathtub.
- Only 8% of the homes had a telephone.
- A three minute call from Denver to New York City cost \$11.00
- There were only 8,000 cars in the US, and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21st most populous state in the Union.
- The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
- The average wage in the US was 22 cents an hour.
- The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.
- A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year.
- A veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year.
- A mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.
- More than 95 percent of all births in the US took place at home.
- 90% of all US physicians had no college education. Instead, they attended medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as “substandard.”
- Sugar cost four cents a pound.
- Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen.
- Coffee was fifteen cents a pound.
- Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.
- The five leading causes of death in the US were:
 1. Pneumonia and influenza
 2. Tuberculosis
 3. Diarrhea
 4. Heart disease
 5. Stroke
- The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.
- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30!
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented.
- There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
- Two of 10 US adults couldn't read or write.
- Only 6 % of all Americans had graduated high school.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores. According to one pharmacist, “Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health.” (Shocking!)
- Eighteen percent of households in the US had at least one full-time servant or domestic.
- There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire US
- And this was forwarded from someone by e-mail without typing it myself, and presented to you in a matter of seconds! Try to imagine what it may be like in another 100 years ... it staggers the mind.

Recycling Your Old Computer

If you received or bought yourself a new computer during the holidays (or any time), many options are available for the use of your old computer. In addition to passing on a still useful machine, remember that in many cities throwing out old computers or monitors is illegal.

First and foremost BEFORE giving away your computer, make sure you purge it of any of your personal information. If your computer came with restore CD's, use them to restore the computer back to its original state. If you don't have restore CD's, you will have to uninstall programs manually and delete your email, financial data, etc on your own.

Probably the first option to consider for your old computer lies in your own circle of family and friends. Chances are pretty good that someone you know either doesn't have a computer at all or has an older one that you do. This makes a great use for your computer and makes you a family favorite at the same time.

Next, consider contacting a local church or charity who often have lists of families or individuals who could use a computer. Salvation Army, hospice organizations and similar entities make good choices.

Technical schools make good options also. Many high school and post-grad technical schools will either use the machines or take them apart for teaching purposes. Note that most public and private schools will not accept older computer technology for their use, but these technical schools will.

Some larger corporations will also take back your old computer (sometimes for a fee) and recycle your computer through commercial means. Dell, Office Depot, and others offer incentives or programs to do just this. Ask or check their web sites for more details.

Your old computer doesn't have to hit the land fill or collect dust in your garage. Take a moment to explore some of these options (or explore your own) and keep that machine churning. Many computers can function for more than 10 years and although not capable of performing tasks that new computers can, they make great word processors, spreadsheet crunchers and even basic game machines for someone who does not have a computer.

DONA'S COMPUTER CAPERS

By Dona Z. Meilach

LONG DISTANCE PHONE RATES AND MORE GOOD THINGS

TIME TO SHOP FOR LONG DISTANCE RATES

If you've been watching the papers, and your phone bills, you know that you are probably spending more for calls, local and long distance, than you did a few months ago. Most of us roll over and play dead when these bills come because we think it's tough to fight city hall and we get in the habit of using one phone system. Now is the time to take the receiver by the cords and check into alternatives. And there are plenty. Go to www.saveonphone.com and you'll be amazed at the price ranges for phone services.

With AT&T and MCI raising rates significantly, long distance customers should shop around for lower long distance rates."The average long distance customer should search for a plan with a low cost per minute rate and one with no monthly fees or minimum usage fees.

SaveOnPhone.com is a consumer resource that ranks the lowest rate long distance carriers based on rate, billing increments, fees and customer service wait time. It provides detailed rate and fee information that is often difficult to find in the fine print. It also compares and reviews bundled plans with local and long distance service, calling card rates, and toll free rates.

Long distance rates should be easy to find and www.SaveOnPhone.com does that for you. It has been rated the #1 long distance rates comparison site by Consumer.com for two years in a row. They constantly analyze over 350 different long distance plans and rank them based on an unbiased scoring system. An easy to read chart helps you find the top long distance carriers with the lowest long distance phone rates. You could save up to 70%! There's a list of the Top 30 plans which includes AT&T, MCI and Sprint on a long distance provider comparison chart at <http://www.saveonphone.com/chart.html>>. You can also plug in your monthly long distance phone service bill to their long distance rate calculator to see the best plan for you. Recently several companies have offered bundled unlimited long distance and local plans that are analyzed. For other questions, there is an FAQ site at <http://www.saveonphone.com/faqfiles.html>>.

Being aware of your phone bill charges and clucking over the increases is only for the lazy. Doing something about it through a valuable website like this will help you save dollars..and kick yourself for not doing it sooner.

HAVE FUN LEARNING A LANGUAGE

Using the computer for language training is not new. There have been programs around to help you learn almost any language on the earth and all tout their efficiency and simplicity. Among the latest offerings is a program called EAZYSPEAK that is aimed at children but is equally valuable for an adult. If a child and adult learn it together, so much the better.

The gimmick with EazySpeak is that it uses what they call the entertaining "Doki" language learning system. It is set in the cartoon world of Doki City where the user interacts with the humorous Doki characters in scenarios that mimic the same communication challenges found in the real world. There are no grammar or rules to learn. Users decide on their own path to the supermarket, the hotel, dining in a restaurant. And while they're doing that, they learn the basics of everyday conversation.

The idea is that one can learn the language at home, or it can complement school learning. It provides the sounds, pronunciations, and vocabulary without resorting to lengthy grammar explanations or exercises.

I played with the Spanish lessons provided in Levels 1 and 2, on one CD disk that is Mac and PC compatible. The animation is delightful and the lessons are geared for ages 12-112, according to the box. If you want to learn Spanish and/or French, this is as good a stab at getting it under your tongue as any of the language programs. It's produced by Kutoda Interactive and has won a large audience. Each program sells for \$24.95. Check it out at www.kutoka.com.

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO PCs & WINDOWS: 2005 Edition

Along with learning a language without pain, there's a new batch of books for learning PC's & Windows without pain. They may be just what you need now for the people who are coming to you for help with units they got for Christmas. It's a small book, the Rough Guide to PC's and Windows by the same people who publish the Rough Guides to Travel 4-1/2 " x 6" with 420 thin paper pages so it's lightweight and easy to carry around.

It begins with chapters, From Purchase to Power-up, then follows through Working With Windows, Getting Connected, Software, Keeping it Purring, Contexts and Resources. There's an excellent glossary, and a short list of Web sites. These change so fast, it's tough to keep them updated in a book. The book is available from your computer or book store or visit www.roughguides.com. With more and more products putting their instructions on CD's that are hard to access when you need them, this handy guide could be a valuable resource.

There are also books in the series with Guides to Pods & Music Online, and to the Internet, with other titles on the launching pad. Dona Meilach is the author of over 85 books with 10 on computers. Her just released newest book is WOOD ART TODAY from Schiffer Publishers. <http://www.schifferbooks.com>. Put her name in the search box. Other computer organizations interested in running this column should contact the author. The column is also available as a free E-zine. Subscribe DCC: Contact Dmeilach@msn.com. Dona's Computer Capers may also be found at <http://www.smalladdictions.com/Skateboard>.

right in. Be patient. Above all, don't ever lose your enthusiasm.

This column is dedicated to Martha Tattersall, who was tragically struck and killed by a reckless driver on December 14, 2004.

Those of us who knew her mourn her loss, but Martha's spirit propels us to endeavor to make our lives as kind, gentle, and enthusiastic as hers was.

Free Newsletter <http://www.comp-u-kiss.com>

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Graying of the Internet

by Sandy Berger

Pew's Internet and American Life Project recently released their study on wired seniors, disclosing the number of seniors online as well as their motivation and Internet behavior. While senior citizens over the age of 65 comprise 14% of the U.S. population, they represent just 4% of the U.S. Internet population with a substantial number identifying themselves as Internet holdouts.

Many of our oldest Americans see no reason to go online, but those who do become enthusiastic surfers. Often they are coaxed online by relatives who are anxious to have their senior family members participate in e-mail activities. Once online, wired seniors are more likely to send e-mail than the average Internet user. Nearly three of five online seniors say that the Internet has improved family relationships.

Like the general Internet population, many seniors use the Internet to seek out information on hobbies and finances. Not surprisingly, seniors who suffer many age-related medical problems are also likely to research health issues online. The Pew study shows that few wired seniors do research for school or training, participate in chat rooms, or download music. Yet, surprisingly, seniors are more likely to play games online than any age group other than the game-crazed 18-29 year-olds. While the younger group is concentrating on shoot-em-up games, senior game choices are much more sedate. Bridge, mahjongg, and other card games as well as Monopoly and board-type games draw the most attention from seniors.

Although today's seniors are only peppering the Internet, the silver tsunami is coming as the graying 50-64 year-olds are now among America's most wired. This pre-retirement group is currently using the Internet at work and is comfortable using online resources for e-mail, news, online banking, job information, and work-related activities.

The Internet meets the needs of both the pre-retirement 50-64 year-olds and the senior 65+ and older group as they age. It provides instant communication with family and friends, medical information, learning opportunities, and many chances for self-fulfillment. As younger surfers show the benefits of the Internet to their senior family members and as the 50-64 year old group moves into retirement, the Internet of the future may be awash with gray.

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Life is Precious

Sandy Berger

The many different ways that technology brings people together never ceases to amaze me. E-mail, chat rooms, auctions, and instant messaging all bring people together. Today I'd like to tell you the story about how writing about technology brought Martha and I together. In 1999, when I signed a contract to write my second book, I found my writing chores had become overwhelming. My husband encouraged me to hire someone to help me. "All you need is someone who has is personable, has good writing skills, and is computer literate", he said. After a short search, we found Martha. She was a wonderful person.

Over the course of her life, Martha was successful at several different jobs including real estate sales and golf club management. Martha, however, had a hidden love that she had dabbled in over the years. She loved to write. We took a quick look at some of the articles she had written and found that she was an excellent writer. We were so impressed with her enthusiasm for the job that we hired her immediately. Martha lacked only one of our original criteria. She had only rudimentary computer skills. Yet I never doubted that her enthusiasm could overcome that deficit.

Martha was a perfect example of how an older person can learn to deal with computers and technology successfully. Although she found some computer tasks intimidating, she plunged right in. She learned about bits, bytes, rom, and ram. The basics were not boring to her because she knew that she could use her knowledge to build up to more exciting and interesting tasks. She was never afraid to try new things. When she needed help she asked questions or did research until she found the information she needed. She took the time to learn new things and was patient with both herself and the computer. When she learned how to achieve a new task on the computer, she took pride in her accomplishment and beamed from ear to ear. When a new software program or gadget was delivered for me to review, Martha always wanted to be the first to try it out. She was energetic and passionate about everything she did. For Martha, every new task was a thrilling new excursion.

By the end of her first year with us, Martha was using the computer like a pro and was completely comfortable with technology. By the end of the second year, she was able to finish my sentences and I was able to finish hers. We went together like hand and glove. She shared her love of writing with me and I shared my love of computers and technology with her. We loved working together and found everyday a new and exciting adventure. I thank God for giving me an opportunity to work with a woman of her sense of adventure, her integrity and her love of humanity.

Those of you who are just starting out in the computer world can learn a lot from Martha's example. Don't be afraid. Plunge

Affordable Hot Stuff

by

Dave Berger



There is a lot of great new technologically advanced equipment arriving in the marketplace everyday. Often people purchase these great new products in order to be on the “cutting edge”. Instead they find themselves on the “bleeding edge”. Also the latest and the greatest new technologies are always costly.

The time to buy into new technology is after it has been sufficiently tested in the marketplace and after the price has dropped to affordable levels. Here are four outstanding product categories with proven goods that perform well and are cost-effective for today’s high tech consumers.

Flat Panel Monitors

If you still have a big bulky CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) monitor on your desktop, now is the time to replace it with a sleek new flat screen LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) monitor. Flat panel monitors are thin and lightweight. They take up much less precious desktop space than their predecessors. Even more important, LCD monitors are clearer and flicker-free so they are easier on the eyes. Flat panel monitors were extremely expensive when they were first introduced, but they have come down to affordable levels. You don’t have to wait until you get a new computer to have one of these sleek new monitors. They will work with your computer whether old or new.

Color Ink Jet Printers

I paid \$500 for my first color ink jet printer. Now you can purchase a comparable printer for less than \$50. Quality ink jets with numerous new features and excellent quality can be had for around \$100. When making your purchase, be sure to consider the cost of consumables. I recently saw an ink jet printer complete with ink cartridges for \$30, but replacement ink cartridges were selling for \$35 each. Know that you will have to purchase ink for your printer in the future and be sure to check out the price of ink before you make your printer purchase.

USB Hard Drives

These devices are also called Portable Hard Drives and Flash Drives. When they were introduced several years ago, USB Drives were quite pricey even for devices that had as little as 16 MB of storage space. Today if you shop around, you can buy a 256MB USB Hard Drive for about \$30. A portable hard drive allows you to take your files with you. They are small devices that act just like hard drives. Insert one into the USB port on your

computer and it will look just like a hard drive in the “MyComputer” folder on your computer. You can drag and drop, copy, or move and type a file to the portable drive. Use it for your text documents, audio files, and photos. It is perfect for anyone on the move. I use one to store all my writing files. Then, whether I am at home, at the office, or on the road I have immediate access to all my files. These devices are perfect for transporting files between home and school or home and office. They are a great way to make a quick backup. They can also be used to carry around the photos and/or files that you would like to share with friends or neighbors.

Digital Cameras

With no need (and no cost) for film or film processing, the digital camera has come of age. Prices have plummeted while quality has improved. The quality of digital cameras is often determined by the number of megapixels it has. (Although this is not the only measurement that should be used.) Nikon has recently announced a 12.4 megapixel camera and, as expected, as the megapixels increase in the newest products, the prices for cameras with fewer megapixels fall. With the 2-4 megapixel cameras being adequate for most average photographers, cameras in that quality range have become surprisingly affordable. So if you haven’t yet taken the plunge into the exciting world of digital photography, be sure you put a digital camera on your Christmas wish list.

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TECHNOLOGY STATISTIC!!!

According to Nielsen NetRatings (www.nielsen-netratings.com) Nielsen//NetRatings, the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis, reported the top local markets connected via broadband at-home during the month of August 2004. Tracking 35 local markets in the U.S., Nielsen//NetRatings found that the cities of San Diego, Phoenix, Detroit, New York and Sacramento represented the top five wired local markets connected via broadband access with penetration rates of 65 percent or higher 1. San Diego 69.6 2. Phoenix 68.4 3. Detroit 67.0 4. New York 66.8 5. Sacramento 64.9 6. Orlando 64.7 7. Seattle 63.0 8. San Francisco 63.0 9. Los Angeles 61.6

MOZILLA NEWS: MOZILLA PLANS TO SNUFF OUT OUTLOOK

Microsoft Outlook is a wonderful program from Microsoft that allows you to manage email, track appointments and setup memos and to do lists. While Outlook is an amazing program, it could be better. Since it is such a commonly used program, it is a primary target and tool for most virus writers and bad guys. Mozilla (the folks who brought us Firefox) plans to release their own personal information manager and email program to compete with Outlook. While it probably won’t steal many people away from Outlook, it could possibly cause a dent in the number of people using Outlook Express - the email-only version of Outlook that comes on all Windows XP computers.

Quick Studies

February 2005 • Vol.16 Issue 2

Security

Firewall Management

Broadband “always-on” connections (such as cable or DSL [Digital Subscriber Line]) can easily expose an unprotected PC to attack from spyware and crackers—even before the user knows that a problem exists. Firewalls are now standard tools for every PC user because they help protect PCs by blocking unauthorized communication to and from computers. Unfortunately, firewalls run in the background and are often forgotten once they’ve been installed and configured. Computer users should periodically check their firewall setups to examine status reports and make any adjustments needed to maintain optimum security.



Figure 1. Regularly inspect your firewall’s records to see if there’s any statistical information that may suggest a serious security threat to your PC. ■ **Status & Security** Most firewalls will provide alerts when an event demands your attention. For example, you’ll see an alert when an IP (Internet Protocol) address across the Internet attempts to access your computer, or when a new program on your system tries to access the Internet for the first time. Still, “silence” doesn’t always mean that things are working smoothly. You should check your firewall client on a weekly basis to examine its status. In most cases, this involves opening the firewall’s interface, which is usually a matter of just double-clicking the firewall’s icon in your System Tray. Firewalls typically provide an operational summary that can help you identify potential areas of concern. For example, ZoneAlarm Pro 5.5 (\$49.95; <http://www.zonelabs.com>) presents an Overview page that lists the number of programs accessing the Internet, blocked access attempts, suspicious email attachments, and so on. The idea is to look for numbers that might suggest a problem. For example, the firewall in Figure 1 states that it has blocked 0 access attempts. That’s good, but if you saw a number such as 50 access attempts, you may need to wonder if your computer is experiencing the effects of an Internet attack or PINGs (Packet Internet Gropers) from your ISP (Internet service provider). If you suspect a problem, you can examine the firewall’s logs to determine the source of each access attempt. Then, if necessary, you can specifically block sources of frequent or consistent access attempts; your firewall’s documentation will provide details on how to do that. The next step is to check the firewall’s security levels to ensure that you’re receiving the desired amount of protection. For ZoneAlarm Pro 5.5, simply select the Firewall feature to see the security settings for both the Internet Zone and Trusted Zone (see Figure 2). By default, the Internet Zone is set to High security, whereas the Trusted Zone (such as other PCs on your LAN [local-area network]) is set to Medium security. Ideally, these settings wouldn’t have changed since you set them, but a quick check will ensure that someone else hasn’t changed the settings unexpectedly (if so, simply return the



Figure 2.

Always ensure that your security levels are adequate and that no one has changed them inadvertently. (NOTE: If you wish to prevent unauthorized users from changing security levels, see the firewall software’s documentation to find out how to set up an administrator password.)

Pesky Programs One of the main features of a firewall is its ability to manage Internet communication on a program-by-program basis, so taking advantage of this ability is simply a matter of listing each program using the Internet, along with any corresponding rights. This makes program lists handy tools for identifying unauthorized software such as spyware. Open the program list and check each program that accesses the Internet. For ZoneAlarm Pro 5.5, just select the Program Control feature and click the Programs tab (see Figure 3). In most cases, you should be able to identify every program that uses the Internet (such as Microsoft Outlook, Internet Explorer, etc.). If you see a program you can’t identify, do some research to figure out what its listing refers to. Then, if applicable, remove the program from the list (according to the firewall software’s instructions). If the program tries to use the Internet later, it will need to request your permission before communicating online. This is an ideal way to prevent spyware or other unwanted programs from operating.

Figure 3. Because unknown programs may suggest the presence of spyware on your computer, verify that only known programs can access the Internet. In addition, if you uninstall a program that uses the Internet, be sure to check your firewall’s program list and remove its entry as soon as possible. Operating rights are another important issue. For example, access rights define how other systems (such as your trusted LAN or the Internet) access a particular program. Server rights define how a certain program sends information from your PC. Allowing a program to act as a server is potentially more dangerous to your data than basic access rights, so be sure that only your most trusted programs have server rights. If you’re not sure what’s appropriate, configure each of these programs so that they ask permission before communicating (designated by blue question marks in Figure 3). This will alert you each time a specific program tries to communicate online, allowing you to monitor the program’s activities more closely.

Update Often Don’t forget that firewalls themselves are software products, and they may require periodic updates as their developers fix bugs and identify emerging security threats. Be sure to enable automatic product updates if your firewall supports that feature; this will eliminate the need to manually check the manufacturer’s Web site to see if there are updates you should install. When updates do become available, make it a point to install them immediately—either automatically or manually. *by Stephen J. Bigelow*

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INTERNET TALK

by

Frank Chao (GSBUG)**(January 2005)**

Welcome the 77th "Internet Talk" article for "The Bug Report", a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Liz and I hope that you will make maximum use of your computer and it's Internet connection in this new year !

GSBUG MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Joyce Oliver reports that as of December 8th, GSBUG has 138 members, which is a decline from previous months. Joyce also stated that 17 members have been "marked for deletion" for non-payment of renewal dues. Please renew if your membership is not current. This fine organization deserves your support.

FREE CREDIT REPORTS

Kostek Haussmann of GSBUG would like to tell you that you can now get three free credit reports for yourself at

<http://www.annualcreditreport.com>

At the Web site, they dispatch you off to the Web sites of the three credit reporting bureaus:

Experian

Equifax

Transunion

You can now get a free credit report from each of these agencies every 12-months. After getting these reports, you can return to the respective Web sites to dispute any erroneous data that you find.

To learn about the new Federal law that made these credit reports available to you, go to

http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/credit/yqr_free_reports.htm

If you already have an online account (even a real old one) at any of these three credit reporting agencies, you will probably have to phone them to get access to your free credit report. These companies are doing their best to deter identity theft.

The <http://www.annualcreditreport.com> Website is sometimes overloaded but you can generally get in and get your credit reports after a few tries.

"FIREFOX" WEB BROWSER

A great, totally-free Web browser called Firefox is now available for you to download and use:

You can get it at:

<http://www.getfirefox.com>

I have installed it on my own home computer and I love it. During it's installation, it imported all of my favorites and settings from Internet Explorer.

The biggest advantage of Firefox over Opera is that Firefox is totally free and it does not push ads at you. The free version of Opera comes with a mandatory advertising window. Firefox does not have an advertising window so you will have more room on your computer monitor for your own use !

The biggest advantage of Firefox over Netscape is that it has more new-fangled features such as tabbed windows, integrated RSS feed display, more customization, and integrated popup blocking. These powerful features are described at:

<http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>

For your information, the Web site for Foxfox will be moved to <http://www.firefox.com> in a month or two.

OPERA WEB BROWSER

The Opera Web browser still has one advantage over Internet Explorer, Netscape, and Firefox:

When using Opera, if you click on "File", then "Save with images as.." and save a Web page to a local drive, it will save an accurate rendition of the HTML code that the Web server used to generate the Web page.

When using Internet Explorer, Netscape, and Firefox, if you attempt to perform the same operation to save to your local drive, the HTML code that is saved is re-written to point to graphics files that are located in a subfolder. We will discuss this difference between Opera and the other Web browsers in future articles.

RATEMYNETWORKDIAGRAM.COM

To learn about how to build a home network so that all of the computers in your home can share files, printers, and the same Internet connection, you can go to

<http://www.ratemynetworkdiagram.com>

Using the network diagrams at this Web site and the comments that have been posted by various online members, you can learn about what various homeowners have installed, and their trials and tribulations.

According to the main page of this Web site:

<Start of quote>

The purpose of this site is to allow people to learn about computer networking and network documentation by seeing what other people have done with their networks — all for free.

Along with rating network diagrams, users may also leave comments or messages in the RMND forum to interact with other users of the site. Anonymous users are allowed, but who wants to remain anonymous. When rating other user's network diagrams or designing your own diagram, please keep in mind ratings should be based on the function of the network and not the graphic design capabilities of the network administrator. I hope you enjoy sharing networking ideas and methods with other RMND users.

<End of quote>

If you use the information at this fascinating Website, it will save you on time and dollars on your own home network.

Enjoy !

RECYCLING AN OLD COMPUTER

A friend of ours brought us a prehistoric 80286 IBM-compatible computer. I knew that this computer was ancient when I tried to lift it and almost got a hernia. In the good old days back in the mid-1980's, 45 pounds was a typical weight for many desktop computers. My task, if I was willing to accept it, was to recycle the boat anchor. Liz and I removed the floppy disk drive, the CD-ROM drive, ribbon cables, and page mode RAM. Then, we delivered these items to Bob Hudak, for donation to GSBUG. Next, I delivered the 15-pound steel case to a scrap steel bin at a metal recycling facility. Then, I delivered the old 12-inch VGA monitor and the 4-gigabyte hard drive to a friend who is a connoisseur of vintage computers. Finally, I delivered the old system board, the internal multi-function controller, the power supply, and the internal modem to a Los Angeles county-sponsored recycling center at:

S.A.F.E. CENTER

1400 N. GAFFEY ST.

SAN PEDRO, CA 90021

<http://www.lacity.org/SAN/safe-gaffey.htm>

You can learn more about the "Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program" of Los Angeles county at:

<http://www.lacsd.org/HHW/HHWFLIER.htm>

The "Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center" program of Orange county is described at:

<http://www.oilandfills.com/hhwcc123.asp>

Hopefully, the preceding discussion gives you some idea of what to do with an old computer. It was a lot of work to get the old boat anchor dismantled with different sections going to different recipients. If this computer had been any type of an Intel Pentium, we could have donated the whole thing to the Goodwill Computer Works at

http://www.ocgoodwill.org/computer_works/computer_works_main.html

These nice folks will not accept any computers that are not Pentium or equivalent.

We probably could have taken the whole thing to the recycling center in San Pedro. They apparently sell old computers and monitors to various electronic disposal companies that either re-sell the parts or extract the gold from the connectors.

BUYING OLD COMPUTERS FROM GOODWILL

If you wish to bid for the privilege of buying old computers and computer parts from Goodwill of Orange County, you can shop online at <http://www.shopgoodwill.com> or more specifically:

<http://www.shopgoodwill.com/listings/>

[listByCat.asp?catID=30&ending=Items](http://www.shopgoodwill.com/listings/listByCat.asp?catID=30&ending=Items)

Someone's trash might be your treasure !

SEARCHING AT MICROSOFT.COM

When searching for help on a Windows problem at Microsoft's Web site, it is usually better to search their "Support Knowledge Base" at <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=FH;EN-US;KBHOWTO> than to search in the "Search Microsoft.com for:" boxes that are displayed throughout the Microsoft Website.

When using the former location, you get better results for the problem at hand than when you use the latter.

WAYS TO CONTACT ME:

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

1. Send me e-mail at: fchao@pacbell.net
2. Leave me a voice message at (310)768-3896.
3. Send "snail" United States Postal Service (USPS) mail to

Frank Chao

4001 Inglewood Ave., Ste. 101f

PMB 305

Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Or sell your computer and take up crocheting instead !!

Happy New Year

*Another year has passed and we're all a little older.
Last summer felt hotter and winter seems much colder.*

*There was a time not long ago when life was quite a blast.
Now I fully understand about "Living in the Past"*

*We used to go to weddings, football games and lunches.
Now we go to funeral homes, and after-funeral brunches.*

*We used to have hangovers, from parties that were gay.
Now we suffer body aches and while the night away.*

*We used to go out dining, and couldn't get our fill.
Now we ask for doggie bags, come home and take a pill.*

*We used to often travel to places near and far.
Now we get sore asses from riding in the car.*

*We used to go to nightclubs and drink a little booze.
Now we stay home at night and watch the evening news.*

*That, my friend is how life is, and now my tale is told.
So, enjoy each day and live it up...
before you're too damned old!*



Quick Studies

February 2005 • Vol. 16 Issue 2

Google, At Your Command

Google's growing empire of online tools—including Gmail, Blogger, Google Groups, and the new Google Desktop—are quickly making the original search engine just one of its many interesting projects. The original Spartan page, however, still has some tricks up its sleeve. As you know, Google searches the Web for key words and phrases, but the Google gods also have bestowed upon the site a number of other commands that work directly from the same search window. The Google that finds your proverbial needle in a haystack also can tell you someone's phone number, the status of your overnight shipment, or even how many teaspoons are in a tablespoon.



Acting as much more than a simple search engine, Google can work as a calculator, phone book, delivery tracker, and more.

Add It Up

Dive into Google's other functions by first trying out the calculator. Rather than hunt down a particular Web page, Google will hunt down the answer to your mathematical queries. Just type an expression (such as $5+5$) into the same search field you normally use to conduct a search and press ENTER, and Google returns the result. You can put together some fairly complex questions. Google understands operators such as sin, cos, and log. It also knows many mathematical constants, such as pi. You'll find a complete list of operators at <http://www.google.com/help/calculator.html>. What's more, the Google calculator will convert almost any unit to another unit. For instance, type **miles in 100 km** in the Google search field for a quick conversion. Plus, converting recipes is simple when you can type such queries as **2 cups/5 in tablespoons**. When in Rome, add "**in roman numerals**" to the end of your query for answers Caesar would appreciate. **Track It Down** Not all numbers entered into Google demand mathematical operations. Google accepts a variety of numbers to scour Internet-connected databases, including UPS tracking numbers, FedEx numbers, VINs (vehicle identification numbers), UPC codes, airplane registrations, and patents. Simply type the number in the Google search field, and Google should recognize it and provide the appropriate results.

In the case of some searches, such as patents, you must precede the number with an identifier, which in this case is "patent," so you would type **patent 5123123**, for example, in the search field. Another handy lookup feature works with stock and mutual fund symbols. Type in any symbol, and near the top of the resulting list, you should see a link to the latest quotes. A small graph icon next to the link should help you zero in on what you need. The link leads you to a page with several financial Web sites listed at the top and quotes on the bottom. Pick your favorite Web site for the analysis you prefer. Google also finds flight information if you type an airline name followed by the flight number. For example, if you type **Continental 21** in the field, Google guesses this is a flight query and posts (at the top of the results page) a few links to different sites where you can see the flight's status. Click one of the links, and Google will automatically enter the flight number at the site you choose. For another travel time-saver, you can look up weather and delay reports for individual airports by typing in a three-letter airport code followed by the word "airport." Google will then present the appropriate FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) airport status page.

Just Like The White Pages

Besides searching for mentions of specific people around the Web, Google also can find names in its online phone book. Type in someone's first initial or name, along with his last name, town, and state. In addition, you can try to enter just a name and a ZIP code. Google returns a list of possible matches, which oftentimes include street addresses and phone numbers. Links next to each result give you quick access to street maps of addresses, if available. If you already know the address you seek, just type it in for links to maps of that area. For the best results, include the street address, city name, and ZIP code. (The ZIP code isn't always necessary if you are unsure of that portion of the address.) On the results page, the first item listed is a "Map of" the address you entered. Click the link to see the map. Even with everything we've described here, we're still not close to revealing the full extent of the tools you can unfold out of Google's Internet-based Swiss Army Knife. For a complete list of tools, see <http://www.google.com/help/features.html> and then Google away. *by Alan Phelps*

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Free Real-Time Stock Quotes

In the past, the average investor had to wait for newspapers to discover stock prices. Today, real-time and 20-minute-delayed stock quotes are available on the Internet. In fact, during the last few years, the number of Web sites offering free real-time and delayed stock quotes has proliferated. Here are a few examples on online quote servers: [MSN Money](#) provides free access to delayed and real-time quotes. [Thomson Financial Network](#) offers investors free delayed quotes and free real-time quotes with your registration. [FreeRealTime](#) requires registration for your free access to real-time stock quotes, financial news, and corporate profiles. There is no limit on the number of quotes you can get per day.

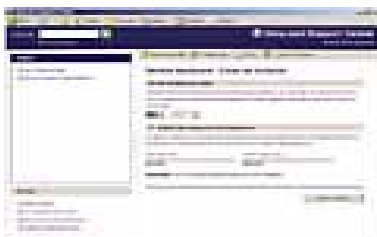
Getting & Providing Remote Assistance

PC Operating Instructions October 2004

• Vol.15 Issue 10 Page(s) 28-29 in print issue

You're an average computer user—you know how to use your computer to get your work done, but you're no expert troubleshooter. You're sitting at your home PC when something goes wrong, and you don't know how to fix it. You could call tech support, but that could cost you too much time and money. Or, you're an expert user, your friends know it, and they're always calling you for help. You offer what assistance you can over the phone, but because you can't see your friend's screen, you're not certain of your instructions or the way they're carried out. You often end up visiting your friend to troubleshoot and solve the problem yourself. With Windows XP's Remote Assistance, a user can invite an expert user to view his screen, relay instructions in real-time, and take over and operate the problematic PC so the expert can fix the problem as the other user watches. Remote Assistance saves the user who needs help the time, cost, and language barrier-based frustrations of technical support and spares the Good Samaritan a trip.

There are two ways to use Remote Assistance: via email and the Web and via Windows Messenger. We'll cover the email/Web method, which requires more steps but will be more practical for most users. (For more on Remote Assistance via Windows Messenger, see "What About Windows Messenger?" at the end of this article.) **Cry For Help**A Remote Assistance session can't begin unless the user who wants help invites another user (whom we'll call an expert) to a Remote Assistance session (or incident). To create and send an invitation, click Start and Help And Support. Click Invite A Friend To Your Computer With Remote Assistance and click Invite Someone To Help You. You'll be prompted to connect to the Internet if you're not already. (If a box appears telling you that your current system settings prevent an invitation; right-click My Computer; choose Properties; click the Remote tab; and under Remote Assistance, make sure Allow Remote Assistance Invitations To Be Sent From This Computer is checked. Click OK twice and repeat the instructions above.)



If you're concerned about security, you can restrict the time after which your Remote Assistance invitation will expire and require a password to start the session. You'll still need to be at your computer to authorize any Remote Assistance

session. Under Or Use E-mail, enter the email address of the person you want to invite and click Invite This Person. In the next screen, enter a description of the problem in the Message box (unless you've already talked with the person, in which

case you won't need to type anything). Click Continue. The next screen you'll see lets you enact a degree of security by putting a time limit on your invitation and setting a password for the session. (Much of what you choose will depend on your relationship with the person you're asking for help.) Under Set The Invitation To Expire, use the list boxes to set the number of minutes, hours, or days your invitation will be open. The default for the maximum invitation duration is 30 days, even though the drop-down menus seem to suggest longer periods are possible. In the bottom section, type and confirm your password. You'll want to relay this password to your assistant over the phone. Don't use your system password or a password you use to protect sensitive information. Click Send Invitation. If you see a warning that a program is trying to access email addresses stored in your email program, click Allow Access For (the default should be one minute) and click Yes. If you see a warning that a program is trying to automatically send email on your behalf (which in this case you want it to do), just click Yes. You'll soon return to the Remote Assistance screen, which displays notification that your message has been sent. **How To Respond**A remote support invitation comes in the form of an email with an attachment. The subject of the email reads You Have Received A Remote Assistance Invitation From, followed by the name of the sender. The attachment is the Remote Assistance Incident file, which you need to run to start the Remote Assistant session. Open the email, right-click the attachment, choose Save As, and save the attachment to your Desktop. Scan the incident file with your antivirus app (it's an executable file that could carry a virus). Contact the sender to ensure she is at her PC and to get any password the sender has set to restrict Remote Assistance. Double-click the incident file shortcut on your Desktop. In the box that appears, enter the password you and the sender have set and click Yes. On your screen, the Remote Assistance workspace will open; once the sender grants permission to begin a Remote Assistance chat session, you'll see the sender's screen in the workspace. **Getting To Work**The most basic way to conduct a Remote Assistance session is for the expert to type and send instructions via the message entry area and watch the other user perform those instructions. However, while instant messaging is great for nonurgent chat, it can be a restrictive and frustrating way to converse during the problem-solving process. If both of your phone lines are free, you'll probably prefer to do your talking on the phone as you work on the problem. If both PCs are equipped with speakers and a microphone or, even better, with headsets, you can talk with each other over the same Internet connection you're using for Remote Assistance. One user clicks the Start Talking button. The first time you click the button, you'll have to go through the Audio Tuning Wizard, which helps you tweak settings for optimal sound quality. Once you're finished and once the other user agrees to start talking, start talking as you'd talk over a phone. **Taking (& Surrendering) Control**The most expedient way to conduct a Remote Assistance session is for the expert to take remote control of the other user's PC and perform corrective action while the other user watches. The expert clicks the Take Control button in the top-left corner of the Remote Assistance workspace. (The user who requested Remote Assistance won't have a Take Control button.) A box appears on the other user's screen, which he can use to authorize remote control; the other user clicks Yes.

The expert can operate the other user's computer as if she were sitting in front of it. (The other user can still operate his PC, although that can cause confusion.) *The Remote Assistance request arrives in your email; save the attached incident file, which you run to start the session.* Remote control is a great way for the expert to demonstrate or conduct a Windows Update session, install an antivirus app, or take any of the somewhat intimidating steps often necessary to solve problems. It's also ideal when the expert has less time to teach and just needs to solve the problem and get back to work. Another handy Remote Assistance feature is the Send A File button, which you can use to transfer files over the Remote Assistance connection. Click the Send A File button, use the Browse button to locate the file, and click Send File; the user at the other end will accept it and save it. Either party can end the session by clicking the Disconnect button. **What About Windows Messenger?** Many sources list Windows Messenger, the IM (instant messaging) program included with WinXP, as the preferred conduit for Remote Assistance: Windows Messenger has a simple menu command for initiating a Remote Assistance session. But Remote Assistance via Windows Messenger requires that both users have a Windows Messenger screen name, which requires that both users have a Microsoft .NET Passport account. If you or the other user use another IM app, you won't likely want to go through this trouble. The same is true if you don't use IM at all. You almost certainly won't want to add an IM program just for occasional assistance sessions. Better to use email, which you can be certain both of you are already using. *by Mark Scapicchi*

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Windows XP Unwired

by Lloyd Boutwell

Orange County IBM Users' Group, California

As the back cover of the book says, "Windows XP Unwired is a one-stop wireless information source for the technically savvy Windows XP users." This is definitely not one of your Computers for Dummies book. It provides a lot of information especially useful if you are thinking of going wireless. Chapter One covers the fundamentals of wireless networking. Basics of TCP/IP are covered such as IP address, subnet addressing, supernet addressing and IP routing.

I was pleasantly surprised to find the author included the URL for NTIA to obtain a frequency allocation chart (I had been looking for something like this for years). Chapter two gets into Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity) and the various 802.11 standards. I have seen a lot of Wi-Fi devices for sale but I was not aware of what the major differences were between 802.11a, b, and g. The chapter notes that the 2.4 GHz frequency used by 802.11b and g are also shared with some wireless telephones, microwave ovens, and Bluetooth so there might be interference which will slow down the data rates (raw rates for b is 11 Mbps while g is 54

Mbps). Also there are differences in the range (distance) for the various 802.11 standards. By the way, the chapter notes that Intel's Centrino technology is 802.11b.

Chapter three, Wi-Fi on the Road, deals with wireless hotspots, providers and introduces new terms, at least to me. Wardriving, Warwalking, and Warflying are used to describe the process of locating WI-Fi zones. There are even special symbols to designate an open network, closed network, and a network protected by WEP (Wireless Equivalent Privacy).

Each chapter has many examples of actual setup screens with various hardware products such as Linksys and D-Link. The book does address the security issue, pointing out that WEP is not the best for protection where WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) provides a dynamic key versus WEP's static key.

Curious about infrared? See chapter 7. Want to know more about GPS? See chapter 9. Don't know what piconet or scatternet means? Chapter 6 on Bluetooth provides the answers.

The book is authored by Wei-Meng Lee, published by O'Reilly August 2003 and lists for \$24.95. It is curious that the book talks more about the design of the cover than it does about the author (go figure).

The punch line — is this book worth 25 bucks? My answer, even though my own network is the unglamorous wire kind, is a strong yes. It gets into a lot of technical stuff about all things wireless in the XP world but it is an excellent single reference source. Besides user group members can get the O'Reilly discount.

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

IE Favorites

To remove Favorite links in Internet Explorer (IE), you should right-click each one and then select delete. If that doesn't work for you, click on Favorites, Organize Favorites, and then select the links to be removed from your list. If you get an error message about the system file being in use, reboot your computer before deleting the links, or you may need to start in Safe mode. To have your IE Favorites shown on your Desktop to preclude having to open IE and then Favorites to get to your most favorite web site, create a window called the Channel Bar that contains your IE Favorites. From the Start menu, select Run. In the Open box, type "iexplore -channelband" (without the quotes). Look at your desktop and you should see your Favorites. If you later want to remove them, just click the Close box in the top right corner of the Channel Bar.

A Look Back at the History of OCIPUG



OCIPUG's first Newsletter



OCIPUG's 2nd Newsletter

GOOGLE NEWS: GOOGLE TOOL HELPS SORT YOUR DIGITAL PHOTOS

Google released Picasa 2.0 this week. Google purchased the digital photo sorting program about a year ago, but it has been mostly unpromoted by Google. The FREE program is loaded with tools and features that help you organize and (to a limited degree) modify your photos. The program also has tools to help you create a photo blog, order prints and backup your photos. While it doesn't have all of the features of larger programs like Adobe Photoshop Album, it is much better than most software that comes with digital cameras and computers. Picasa's strongest feature is its ability to scan your computer and find all of your lost photos.

VIRUS USES CNN HEADLINES

We aren't quite through January yet, but the virus writers are starting to ramp up to their annual spring no-good. One of the first viruses out of the gates this year is one that culls headlines from CNN.com and tries to entice you into opening their dangerous payload with the news. As always, keep an eye out for suspicious looking emails, but most of all RUN AND KEEP YOUR ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE UPDATED!!

Favorites

If you are changing computers and want to save your "Favorites," this tip may be of help if using Internet Explorer and Netscape. In Internet Explorer 6, click File, Import and Export. Now select Export Favorites and click Next. Under Import from a File or Address, use the pre-selected destination file or choose your own with the Browse button and click Next, select Favorites, click Next, Finish. In Netscape 7, press Ctrl+B to open the Bookmarks window and click Tools, Export. Now navigate to the folder where you want to save the Bookmarks and click Save.

The most popular browsers on the web

1. Microsoft IE 6.0 80.95%
 2. Microsoft IE 5.0 4.18%
 3. Microsoft IE 5.5 3.66%
 4. Mozilla Firefox 0.1 2.79%
 5. Mozilla 1.x 2.77%
 6. Mozilla Firefox 1.0 1.79%
 7. Opera 7.x 1.29%
- OneStat.com (www.onestat.com)

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

*Below Are More Announcements
Offering Discounts For User Group Members

*AdWords Clever Wizard

I saw something interesting on the news concerning problems getting a travel visa. Seems it takes months to be granted a visa these days and the Rockwell International Automation Fair (a show I worked and wrote about) lost many foreign attendees who were unable to get their visa in time to attend the show here in Orlando.

“Our company, CleverStat, would like to announce the release of AdWords Clever Wizard 1.4 for Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP. (Author’s note: they included a press release, but because it was lengthy, I did not include it so check the URL) “Note, all users group members will have a 20% discount if purchasing AdWords Clever Wizard 1.4. In order to get the benefit of discount they need to type the following coupon code while ordering: TFBH-R4NT-IHNG.”

I occasionally watch Mythbusters on the Discovery channel. I saw them trying to get a ringing cell phone to cause an explosion, with no success, even exposed directly to some very dangerous fumes. After more suggestions from viewers, they tried again on another show using the suggestions from the viewers along with some new ones of their own, but with no success. I’ll still leave mine in the car.

This one was a bit hard for me to understand so I am passing it on to you with the URL to read up on it. [<http://www.cleverstat.com/adwords-analyzer-software.htm>].

*Vacation Comments

***NotePage’s FeedForAll**

Every time I mention taking a cruise, I get lots of feedback. My wife and I decided it was time for another getaway and opted for an eastern Caribbean cruise on Holland America’s Zaandam cruise ship. I was very much disappointed with the Zaandam. Sailing on the Zaandam left something to be desired since it tended to roll a lot, even on relatively quiet water. I was told privately by a crew member that one of their stabilizers was broken. While ashore in one port (St. Thomas), we talked to people who arrived there on Holland America’s Maasdam who had the same experience. They also said the Maasdam had one engine down so their speed on the water was curbed until it could be fixed. That problem changed their next scheduled stop to Freeport where the ship was to be repaired. St. Thomas was packed the day we were there because there were a total of eight cruise ships docked or anchored with passengers ashore. Tour bus traffic sure added to the traffic congestion.

“To celebrate the launch of FeedForAll, NotePage’s new RSS feed creation software, NotePage has created a User Group Power Point Presentation that explains RSS and how it can be used. RSS is becoming increasingly popular and is a hot topic in many user groups. NotePage, Inc. would be interested in making this Power Point presentation available to you, along with FeedForAll discount coupons for your members. The Power Point presentation can be downloaded from: [<http://www.feedforall.com/rss.ppt>]”

To read about this product, go to [<http://www.feedforall.com>].

***Announcement of Flash File Recovery 1.3**

Below is an announcement I received that includes a discount for user group members.

The only thing we liked better on the Zaandam compared to Celebrity’s Summit was the food, although the available times for it should be improved. Thank God for room service when we wanted food in between serving times. To make matters worse, a complaint tended to fall on deaf ears at the Front Desk. They did have good shows though. We had been thoroughly spoiled by our last cruise, which was on Celebrity’s Summit last year. That one was surely a cut above all others. That doesn’t mean we didn’t enjoy this cruise though. We are now considering what and where our next one will be.

“Our company, PANTERASoft, would like to announce the release of Flash File Recovery 1.2 for Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP. We’d like to offer your members and subscribers a 15% discount off the regular price. (Author’s note: They included a press release, but I didn’t include it. Check their Web site) “Flash Fire Recovery is probably Net’s oldest and most powerful flash recovery software created specially for digital cameras. The program brings back deleted images and salvages pictures from damaged or corrupted digital media, including the camera’s built-in memory. It works with virtually all media types, including SmartMedia, CompactFlash, Memory Stick, MicroDrive, xD Picture Card Flash Card, PC Card, Multimedia Card, and SD Card. While this program does not recover mp3 files, it does recover image files like JPEG, TIFF and such, as well as RAW image files - Canon CRW, Nikon NEF, Kodak DCR, among others. Video files - AVI, MOV, MPG/MPEG are supported as well.

*Reminder

“Flash File Recovery is available at [www.panterasoft.com] for free evaluation. Registering the program is \$49.50 US Dollars per copy. Product Page: [<http://www.panterasoft.com/file-recovery/index.html>]”

Don’t forget about the Alpha 5 ver.6 special offer that is still good this month. The discount is great and you can order at [brett@alphasoft.com]. You get it for just \$179.00 as compared to MSRP \$349.00.

I didn't see any code or downloading process in the announcement for getting the discount so I don't know how that works.

*What Do You Want?

Joe Bendersky of Computer Club of Palm Shores periodically writes a favorite Web site column and this one took my eye. [<http://www.savvysenior.org>] It is said that this site offers everything for seniors including 3000 free goodies.

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 new 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 those one of these days.

Auto makers to create car-to-car

WLAN by 2006

By Tony Smith

([tony.smith at theregister.co.uk](mailto:tony.smith@theregister.co.uk))

Published Tuesday 21st December 2004 13:38 GMT

Car makers BMW, Audi, Daimler Chrysler, Volkswagen, Renault and Fiat have won a German government grant to help develop the basis for a standard method for car-to-car wireless data.

The money will be used by Network on Wheels (NOW), a project run out of the University of Mannheim with the participation of Karlsruhe Technical University. NOW is funded in part by the German 'Ministry for R&D'; the Car2Car Communication Consortium, a non-profit organisation founded by said vehicle manufacturers; Siemens; NEC; and the Fraunhofer Institute, itself better known as the home of the MP3 format.

NOW is focusing on 802.11 technology and IPv6 to develop "inter-vehicle communication based on ad hoc networking principles". Essentially, it's exploring ways that moving vehicles can automatically set up temporary links with other cars, bikes and trucks in the vicinity, and share traffic information.

With routing capabilities, the whole thing could become a huge 'automobile Internet', with vehicles warning each other - and their drivers - about slow-downs, bad weather, accidents and other road problems.

NOW's work will feed into the Consortium's effort to create Continuous Communications Air Interface for Long and Medium

Range (CALM) - this vehicle-to-vehicle network. The Consortium is keen that a standard be defined for CALM-style networks, allowing manufacturers to differentiate without the risk of building (potentially dangerous) incompatibilities into the system. It sees CALM as a kind of automotive answer to the way GSM and GPRS came to be defined as Europe's mobile telephony standards.

It's all very clever, of course, and impressive from a technological standpoint. However, alongside the rewards there's a risk to personal liberties, as the potential is once again opened for government and law-enforcement agencies to track vehicle movement. Something we'll undoubtedly be forced to swallow on the grounds it allegedly makes terrorism less likely. Along with the ID cards, phone taps, satellite tracking, CCTV cameras et al that are supposedly keeping us safe.

CALM also ties into the European Commission's eSafety Programme, itself geared toward a 50 per cent reduction in road fatalities by 2010.

The Consortium plans to build its first prototype by mid-2005, with more advanced prototypes for field trials coming late Q1 2006. The final CALM specification is scheduled to arrive at the end of that year. ®

Remove Password at Startup

Are you annoyed by a 'password' screen that starts up every time you start your computer? Did you know that this password affords you NO extra security what-so-ever?

Well, if you are itching to get rid of it, here's how:

Click on Start —> Find —> Files or Folders

Type: *.pwl in the *named* box

Click in the *Look In* box and choose My Computer

Make sure the *Include subfolders* box is checked and then click on Find Now

Delete any files that are found and close the Find window

Click on Start —> Settings —> Control Panel

Double-click on Network

In the *Primary network logon* box, make sure it says Windows Logon
Click OK and restart your computer

When Windows comes back, you will be presented with the logon screen once again, this time, however, **DO NOT** enter a password...just click OK (some users may get a second screen...just click OK again).

You will never again be bothered by the logon password screen.

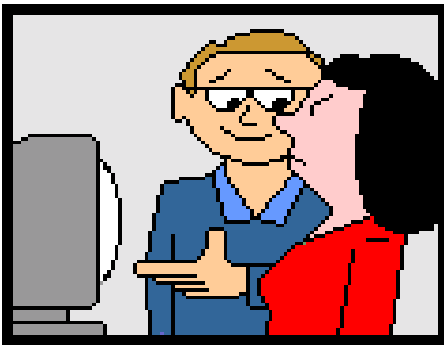
PC Don's First Computer

This information was borrowed from Don Edrington's informative and entertaining website. It is a must for your favorites list! [PC don.com](http://PCdon.com)



It was late in 1977 when I spotted the Radio Shack ad for something new called a “microcomputer” - and it was named the TRS-80 Model I.

I couldn't wait to get to the local store to check out this \$600 wonder. It had a black and white monitor that displayed 16 lines of 64 characters each (with capital letters only). It had 4K of RAM and came with two programs: Craps and Backgammon. There was also a manual which gave instructions for learning to write your own programs in something called BASIC. There was no disk drive of any kind — an audio tape recorder was used for loading and saving software. My wife couldn't believe I actually wanted to buy one of these crazy things. Here's a little poem that tells the story...



I can't believe it's been this long
since I first saw that ad.
“Six hundred dollars for a *what?*”
My wife said I'd gone mad.

“Computer thing? What does it do?
This surely is a joke.
You type in stuff - it's on a screen.
For this we should go broke?”
Our TV set was getting old.
How could I be so dense?
A bigger screen, a stereo...
now these would make some sense.

Of course I said, “You're right, my dear...
you always know what's best.”
Then headed downtown to the Shack
to give it just a test.

My eyes lit up to see the things
that this device could do.
I simply couldn't turn it down -
could not resist - could you?

I took it home and set it up...
I knew just what to say.
We'll use it in our business -
it soon will pay its way.

“Yeah, right!” was all my wife could say...
I'd have to show her proof
that this new toy could do some work...
or she'd go through the roof.

Well, that was not so easy then...
of printers there were none.
You'd have to write the screen results
to use what you had done.

There were no disks! A tape machine
was what you had to use
to save your files and, frequently,
the tape would just refuse.

But this is where it all began...
this crazy new device...
This toy which nearly wrecked my home,
was somehow worth the price.

Microsoft Buys Anti-Spyware Company

Could spyware be on the decline in 2005? We can only hope; a very big player has now entered the market. On December 16, Microsoft announced that they had purchased GIANT Company, maker of anti- spyware products. Although Microsoft's future plans for fighting spyware using GIANT's technology are still hazy, the company said it will release a beta product in early 2005. The beta, compatible with Windows 2000 and XP, will detect and block spyware. Details of the final product and pricing were not disclosed. * Spammers Hit with \$1 Billion Judgement Three cheers for Judge Charles Wolle, US District Court of Iowa! This month, Judge Wolle awarded a \$1.08 billion (yep, with a “b”) judgement to an ISP that had sued several chronic spammers. An Iowa spam law allows \$10 plus damages for each spam sent, so you can imagine how fast those spams add up to a cool billion dollars. The odds are that the ISP, CIS Internet Services, won't be able to collect all that money. They may, however, be able to sieze all the computer equipment used for spamming. At least it's a start.

Microsoft Windows AntiSpyware (Beta): Overview

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/about.msp>

Cyber Nightmare

By
Sandy Berger

A cyber citizen's worse nightmare has come true. A deceitful marketer has been deviously downloading spyware to computers, then selling software to the computer owners to remove the spyware he implanted. The Federal Trade Commission has filed a lawsuit to stop the alleged illegal activities of Sanford Wallace, a New Hampshire man, who is accused of this corrupt activity.

It has crossed everyone's mind at one time or another. Could companies that manufacture anti-virus, spyware removal, and firewall software be creating and releasing viruses and spyware just to generate a need for their software? Unfortunately, this type of behavior is a distinct possibility as shown by the filing of this lawsuit.

Web surfers unsuspectingly download the spyware when they visit Web sites that contain certain banner ads. The spyware is able to enter the computer through a hole in Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser. It redirects Web browsers, causes CD trays to mysteriously open, and generally slows down the infected computer. It also starts a series of aggravating pop-ups that advise the computer user to purchase one of two programs, Spy Wiper and Spy Deleter. The pop-ups promise that these programs will rectify the problems with your computer. Sanford's two companies, Seismic Entertainment Productions Inc. and SmartBot.Net Inc. have been named in the lawsuit.

This is the first time that the FTC has taken action against a company for secretly installing software. While several states have already enacted laws against spyware, currently there are no national "spyware" laws. The FTC will prosecute this case based on laws against deceptive business actions. The Legislature currently has several anti-spyware laws under consideration.

This is scary stuff, folks. Thank goodness the FTC has taken some action. Let's hope that if the legislature comes up with some spyware laws they will be more effective than the recently enacted anti-spam legislation. I am now receiving more spam than I was before the spam law went into effect. While spam is aggravating and costly, it is not as devastating as the deceptive practices allegedly used by Mr. Wallace.

We must stop this type of behavior before it becomes more widespread. If you want to see what can happen when unscrupulous companies take control, rent the Sandra Bullock movie "The Net" where the main character has her identity stolen. Another movie called "AntiTrust" shows what can happen when a large computer manufacturer goes awry. Let's hope our law-makers recognize the importance of the legislation they are now considering.

Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself and your computer.

1. Make sure that you use the Windows update feature to keep your software up-to-date.
2. Use a different Web browser. Because Internet Explorer is the most widely used Web browser, it is usually the one used by conmen and deceitful marketers. So consider using an alternative Web browser like Opera, which can be found at www.opera.com or Firefox, which can be downloaded at www.getfirefox.com. Mr. Wallace's banner ads will not download his devious software to your computer if you are using Opera, Firefox, Netscape or any browser other than Internet Explorer.
3. Don't purchase Spy Wiper or Spy Deleter.

In fact, when you purchase anything from spam or from a pop-up ad, you feed the spam and pop-up frenzy. Do not buy anything from an unsolicited e-mail or pop-up ad.

Free Newsletter <http://www.comp-u-kiss.com>

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GOOGLE NEWS: GOOGLE RATES TOP 10 MOST SEARCHED IN VARIETY OF AREAS Zeitgeist is a service used by Google to track the most popular searches in given categories. The top 10 searches for all categories for 2004 are currently posted at:

<http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html>

While you are there, check out the interactive Zeitgeist. It is one of the coolest useless trivia devices ever devised.

Seniors Zooming into Technology

by Sandy Berger

The lights of Las Vegas, the camaraderie of AARP members, and the thrill of a large convention... I got to experience it all at this year's AARP Convention. The best experience, however, was seeing the progress that has been made by the "silver-haired crowd" regarding computers and technology. It was amazing...no, mind-blowing.

At my first AARP convention, six years ago, I found members who were struggling to get their feet wet in the computer world. They asked basic questions about how to get on the Internet and how to work with their computers. This year, conventioners were much, much more technologically sophisticated. Many were using the computers in the tech café to view e-mail, print airline tickets, and check the status of their bids on e-bay. My talks were given to standing room only crowds. Although some were still making basic inquiries, many questions were quite sophisticated.

I would like to thank all those who stood through my hour-long presentations as well as those who shared their high tech stories with us in the Viva Computers AARP University session. The stories showed just how, and how much, members are using their computers. They were truly a tribute to all our wired members. Also thanks to those of you who brought "an apple for the teacher". I enjoyed every bite.

Is It Time to Abandon Microsoft?



By Don Edrington
LovinLife.com
Feature Columnist

The questions I'm hearing most often lately pertain to the installation of Microsoft's Service Pack 2 for Windows XP, along with many expressing fear about buying Windows-based computers altogether, citing the fact that Macintoshes don't seem to have the security problems plaguing PCs.

Others have asked if they should switch to a non-Microsoft browser, such as Netscape or FireFox, as well as to a different operating system, such as Linux.

Well, if it's of any comfort, I practically live on the Internet using Microsoft products, and am not plagued with viruses or other malware. Furthermore, I have not installed SP2.

However, this does NOT mean I'd advise others to avoid installing SP2. I'm holding off until SP2's conflict with a certain program I use has been resolved. For most XP users, however, it appears that SP2 is a valuable tool that plugs many of the security leaks in Internet Explorer and other Windows products. If you have questions, Microsoft's toll-free number is 866-727-2338.

So how do I deflect all the malware that's aimed at me?

- (1) I have Norton Anti-Virus running all the time.
- (2) I have the ZoneAlarm Firewall running all the time.
- (3) I delete all "cookies" daily.
- (4) I use Ad-Aware and Spybot daily to eliminate spy-ware I occasionally get stuck with while surfing the Web.
- (5) I never open any suspicious email.
- (6) I change my email address periodically to avoid spam.
- (7) Although I have Norton AV, I use the free virus scan and removal service of TrendMicro HouseCall periodically.

So wouldn't I be better off with a Macintosh and not have to take all the above precautions?

Well, I was an instructor in a Macintosh Desktop Publishing Lab at Fallbrook High for three years, and used Macs at Fallbrook's local newspaper when my column began over ten years ago. I love Macs, but no longer use one. Why? Well, there is only so much space available for this column, so it needs to be written about the machine owned by most computer users — and PC owners outnumber Mac owners by about 10 to 1.

But what if all the fed-up PC users were to suddenly switch to the Mac and to non-Microsoft software?

Well, let's think about this — if you were a virus or spy-ware author, wouldn't you aim your guns at the largest group of potential victims? And if the majority of computerists were suddenly using Macs, who would become the target of your malicious efforts?

Alternatively, what if PC users just dumped Windows and switched to Linux (the free or very low cost alternative to Windows)? What an exhilarating idea! And why haven't I done it (yet)?

Well, Linux is great for highly skilled PC users and hobbyists — but for the average user, the learning curve would probably be unacceptably long, in addition to discovering that some of their favorite programs might not be compatible with the OS.

In summary, Windows and other Microsoft programs work great for me, and I see no reason to abandon them at this point.

(Editor's note: Don Edrington lives in Southern California, where he writes a bi-weekly newspaper column called PC Chat. He also teaches computer applications part-time at local schools and does freelance tutoring. PCdon.com)

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What's a Blog Anyway?



By Susan Dunn
LovinLife.com
Guest Columnist

In case you don't know what a blog is, it's a shortened form of "weblog." It's like a personal journal, offering musings or information, but available to the public on a website. Blogs are informal, and often provide new entries every day, or quite frequently. There's nothing static about a blog.

Blogs are intriguing because they give you an insight into the person writing them, and because you know there will be new stuff daily. Many give you the opportunity to make entries or comments yourself and become sort of dialogues or collaborations between the writer, you, and others who contribute.

Blogs sometimes have a theme (I have one with information on emotional intelligence, for instance), but in some, the theme is simply the person writing them — a sort of stream-of-consciousness about what they're thinking which includes what they're worried about, mad about, concerned about, interested in, and so forth.

Like everything else on the Internet, it's evolving and moving fast, so who knows what a blog might be tomorrow.

Are they popular? The blogger of Cooking for Engineers, <http://www.cookingforengineers.com> said he had to change his server because he was getting 12,000 hits an hour.

Here are some uses for blogs:

1. Journal. As we all know, there's something about writing things out that aids our well-being.
2. Connect. While you're journaling for your own benefit, others benefit as well. If you allow comments, you'll meet all sorts of people.
3. To impart information on a particular subject or range of subjects. For instance I have one on emotional intelligence — <http://www.eqcoach.net/blogger.html>.
4. Update on illness or hospitalization. Set up a blog to keep everyone informed on your progress. Concerned others can check daily.
5. Coordinating an event. Lets say you're planning a huge family reunion and know it's going to take weeks-to-moths to get it all together. Others can check daily and add their "yes" or "no" to the plans, give suggestions, etc.
6. Work project. Same as above.
7. Collegiality. Get a group of like-minded people together, such as coaches who coach in the same field. Ideas can be shared.
8. Learn about the Internet (children, teens, beginners). It's a website, but a simple formula, and cost-free.
9. Rant and rave.
10. Have fun and learn how to write. The way to learn how to write (once you know you're A-B-Cs) is to write, and here's the opportunity. And you get to write about your favorite subject — you! (Or in some cases, your favorite topic.)

You can set up a blog free at <http://www.blogger.com>.

Examples:

Supposedly slashdot.org (<http://www.slashdot.org>) is the most popular blog on the Internet. Its tagline is "News for nerds. Stuff that matters."

Nancy Fenn, the IntrovertzCoach has a blog called "Introverted and Intuitive (INFP),"

<http://www.theintrovertzcoach.com/blogger.html>. Her tagline is: "Nancy R. Fenn describes what it's like to be intuitive and introverted every day!"

Here's a blog leading with "I am here I am whoever whenever wherever whichever you say I am. your choice: <http://darklaquer.blogspot.com/2004/09/i-am.html>.

As noted above (cooking for engineers), a blog can be very

popular. If you want to increase the popularity of yours, here's an article with tips on how to do that: <http://www.blogger.com/knowledge/2004/09/promoting-your-blog.pyra>. It contains such advice as to write well if you really want to attract traffic, post a lot, keep the posts short and sweet (say, less than 1,000 words per entry), and submit the blog site to search engines. So jump right in and get your blog going. You'll enjoy it, and so may a lot of other bloggers.

We want to know what you think about Susan's article. Voice your opinion, add your thoughts, rant, rave, or be tickled pink. [CLICK HERE](#) and send us your comments. **(Be sure to mention the title of the article you're writing about!)** Or you may write to the author directly at the e-mail address below.

(About the author: Susan Dunn, MA Clinical Psychology, The EQ Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc>. Emotional intelligence coaching to enhance all areas of your life - career, relationships, resilience, parenting, intuition, focus. EQ coach training, <http://www.eqcoach.net>. For more than "how to" coaching, call 210-496-0678, or write sdunn@susandunn.cc.)

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TECHNOLOGY STATISTIC!!!

According to Nielsen NetRatings (www.nielsen-netratings.com)
**ONLINE CONSUMERS SPENT
 \$16.7 BILLION DURING
 FIRST SIX WEEKS
 OF THE 2004 HOLIDAY SEASON,
 RISING 28 PERCENT FROM 2003:**

Music, Video/DVD and Jewelry Represent the Fastest Growing Online Shopping Categories Year-over-Year ROCHESTER, N. Y. and NEW YORK—December 20, 2004—Goldman, Sachs & Co., Harris Interactive®, and Nielsen//NetRatings' Holiday eSpending Report revealed today that online shoppers in the U.S. spent \$16.7 billion during the first six weeks of the 2004 holiday season excluding travel, rising 28 percent from the \$13 billion spent online during the same timeframe in 2003. The year-over-year increase underscores the increasing comfort that people have in purchasing gift items online. According to the 2004 eSpending report, based on weekly surveys of more than 1,000 respondents, music was the fastest growing category year-over-year in revenue during the first six weeks of the 2004 holiday season, jumping 33 percent (see Table 1). The video/DVD and jewelry categories tied for second place, surging 32 percent each. Rounding out the top five fastest growing categories, the books category increased 27 percent, while the toys/video games category grew 22 percent.

Make New Year's resolutions to ensure Good Boot

(12/27/04)

By
Al Winchell

I resolve to

- ◆ Install anti-virus and ensure it's automatically updated.
- ◆ Ensure my firewall is set.
- ◆ Ensure I've installed all Windows Critical Updates.
- ◆ Always obey Keller's (Compu-Doctor) 1st Law of Windows and never delete, rename or move any file I didn't put on my system myself with a program's 'Save' or 'Save As' command or receive as e-mail.
- ◆ Always keep in mind Microsoft will not e-mail me recommending an update or fix or a Web site to go to for an update or fix.
- ◆ Always read disclaimers before I download a program — particularly a free program.
- ◆ Always create a Systems Restore Point before installing a new program or making a significant change to my Windows system.
- ◆ Always use a qualified technician to set up or repair my computer.

I resolve not to:

- ◆ Go to a Web site recommended in an e-mail from my bank, ISP or any other organization suggesting I'll discover important information without first checking the authenticity of the e-mail.
- ◆ Open an e-mail attachment or, if I'm an AOL or CompuServe user, ever download an e-mail attachment unless I can answer 'yes' to all of the following four questions

1. Do I know who the attachment is from?
2. Do I know what the attachment is?
3. Do I know what the attachment does?
4. Did the sender create the attachment? If an attachment is part of a forwarded e-mail, the answer to this question is 'no!'

- ◆ Delete my Cookies or Temporary Internet Files
- ◆ Purchase a computer that doesn't include a Windows installation CD.

◆ Allow a technician to install Windows on my computer without providing me with the original installation CD and registration number.

◆ Invite a computer technician into my home if they don't have a local business license, business insurance and the confidence and trust of the Better Business Bureau.

And finally because by adhering to all my New Years Resolutions I'll be reasonably assured my 2005 computing adventure will be as safe as it can possible be, I'll do my best to set aside my preoccupation with viruses, spam, spyware and Internet bad guys and paranoia over making a possible computing transgression.

Instead, each day I'll enthusiastically fire up the Beast that sits on my desktop and enjoy the opportunity I have to communicate with friends and relatives, or, perhaps, indulge myself in an Internet adventure or a session editing a photo or two. All those things I hoped I'd be able to do when I purchased my computer and became a Good Booter.

Here's wishing you a Good Boot.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in ontext 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.

Radiant Frame

by Sandy Berger

As an amateur photographer with three children, two grandchildren, and an entourage of dogs and cats in the family, I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to display my digital photos. Digital picture frames have always intrigued me, yet the frames that I've looked at like Ceiva and MemoryFrame are still fairly expensive. Radiant Frames has come up with a relatively low tech way to display those precious photos that is both unique and inexpensive.

The Radiant Frame comes in three different styles, a wood frame with natural oak finish, a wood frame in matte black finish, and a glass frame in a somewhat contempoxtrary design. The frames are approximately 8" x 10". They come with matting that accommodates a 4" x 6" picture. The frame itself is backlit, powered by either the included AC power adapter or a set of 4 AA batteries.

The Radiant Frame comes with several sheets of special ink jet printer paper, which looks and feels like a translucent parchment-type paper. You print your photo on the special paper. Then you remove the back of the frame, which comes apart just like most ordinary picture frames. Insert your photo into the frame, reattach the back of the frame, and turn it on. The combination of the

special paper and the back light really make the picture pop. While garden and landscapes looked very good, I found the frame really brought out the best in pictures featuring people. It made them look much more lifelike.

The paper was easy to print on. I tried it out on both a Canon and a Lexmark printer with excellent results. The included instruction sheet walks you through the proper printer settings. For an even more customized look you can create you own personalized matting. Several matting ideas are presented on the Radiant Frames Web site. I would love it if they would include a template to you could create these custom mats more easily. Radiant Frames also offers an image processing service which you can use to send them an old or new photo or digital image and have them print it on the Radiant paper.

What's not to like? The frame was well-constructed and sturdy, but the arm that the frame rests on was a little skimpy. While this did not cause any problems in my testing, I would like to see a thicker arm with a little more substance to it. Also, the frame comes with only three sheets of paper. Unless you are giving it as a present with one of your pictures in it, you will definitely need more paper. While you can order additional paper from the Radiant Frames Web site (ten sheets for \$9.99), I would like to see more paper included with the frame itself. According to the manufacturer's information, my other wish, for frames in larger sizes, will come true later this year.

The lighted frame has a nice glowing quality so it can also be easily used as a nightlight. It is a distinctive way to show off your digital photos with a special brilliance. The RadiantFrame makes a unique present, as well.

Free Newsletter <http://www.comp-u-kiss.com>

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Spam is Spreading by Sandy Berger



Aggravated by spam? How about spit and spim? These are two new forms of spam that are in position to become tomorrow's high tech annoyances.

Spit is spam received through Internet telephony. As more people gravitate to making cheaper phone calls over the net, spit is poised to become a problem as big as spam. It will be easy for marketers to program their computer to send out spit in mass quantities, just as they now send out spam. Just as the National Do Not Call list is placing unwanted telephone messages under control, spit will soon infiltrate Internet telephony with a deluge of unsolicited and unwanted voicemail.

Spim is spam received through Instant Messaging. It has already become a problem. Researchers expect that approximately four billion messages will be sent to instant message users in 2005. Although they have not created a name for this annoyance yet, cell phone users are receiving text messages, in alarming numbers, promoting viagra, get-rich schemes, and mortgage offers.

Spam, spit, spim... Whatever name it goes by, is clogging Internet servers, consuming the precious time of computer users, costing businesses millions of dollars, and aggravating everyone. As of now, no end seems to be in sight. Devious marketers continue their exacerbating mass of messages. It looks like SPAM and all its spin-offs will continue to be a thorn in the side of all those who use computers, cell phones, and other new technologies for some time to come.

Free Newsletter <http://www.comp-u-kiss.com>

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Leo Laporte's 2005 Gadget Guide by Sandy Berger



Leo Laporte is well-known as a host on the now deceased TechTV cable television channel. In this book Leo shows off his knowledge of the latest and greatest in technology. He has gathered the newest and best high-tech gadgets and presents his choices in a wonderful book.

Each of his gadget choices are shown in full color. The book is divided in eight sections: Computer Gadgets, Portable Gadgets, Digital Photography Gadgets, Home Movie Gadgets, Home Audio/Video Gadgets, Telephone Gadgets, Game Gadgets, and Automotive Gadgets. Each chapter is color coded giving the book great visual appeal. In fact, the layout of this book is excellent. It is a pleasure to thumb through just to look at the pictures. Yet, Leo also includes useful information with his description of each product, pricing, and manufacturer. In each category, he denotes the one product he found to be most useful and the best value as "Leo's Pick".

I found that many of Leo's gadget choices to be my high-tech choices as well. I have reviewed many of the products that are represented in this book. The choices are excellent because they are on the cutting edge of technology, but not on the bleeding edge.

The book is like a colorful catalog that will appeal to the geek in everyone. Who doesn't want to know about the latest and greatest that technology has to offer? This is a perfect holiday gift for anyone interested in technology. It is also the perfect gift guide for anyone who wants to purchase great gadgets for family and friends this holiday season.

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Gmail

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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.

Google has never issued any statements about its relationships with other countries, and this should give you cause for concern. Check out the language in the agreement you have to

make with Google when you sign up for Gmail. You are giving permission for Google to release your Gmail records to any official from any government, U.S. or otherwise, who requests it for any reason. Would you even want to send an email to someone who has a Gmail account, knowing that your email may be examined by a foreign government?

Google has also stated that your email will be scanned so that you can receive advertising and links to relevant web sites. This applies to both incoming and outgoing email. Nothing in any of Google's policies or public statements applies to those of us who don't have Gmail accounts. There is nothing in Google's privacy policy that would prevent them from storing a list of keywords scanned from incoming email, and associating these keywords with the incoming email address in their database. Google has promised their advertisers won't receive any information that would allow personal identification, but what's to stop Google from keeping this information for some other future use? No one except Google knows if the company has deleted any of the data they've collected since going online. The cookie they dropped on your hard drive doesn't expire until 2038, and it's kept track of every search term you've ever used. How's that for scary?

We don't know for certain if Google will build a colossal database derived from keywords associated with email addresses. If that does turn out to be the case however, there is incredible potential for abuse. The RIAA has sent out thousands of "John Doe" and "Jane Doe" subpoenas to Universities and Internet Service Providers to identify people who download MP3 files illegally. If the RIAA can force AOL to comply, they can do it with Google.

Would an intelligence agency make anything sinister of keywords like "Send us the secret Martha, it's only a recipe, not a nuclear launch code"? Much more ominous would be combinations like jihad coupled with assassination. All kinds of patterns can be generated from keyword combinations. We're beginning to sound like paranoid conspiracy theorists, but the potential for abuse is real and should not be ignored. What makes Gmail appear so suspicious, sinister, and frightening is the enormous storage capacity that Google offers, combined with its super efficient search engine.

There is also the problem of inappropriate ad matching. Stories abound about online merchants who send themselves email for testing, and discover that something in their emails generates ads for their competitors. The "Backspace" section of the October 5, 2004 issue of PC Magazine shows a juxtaposition of an advertisement for an all-inclusive vacation in the Caribbean along with an ad that says "Just say no to all-inclusive".

Gmail was launched presumably as a response from Google users complaining about the poor quality of their current email services. Be careful what you wish for.

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2. Mail a 3.5" disk so as to be received by the deadline by the Newsletter Coordinator at the OCIPUG mailing address above.
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