"XP Error Messages"

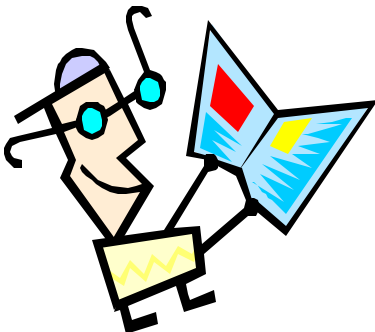Reprinted from The Digital Viking, Twin Cities PC User Group

000   Unexpected Intelligent User Detected; Please Reload Everything

001   Intimidation Failed; Attempting to Crash Repeatedly

002   Erroneous Error - No Error Occurred (Yet)

003   RAM Depleted; Annex Japan (Y/N)?

004   Deluxe Error: Please Send $75 to Upgrade Your Error

005   Long File Name Error; Tape Erased to Make Room for Filename

006   Insufficient RAM to Crash Properly; Attempting Fake Crash
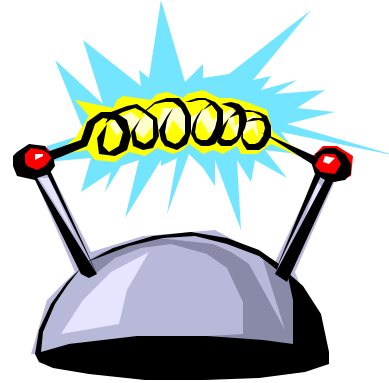
007   Alphanumeric Sequence "OS2" Prohibited

008   This License Has Expired; Please Purchase Another Copy

009   Error Buffer Overflow; Too Many Errors

00A   Non-Microsoft Application Encountered

00B   Push Error; Removing Files to Make

Inside

Shopping Tips For Internet Shopaholics

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Last month I described my experience spending over $150 to save about $4 on vitamins I bought on the Internet. This column takes care of the other side of the story: Tips on tackling the problems of Internet buying.

Fighting The Free Syndrome

How much do you make an hour? If you're clocking more than, say, $5 an hour, don't waste your time hunting for discounts that come and go. The worst ones to try finding are free shipping or $10 off with your first order. A better strategy? If you bump into an offer from Half.com, say, and you're in the market for a bunch of used books, it's a slam-dunk. Otherwise, don't bother tracking them down.

Factor In Shipping

Paying attention to shipping costs may seem obvious, but there are variables to consider. You might think you'll save on shipping by choosing a site that charges a flat fee for shipping no matter how many items you purchase. That's likely true unless the site's products are inflated to cover the shipping costs. With some items — vitamins, for instance—that's not such a big deal as most sites charge a flat $4.95 for standard shipping. (One exception, though, is AdvanceRX; they charge a flat fee of $3 for the entire order, and the product pricing is lower than other drug sites.)

Listen To Users

The wealth of opinions on the Net is overwhelming and you need to tap into it before making any major purchase. There are two spots I listen in on that are useful in their own way. First try the newsgroups and do it using the Google.com search engine. When I was interested in a camcorder, I typed "Panasonic Camcorder" into the Google search field and clicked on Groups. Goggle will provide a list of groups that contain the two words. It's a little daunting from here because you'll face at least 10 groups. Choose the one that's closest to your search. For instance, "Humanities" (Fine art, literature, philosophy) and "Misc" (Employment, health) won't fit while "Comp" (Hardware, software, consumer info) sure will.

You'll then see a dozen or more sub-groups belonging to Comp, each with a green bar showing the likely hits in the groups. Type "Panasonic Camcorder" into the field again and choose "Search only in comp."

The dilemma, as you'll soon find out, is there's a lot to sort through in order to find the recommendations and discussion you're looking to read.

The other spot I really like is Epinions.com. It's filled with people like us providing their observations and experiences with products. Don't be put off by thinking these are just willy-nilly opinions. Granted, some are, but most people are careful and thorough in their reports, few seem to have an ulterior motive, and those that do are easy to spot.

Try Epinions by typing, "Choosing an Air Conditioner" into the search field. Scroll down to "Member Advice" and you'll get a sense of what Epinions offers. Better, search for an item you're very familiar with and see what others have to say.

Make Those Comparisons

You're crazy if you shop on the Internet without using a price comparison site. There are many available, and here's a sampling:

　　　　** Mysimon.com

　　　　** Dealtime.com

　　　　** Pricingcentral.com

　　　　** Bizrate.com

　　　　** Smartshop.com

　　　　** BuyBuddy.com

If you're wondering which sites I use regularly, take a gander at some of my favorites:

** Pricescan.com: A neat site with an assortment of ways to search for products and spots to purchase the item. The site does an exemplary job at digging up pricing for a myriad of products including for books, computers, office equipment, home and garden, and other categories.

** DestinationRX.com: Does a remarkable job at neatly displaying a grid with product, vendor, price, estimated shipping, and total cost. Great: Sorting by column—cost or price—is easy, and getting details about the vendor is a click away. Not so hot: "Total Cost field" doesn't take into account price per unit, so comparing a bottle of 100 60milligram vitamins with the same bottle of 100mg vitamins isn't accurate.

** Canada.rx: A member of another user group told me about Canada.rx. She said, "I thought you might be interested in this solution for prescription drugs. A friend is diabetic and has who knows what else. His doctor faxes his prescriptions and he receives a package a few days later with no hassle from the post office. (His only real difficulty lay in convincing his doctor to send the fax and that only had to be done once.) His credit card is charged approximately one-third the price he'd pay locally. I asked

him for the URL and this is his response:

'It's CanadaRx. No www, no .com, nothing but CanadaRx. They keep changing the entry screens, making it sometimes difficult to find the screen one wants. But it's all there. All that's needed in patience. Persistence helps some too.'"

I checked and the prices really are substantial lower than most discount pharmacies.

** Pricewatch.com: This site has been around the longest and provides a fast, convenient way to find the best prices on computing hardware.

** Addall.com: Think Amazon has the best prices in town? Nope. Half.com, BooksAMillion.com, and others often beat Amazon. The saving are enough that it makes using Addall.com a must every time you shop for books.

** PCworld.pricegrabber.com: I'm a little biased here, so pardon my conflict-of-interest for a minute, and try PCWorld's Product Finder. Primarily hardware, software, and electronics, it gives you a way to find products, and check and compare their prices. Three things I like better here than the other sites: I can easily track a product, watching for price changes, just by supplying my e-mail address. Next, if the product's been reviewed by PC World, one click gets me to the article. Finally, the site gives me access to the full spec sheet of the product, something I find invaluable.

** Cnet's shopper.cnet.com: Does a decent job with hardware and software but only so-so for consumer electronics. It's sometimes difficult separating ads from product reviews.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG Write to him at Steve_bass@pcworld.com. Check PCW's current edition at http://www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index. asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

Mandrake 8.1 — Is Linux For You?

By Bryan Lilius, Alamo PC

I have been a Linux dabbler since 1993, when I worked in Berlin, Germany with a real programmer, Scott Maley. Our mission there was conversion of the Tempelhof Terminal Radar system to serve as the regional Air Traffic Control System for the former East Germany. Scott was a sub-scriber to Linux Journal before the Linux Kernel reached version 1.0, and he would let me look at his magazines, which I found to be interesting curiosities. While I could look over his shoulder at his Linux system, I didn't have one of my own until 1996 when I installed Red Hat (4.0?) on a 486 I was retiring from active Microsoft service. Amazingly, I succeeded at getting that old 486 set up as our home file and print server, although it didn't seem the sort of thing that just anyone could do. I had to recompile the kernel to get it to work with my bus mouse and obso-lete Western Digital network card. Recompiling the kernel, for me, required extensive reading of kernel cookbook in-structions, and resulted in having to start over from initial installation more than once. It was the sort of thing that computer "hobbyists" might enjoy.

I stayed with Red Hat through version 6.0, and would probably still be using it but couldn't get network services working on a Toshiba laptop. While this may sound like a criticism of Red Hat, it isn't, as many other people were able to get a configuration similar to mine working, and they were patiently helping me do the same when some-one suggested I might like to try Mandrake <www.mandrake.com>. The Linux world is very remarkable in this respect   there are a lot of people willing to help you and it is very inexpensive to try different distributions. If you have access to a high-speed Internet connection and a CD burner (and almost everyone does nowadays, right?), then you can try any one of the hundreds of Linux distributions for the cost of your time and the blank CDs. When I first tried Mandrake Version 6.0. I was very im-pressed with how easily it installed on my laptop, recog-nizing all the hardware, including the Ethernet PC-card. A creature of habit, I have been using Mandrake ever since and have been quite happy with it.

Who Should Try Linux

Linux is most suited for those with a "sys admin" outlook, who enjoy twiddling with configuration files. Web-site developer/maintainers and software developers must give it a try it a try and see the incredible capabilities available at little or no cost.

More and more, though, if you just want to surf the web, use e-mail, and maybe compose your paper for school, Linux may be for you. Mandrake Linux installs easier than Microsoft Windows (98, 2000 or XP), and is at least as likely to recognize all your hardware and work on first boot up. There is the possibility that you may be one of those able to free yourself from the monolith before you get so locked in to applications that demand the Windows oper-ating system.

Getting Started

While most people I know who use Linux (including my-self) have a dual boot machine, (we want Linux on our best hardware), I think first-timers are better off trying it on the machine they have just replaced. Right now people are giving away old Pentium II's, if you don't have one of your own sitting in a closet, and Linux will run just fine on them. The advantage of this is that you don't worry about messing up your Windows machine and you have the freedom of knowing you can't hurt anything. You should be aware that if your computer is really old (say a P-133 with 8MB RAM) you ought to get an older version of Li-nux. These older versions are still available for download. Mandrake recommends you have at least 64 MB of RAM for using version 8.1. You should also have at least 2GB of disk space available, and 4GB is better. However, you can still obtain versions that will even run on a 386 with 640kb of RAM from their Web site.

If you are not putting Linux on a stand-alone machine, you must make some decisions. Mandrake provides an option of installing itself in your Windows partition, and actually starting up from a Windows command. I have never tried this, and wouldn't recommend it. I have heard that it runs slower than native mode.

If you have room for a second drive that you can dedicate to Linux, then this is a better option. You won't have to repartition your current, fully utilized Windows partition. If for "some reason" you have just lost all your data and must reinstall Windows, then you have the perfect opportunity to set aside a small portion of that big hard drive, create a Linux partition, and enjoy a dual-boot machine. Before you do any of these things, be sure to read the "install.htm" file in the top-level directory of the first CD. This document tells you everything you need to know to boot from the CD-ROM and install Mandrake Linux. It also shows you how to create a set of boot floppies if your machine can't boot from CD-ROM. Other informative reading about Linux and Mandrake can be found at Mandrake's Web-site.

Mandrake's installation is easy and straightforward. From my experience and reading, Mandrake does the best job of recognizing the hardware on your machine and configuring it appropriately of any Linux distribution available. Figure 1 shows what the screen looks like as you step through the installation program. There isn't space in this review for a step-by-step description of all must do, but the installation instructions will be sufficient for most users and systems. When you are finished you will have X-Windows and the KDE environment all configured for you. After you log in you will have a desktop that you could in no time have looking like this screen shot taken from Mandrake's web site.

What's Included

Mandrake 8.1 comes with Linux Kernel version 2.4.8, the KDE Desktop version 2.2.1 with the "dramatically improved" KOffice 1.1. Server features include support for Journalized File Systems, a special version of SAMBA which allows Windows file sharing with NT-like access control lists, and the Apache web server.

Some of the 100's of applications include:

- Grio500: synchronize your desktop with the Rio 500 MP3 player

- Mozilla 0.9.4: browse the Web and try the new communication module

- XMMS 1.2.5: edit and manage MP3 files

- GIMP 1.2.2: create and manipulate photos with this powerful graphics software

- Gphoto2: manage all your digital photos

- Grip 2.96: burn you favorite CDs

- KOffice 1.1: perform all your office tasks

- Galeon 0.12.1: try this unusual browser for a new kind of browsing experience

- Gnomemeeting 0.11: Share good times with family and friends with this full-featured video conferencing software

Availability And Pricing

If downloading and making your own CD is not something you can or want to do, you can order the 3-CD "Download" set from Mandrake for $25 plus $5 shipping, or from <www.cheapbytes.com> for $10.49 including shipping. You may also find bargains on Mandrake through other inexpensive sources such as book and discount computer stores.

If you want to jump in with both feet, Mandrake Linux PowerPack Edition 8.1 features 7 CDs, 2 manuals, thousands of Open Source and commercial applications and installation support. The price of $89 includes shipping and a contribution to Mandrake's Free Software developments. Other more expensive and extensive options are also available.

Bryan Lilius is the Staff Elder at Faith Presbyterian Church, 1307 Blanco Woods.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

Hard Drive Cloning

By David Muscato   <fastlane@lvdi.net>,
Las Vegas PC Users Group

A while back I bought a Hewlett_Packard 6735 Pavilion machine. It came with a (Seagate) 10 or 15 Gig hard drive and Windows ME pre_installed along with a number of other bundled programs, none of which came with an "installable" CD, just the typical OEM resource recovery type CD so a successful reformat and new install of Windows ME on my 30 Gig Maxtor was out of the question.

I went to CompUSA,and after being assured by the sales clerk at the register that Drive Image is Win ME compatible, I purchased a copy. Skeptic that I am, I immediately went to PowerQuests' website and still saw no indication of Win ME compatibility so I had to wait until Monday to contact their support department by voice. Sure enough, their software had yet to achieve Win ME compatibility so it was back to CompUSA for a credit and a likely long wait before I could use my Maxtor as the primary master.

On Windows_Help.Net that I came across an article on drive cloning using the xcopy32 command and sure enough it worked like a charm.

DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS ON COMPRESSED HARD DRIVE(S) OR DRIVE(S) USING TRANSLATION SOFTWARE.

** My drives are EIDE. I do not know if this is safe for use on SCSI drives.

If you don't have two machines using the same version operating system you may need to disconnect your C: drive while you reformat or partition and format the target drive for use in which case, boot from a startup diskette created by the same operating system you will be using, use the Fdisk and/or Format commands then reinstall the source drive (C:) as primary master and the target drive as primary slave or secondary master, jumper and cable accordingly.

Restart the computer (suggest you verify proper drive parameters are properly set in CMOS at this time), when Windows has loaded, click Start then Run and enter the following in the Run box

   XCOPY32.EXE /c /h /e /k C:*.* D:

then click OK.

** CAVEAT ** You MUST enter the command line in
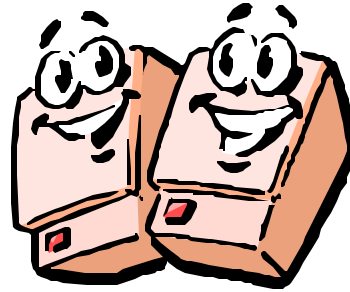
the Run box off of the start button, NOT from a DOS prompt or window !

/e continues the operation if an error is encountered (the swap file causes an error). Switch information can be obtained by typing xcopy32 /? /p in the "Run" box off of the Start button.

When the xcopy operation is completed, shut down, reinstall the target drive as primary master (and the source and primary slave or secondary master or door stop), set jumpers and cabling accordingly.

Restart Windows in SAFE MODE. When Windows has loaded, right click my computer, then properties then performance and click virtual memory at the bottom to re-establish the swap file on the drive. Click ok a couple of times and click ok to restart the system, start in normal or logged mode and you should be up and running.

Corrections To Original Article
From Ev Quinnett, APCUG

"Hard Drive Cloning contained what could be construed as an inaccurate representation about Drive Image.

In the article "Hard Drive Cloning", David Mascato mentions that his copy of Drive Image was not compatible with Windows ME. While PowerQuest has confirmed that versions released prior to Windows ME were not compatible, PowerQuest released a version designed to be compatible just four days after Microsoft released Windows ME.

PowerQuest has designed version 5, the current version, to be fully compatible with Windows 95, 98, NT 4.0 workstation, Windows ME, Windows 2000 Professional, Windows XP, even DOS 5.0 or later."

Trimming And Cutting For Dummies Like Me

By Bruce Switalla <bswit@usa.net>, Coastal Area Users Group

Since it will be a while before I learn how to get my graphic printouts to line up correctly on pre-perforated paper, I decided to simply save money on mistakes and take matters into my own hands. So, for the February graphics SIG, I briefly demonstrated how I make business cards, greeting cards, and photo prints without the perforated paper that I can't always figure out how to line up.

For now, I use Epson Matte Heavyweight paper (52-lb) for everything. It makes a thin but acceptable bus. card, and it doesn't stick to glass photo frames. As shown at the meeting, it yields rich, dark colors too. For business card software, I use Print Artist and can get it to print TWELVE cards per 8½ x11 sheet with hairline crop marks that get split in two and don't show. The pre-perforated business card sheets I've seen yield only ten and thus leave wasted paper.

For business cards, greeting cards, and photos alike, I use the following equipment. I place an 11"x15" Good Cook Flexible Cutting Board (about $2.95) from H-E-B's cooking utensils section down on my table surface. Yes, it gets cut marks in it, but that's what its for! I heard at the meeting that a fabric store has more costly cutting mats that "heal" after you cut into them thus preventing the knife from following a previous groove. To cut, I use an Exacto knife (from Hobby Lobby) and keep it covered with its plastic cap when not in use. For the projects without crop marks like photos, I use 2 sharp pencil marks to determine where to cut. I place the knife on the mark first, then slide a cork-backed metal ruler (available cheap at Office Depot) against the knife at my first point. Then, holding the ruler down with my finger out of the way of the cut, I place the knife-point in the other pencil mark, pivoting the ruler this time against the knife. I consistently keep the knife straight up while watching my fingers. I cut 2 or 3 times just past where I need to, so the side cuts will come apart when finished. I got a beautiful 5"x7" mahogany-colored wood frame from Dollar General for $2. And 8"X10"s are $3 and $4. By the way, if you go with glossy paper, you cannot let it touch the glass, so you will need to place a spacer, like a mat, around the photo (a job for the pro's).

Advanced Advice

If you can control how large your photo prints out, you may opt for 4½"x6½" or so with white borders that you leave when you cut to 5"x7', since a 5"x7" wood frame will cover a quarter inch on all sides, and ink is expensive. Measure the frame's inside dimensions for white border (cutting purposes) and from the front of the frame measure for printing purposes but be sure no white will show after framing. Better to think this all out and practice on Crayola-colored notebook paper than mess up a print. "Measure twice…"

One thing I didn't cover at the meeting was folding greeting cards. I place two pencil marks down the center of where I need to fold. Then I put the ruler edge over the marks and use a pizza cutter roller to crease neatly the fold I need. Care is needed to avoid rolling away from the ruler's edge. The resulting fold looks professional!

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization.
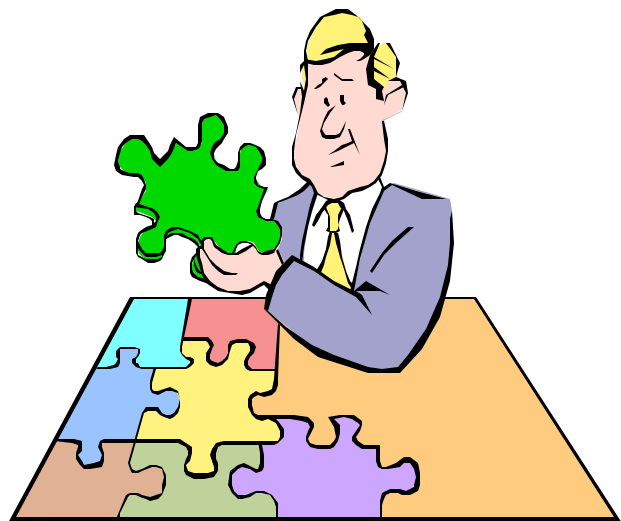
Notebook Computers And Accessories

By Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club

Reprinted from the I/O Port Newsletter, 2001, Tulsa Computer Society

Just recently, I purchased a notebook computer (commonly also referred to as a "laptop") for my oldest daughter. This computer was to replace the one I bought her four years ago, that is currently in a terminal state of repair, with a cracked screen and a deceased floppy drive. The old notebook computer was heavily used, and was fast and powerful in its day, but is now functionally obsolete. The "new" one is a current model, name brand, loaded with a fast processor, large hard drive, large screen, and adequate memory, and cost about the same as the now-antique machine it is replacing. Unlike its predecessor, the new machine also has some features that we could only dream of four years ago, such as an excellent sound system for playing music CDs and MP3s, as well as a built in DVD player. Refurbished by the factory and purchased online, as was its predecessor, it comes with a factory warranty similar to the new warranty, in a factory sealed box, at about half the store price. For a law school student, it should be more than adequate to meet her needs until graduation, and likely even to be a valuable asset when she starts practicing law.

A good notebook computer may be a valuable asset and tool for those who can make good use of them. As the notebook computers improve in power and capabilities, many are using them as their only computer, rather than as an adjunct to a desktop system. It never ceases to amaze me how an individual can spend well over a thousand dollars for a good notebook computer, and then spend $29 for the cheapest case they can find. While notebooks are becoming more rugged, they still need substantial protection when being carried, thrown in the car, shoved under an airline seat, and otherwise bumped and banged around. Unless the machine is intended to be somewhat permanently tethered to a table, a good case is imperative. When purchasing a case, the covering material is a matter of personal choice, whether vinyl, ballistic nylon (my personal choice), aluminum, or leather. What is most important is the construction of the case and the protection offered the computer. I strongly recommend a case that provides well-padded protection on all 6 sides of the notebook. The padding can be simple sheets of foam, foam in convoluted shapes, or the now popular "air bubble" design made up of thick, large sheets of a sturdy "bubble wrap" type material.

It is also important to consider where and how the computer is likely to be carried, as to whether the case must be capable of fitting under a coach airline seat, or carried in a backpack configuration. A notebook computer with a badly cracked screen, or a hard drive knocked out by a moderate blow may be useless, and will tend to be damaged at the most inopportune times; Mr. Murphy's Laws apply to notebook computers as much or more than other computers. In terms of notebooks, a case offering very good protection is more valuable than a case that lacks such protection but meets the user's personal vanity needs. An undamaged notebook in a plain nylon case beats a damaged notebook in a fancy leather case every time.

Another factor to consider in a notebook is its performance. Today, notebooks are available with processors that rival the speed of contemporary desktop units. One item often lacking in many better notebooks is adequate memory. While 64 megs of memory is now the defacto minimum standard for notebooks, 128 megs of memory or more is becoming more commonplace, and typically results in much improved performance. Memory is currently the cheapest in

history. Most modern notebook computers require a different format of memory stick then desktop computers, but notebook memory is currently widely available at reasonable prices. I just purchased an additional 128 Meg stick of notebook memory for my daughter's new computer at a local store for about $30 after rebates. A rule of thumb in computing is that up to certain reasonable limits, adding more memory is the most cost effective method of improving performance; this applies to desktops and notebooks alike. For most computers, adding memory is a simple, do-it-yourself installation. If you have a recent notebook, look at the electronics and office supply store ads in the Sunday paper, and you will likely see notebook (and desktop) memory at reasonable prices, often including substantial rebates. The average improvement in performance is well worth it.

Many users use their notebook computer as both a portable and a desktop unit. Frequent plugging and unplugging printers, monitors, keyboards, mice, scanners, and other peripherals to a notebook is a "pain" to say the least. Most major manufacturers of notebook computers offer an extra-cost option of a "docking station" which usually allows the user to simply slide the notebook in the docking station to serve as a desktop unit with all peripherals attached. Sliding the notebook out of the docking station simply restores the portability function. Docking stations tend to be expensive, and are usually only functional with a particular model of computer. An alternative is a generic docking station, such as the Belkin USB Dockstation. This is small, relatively inexpensive flying saucer shaped device, only a few inches in diameter, that can be "hot swapped" or plugged in to the notebook computer without shutting down the computer first. Attached with a single USB cable to the USB port on the notebook, the Dockstation immediately gives access to two PS-2 ports (commonly used for external keyboards and mice), one serial port (commonly used for external modems or mice), one parallel port (commonly used for printer connections, scanners, and external tape drives), and four fully powered USB ports (commonly used for scanners, printers, mice, modems, tape drives, external CD-RW drives, etc.). An advantage to a device like this over a proprietary docking station is that it can be used with almost any brand of computer properly equipped. In an office environment, one device can serve several different users, one at a time, without any additional configuration. Peripherals can remain attached to the Dockstation, or the Dockstation can be easily carried with the notebook, as it is small and light, unlike the most proprietary docking stations.

Notebook computers have become increasingly common

as their capabilities increased, and their prices were reduced. Look in any airport waiting area at the number of travelers using them; look at the hotels that now offer data ports, and sometimes even broadband connections in the rooms. One of the hot new technologies, which will be covered in depth in an upcoming column, is the new high speed wireless network devices, now common in may hotels, airports, college campuses, and even retail establishments like Starbucks. These small wireless network cards are giving notebook computers the same broadband capabilities as a desktop computer back at home or in the office, but with the portability of a notebook. I have traveled extensively with my notebook computer, and have used it for many presentations. It has provided a technology and an enhancement that few dreamed of a few years ago.

Ira Wilsker is an Instructor IV of Management Development at Lamar Institute   of Technology. Ira has been working with computers since 1965 when he took his first computer class at the Illinois Institute of Technology, in Chicago. A   past president of the Golden Triangle PC Club, and a board member of the Association of PC Users Groups, Ira is a frequent guest on the local television news, and has lectured locally to internationally on a variety of computer topics ranging from computer and Internet basics, to CyberCrime, and Community Oriented Policing. Ira is the host of the Computer Information Hour on KLVI 560AM every Tuesday, 6-7pm

OmniPage Pro 11 from ScanSoft

by Bee Reynolds, Tulsa Computer Society

Do you have a scanner? Do you have the need to scan documents and use them through your word processing software? Do you want to do all this and more in just a few easy steps and with software that is easy to use? Well, let me have a few minutes to tell you about OmniPage Pro 11 from ScanSoft. OmniPage has been around for several years and just recently turned over to ScanSoft who have been able to improve a really good product. If you have used OmniPage then here is a list of some of the new improvements that have come about:

⊙ Redeveloped recognition engines make OmniPage more accurate.

⊙ Improved page layout will allow you to retain formatting true to the original.

⊙ New IntelliTrain automatically uses previous corrections to generate better OCR.

⊙ You can import PDF files and convert them to your favorite program files and you can also create PDF files from any paper or image files.

⊙ New WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) HTML output will handle graphics, text and backgrounds to keep web output looking like original.

⊙ OmniPage supports over 100 languages and extends to the Greek and Cyrillic alphabets.

⊙ The Details View now provides more customizable information about each page   for easier handling.

⊙ Text Editor now is fully WYSIWYG for recognition results with a wide range of editing tools, color support and four formatting levels for display and   export.

⊙ A new despeckle module reduces errors on spotty, shaded and color backgrounds.

If you have to handle lots of business letters or prepare reports from data and other sources, then chances are you will be scanning lots of the time instead of painstakingly retyping them in to the computer. To put those pages of information in a readable formation, output so others can read and understand what you have done, you need to

have a good scanner and an OCR (Optical Character Recognition) program. OmniPage has been one of the leading products out for several years, but more recently it has been improved and will handle most any job you have available. OmniPage will work with a wide range of scanners. On the CD is a list of all the scanners it supports. Also on ScanSoft's website is a listing at www.scansoft. com. Also the CD has help files, readme files that offer lots of information. On ScanSoft's website is a Tech Notes section that will address reported issues and offers installation and troubleshooting help. File types for saving recognition to are:

    ASCII text.txt/.csv
    Adobe PDF, normal, with subs, with image on text,
        and image only.pdf
    Excel (3.0 to 7.0, 97, 2000).xls
    Framemaker.mif
    Lotus Freelance Graphics.txt
    Harvard Graphics.txt
    HTML (3.2 to 4.0).htm
    PowerPoint 97.rtf
    MS Publisher 98.rtf
    Word for Windows (6.0, 97, 2000).doc
    Quattro Pro for Windows 4.0, 8.xls
    RTF 6.0, 95.rft
    Unicode text.txt/csv
    Ventura Publisher.doc
    WordPad.rtf
    WordPerfect (5.1,5.2, 6.0, 6.1, 8).wpd
    OmniPage Doc.opd

Image File types supported are:

    BMP, DCX, GIF, JPEG, PCX, PDF, PNG, TIFF G3, TIFF G4, TIFF LZW, TIFF FX, TIFF PACKBITS, and TIFF uncompressed.

The system requirements for this program are:

    A Pentium or higher processor
    Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000 or NT 4.0
    32 MB RAM but 64 MB recommended (higher if
        possible)
    75 MB hard disk space plus 10 MB working space
        during installation
    9 MB for Microsoft Installer if not present

44 MB for Internet Explorer if not installed
SVGA monitor with 256 colors and 800 x 600
    pixel resolution
A compatible pointing device
CD-ROM drive for installing software
A compatible scanner

Performance and speed will be enhanced if your computer's processor, memory and disk space exceed minimum requirements. The more the better as they say. Once the software has been installed, The Scanner Wizard will help you setup your scanner and you will be on your way to scanning your documents. You should remember to register the software to be able to get updates and information also. The User's Manual has a wealth of information. There is a Tutorial section that has shown to be very helpful in getting started for first time users. The Tutorial will lead you step-by-step on how to use the software and get perfect results each time. There are notes and tips sections throughout the whole manual. It is organized very well. It has 92 pages and so it isn't long. There are not a lot diagrams, but those that are in the manual are good.

Several of the basic processing steps are:

⊙ Bring a set of images into OmniPage by scanning.

⊙ Perform OCR to generate editable text and create zones.

⊙ Export the document to the desired location.

Proofing.

These steps and others are covered in the manual. There is also a Quick Start Guide that will help you get going. It will show "What you do" and then "What happens" in a diagram that works out great. You can also the OCR Wizard to get your documents handled. You can also use OmniPage with PaperPort software and several packages. OmniPage can be purchased directly from ScanSoft or at your local computer store. It is an expensive package, but worth the money if you use your scanner for documents a lot. The cost is $499.99 for full version or $149.99 for the upgrade. If you are upgrading from a previous version or another OCR program, I would suggest contacting ScanSoft directly and see what they will do to help you with pricing.

www.scansoft.com

Ten Years Ago

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

A look back at a column that describes the process of getting a new hard disk — in 1992

Here's a quiz: Why is upgrading your IBM PC like going to the dentist? It's not — going to the dentist is a lot more fun.

It's no joke. I hate upgrading because it's a day of tinkering with the insides of my computer. But I had to get a larger hard disk because I switched to Windows. Applications written for Windows take up humongous amounts of hard disk space and there's little chance that the trend will stop. Microsoft's Word for Windows, for example, gobbles up 12 megabytes and Corel Draw takes about 14 megabytes.

Most users have hard disks ranging in size from the older 30 megabyte (the one I'm still using) to about 200 megabytes. Larger sizes are available and many people are looking towards the future, buying disks as big as 384MBs. I predict that within two years, 1 gigabyte disks (that's 1000 megabytes) will be on many machines. But for now — with hard disks dropping in price — I recommend a minimum 200MB hard disk on a new system or 120MB on an upgrade.

There's more than one way to add a new hard disk and how you do it depends on your budget and your existing system.

Quantum's Plus Hardcard is not the least expensive but it is the quickest, easiest way to upgrade. For about $400, you get 105MBs of disk storage on an add-in card — and no installation hassles. Putting in the Hardcard will take less then fifteen minutes from start to finish.

(Continued from page 1)

Room for Advertisement

00C   Windows Loaded Correctly This Time

00D   User Error; Lemming Not Found

00E   Open Standard Encountered; Attempting to Redmondize

00F   Reserved for Future Coding Errors

010   Virus Error - Other Applications Will Be Closed Instead

011   Orwell Not Found; You Must Use MSN

012   Cash Underflow — Credit Card Number Will Be Assimilated

013   Keyboard Error; User Must Learn to Slow Down

014   User Error; Reading License Agreement Mandatory to Continue

015   Error Message Deleted

016   Expected Error Did Not Occur; Attempting to Restart Error Sequence

017   Multitasking Attempted; System Confused

018   Network Error — Your Crash Will Be Replicated to All Stations

019   Freedom-of-Choice Error; Select a Microsoft Browser to Continue

01A   Insult Detected - Your Bill Gates Joke Will Be Deleted

01B   Error Removing Temp File; a Permanent File Will Be Substituted

01C   Wrong Disk Formatted. Sorry About That.

01D   Mandatory Error Inserted to Meet Error Quota

01E   Please Insert Your Favorite Error Here

01F   Error in Progress; Please Wait....

020   Unknown Error Occurred But Was Lost. Windows Will Try To Remember

021   Error Parsing Error List; Please Wait For Next Error

022   Upgrade Error; Please Format Your Drive And Reload Everything

Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC) Meetings

The May WAC Meetings will be held on Saturday, August 17 and September 21, 12:30-3:30 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia. You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC An-

From The DealsGuy

Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group

This was a frustrating month for me. I certainly get a lot of junk e-mail. I have used Eudora Pro version 4 as my e-mail software for some time because it was doing what I wanted and I feel I have fewer consequences if I trigger a virus. Most spam I delete by looking at the header, although with my version, I have not found a way to turn off the message preview.

One night I was deleting spam and all of a sudden the program froze when I hit delete. I had to use ctrl-alt-delete to close the program and even had to reboot. From then on, I had problems with Eudora (couldn't delete) and it finally would reboot my computer when I tried to start the program, causing an improper shutdown because it started scandisk on the startup. I removed Eudora and reinstalled it.

It ran pretty good for a couple of days, but finally the same thing happened again so I tried using Outlook with the same results, but worse. At the same time, I seemed to be having problems with other things on my machine. I suspected a virus, but my Panda AV found nothing when I scanned my drives and Panda updates each day. Things got so bad that I finally had a friend help me check things out, then Fdisk my hard disk and reinstall the OS in case there was a strange virus.

In the meantime, I used my laptop for a few days to download my e-mail and read it. All of a sudden the same thing happened. Eudora locked up when I tried to delete a spam message. In each case, there was no attachment. These spam messages were very colorful as though they reached out to the Web, as many of the other spam messages do. After that, I stopped using the laptop because I had no AV on it and wondered if perhaps whatever was affecting my desktop machine had spead to my laptop through the network.

At this point, I am reloading software on my desktop machine and trying to figure out what to do with my laptop. I am certainly going to install an AV on it, which I already have. It will be the Panda Titanium, which ran invisibly on my desktop machine. Panda gave me their Platnum to try so I'm putting it on the desktop. I certainly hope it is telling me the truth. I would think that after a month of updates, it would have caught any virus that was a month old. Another friend thinks my machine simply ran out of resources. I'm skeptical on that one because of the corruption.

I hope my machine is clean when I send this out. At any rate, I have very little this month because vendors are not responding, and two deals are still cooking, not to mention the lack of time. One item is from our good friend Dave Whittle for MGI software. Roxio recently acquired MGI and since Roxio hasn't communicated any plans for supporting users groups, Dave is proactively reducing his inventory of MGI-logo software.

Another item is something I saw demonstrated at a user group meeting I attended, and the members all liked it. Let's take a look at them.

Dave's Deals

I'm inserting Dave's words: "PhotoSuite is the all-time best-selling, easy-to-learn and easy-to-use digital photography favorite. It's an all-in-one package offering digital photo editing, stitching, touchup, organization, enhancement, ready-made templates, web site creation, e-mail sharing, and much more.

"VideoWave 5 is an all-time favorite digital video editing package offering easy-to-learn video editing, plenty of special effects, transitions, text effects, slow and fast motion, automatic scene detection, and now, DVD authoring and CD and DVD burning. Make up to a 20-minute DVD with just a CD-R and a CD burner!

"PhotoVista 2.0 is the best way to create an immersive 3D panorama that gives you the power to share that 'being there' feeling with family and friends.

"MGI Cinematic is video at its very easiest for home users and novices. You shoot the video; we'll make the movie! Offering much of the power of VideoWave, it has a wizard-driven interface and extra transitions and templates especially for home movies.

"PhotoSuite Mobile Edition is for Palm-OS handhelds, including any Palm, Handspring or Clie, including color or black and white units. It simplifies the storing and sharing of your digital pictures and video on your Palm-powered handheld device.

"MGI PhotoSuite 4 Platinum Edition — (retail, $49.99). Special $18.00, saving $31.99.

(Continued from page 13)

MGI VideoWave 5 — (retail $129.99). Special $50.00, saving $79.99.

Bundle of PhotoSuite 4 + VideoWave 5 — (retail $179.98). Special $65.00, saving $114.98.

MGI PhotoVista 2.0 — (retail $49.99). Special $20.00, saving $29.99.

MGI Cinematic — (retail $89.99). Special $35.00, saving $54.99.

MGI PhotoSuite Mobile Edition — (retail $24.95). Special $10, saving $14.94.

Any 3 products -- (retail up to $269.97) — only $80, saving $189.97.

Any 4 products — (retail up to $319.96) — only $90, saving $229.96.

"Add $7.95 for shipping. (Dave says he'll offer FREE S&H **IF** you write 'DealsGuy' on your order!) "You may order by US mail if you pay by check or money order, or by e-mail, fax or phone if you pay with VISA or Master-Card. Please provide your name, complete mailing address, phone number and/or e-mail address along with the product(s) you'd like and the total price you expect to pay based on the above. Mail orders to:

Webworking Services, 653 N 600 E, Springville, UT 84663. Phone orders to 1-801-489-0605. Fax orders to 1-801-489-0609. E-mail orders to orders@webworkingservices.com.

"Don't miss out on the great prices for these highly popular, highly-touted products. Tens of thousands have been sold to user group members nationwide during the past three years. These are the easiest to learn and the easiest to use products you can find, yet they're powerful enough for almost everyone, including many professionals!"

I've watched Dave's presentation a number of times and have always been impressed with what he can do with all these products. I own one MGI product and it certainly did what I wanted easily.

What, Another Free Office Suite!

I was at a Space Coast PC Users Group meeting one evening and their very able Webmaster, Curt Potsic, did a

great demo on this fine office suite that will do the job if you don't need the gargantuan work of MS Office or Corel Office Suite. He was even using voice recognition during his demo. I took the description below off the Web.

"EasyOffice 2001, a Powerful but easy-to-use office suite. EasyOffice includes Easy Word, Easy Spreadsheet, Easy Presentation, Easy Bar Coder, Easy Web Page Creator, Easy Contact Manager, Easy Bookkeeper and Easy Speaker. EasyOffice is self-explanatory — No manuals to read. EasyOffice automatically gets you working with the Internet — one click sends your document as e-mail. Save your files on the Internet. Create great looking Web pages. EasyOffice 2002 is compatible with Microsoft files."

It's hard to find the freeware version, but when I looked it was at http://www.e-press.com/demo_downloads.html. I'm told it's also on ZDNet and c/net. http://www.download.com, doing a search for EasyOffice. Or try http://www.winsite.com, http://www.tucows.com and http://www.zdnet.com doing a search for EasyOffice.

It is only free for personal use. However, I saw it on the Provantage.com site for $21.00 and it would be worth that to be able to avoid the nag screens and be able to download the upgrades to it when they come out, if I understood it right. Be sure and read all the latest improvements introduced this year, such as its EazyZip, EazyBackup, etc. What a deal this is.

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused, or disgruntled, I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [Bobclick@dealsguy.com]. Visit my Web site at [http://www.dealsguy.com] for past columns. There are also interesting articles from user group newsletters on my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.

(Continued from page 11)

A friend of mine chose a neat alternative and upgraded with a Bernoulli storage device. Instead of a "fixed" disk — one that stays in the computer — Bernoulli lets you remove their 90MB disk. The internal Bernoulli drive is discounted to under $800 and is a good solution as you can buy more disks (at about $150 each) when your storage needs increase. My friend keeps Windows applications on one disk, shareware on another and DOS programs on a third. You're also able to move the data to another computer via the portable disk, an added benefit.

The traditional upgrade path is to add a hard disk to your existing system which means the drive you purchase must match the controller card that's already plugged into one of your system's expansion slots. Older machines usually have an RLL or MFM interface but newer machines come with faster IDE (integrated drive electronics) controllers, the current standard. Most controller cards manage up to two hard disks along with the two floppy drives. Some IDEs include parallel and serial ports used to attach modems and printers.

If you have an IDE controller, I recommend you stay with it. On one IDE machine, I upgraded and choose a fast Conner hard disk because of their reputation for long life expectancy and fast access time. Their 120MB model (CP30104) will set you back about $400 and their 212MB (model CP320) is about $560.

Macintosh owners, however, have a secret recently available to IBMs: Small Computer System Interface (SCSI) adapters. SCSI, pronounced "scuzzy," lets you attach up to seven devices onto one internal controller card. If you're upgrading a hard disk and think you may want a CD ROM player (also called a reader) in the near future, consider the SCSI adapter. You can daisy chain the hard disk, CD ROM player, a tape backup and up to four peripherals.

Adaptec's fast SCSI adapter, the one I'm using, even lets you connect up to two floppy drives, a valuable addition. If you choose to upgrade with SCSI, make sure you check with the hard disk manufacturer to see which controller cards are compatible. I tried the Adaptec with a Conner SCSI drive and had no problems. If you run

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Article Submissions

Articles, helpful hints, and other items of interest to readers of the NCTCUG Journal are always welcome and will be published as soon as possible after submission. Priority is given to members' contributions. Items may be submitted via modem to the BBS or on diskette. Submissions to the BBS should be uploaded to the Newsletter Conference and a message left for the Editor. Files should be straight ASCII, unformatted, with C/R only at end of paragraphs; no indents for paragraphs should be used. Preferred format for diskettes is MS-DOS 3½ 720k or 1.44Mb. Diskettes in other formats may be submitted but there will be a considerable delay in processing. If absolutely necessary, items may be submitted in hardcopy only but these will also meet with delay.

Membership Policy

The National Capital Tandy Computer Users Group, Inc. is a non-profit [501-c(3)] organization founded in 1977 to educate users of all Tandy computers and MS-DOS compatible computers. Membership dues are $25.00 (U.S.Funds) per year, with a $5 surcharge for international mail. Membership in NCTCUG includes membership in all SIGs, access to the BBS and software libraries, and subscription to the Journal published 10 times per year. Applications may be obtained at any club meeting, by downloading from the BBS, by calling one of the officers or board members, or by writing to the club. A sample newsletter, membership application and related information may be obtained by enclosing $1 and mailing your request to Jim Rhodes, 201 S. Kensington Street, Arlington VA 22204.

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Is no longer in operation. It has been replaced by the 'compucenter' mailing list at http://groups.yahoo.com/

If you are moving

Please send your change of address to the club PO box as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.
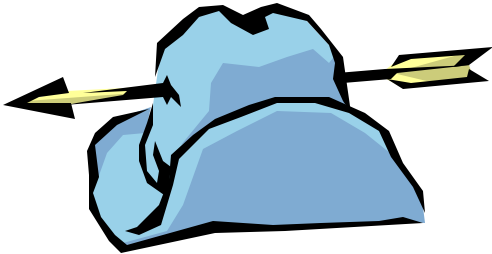
into trouble, get in touch with CORELSCSI, a Canadian company that supplies special software for a wide array of SCSI devices.

While SCSI offers faster access and more flexibility, it isn't for everyone. On uncomplicated home machines, upgrading to SCSI should present no problem and you can likely do it yourself. But in business settings — especially if you're on a network — you may need to hire a technician for help.
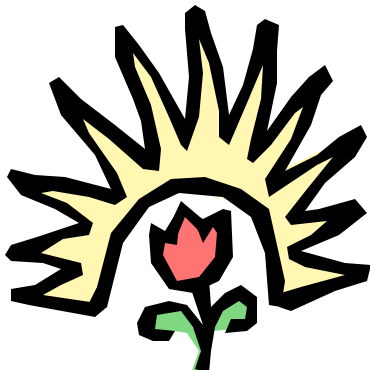
So what will it be: upgrade or go to the dentist? I'll let you make your own decision. I've already made mine.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.
This article is brought to you by the EditorialCommittee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

August/September 2002

1st Wed. (8/7, 9/4) **7 p.m.**   Virginia General Meeting

4th Wed (8/28, 9/25) **7 p.m.** Internet SIG

3rd Monday (9/16; no meeting in August) **7 p.m.** Board of Directors

All meetings are at **Carlin Hall**, 5711 S. 4th St., Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50.

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