

Orange Coast IBM PC User Group

README.DOC

Volume 22.03

Newsletter

MARCH 2006

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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OCIPUG

Needs a person to record during the General Meeting

A Special Thanks To:

- Judy Taylour
- Vinny La Bash
- Dick Maybach
- Bob Hewitt
- Lee Alexander
- Gabriel Goldberg

for their contribution to this Newsletter



PROGRAM BY



SCHEDULES of MEETINGS

General Meetings are held from 8:30am till Noon on:

- Mar 25 '06**
- Apr 22 '06**
- May 27 '06**
- Jun 24 '06**
- Jul 22 '06**
- Aug 26, '06**
- Sep 23, '06**

For details see pages inside this issue also check the Web Site @ www.ocipug.org

The Executive Board meets at Noon on:

- Mar 25 '06**
- Apr 22 '06**
- May 27 '06**
- Jun 24 '06**
- Jul 22 '06**
- Aug 26, '06**
- Sep 23, '06**

All current OCIPUG members in good standing are welcome

Special Interest Group (S.I.G.) meetings are held monthly as follows:

- 1st Tuesday **Mar 07, '06** Internet
- 2nd Tuesday **Mar 14, '06** Hardware
- 3rd Tuesday **Mar 21, '06** Windows
- 4th Tuesday **Mar 28, '06** Digital

All S.I.G.'s start at 7:00 pm

S. I. G. MEETINGS

March 7, 2006
Internet - 1st Tuesday 7:00 pm
Steve Shiffman

March 14, 2006
Hardware - 2nd Tuesday 7:00 pm
Ed Leckliter - eleckliter@adelphia.net

March 21, 2006
Windows 3rd Tuesday 7:00 PM
Robert Strader - robert.strader@comcast.net

March 28, 2006
Digital Photo - 4th Tuesday 7:00 pm
David Wintle - allart@pacbell.net



March 25, 2006
TBA

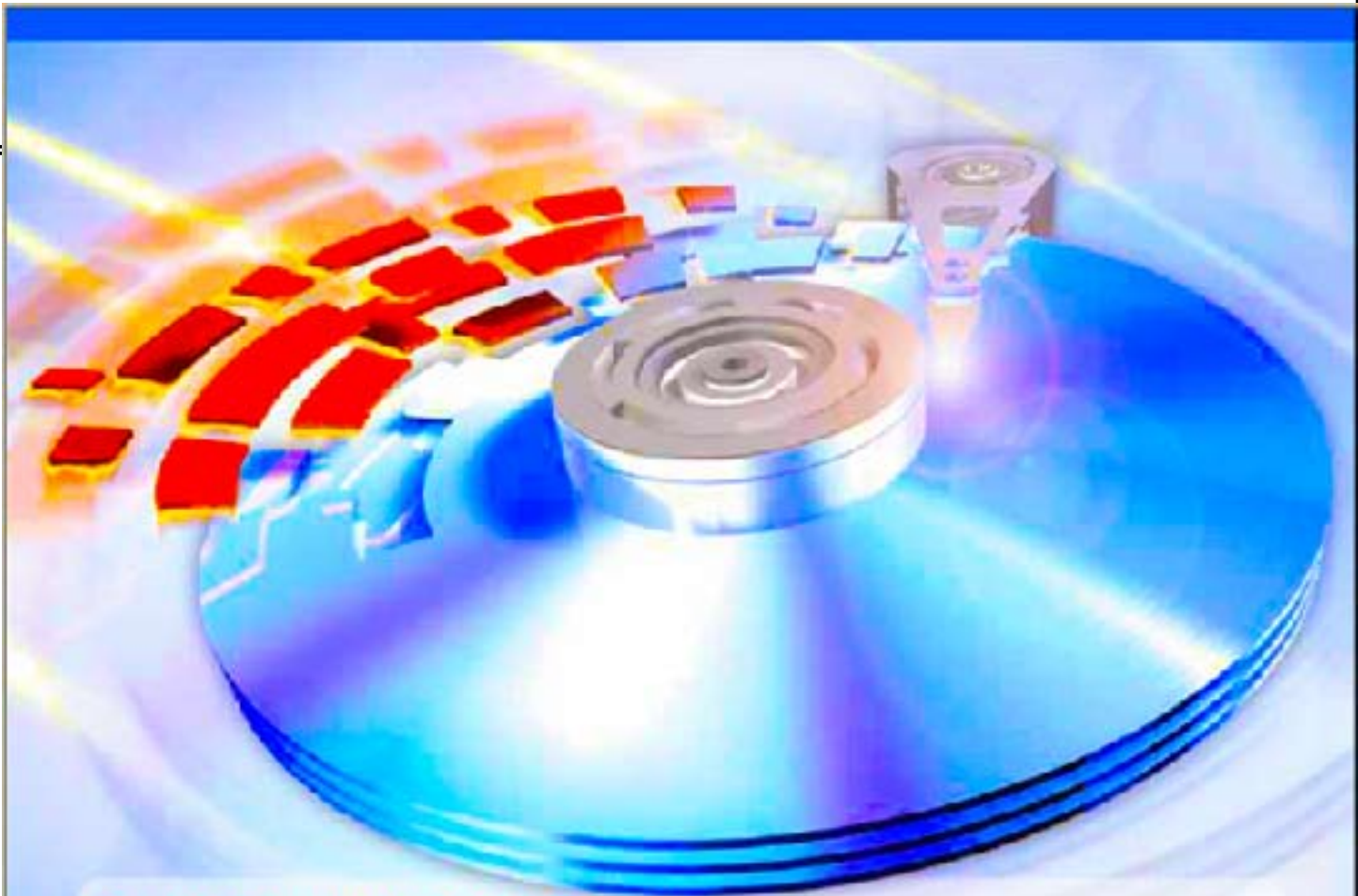
April 22, 2006
TBA

May 27, 2006
TBA

June 24, 2006
TBA

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It's a known fact fragmentation cuts directly across the integrity of your systems causing crashes, slowdowns, freeze-ups and even total system failures.

NEW Diskeeper 10 provides new adaptive technology designed to bring every last drop of performance out of every computer on your network.

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Diskeeper 10 "Set It and Forget It" Features

- **NEW!** I-FAST™ (Intelligent File Access Acceleration Sequencing Technology), breakthrough disk performance calibration technology that boosts access speeds for the most commonly accessed files.
- **NEW!** Terabyte Volume Engine™ defrags large volumes, SANs, RAID's and NAS, quickly and thoroughly.
- **NEW!** Core enhancements provide faster, more thorough defragmentation.
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*"Instead of waiting for problems to be reported and then fixing them when they arise, daily defragmentation of all server, workstation and laptop drives site wide eliminates issues and reduces help desk calls significantly. ***"*

– Gene LoProto, Allstate Insurance, Company's IT Manager for Agency Infrastructure

REPORTS of MEETINGS

Presidents Message

Welcome to the month of the Green and Orange. Why Orange you say, there are Orangemen in Ireland as well as those that wear the Green. I will not get into the whys and wherefore of the distinction between them. I only wish in these days of political correctness to try and not offend either.

Speaking of the Irish they are known for a few things other than the green of their country. They have these so called little people running around. Now I don't know if they in fact are true or just that you may see them after a few drinks of Irish whisky. I do know it is said, that if you catch one of them they have to give you their pot of gold. Now we in OCIPUG may not have a pot of gold, but we try to provide you as members with information that if used correctly may allow you to make a pot of gold. The size of the pot depends on you and how you use the information.

You do not have to catch these little people to get your pot of gold. You only need to attend the General Meetings and the SIG's. There is information presented at these meetings that you may not realize is possible. There may be ways that can save you time and frustrations with programs that you are using. You may acquire information on a piece of hardware that could improve what you do with your computer, laptop, palm pilot, etc. Those that are attending the hardware SIG may not build their next computer, but they will have a better knowledge of what to look for when they decide to buy a newer computer.

The February meeting by Jim Kelton of Altius Information Technologies may not have given you anything that would allow you to make a pot of gold. However it could keep you from needing to spend a pot of gold to re-install all of your programs on your computer because of a virus or hacker finding its way into your computer.

There is also another way to gain a greater understanding of your computer programs. OCIPUG provides computer instruction to the Senior members of the Costa Mesa Senior Center. By instructing and coaching these seniors you gain a better understanding of the programs we use to instruct the seniors. You also achieve the enjoyment of receiving the thanks from these seniors as they can now better communicate with their children and grand children. They now feel they are not left out of this new world of computers.

Remember you learn by doing as well as attending. You learn by reading about things as well as asking. With OCIPUG you can do both.

See you on Saturday the 25th.

David Wintle
President
Readme.Doc Editor
Program Committee
Digital Photo SIG Leader

INTERNET S.I.G.

Steve Schiffman Internet SIG Leader

Internet SIG Mini Report for March 2006

The theme for the March Internet SIG was interesting web sites that SIG attendees visit. The urls for the websites will be published next month after they can be gotten out of our notetakers PocketPC.

The April meeting topic will move back to a more technical topic yet to be determined. The May meeting will address web applications.

I did receive a report that assistance provided to one of our regular attendees on network printing from a laptop to a desktop connected printer was successful.

If anyone wants to learn more about the Internet and networking, come visit the Internet SIG on the 1st Tuesday of the month. See you all at our next meeting on April 5th.

Steve Schiffman
OCIPUG Internet SIG Leader



HARDWARE S.I.G.

Ed Leckliter Hardware SIG Leader

All:

OCIPUG Hardware SIG - Meeting Recap

Meeting Date: March 14, 2006

There were only 9 attendees (including SIG Leader, Ed Leckliter).

Featured Topic(s): Your New System (2006 Update) - Setting Up/Installing Your Motherboard, CPU, and System RAM

Hardware Submissions:

Leonard Stein brought in a system he had put together using a Fry's Special "barebones" (chassis, power supply, and motherboard), boxed processor (AMD Athlon 64), and RAM which he recently purchased. Nothing was happening when he pressed the power switch.

Ed checked the unit out and found that the power switch cable was misconnected at the motherboard and that the speaker (in the chassis) had one wire disconnected (needed to be resoldered). Once the power switch cable was correctly connected and the power button pushed, the system would appear to be starting up and the CPU fan would continue to run. But nothing was on the screen. The fan continuing to spin indicated to Ed that the installation of the motherboard into the chassis was OK (at least no shorting).

Ed swapped the RAM that was in Len's system for one of the RAM modules he used during the assembly demo just completed (part of the "Featured Topic" section of the night's presentation). No help.

Ed tried a second AGP video card that Len had with him but still no luck.

Without "beep(s)" to help identify the problem, Ed stopped working on the system. He asked Len to repair the speaker wire connection and then listen for the "beep code" sequence (if any) when he tries to boot the system. [The presentation materials (now posted on the Hardware SIG' website) includes a list of beep codes - part of the night's presentation materials.] If it still does not work, Ed suggested that Len setup the motherboard, CPU, RAM, video card, and power supply outside the chassis and see if that setup works - no drives, modem, or chassis to interfere with the testing.

Random Access: None recorded or recalled.

Next Meeting: April 11, 2006

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Next Meeting Featured Topic(s): Your New System (2006 Update) - Installing the Balance of Your Components (alias, Assembly - Part 2)

Following Meeting: May 9, 2006

Following Meeting Featured Topic(s): Your New System (2006 Update) - Installing Your OS and Device Drivers; Functional Testing

Powerpoint File(s):

Presentation slides in Microsoft PowerPoint format (.ppt).

NOTE: PowerPoint presentations are also posted on the OCIPUG Hardware SIG web site (http://www.edscustomcomputers.com/welcome_to_the_ocipug_hardware_sl.htm)

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



WINDOWS S.I.G.

Robert G. Strader Windows SIG Leader

Having trouble with your OS (operating system)? Do you want to know more about what you can do with your OS? Do you have any questions about your computer =? Write your questions down when you have them. Include any error messages that you may receive. Email your questions to me, at robert.strader@comcast.net and bring a copy to the SIG.

The next SIG will be Mar 21, 2006



DIGITAL PHOTO S.I.G.

David Wintle Digital Photo SIG Leader

Are you taking pictures? Do you want to sent your pictures to friends and family? Are your pictures in digital format? Do you know how to get your non-digital pictures on your computer? Do you know how to get the pictures from your digital camera to your computer? These and other questions you may have can be ask and answered at the digital SIG. Learn how to scan items to your computer. Learn how to set your printer to print your pictures. Thes and other mysterys can be solved at this SIG. The next SIG is Mar 28, 2006



PHOTO CONTEST SWUG CONFERENCE

**Artistry through Technology
Digital Photo Contest**

ELIGIBILITY

- A user group must have at least one member in attendance at SW in order for the group to participate in this contest.
- Does your user group conduct a Digital Photo contest? User groups attending the conference are encouraged to enter their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners.
- Individual user group members attending the conference are also eligible to enter.

CATEGORIES

- People
- Nature (including animals)
- Other (abstract, still life, cityscape, objects)

PHOTO FORMAT

- Entries must be taken with a digital camera

- Printed size may be 4x6 to 8-1/2 x 11, maximum
- Color or black and white
- Do not add borders or frames to the photograph.

CONTEST RULES

- The photo may only be entered in one category.
- The photographer's name, user group and category must be noted on the back of the photo.
- Four copies of the entered photo must be received at the below address by July 7:

*Judy Taylour
18727 Nadal Street
Canyon Country CA 91351*

CONTEST RULES (cont'd)

- A JPEG of each photo submitted for the contest should be sent to swugconf@usa.net (by July 7) to be displayed on the conference Web Site – post-conference.

JUDGING

Photos will be judged on the following criteria by the 'official' judges and conference attendees:

- Composition (5 points)
- Technical Skill (5 points)
- Visual Impact (10 points)

AWARDS

- People's Choice will be awarded to the photograph that receives the most 1st place votes from the attendees
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will be awarded in each category after combining the judge and attendee votes



**ATTEND
A SIG**

CLEAR READING WITH CLEARTYPE

by Vinny La Bash, vlabash(at)home.com

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

www.spcug.org

My students know why LCD displays are superior to CRT monitors. When one of them complained to me that he found text difficult to read on his new 21 inch LCD Monitor, I told him it was probably because the screen resolution made the text too small to read easily. He didn't think so because his teen age granddaughter also thought the text wasn't clear. His comment made me think.

Flat panel LCD Monitors are designed to display information at a specific resolution known as the "native resolution". Manufacturers refer to them as "fixed-pixel displays" because they are limited to displaying only one resolution. If they receive an image signal that is either higher or lower than the native resolution, they convert or scale the image automatically to fit the native resolution.

If the incoming source has more pixels than the display's native resolution, you will lose some visible detail and sharpness. Very often you will need to carefully compare the images side by side to see any difference. Only the most exacting applications will suffer from this small constraint.

If the incoming source has fewer pixels than the native resolution, there is no benefit from the higher resolution. Extra pixels will not improve the appearance of a lower-resolution source.

Converting images from either a higher or lower resolution to the LCD's native resolution hardly affects the quality of graphic or video images, but it can make text appear blurry. Early LCD displays had no ready solution for this problem. All one could do was experiment with various font styles and sizes until an acceptable compromise was reached.

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Microsoft didn't want to keep its customers waiting while it found an answer so it licensed TrueType fonts from Apple. The advantage of TrueType fonts was that text could be made larger or smaller with little distortion. Text became easier to read, and Microsoft made some improvements to the technology, but TrueType proved to be an interim response.

While Microsoft was working on Windows XP, it was also developing a new software technology designed to enhance text readability on flat panel LCD monitors, laptops, PDAs, Pocket PCs, indeed any device that used an LCD screen, no matter how big or small.

Microsoft claims that its development people spent two years studying typography and the psychology of reading to create ClearType. Instead of affecting individual pixels which are either treated as "on" or "off", ClearType works with a different type of pixel that is constructed of three individual pieces tinted with red, blue, and green stripes. The technology varies the brightness of the sub-pixels, making the screen characters appear smooth, clean, and sharp around the edges.

Now that you know what it is, how can you use it? You have three ways to turn on or "enable" ClearType for your LCD display. Let's start with the easiest way.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/Step1.aspx>

Follow the online directions to enable ClearType on your system.

Another way is to download the PowerToy version of the online tuner. This lets you do the same thing that the above procedure does, but you do it by accessing the Control Panel and activating the ClearType settings from there.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/ClearTypePowerToy.msp>

Follow the online directions to download, install, and use. It's easy.

Finally, for the propeller heads and bit twiddlers in the audience, you can access the Registry. To en-

able ClearType for all users of your system:

From the Start button, select Run and type Regedit in the Text box. (As if you didn't know).

(OCIPUG Editors Note: Make a backup copy of your registry prior to making changes in your registry. *)*

Navigate to HKEY_USERS/.DEFAULT/Control Panel/Desktop.

Create or Modify the Data Type and Value Name as detailed below.

Data Type: String Value

Value Name: FontSmoothing

Setting for Value Data: [Set Value to 2]

Data Type: Dword

Value Name: FontSmoothingType

Setting for Value Data: [Change Value to 2]

Exit Registry and Reboot

Enabling ClearType only for the current user instead of all users is identical to the above procedure except that instead of HKEY_USERS, work with HKEY_CURRENT_USER instead.

When you're finished, check the Desktop and examine the icon titles. Open the Start menu while you're at it and observe the readability of the text. You may find the text too small to read even though it is sharp and clear. If this is the case:

Right click on the Desktop

Choose Properties from the popup menu.

Click the Appearance tab.

Click the Advanced button and make changes there.

Decide which technique is best for you, and enjoy text that is clear, crisp and sharp. :

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Hard Disk Disasters

By Dick Maybach, member Brookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey

[http://www.bcug.com/N2nd\(at\)att.net](http://www.bcug.com/N2nd(at)att.net)

Hard disk failure is the most serious PC problem, because it jeopardizes all your data. Even if everything else in your PC dies, if your hard disk is good, you can just move it to a new machine and be back in business as though nothing had happened.

The first problem is to recognize hard disk failure. Look for one or more of the following symptoms.

- A squealing or clicking noise – you will have to open your system case to find where the noise is coming from. Diskette and CD-ROM drives and fans can produce similar noises.
- A longer than usual time to boot up.
- A longer than usual time to open a folder or file.
- Spontaneous file or folder name changes.
- Frequent error messages.
- Missing or corrupted files or folders.
- Frequent “blue screens of death”.

If these begin to appear, immediately copy your data files (most likely your My Documents folder) to another device, preferably one with removable media, such as a CD-ROM or a DVD. Do not turn off your PC and do not spend time trying to diagnose the problem before saving your data. Every second you delay increases the likelihood that more data will be lost.

Clearly, the best defense is to back up your data before you have a problem. However, few people do this, and even if you do, it may have been some time since your last backup.

If your hard disk fails before you can save your data, all is not lost. If your data is very valuable, for example if it's customer data, you can send your disk to a commercial firm that specializes in data recovery. This service will cost from several hundred to several thousand dollars, but usually there

is no fee unless they are at least partially successful. If you decide to do this, shut off your PC immediately and contact the firm for instructions. If your data is worth less than this amount, there are two things you can try that may work.

- Remove the hard drive from the system unit and give it a light tap by holding a screwdriver by its blade and tapping the unit with the handle. Reinstall the hard drive and reboot.
- Remove the drive and place it in a freezer for several minutes, until it is cold to the touch. Reinstall and reboot.

If either of these works, move your data to a safe place immediately.

If you have only a partial disk failure, save as much data as you can; then try the following.

- Restart your PC, but before Windows boots get into the BIOS setup utility. If you watch the screen carefully, you should see directions on how to do this. Often you will press F2 or F10. Look for an area called Utilities or something similar and run any drive diagnostics available.
- Run CHKDSK. (Click on Start, then on Run..., and at the prompt type “chkdsk x: /r”, where x: is the drive in difficulty. If c: is problem drive, you will probably see a message that chkdsk can't check the drive now, but will offer to check it the next time you restart. Answer “y” and reboot.
- Run diagnostics supplied by your drive manufacturer, or if you don't have one, use Western Digital's Data Lifeguard Diagnostics, available free from <http://westerndigital.com>. Versions are available for both Windows and DOS.

You can take some simple steps to prolong the life of all your PC components.

- Keep the system unit clean, especially if it sits on the floor. Once every month or two open the system case and remove any dust and debris with a vacuum. I prefer this to compressed air, which just moves the dirt to a new resting place.
- Don't move your PC while it's operating; espe-

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cially, don't jar it.

- Use a power surge protector or preferably an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). The latter are widely available for \$100 or so. Besides reducing stress on your components, one of these will save your data if the power fails. I always had a UPS at work, and every so often I would see the lights blink and hear streams of profanity from other offices whose occupants did not have one.

Modern PC components are quite reliable, and the chances are that you will replace your computer before anything fails. However, you should have a plan in case there is a problem. Similarly, the chances are that you will replace your car without ever having an accident yet you still wear a seatbelt, and carry insurance.

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The Future of Broadband Access

By Bob Hewitt, Editor
The Journal of The Computer Club, Inc., Sun City
Center, Florida
[http://suncitycentercomputerclub.com/
rsh1916\(at\)juno.com](http://suncitycentercomputerclub.com/rsh1916(at)juno.com)

This may end up to be a case of who gets there fastest with the mostest.

The goal is Broadband. Just about all computer owners want it. Many cannot afford it. But every provider wants to get the biggest share of the pie.

The telecommunications industry was in the driver's seat first with dial-up. Then came cable as a

carrier and telecom countered with DSL. Up rose Wi-Fi, Broadband Wireless Mesh, and finally BPL (Broadband over Power Line).

Pew Internet and American Life Project released a survey finding that about 55 per cent of internet-using Americans enjoy a broadband connection at home or at work.

Since computers have overwhelmed the marketplace, it may be somewhat misleading to lump them together.

The goal of computer mavens is the most speed per dollar expressed in Kbps (Kilobits per second), Mbps (Megabits per second), or preferably MBps (Megabytes per second). The latter conforms to the standard measurement of file size and gives an operator an instant impression of the time involved in achieving a download or a transfer, depending on the speed of his CPU or internet connection.

Because their infrastructure was already in place, the telephone and cable industries became the leaders in delivering internet resources to their subscribers at \$10 to \$50 per month depending on speed. But then came the advent of wireless transmission, commonly called Wi-Fi, with its short range signal providing access principally to portable (laptop) PC's—a significant advantage to travelers who were charged a small amount for access.

Almost paralleling the transition from fixed telephone to cell phone, Wi-Fi evolved into wireless mesh internet which has sparked a huge demand for municipal wireless broadband. Fifty four localities, including major cities, are in the process of establishing or already have established such services.

Tempe, Arizona established a wireless access network last November, covering 40 square miles, with an access cost of \$30 a month per subscriber or \$3.95 per hour.

Manassas, Virginia became the first citywide Broadband-Over-Powerline site last October when it opened a 10 square mile site available to all at \$29 per month.

Philadelphia has contracted with Earthlink to cover its 135 square miles with wireless internet service--the cost to Earthlink an estimated 10-million dollars and a cost to residents an estimated \$20 per month for service. It's assumed that Earthlink will amortize its investment by income from advertising.

The excitement over wireless broadband in heightened by a comparison of download speeds available. The fastest of the three Wi-Fi formats now in use (the 802.11g) is 54 Mbps (megabits per second) or 7 Megabytes per second which is 18 times faster than the cable modems of today. Further is the recent approval of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) for the new 802.11n Wi-Fi format which may be two years before activation but could achieve data processing speeds of 600Mbps; an almost incomprehensible 75 Megabytes per second—200 times today's cable modem speed.

At that rate, one could download 80 minutes of music in 10 seconds or an entire opera in 30.

The wired communications industries are not unaware. Witness the fact that they have spent millions of dollars lobbying state legislatures to kill off community internet. Over the past few years, no less than 14 states have enacted legislation that bans or places limits on municipalities from building community internet projects. Florida Governor Jeb Bush signed a law last June that prevents cities from offering broadband if there are competing private services.

There are anti-competitive issues at the federal level, also. Republican Representative Pete Sessions of Texas introduced an anti-community internet bill which would prevent any city in the country from providing internet access if a private company offers internet services nearby—even if the private company serves as little as 10 per cent of the residents.

Republican Senator John Ensign of Nevada introduced the Broadband Investment and Consumer Choice Act which would severely hamper cities' ability to build and manage wireless networks.

In response to Ensign's bill, Republican Senator John McCain and Democrat Frank Lautenberg introduced legislation that gives municipalities free rein to offer broadband and would overturn state laws banning such activities.

Now that President Bush has lent his support to a broad set of proposals to get every corner of the country access to broadband connectivity by 2007, it will be interesting to watch both sides welcome that goal as supporting their particular positions.

The big question for the public is cost. There have been no definitive publicly-available figures on installation and maintenance of the cutting-edge WiFi mesh application.

Jupiter Research has estimated that the average cost of building and maintaining a wireless network is \$150,000 per square mile over five years. Bert Williams, vice president of marketing for Tropos Networks, which has successfully provided mesh based WiFi hardware in several locations around the world, says, "We usually talk in terms of \$75,000 per square mile for our gear." Adding the ongoing costs for backhaul and system management, he believes the total to be closer to \$100,000 per square mile, while Sky Pilot Networks quotes \$50,000.

A long and vigorous battle is ahead involving the established vs the un-established. But one thing is certain. Everyone is going to end up with a piece of the pie. For this is still early in the digital age and there is plenty to go around.

muniwireless.com informationweek.com
 zdnet.com
 vnunet.com
 jupitermedia.com arstechnica.com
 eetimes.com
 mercurynews.com
 slate.com
 eweek.com
 mistershape.com S. Derek Turner

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WHY SETTLE, DO IT YOUR WAY

by Lee Alexander, Member of the Macon Users Group, Franklin, NC

<http://www.maconusersgroup.org/>
sawdust21(at)verizon.net

Icons

You can make your PC more colorful and distinguish folders by using icons other than the ubiquitous manila folder. Right-click a folder and select properties; under the Customize tab, click the Change icon button and you will see more than 250 icons to choose from. Actually, the file, Shell32.dll, contains 1484 icons on my system. A good many of these are duplicates in different sizes and color depths. Sizes range from 16 x 16 pixels through 96 x 96 pixels; color depths can be 16, 256, or True colors (24-bit for a range of 16,777,216 hues).

Using one of my favorite free utilities, IrfanView, you can view and do minor editing such as changing size, color depth, and rotating the image.

TIP: Open an IrfanView window and Drag the file Shell32.dll into it. You can then see previews of the icons, one by one. If you want to do extensive editing of folder icons, create a shortcut to shell32.dll on your desktop. Then right-click on it and choose "Open With" - Irfanview.

I have created an Excel spreadsheet with a brief description of about 100 selected icons – Shell32Icons.xls.

Acrobat Reader

This free utility is much in demand of late as many program manuals are now written in the .pdf (Portable Document Format) format. A few handy keyboard shortcuts are:

Adobe uses <Ctrl> L (instead of F11 as in Microsoft products) to toggle full screen view.

Toggle the toolbars with F8.

Use the right/left arrow keys to advance/go back a page.

Adobe Photoshop, Etc.

You can hide the floating palettes in Adobe products (such as Elements), by hitting the <Tab> key. It is a toggle; hit it again to bring them back.

Word Toolbars

You can create a toolbar button for easily inserting a symbol into a document. Right-click a toolbar and select Customize and the Commands tab. In the categories pane scroll down and click on All Commands . In the right pane, Commands, click on Symbol: and drag it to a toolbar. This will open the Symbol dialog box. Click the symbol to be attached to the button and click OK.

The toolbar button now displays the font name (Symbol) followed by the symbol number. Since this is not very friendly information, we can change the button's appearance. With the Customize dialog box opened, right-click the button and choose Name: . To make the button resemble the symbol it's attached to, use the <Alt> key and the four digits on the number pad for that symbol. You can add a graphic to the button by clicking on Edit Button Image. You're then presented with a simple grid and color palette upon which you can draw simple shapes.

Tips on Digital Photography and a PC Windows Picture and Fax Viewer

This versatile (for photos) utility is often overlooked

in the availability of photo editors. As it is included with the Windows Operating System it is a “freebie” readily at hand. Typically, unless you have set file associations otherwise, double clicking on a photo will open it in the Viewer. The toolbar at the bottom has some handy features that are not immediately intuitive. The Previous and Next buttons allow you to view all the images in the folder of the first photo you selected. The Screen icon will start an automatic slide show; the Zoom, Rotation, and Delete are self explanatory. However, the Print icon can surprise you – it opens the Photo Printing Wizard. As you step through the Wizard, the Layout Selection provides a variety of print configurations from 8.5 X 11 to a 35 print “contact sheet.”

If you have set a file association to open your photos in an editor, you can create a shortcut to the Picture and Fax Viewer on your Desktop or in the Quick Launch Tray. Right-click in the area you want the shortcut and choose New | Shortcut. In the Shortcut wizard, enter C:\Windows\system32\shimgvw.dll (assuming your Operating System is on the C: drive). Name the shortcut and click Finish. On the first use you will have to choose the program, Picture and Fax Viewer, and check the box to “Always use selected program ...”

Note that if you right-click and choose Edit, you will open the Paint program. The next-to-last button closes the viewer and opens the photo editing program associated with the file type.

Harrys Filters

Harry’s Filters 3.0 is a Photoshop-compatible plugin which can be used in dozens of different image editing applications e.g. Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, Corel Photo-Paint and many other. It includes 69 effect filters, an Animation feature, options for saving and opening presets and an instant preview feature.

Harry’s Filters 3.0 is freeware. You can use them for whatever you like, but you aren’t allowed to distribute them without the author’s permission.

Be sure to read the instructions about extracting the zipped file to the folder containing your photo editor.

At this point, the website link I had entered is no longer valid. This brings up a salient point – rather than hold on to old links (the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web is in constant flux, always changing) it is better to Google the topic or subject to get the latest information.

LCD Usage with a Digital Camera

The disadvantage of using the LCD, as opposed to the optical viewfinder, the camera is not braced against a body part (your head). It is difficult to avoid camera shake when the camera is held at arms length. Try tucking your elbows into your sides and exhale before pressing the shutter release -- don’t punch it.

Flash as a fill-in.

Using flash as a fill-in in outdoor shots, such as when the subject is backlit, can reduce the shutter speed. If your camera has the ability, check the shutter speed and aperture after such a shot. When flash is forced, digital cameras typically compensate by lowering the shutter speed and/or increasing the aperture.

White Balance.

If your photos have an overall cast of color it could be a function of the White Balance. In a photo editor, find a patch of near-neutral gray and check the RGB color levels. They should be nearly equal in value. A free utility, Pixie, can check this for you. You can download the program from www.nattyware.com.

Color Management Schemes

Color schemes can conflict, if you use more than one of them. Select the color profile of either the printer or the photo editing software, not both. With inkjets, a greenish tone could indicate that no color scheme has been applied; a reddish hue may indicate two color schemes have been applied.

See More Thumbnails in Win Explorer

Hold down the <Shift> key when selecting the Thumbnail view to eliminate file labels = more pics per screen.

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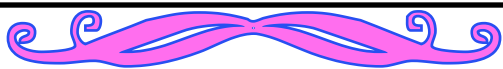
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Auto-reduce Photo File Sizes

Windows XP has a neat feature to adjust the file size of photos for transmission over the internet. Select the photo(s) and right-click on one. From the pop-up menu, choose Send to and Mail Recipient. This will bring up a dialog box, Send Pictures via E-Mail. The radio button Make all my pictures smaller is selected by default. Click on Show more options to see 3 degrees of reduction.

Although it creates a message with the reduced file size photos as attachments, you do not have to send the message. You can right-click on an attachment and from the pop-up menu select Save as or Copy to put it on the Clipboard. You then simply delete the message without sending it.

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What is going on in this picture?

Do you know!

Answer next month



Being Online Brings Coincidences and Lasting Trails

By Gabriel Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computer & Technology Website, www.aarp.org

A song written by Peter Mayer, a great singer I've just discovered, is titled "Earth Town Square." Describing how technology and travel have shrunk the world, Peter lyrically observes "Now it's feeling like a small town, with six billion people downtown, at a little sidewalk fair, in Earth Town Square". Even though all six billion of us aren't (yet!) online, the Internet as a meeting place is certainly one of the engines making the Earth seem smaller. While it was once exotic — or alarming — to have a long distance telephone conversation, chatting electronically with people half a world away doesn't raise my pulse.

A decade ago, early in my use of the Internet, I was astonished by its ability to create coincidences. This is a true story. I was consulting for an online service that gave me an e-mail address used only for their work. I received a note at that address with the intriguing subject, "I am you" from another Gabriel Goldberg. Nowadays, that's the sort of spoofed e-mail I'd likely delete without reading. He had checked his entry in the service's directory and found my entry next to his. We exchanged pleasantries, described ourselves, shared wonder at having found each other, and he mentioned that he was a music student in Boston.

Later that week, I received another note at my regular e-mail address, from a woman who said that she'd known a Gabe Goldberg years earlier, the last she'd heard from him he was going to Boston to study music, and was I that person. I replied to her, copying the other Gabe, that either they were playing a joke on me or we had a mighty powerful coincidence. Truth is stranger than joke — they were former high school sweethearts who had drifted apart. In the same week they both found my name and two different e-mail addresses, and for very different reasons, they contacted me. I later heard from

her mother, who thanked me for reuniting them! Remarking on the coincidence of names, the other Gabe wondered “how do guys named Jim Smith handle all the coincidences.”

Participating in mailing lists, newsgroups, and Web sites leaves online footprints and makes us visible. The bad news is that’s one of the ways spammers find targets, but the good news is that being visible makes it easier for lost friends to track us down. Soon after 9/11 I heard a voice on the phone I hadn’t heard for nearly 30 years: my college girlfriend. She’d searched Google (often called “Googling”) for me, found me, and called. We’ve stayed in touch since, have gotten together several times, and shared news of our respective families. And just recently I used Google to contact an elementary school friend after hearing of her taking a new job in San Francisco.

Amidst the fun of unanticipated connections and reestablished friendships, there’s a cautionary note: information online has a long memory. Web sites like Google cache (retain) Web pages even after they’re deleted from their original Web locations. Postings to mailing lists, Web forums, newsgroups, and other online venues are usually retained indefinitely. It can be unnerving to discover that items posted in the heat of the moment or as youthful indiscretions can be retrieved years later by potential employers or new acquaintances, or just be someone snooping for unpleasant reasons.

Just as it’s worth checking your credit report periodically, it’s a good idea to occasionally check out what online trails you’ve left. My current favorite surfing tool is Google, so I search for “Gabe Goldberg” and “Gabriel Goldberg.” The quote marks bind the first and last names together so that only Web pages having the exact full name are found. I search on Gabe and Gabriel because I’ve used both names. If your name is closer to Jim Smith’s — offering 56,000 hits rather than the more manageable 182 for my name — you can tighten the search by adding terms such as a middle initial, state of residence, hobby, employer, etc. But don’t make the search too narrow or you may miss genuine references.

It’s tedious to erase tracks from an online history. It requires contacting each site that hosts material you’d like to delete, perhaps following instructions and filling out forms. Some mailing list sites refuse as a matter of policy to delete list postings, reasoning that doing so would distort a list’s historical record. The government has made serious efforts to sanitize the Web by removing content deemed dangerous, such as plans for water and power system. Even when successful, scrubbing data off Web sites often doesn’t really make it unavailable, it just slows people from finding it. It’s much better to avoid saying anything online that might return to haunt you, than try to clear the record after the fact.

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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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