

Orange Coast IBM PC User Group (OCIPUG)



README.DOC

Volume 25 : Issue 2 – February 2009

Monthly General Meeting

Date: February 28, 2009

Agenda:

0830-0900 Random Access (general Q & A on IBM-compatible, personal computer hardware and software)

0900-0915 User Group Administration and SIG Announcements

0915-1015 Featured Presentation

“Home networking, including a review of the products that D-Link offers to make the experience productive, efficient and entertaining” (**Les Goldberg, Media Relations Manager, D-Link**)

1015-1030 Break

1030-1110 Featured SIG Presentation

“Improving Your Browser Experience” (Steve Schiffman, Internet and Networking SIG)

1110-1155 Capsule SIG Presentations:

Hardware SIG - Recent New Hardware

Windows SIG - Tips and Tricks

Digital Content, Scanning, and Printing SIG - New Features in Photoshop Elements 7

1155-noon Raffle

Raffle tickets are **FREE - five (5) to each member attendee and one (1) to each adult, non-member attendee. Please pick them up when you sign in. The monthly raffle prize is a \$50 Fry's Electronics gift card.**

Location:

All meetings are held at the [Costa Mesa Senior Center](#), 695 West 19th Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92627

Meetings

General Meetings - next six months:

February 28, 2009 (see cover page for this month's meeting agenda)

March 28, 2009 (sorry, Microsoft bailed for March, possibly later in the year), April 25, 2009, May 23, 2009, June 27, 2009, July 25, 2009

Executive Board Meetings - follow each General Meeting. OCIPUG members are welcome to attend.

Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings:

First Tuesday (February 3, 2009) - Internet & Networking SIG

7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Featured Topic: "Improving your browser experience"

SIG Leader: Steve Schiffman

Internet & Networking SIG web site - click the "Internet & Networking" link on the [OCIPUG web site](#)

Second Tuesday (February 10, 2009) - Hardware SIG

7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.

Featured Topic: "Core Logic (Chipsets): 2009 Update"

SIG Leader: Ed Leckliter

Hardware SIG web site - click the "Hardware" link on the [OCIPUG web site](#)

Third Tuesday (February 17, 2009) - Windows SIG

7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Featured Topic: "Tips and Tricks"

SIG Leader: Robert Strader

Windows SIG web site - click the "Windows" link on the [OCIPUG web site](#)

Fourth Tuesday (February 24, 2009) - Digital Content, Scanning, & Printing SIG

7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Featured Topic: "Edge effects, texturizing, water reflections, and hands-on with a Wacom tablet"

SIG Leader: Robert Walker

Digital Content, Scanning, & Printing SIG web site - click the "Digital Content" link on the [OCIPUG web site](#)

Administration (Team Roster – 2008-09)

President	Ed Leckliter	president.bod@ocipug.org
Vice President	Robert Walker	vicepres.bod@ocipug.org
Secretary	Irwin Haydock	secretary.bod@ocipug.org
CFO/Treasurer	Jack Vincent	treasurer.bod@ocipug.org
Director (2007-09)	Leonard Stein	director1.bod@ocipug.org
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Programs Chairperson	Ed Leckliter	programs@ocipug.org
SIG Coordinator	Robert Strader	sigcoordinator@ocipug.org
Membership Chairperson	OPEN (= Opportunity!)	membership@ocipug.org
APCUG Representative	Robert Walker	apcugrep@ocipug.org
SCRUGS Representative	Robert Walker	scrugsrep@ocipug.org

Membership

Members receive a meeting reminder and the monthly newsletter (README.DOC) via e-mail (the online newsletter archive is on a three month delay). Member dues help the group pay its bills (liability insurance, APCUG membership fee, equipment maintenance, web site domain name registration and hosting fees, and raffle prizes). Memberships run from September through August and are prorated for those joining after September. The membership form is available at ([link](#)). The fee schedule follows. Contact the OCIPUG Treasurer for prorated fees.

Individual - 1 year \$30, 2 years \$55, 3 years \$75

Family - 1 year \$35, 2 years \$60, 3 years \$85

Full-time student - \$20/year (see the membership form for more info)

OCIPUG Web Sites

Main web site - see <http://www.ocipug.org/>

SIG web sites - click the associated SIG-name link on the OCIPUG home page (<http://www.ocipug.org/>)

SIG Meeting Reports

Internet & Networking SIG (SIG Leader: Steve Schiffman)

Meeting Date: January 6, 2009

Attendees: unknown (no report received)

Topic/Focus: New Trends on the Internet - What's HOT, What's NOT (scheduled topic, no report received)

Hardware SIG (SIG Leader: Ed Leckliter)

Meeting Date: January 13, 2009

Attendees: 8

Topic/Focus: "CPUs: 2009 Update"

See presentation [slides](#) (PDF format)

Random Access:

Member Irwin Haydock asked, "How do we (I) modernize a 3 yr old machine?" Ed responded with a couple of questions of his own.

First question, was the machine (technologically) current three years ago? His response was "yes" and that he had taken the system into a local shop and they had assured him that everything was working properly. When he asked them if he could just upgrade the CPU (presumably assuming a performance issue) he was told that was not easily done. Before we got to the "real" issue we went off on a tangent trying to get Irwin to run [Belarc Advisor](#) to find out what is actually in his system that might "need" modernizing. We also did some "time-framing" and Ed guessed that the system he has is using an AMD socket 939 processor - meaning, in Ed's estimation, it is likely that the shop did not have any socket 939 processors in stock and was trying to tell Irwin that "they" couldn't upgrade his CPU (with a CPU in their current inventory). He advised Irwin that most likely Newegg had stock (or one of the shop's distributors did). [As of 1/14, Ed was WRONG about Newegg! Not even a category for socket 939 processors. That said, a search of [Pricewatch](#) showed 38 listings.]

Second question, what were you trying to do that brought the issue up? His response was that he was having problems with his video capture card (an ATI All-in-Wonder). Ed suggested that he check ATI's website for drivers and other assistance. Irwin responded he felt the system should just work "properly" and that he felt like replacing it (with an Apple). Irwin was given the appropriate ridicule, Ed offered to help diagnose the problem further if Irwin would bring in his system to the next Hardware SIG meeting, and we moved on to hardware submissions.

Hardware Submissions:

Member Bruce Newbery brought in his Gateway desktop complaining that one day the system runs fine and the next day it won't boot up. The system appeared to be a circa 2003, AGP-generation, Intel-based unit with an Intel motherboard and integrated graphics. Ed tried booting the system and found no boot, no screen. He removed the side panel and checked to see that everything was properly connected and looked in order. Tried booting - same result. Ed then removed all but one memory module and tried again. Same result. Ed next tried swapping memory modules. Same result. Ed then removed the two adapter cards (a modem and a network card) and disconnected all the drives (HDD, ODD, and floppy). The system booted fine to the point

that it found no bootable media/drive. Ed then connected the hard drive and the system booted through to the desktop, all be it at a very slow pace with only one of four DIMMs in place (128MB). The rest of the memory was added and the system booted normally. Ed reconnected the other drives and installed the network card. Everything AOK. He added back the modem and they were back to step one, no boot/no screen. Ed removed the modem and everything ran AOK. Discussions concluded that Bruce was not using his modem and therefore there was no issue leaving it out. It was also noted along the way that at the first boot of the evening the CMOS had complained that it had been reset to day one - and the same had occurred on the reinsertion of the modem. Ed suggested that Bruce replace the CMOS battery (to be "safe") and that he make sure he back up his data as the hard drive sounded noisy.

Windows SIG (SIG Leader: Robert Strader)

Meeting Date: January 20, 2009

Attendees: 5

Topic/Focus:

We took a look at the beta copy of Windows 7. I had downloaded a copy and burned an ISO DVD. I initially had tried to use the burn function within Windows Vista to make the disk but it did not know how to burn an ISO disk. I remembered a program "freeisoburner.exe" and downloaded it. Freeisoburner.exe does not have to be installed, just executed. I was cautioned to put the DVD into my burner drive before executing the freeisoburner program. After following the instructions, it burned the DVD very well. I had another hard drive for my notebook computer so I installed the new hard drive and then loaded the beta of Windows 7 on it. The installation of the software went very well. The software did not have provisions for the notebook hardware that provides the function key switches for Wi-Fi, monitor switching, brightness or contrast. We looked at some of the differences of the GUI vs. Vista and XP. After only working with it for a few hours, I like it. The task bar is different in the way it presents open programs vs. XP and Vista.

We also looked at some screen shots of my Windows Home Server. I have it working except for the ability to access it via the Internet.

Digital Content, Scanning, & Printing SIG (SIG Leader: Robert Walker)

Meeting Date: January 27, 2009

Attendees: 10

Topic/Focus: We reviewed memory cards and how to use them. We also worked on photographing fireworks - using a tripod, remote release, framing your shot, focal length, aperture settings, shutter speed settings, ISO settings, remembering to switch your flash off, and shooting in manual mode. [A handout was provided.]

Articles

Editor's note: My apologies for the brief number of articles this month - one. APCUG PUSH articles are late and it is a slow time for new PC hardware and operating systems - we have already had several articles on Win 7. Next month I should be "a month ahead" on PUSH articles and back to an RMD of 20 pages or more. Thanks for understanding.

FREE “Standardized” Benchmarks Available for Downloading

Attribution: By Ed Leckliter, Orange Coast IBM PC User Group (OCIPUG), www.ocipug.org

There are seat-of-the-pants ways of determining how much your new hardware is “better” than the old, e.g., checking how much more quickly the cards tumble when you win a game of solitaire, playing a game to get the feel for how much more smoothly it runs, or executing a “function” in a business application and noting how much more quickly the work gets done. Those “informal” benchmarks are great for comparing YOUR new hardware with YOUR old hardware. There are also “standardized” benchmarks available to test your old and new hardware AND compare the results to the results OTHERS obtained with their hardware and/or hardware provided to them for product review purposes. Running such benchmarks on your old hardware, and comparing the results to the results others obtained when using newer hardware, can be very helpful in making purchasing decisions for new hardware. I highly recommend doing such benchmark testing.

Some of the “standardized” benchmarks (or lite or evaluation/trial versions of those benchmarks) are available to Joe Public for FREE downloading. Among them are:

[3DMark06 Basic Edition](#)

“3DMark06 is a PC benchmark suite designed to test the DirectX9 performance of your graphics card. A 3DMark score is an overall measure of your system’s 3D gaming capabilities, based on comprehensive real-time 3D graphics and processor tests. By comparing your score with those submitted by millions of other gamers you can see how your gaming rig performs, making it easier to choose the most effective upgrades or finding other ways to optimize your system.”

Minimum system requirements:

- Single-core Intel® or AMD® compatible processor 2.5GHz or higher
- DirectX® 9 compatible graphics adapter with Pixel Shader 2.0 support or later, and graphics memory of 256MB*
- 1GB of system RAM or more
- 1.5GB of free hard disk space
- Windows® XP 32bit or Windows Vista™ 32bit operating system with latest Service Packs and updates installed
- DirectX® 9.0c December 2005 or later
- Visual C++ 2005 Redist
- Microsoft Excel® 2003/XP or later for some 3DMark functionality
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 or later for some 3DMark functionality
- Microsoft DirectX 9.0c (December 2005) System Development Kit is required to run the image quality test using the reference rasterizer.

[3DMark Vantage \(Basic Edition Trial\)](#)

“3DMark Vantage is a PC benchmark suite designed to test the DirectX10 performance of your graphics card.” [This is an update of 3DMark06 for DirectX 10.]

Minimum system requirements:

- Processor - SSE2 support
- Graphics Card - fully DirectX10-compliant graphics hardware; 512MB of video memory (needed to run every preset)
- Display Device - capable of 1280x1024 resolution; capable of 1920x1200 resolution (needed to run every preset)
- System Memory - Windows Vista minimum requirement
- Hard Disk - 1 GB of free hard disk space
- Operating System - Windows Vista with Service Pack 1

[CINEBENCH](#)

“CINEBENCH is a real-world test suite that assesses your computer’s performance capabilities. MAXON CINEBENCH is based on MAXON’s award-winning animation software, CINEMA 4D, which is used extensively by studios and production houses worldwide for 3D content creation. MAXON software has been used in blockbuster movies such as Spider-Man, Star Wars, The Chronicles of Narnia and many more.

MAXON CINEBENCH runs several tests on your computer to measure the performance of the main processor and the graphics card under real world circumstances. The benchmark application makes use of up to 16 CPUs or CPU cores and is available for Windows (32-bit and 64-Bit) and Macintosh (PPC and Intel-based).

The resulting values among different operating systems are 100% comparable and therefore very useful with regard to purchasing decision-making. It can also be used as a marketing tool for hardware vendors or simply to compare hardware among colleagues or friends.“

Minimum system requirements:

- One or more of the supported CPUs (down to Pentium III), running at a minimum clock speed of 1 GHz in total, a graphics card that supports OpenGL in 1024 x 768 pixels screen resolution and 512 MB of RAM. NT-based operating systems back to Win 2000.

[Iometer](#)

“Iometer is an I/O subsystem measurement and characterization tool for single and clustered systems. It was originally developed by the Intel Corporation and announced at the Intel Developers Forum (IDF) on February 17, 1998 - since then it got wide spread within the industry. Meanwhile Intel has discontinued to work on Iometer and it was given to the Open Source Development Lab (OSDL). In November 2001, a project was registered at SourceForge.net and an initial drop was provided. Since the relaunch in February 2003, the project is driven by an international group of individuals who are continuously improving, porting and extend the product.”

Minimum system requirements:

- Minimal processor requirements. NT-based operating systems back to NT4. Minimum RAM not stated.

[SiSoftware's Sandra Lite](#)

“SiSoftware Sandra (the System ANalyser, Diagnostic and Reporting Assistant) is an information & diagnostic utility. It should provide most of the information (including undocumented) you need to know about your hardware, software and other devices whether hardware or software.

Sandra is a (girl) name of Greek origin that means "defender", "helper of mankind". We think that's quite fitting.

It works along the lines of other Windows utilities, however it tries to go beyond them and show you more of what's really going on. Giving the user the ability to draw comparisons at both a high and low-level. You can get information about the CPU, chipset, video adapter, ports, printers, sound card, memory, network, Windows internals, AGP, PCI, PCI-X, PCIe (PCI Express), database, USB, USB2, 1394/Firewire, etc. “

Minimum system requirements:

- CPUs back to Pentium 4, operating systems back to Windows XP. Minimum RAM not stated.

[SPECviewperf](#)

“SPECviewperf® is a portable OpenGL performance benchmark program written in C. It was developed by IBM. Later updates and significant contributions were made by SGI, Digital (Compaq, HP), 3DLabs (Creative Labs) and other SPECopcSM project group members. SPECviewperf provides a vast amount of flexibility in benchmarking OpenGL performance. Currently, the program runs on most implementations of UNIX, Windows XP, Windows 2000, and Linux...(this is an old description, Vista is also supported)

SPECviewperf 10 is totally new performance evaluation software. In addition to features found in previous versions, it now provides the ability to compare performance of systems running in higher-quality graphics modes that use full-scene anti-aliasing, and measures how effectively graphics subsystems scale when running multithreaded graphics content.”

Minimum system requirements:

- CPU requirements not stated, assume at least a Pentium 4. OpenGL 1.5 and a minimum of 1GB of system memory. It currently supports Windows 32/64.

SPEC also offers a number of other free, industry-developed and supported benchmarks. See <http://www.spec.org>.

BenchmarHQ.ru

Yes, this is a Russian website, not a benchmark. But don't let that stop you from looking at the many brief descriptions and source links to benchmarking and other tools listed here. I highly recommend this site - and have never had a problem with anything that they have listed. That said, PLEASE watch out for the operating system requirements as many of the programs do not support Vista and some don't support XP. [Some do support DOS, Steve.]

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Request for SeniorNet Coaches

The SeniorNet team is in need of coaches to assist instructors for computer classes held at the Costa Mesa Senior Center. These are volunteer opportunities. For more info, please contact Bob Strader (sigcoordinator@ocipug.org). Information regarding the SeniorNet classes conducted at the center is available at [Link](#).

End Piece and Fine Print

OCIPUG (Orange Coast IBM PC User Group) was founded in 1985 as a resource to current and prospective IBM PC-compatible computer users in California's Orange County and surrounding areas (south of LA). OCIPUG is an independent, California, non-profit (501.c.3) corporation not affiliated with any vendor or supplier. This user group is a member of the "Association of Personal Computer User Groups" ([APCUG](#)). A copy of the groups Bylaws is posted at [Link](#).

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