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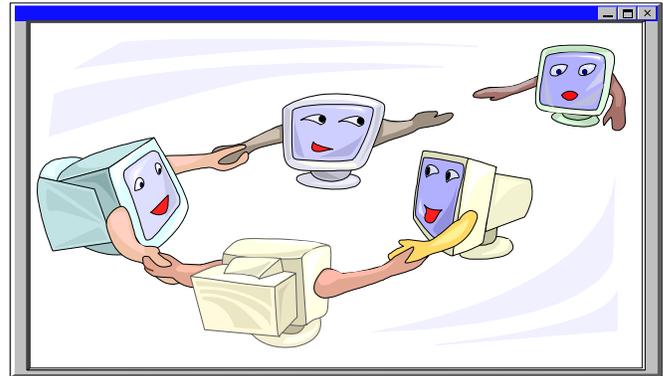
Volume 29 Issue 7

Browsing WebRings: Communities Of Web Sites

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2

If the Internet is the largest library created in human history, where are its card catalog and friendly librarians to explain how the Internet's "shelves" are arranged? Where's a rhyme and reason for how things are arranged, and the Dewey Decimal System <http://www.oclc.org/dewey/> when we need it most? Search engines and directories like Google www.google.com and Yahoo! www.yahoo.com are helpful but can be overwhelming. And search results often appear jumbled, lacking the comfort of neighborhood libraries which shelve related books together—so that if you find an interesting mystery, cookbook, or science tome, its nearby shelf neighbors may be an unanticipated bonus.

But the Internet does offer the equivalent of library shelves, called WebRings ("rings" for short). Not stashed where you can physically touch them, rings are linked sets of Web sites concerned with specific topics.

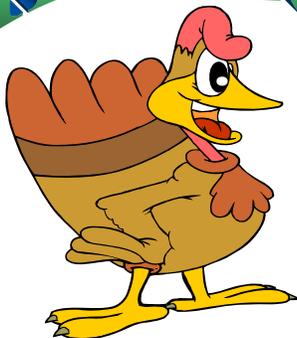


So rings exist for diverse topics—physical fitness, photography, falconry, biking, etc. In fact, those topics were all featured on WebRing.com <http://dir.webring.com/rw>, a directory of rings, on the day I browsed it.

The WebRing concept is simple: Webmasters of sites with a common theme agree to link to each other, and to a hub Web site; each ring site includes links named Ring Hub, Random, Previous, Next, and Join Now. A ring's hub is like the center of a circle, with all the ring's sites connected to it. The hub describes the ring, gives statistics (how many Web sites belong, how many times the hub has been visited, etc.), and lists member sites with brief descriptions.

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“Suddenly...” Or “I Didn’t Do Anything!” Part 1

Or — A Month’s Log Of A Sun City Anthem Computer Club “House Call” Doctor

By Charles W, Davis, Newsletter Editor & Webmaster, Sun City Anthem Computer Club, Henderson, NV Chas(at)anthemwebs.com www.myscacc.org

In working to help Club members and others with their computer problems during the Thursday morning Computer Talk sessions, or more often when making “house calls,” I often hear strange tales that usually involve acts of some gremlin like creature. However, gremlins are more closely related to mechanical problems in aircraft.

Generally the caller’s comments start with “all of a sudden” or “suddenly” and end with “I didn’t do anything.” I can only surmise that it was probably one of cartoonist Bill Keane’s ghostly imps “Not Me.” “Nobody” or even “Ida Know.”

Some recent examples

“Suddenly...”

One morning a couple of weeks ago, I received a call and the person on the other end of the phone connection was obviously very upset. She exclaimed: “Suddenly all of my desktop icons are gone! I didn’t do anything! Please help me!”

This situation seemed to be serious. I had never heard of this happening. I didn’t have anything on the calendar for another two hours so I hopped in my 1999 “Sapphire Blue Mica” (marketing division color name of course) Miata for the short drive up the hill to her Tall Mesa Village home. She was right, the icons were indeed missing. A simple right click on the blank desktop, hover over Arrange Icons by: and then click on Show Desktop Icons. This was definitely an act by the “little people.” As I said, I hadn’t heard of this situation before. Therefore, it must have been “Not Me” wishing to get off the hook by whispering in my ear how I might arrive at the solution. Since the club member was in the back room and the house girl had let me in, I quickly left the scene.

The next day the same lady called and said that her “My Computer” Icon was missing from the desktop. Realizing that it wasn’t the normal desktop shortcut icon, I was puzzled. Not thinking things through, I again slid onto the seat in the Miata and shortly arrived on the scene. Sure enough most icons were visible, but the “My Computer” icon was not in its normal position. It wasn’t immediately visible. I later noticed the top edge of the icon protruding just above the task bar. Once again, I moved the pointer to a blank spot on the desktop, a right click on the mouse and chose Arrange Icons by and chose Name. The My Desktop icon again assumed its prominence at the upper left. She said that she didn’t drag and drop it down there. As I picked up a \$20 donation to the Club, I assumed that it must have been “Nobody” and left for home.

“Suddenly...”

Monday morning is usually the time for the phone calls to begin. On a recent Monday, the caller sheepishly states that “suddenly I can’t access the Internet.” I recognized that the person speaking to me is the same one whose 18 year old granddaughter had placed hundreds of malware programs on his laptop two weeks before. At that time

I had suggested a router/firewall so that she could plug her laptop directly to the router with Internet access. He had immediately gone out and purchased and installed one. Oh yes, the granddaughter had been there over the weekend and had brought her own laptop computer.

The blue Miata once again headed up the hill (from our home in the Valley View Village all destinations seem to be “up the hill.”) to their home in Arroyo Vista Village. In just a few minutes, I found



that the dear child didn't plug the cable into the router as instructed, but had used grandpa's computer. Since she was an AOL user, she attempted to change Gramps' Accounts from Cox Cable to AOL dialup and failed. It would have been so easy for her to have just gone to AOL using Internet Explorer. She left for school Sunday evening and didn't mention a thing to Gramps. That way, she didn't have to tell on either "Ida Know" or "Not Me." I picked up the \$20 donation to the club and was soon on my way.

An admonition: Set up a Guest Account without Administrative rights. Place a User name and password on the Administrative (your's) account.

"All of a Sudden..."

"All of a sudden" turns up many times a month and in some unusual situations. Last week, I received a call from a member that was using Microsoft Office Outlook. It seems that she had been entering information into a new contact when "all of a sudden" she couldn't enter information. She explained that she had been using Outlook and contacts for years and had never had this problem. Since this didn't seem (to me) that this required immediate attention, I arranged an appointment for the next morning. My Miata and I arrived at her Golf Mesa Village home just as the Grandfather clock guarding the entry was announcing that it was 10:00. Grandfather clocks that I am aware of don't announce "a.m." or "p.m."

She met me at the door and we proceeded to the office and she took her place in front of her computer to show me what was happening. She began keying in the house number, using the numeric key pad and just as she had said, nothing worked as expected. I immediately saw why this had happened so "suddenly." Apparently "Nobody" had pressed the Num Lock key thereby turning it off. So as she would enter a house number, things went wild as the 2,4, 6, and 8 keys acted as direction keys, 7 & 9 were Home and Page Up respectively and 1 & 3 were End and Page down. I asked her to press the Num Lock key and "all of a sudden" the problem was resolved. I collected the \$20 donation check to the club and was homeward bound — downhill of course.

"Suddenly..."

On another Monday, I received a call from a member stating that she had recently upgraded to MS Office 2003 and a short time later, suddenly she could no longer access MS Publisher files. This was the result of someone else messing with functions that they should have stayed away from. Support teams at Norton will vow "Not me." But when the lady was directed to an article titled "How to use Office programs with the Norton Anti-Virus Office plug-in" she was able to resolve the problem as I watched. This article can help you extricate yourself and may be found at: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/329820/en-us>

It is maddening to think that one, nay thousands upon thousands, must jump through hoops because a bunch of programmers at Symantec (Norton) can't get it right.

I have never understood their automatic plug-in installation. At least they should tell the user, including a list of possible problems and their resolution, and let them make a decision as to whether to install the plug in. Who needs viruses when "reputable" software manufacturers can do things like this to you?

A long time ago, in computer time, but actually just over a year ago, I stopped paying the extortion money for antivirus software and have used the free AVG antivirus, which is available from <http://free.grisoft.com/doc/1>

"Suddenly..."

"Suddenly" you can't open Word or most other Microsoft Office products. This happened because you owned a Hewlett Packard multi-function printer with a flash memory card reader. It seems that a security update messed with the logic for these systems and caused much havoc around the world. A follow-on update was released to affected computers during the 4th week in April. If you are still having the problem, go to Start then Windows Update, download and install all Critical updates. It seems that "Ida Know" visited Microsoft's Redmond campus...

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Suddenly...

Last week, one of your neighbors in the Valley View Village went to his neighbors stating that his phone went “dead.” On investigation, it was learned that he had ordered and installed a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system. Some of the equipment had arrived, but due to a transposition of digits when entering the credit card number, the important “Silver” box did not get shipped. “Ida Know” didn’t know how the mix up occurred. “Who Knows” stated that the customer probably discarded the silver box with the packaging. However, the land line telephone provider had been notified to discontinue the service. “Dead line!”

An admonition: Always check the contents of packages to make certain that all components are included before installing anything!

The Federal Communications Commission has a web site that explains most aspects of VoIP:
<http://www.fcc.gov/voip/>

Not so “Suddenly...”

This particular call arrived on a Tuesday, so I was surprised to hear: “Suddenly I can send e-mail but I can’t receive any messages. Everything times out. I’ve called Cox Communications and since I use Office Outlook 2003, they weren’t much help.” This phone call came in at a time that Vickie was out and wouldn’t return for a while, so I slid behind the wheel of the Miata and headed for Ridgecrest Village to see what had happened so “suddenly.”

It took several minutes of attempting to send messages to the owner’s e-mail address. Sure enough the message would be sent, but no incoming messages. After some time it would all time out. The first inbound message would never arrive. I found that there was no Internet access using Internet Explorer. I installed Firefox from my USB Flash memory and was then able to access the internet. At this time clues began to appear one-by-one.

Norton Internet Security was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet — twice!

ZoneAlarm was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet!

Oops! Only one program firewall at a time is allowed. Since the member’s Norton subscription was about to expire, I downloaded AVG antivirus to his desktop (free at <http://free.grisoft.com>), shut off the cable modem, went to uninstall Norton System-Works and discovered two versions. I uninstalled both. When I attempted to install AVG antivirus, the program indicated that the version of the Roxio CD creator contained code that was incompatible with AVG, and it provided a link for an update. I installed the update and then successfully installed the AVG antivirus. Then I turned on the cable modem and downloaded updates. I was grateful to the AVG programmers to make that test and inform the user. Suddenly, I decided that I like the AVG anti-virus program and its creators even more than in the past.

Now I felt that I could address the original problem. I opened Office Outlook, and it proceeded to download a monstrous movie clip — 9.87MB! It was able to complete the download due to the fact that Norton wasn’t scanning inbound e-mail messages.

“Suddenly” wasn’t really all that sudden. The second and third firewall programs were installed over a period of time, but the problem didn’t manifest itself until the arrival of the large file. As an aside, it was a clip from a newscast relating the story of an autistic youth that had been the go-fer for a high school basketball team. On the last game of his senior year, the coach (dad) suited him up put him in to play. I believe that I saw through the tears that welled up in my eyes over 21 points racked up — all three pointers. I’m not a sports fan, but am a fan of the underdog! \$20 more for the Club’s treasury.

This article was originally published in *Bits, PCs & Macs*. *Bits PCs & Macs* is the newsletter of the Sun City Anthem Computer Club. All copies are available online at: <http://www.myscacc.org/newsletters.htm>

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How To Know What's In A File Or Folder Before You Open It

By Linda Gonse, Editor, Nibbles & Bytes, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, California

Sometimes you just don't know what's in a file by the title alone. You may have created it so long ago, you've forgotten. Or, you received a file from someone who gave it a cryptic name. Most of the time, if you are like me, you bite the bullet and open the darned thing. This means waiting for an application to load before the file opens. If your attention doesn't wander, you'll spend exasperating seconds — maybe even a minute or more — drumming impatiently on the desk. Otherwise, you get distracted looking through papers or books in your To Read stack, and jerk to awareness 10 minutes after the file has opened.

Either way, you don't get the information you need when you want it.

Call it secret, or just overlooked information, but there are ways to glimpse file information so you don't have to open the files or folders to see what they contain.

FILES — Stay with me while I open my OR-COPUG folder in the Details view and click on a subfolder titled Ira Wilsker. There's a list of files in

the right window pane that I have saved Ira Wilsker's emails. But, now I'm not sure what they contain. So, I go to View on the menu bar and check to be sure that Status Bar has a check next to it. Next, I click on the file titled "ATT00010.doc." [figure 1]

The author of the file, the actual title of the file, the date it was created and the size of the file all appear at the bottom of the pane in the status bar. [figure 2]

Or, I could just hover the mouse over the file name for a second or two and a popup will show me the file information. [figure 3] If you don't see a popup when you hover your mouse over a file, in an open folder go to Tools > Folder Options > View. Then, scroll almost to the bottom of the list and check the box next to "Show pop-up description for folder and desktop items."

The third option for checking on file innards is to right click on the file name, and go to Properties in the drop down list. Left click on Properties and go to the Summary tab. The author's name and the title of the document will be there. [figure 4, next page]

(Continued on page 7)



Figure 1: To add the Status Bar to your folders, you have to select it under View.

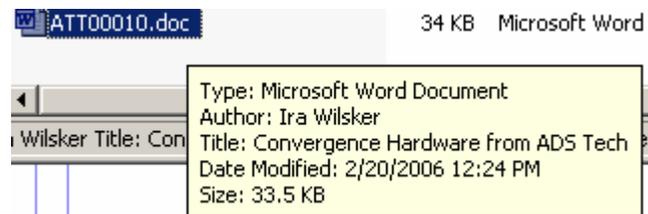


Figure 3: Hover your cursor over a file for a popup box with the file information in it.

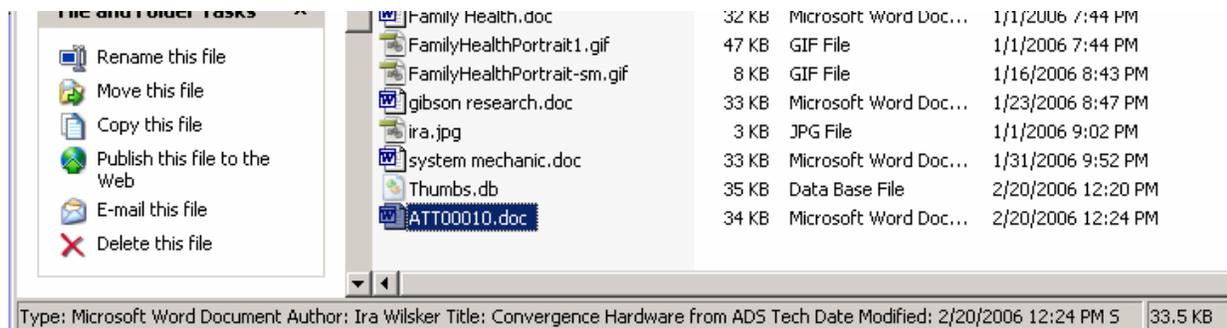


Figure 2: Information about a file shows up in the Status Bar at the bottom of an open folder.



Figure 4: The Properties box defaults to author and title. Other information can be added to this file, also, at the time the document is created or modified.

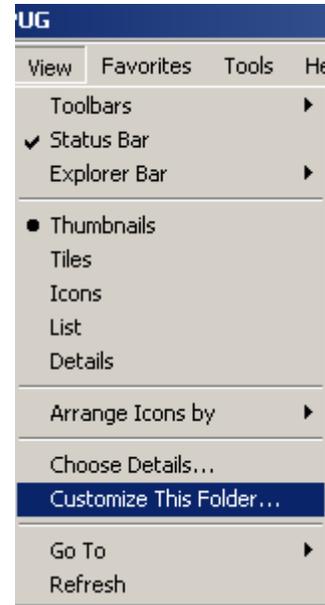


Figure 5

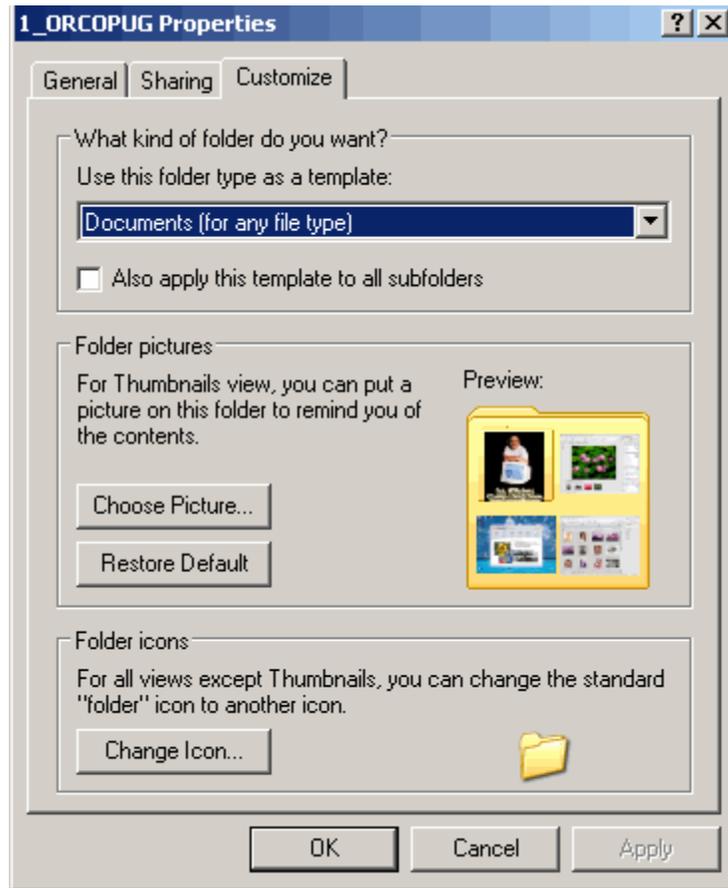


Figure 6

(Continued from page 5)

FOLDERS—You can make searching through folders easier (and even more fun) by using a custom picture to remind you of the contents. Or, you could assign a custom icon for the folder so it will stand out from the rest of the folders.

Go to the settings under the View menu in an open folder. First select Thumbnails. Then, go back into the list and click on Customize this Folder. [figure 5]

Click on the Customize tab and then the “Choose Picture” button. [figure 6] Find a picture in the folder (or in any other folder) that will remind you of what types of files are in this folder. For example, my folders are filled with articles for the newsletter from various writers. One folder contains articles by Ira Wilsker and images for his articles, so it makes sense to put Ira’s photo on the folder. I browse to his picture, select it, click Open, then click Apply and OK.

Take a look at the folder now (below) in Thumbnail view. There’s no way you can miss this folder, or forget what is inside of it! [figure 7]

In other views, such as Icon view, you won’t be able to see a picture on the folder. But, you can still make the folder stand out from the rest. Or, if you have a group of folders that are similar, you can change all the folder icons so they will stand out as a group and be easier to locate. [figure 8]

To change a folder’s icon, go back to View and Customize This Folder. At the bottom of the dialog box, click on the Change Icon button, and select an icon. Click Apply and OK, and go take a look at the folders in icon view. [figure 9]

It’s hard to miss the special icon, isn’t it?

Try it yourself and discover how easy it can be to identify the folders you need, instantly and without guesswork.

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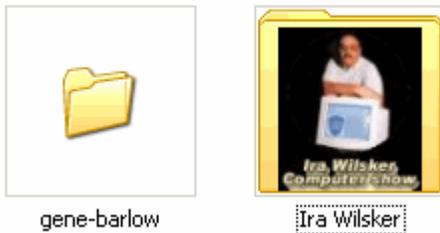


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Add A New Dimension To Your Browsing

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor

It's hard to imagine a different world. A great early science fiction book *Flatland* [www.eldritchpress.org/ea/FL.HTM] describes life in a two-dimensional world, with creatures unable to imagine the third dimension we take for granted. And modern physics' "string theory" [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/] speculates that our world really has eleven dimensions.

While I can't imagine those extra dimensions, we spend time in a two-dimensional world every day—it's how most people browse the Web. But even that has changed, as browsers have evolved from displaying one site per window to more flexible tabbed browsing, displaying many Web pages in a single window.

So now it's interesting and fun to take three-dimensional browsing out for a cruise, surfing the Internet, courtesy of Browse3D. This visual-browsing style lets you see forward and backward, where you've been and where you're going. It's great for browsing that involves a lot of forward-and-backward navigation, or that requires following many Web links.

When first started, Browse3D offers abundant helpful tips for use. These can be scrolled all at once or browsed each time the program runs. And built-in Help provides a comprehensive tutorial highlighting features and capabilities.

This tool wraps around Internet Explorer — the vendor calls it a "reverse plug-in"—to display Web pages on multiple walls, shown three dimensionally

on our two-dimensional monitors.



The main straight-ahead wall is the home view, a browser window controlled by a tool bar. It can be zoomed to occupy the full screen, momentarily hiding the side walls. The left wall shows your browsing history, pages you've visited. It's much easier navigating to these pages visually vs. the usual cryptic browser back button: simply right click a page to bring it back to the home view.

The right wall is a multi-talented workhorse. It can be automatically filled with pages linked from the current home view, avoiding interrupting current attention while allowing instant jumps to linked pages. A handy use for this is pre-loading top entries in search engine results lists. The right wall can also be used like a corkboard, loaded with pages to be kept handy for quick reference; this is called making it "sticky". And it can be put in "4-live" mode which displays four active browser windows with clickable pages. This allows quick site viewing and comparing, or monitoring multiple auto-updating pages simultaneously, such as saving/tracking multiple auction items though the sale process. Right-wall pages can be rearranged, scrolled, flipped between Auto Crawl and sticky. And right-wall and sticky contents are separately cleared.

Pop-up window behavior—normally an annoyance—is customizable: ignore, open in new window, open on right wall, open in current browser, or ask for instructions.

An elegant "rooms" feature extends browser bookmarks/favorites, allowing saving and sharing collections of Web pages as single files. Any selected pages can be grouped; you might gather family, recipe, financial, or technical pages. Rooms can hold static pages (content when pages were collected) or dynamic pages (links to pages as they are when the room is viewed). Opening a room displays pages as they were positioned when the room was saved.

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Getting The Most Viewing Space In The Internet Explorer Window

by Glenn Richards, Emeritus Member of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Leesburg, FL
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The IE window toolbars can take up a lot of space that could be better used to see web page content. This can be especially critical with small monitors and/or with low resolution settings. But even with my 21" monitor at 1280 by 1024 pixels I like to maximize the viewing area. The graphic shows my setup (split into two rows to show the detail).

Below the Title bar are the Menu, Standard Buttons, and Address Bars in one row. Below these is the Links Bar that has the full width of the window for its choices. Note that for the Standard Buttons Bar I have reduced the choices to just Back, Forward, Stop, and Refresh. These are the only tools I use frequently. The functions of some other tools can be found under View, Explorer Bar. Make the selection via menu item View, Toolbars, Customize. Also in the Customize Toolbar window are the options to select "Small icons" and to have "No text labels" — my choices.

Some users may not realize that toolbars can be moved to the row occupied by the Menu Bar, but IE version 6 allows this. To make the move go to View, Toolbars, and uncheck "Lock the Toolbars." This enables vertical bars at the left end of toolbars. These are "Handles" that can be dragged with the mouse cursor. Once a satisfactory arrangement is found, go back and check "Lock the Toolbars." This insures against accidental rearrangement of the toolbars.

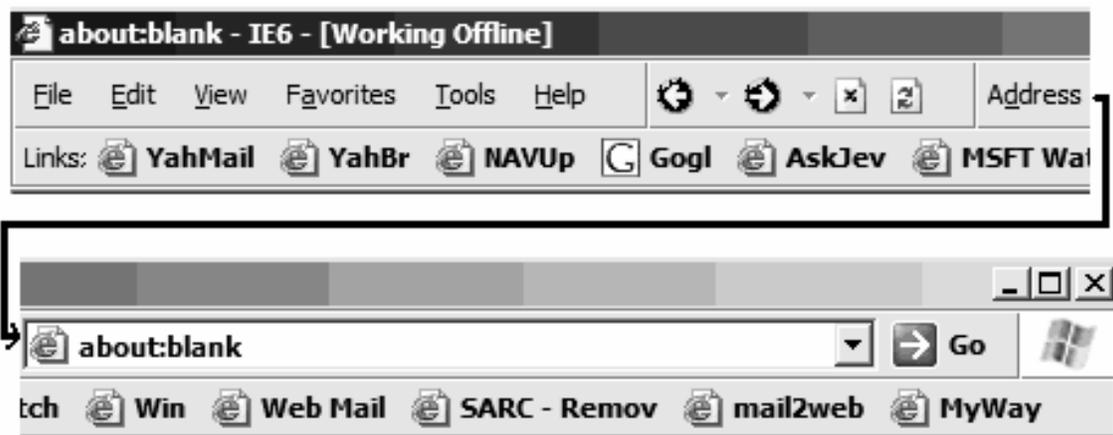
The Links toolbar, a special function of the Favorites menu because Windows and IE make its content available on the toolbar, contains internet shortcuts that I access frequently. Actually, in my system it has more choices than I really need because I have the space for them. And I shorten the references to the web sites they point to to make space for as many as possible. For instance YahMail points to the web page for Yahoo Mail, <http://mail.yahoo.com/>. And NAVUp points to the web site for updating Norton Antivirus references, <http://www.sarc.com/avcenter/download/pages/US-N95.html>. The same shortcuts can be found under menu item Favorites, Links.

Another space saver is shortening the IE program name in the Title bar. Typically it is "Microsoft Internet Explorer." Other info in this bar is the web site or other info. I changed the program name to IE6 to make more space. This involved editing the Registry at HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main to have an entry in the Name column of "Window Title" with a Value data of your choice (like IE6).

One last note is that I set the default Home page to Blank to prevent IE from trying to go to a web site when the window is opened.

Remember to tap the F11 key for more space.

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Windows XP Housecleaning

By Dick Maybach, Member of the Brookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey
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Unless you are careful, after a period of use Windows will begin to slow down. This occurs because many programs are always active, even though you aren't using them and because the number of files increases, which means that searches take longer. Fortunately, Windows XP contains several tools to help you ease these conditions. Using these tools periodically (every month or two is reasonable) will help you keep your PC lean and mean.

Use Disk Cleanup to delete useless files. Right-click on a disk icon in Windows Explorer (C: will be the most rewarding); then click Properties, click the Disk Cleanup button, and select the actions. (I prefer not to compress old files as I've had bad experiences with compression.) Also be sure to check the actions available under the More Options tab, in particular deleting all but the last restore image. Finally search all

your hard drives for the strings "*.tmp" and "*.dmp" in filenames. Delete anything more than a week or so old; however, Windows will refuse to delete any files it considers important.

Go through your saved e-mail and delete old messages. This will reduce the size of the mail database file and help you to find important e-mail more quickly.

Look at the list of installed programs (Start → Control Panel → Add or Remove Programs) and remove any you don't use. Most of us find that new software often is less useful than we expected. Also, many PC manufacturers ship machines with software that we neither ask for nor need. While you're checking, be sure to click on the Add/Remove Windows Components icon in the left margin of the window. You find MS tools that you don't need.

Windows allocates a large portion of your disk space for use by System Restore (Start → All Programs → Accessories → System Tools → System Restore → System Restore Settings). Select each drive and click on the Settings button. Reduce the Disk Space Usage by moving the slider to no greater than 1 GByte on each of your drives. Use less on small drives, especially if they contain nothing but data.

Check the startup folder for programs that automatically start; you will probably find that you don't want many of these running. Start → All Programs → Startup to view the contents of the startup folder. To stop a program from starting automatically right click on its icon then click delete. This does not delete the program; it only stops it from being started at boot-up.

Unfortunately, most programs that start automatically don't appear in the startup folder. To disable these, click Start → Run and type "msconfig". Click the startup tab and uncheck any programs

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Browse3D is easily purchased online and downloaded/installed/registered; a free version lacking a few features is also available. The software requires a relatively powerful PC; it checks operation when installing. But most relatively current PCs should be adequate. Because of how it uses screen space, Browse3D is most impressive on larger monitors.

Company: Browse3D Corporation

Product: Browse3D

Price: Free or \$29.95

URL: www.browse3d.com

Telephone: (888) 444-3200

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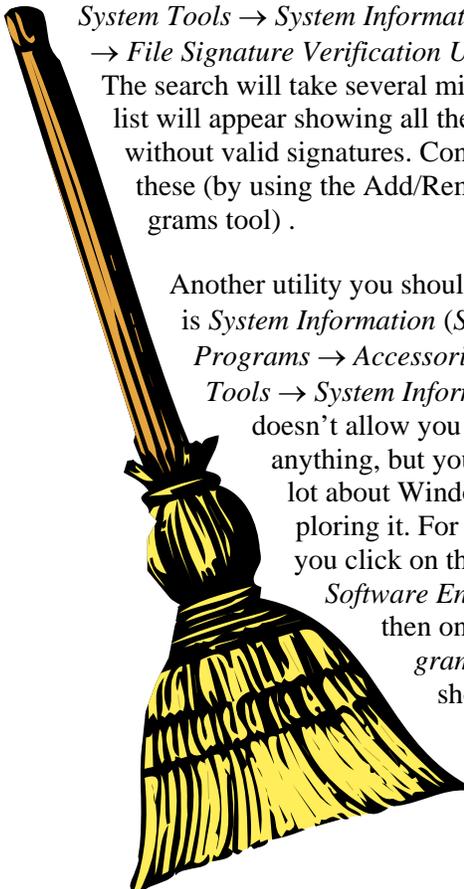
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you don't want to run at startup. When you finish, Windows will ask you to restart. After boot-up you will see a diagnostic screen. On it uncheck the box that displays the diagnostic screen each time you boot.

You can also turn off Windows services that you don't need, but you shouldn't do this unless you are very knowledgeable. However, it doesn't hurt to look at what's running, and you may learn something. Open the Services window by clicking *Start* → *Control Panel* → *Administrative Tools* → *Services* and the System Configuration window by clicking *Start*, then *Run*, typing "msconfig" and selecting the services tab. Move the windows so you can see both. Clicking on a name in the services window will display a short description. Removing a check mark in the System Configuration window will disable that service, but no matter how confident you are, don't disable any service marked "essential".

Check for unsigned files and drivers; these can be corrupted files or programs not approved by Microsoft. Click *Start* → *All Programs* → *Accessories* → *System Tools* → *System Information* → *Tools* → *File Signature Verification Utility* → *Start*. The search will take several minutes; then a list will appear showing all the program files without valid signatures. Consider deleting these (by using the Add/Remove Programs tool).

Another utility you should know about is *System Information* (*Start* → *All Programs* → *Accessories* → *System Tools* → *System Information*). This doesn't allow you to change anything, but you can learn a lot about Windows by exploring it. For instance, if you click on the plus box by *Software Environment* then on *Startup Programs*, it will show you a list (after a pause)



of all the modules that start at boot-up. It shows information in each entry that may enable you to track down a troublesome program. As is common with Windows utilities, you can sort any column by clicking on its header.

If you have problems with a program that ran with an earlier version of Windows, try running them in program compatibility mode. Click *Start* → *All Programs* → *Accessories* → *Program Compatibility Wizard* → *Next* → *Next*. You will see a list of all the installed programs. Select the troublesome program and a compatibility mode (Win 95, Win NT, Win 98/Me, or Win 2000). Clicking *Next* brings up a screen allowing you to set a lower resolution on the screen, which may be needed for very old Windows programs.

You can tune your PC performance with very little risk, even if you are a novice. Right click on *My Computer* in Windows Explorer; then, click *Properties* → *Advanced* → *Performance Settings*. Usually, checking "Let Windows choose what's best for my computer" is satisfactory, but you might to try "Adjust for best performance" if you machine is slow. If you are more adventuresome, you can select *Custom* and disable individual features by unchecking items in the list. If you don't like the result, you can just go back to "Let Windows choose what's best for my computer."

After completing the cleanup check to see if you should defragment your disks. Right click on a disk icon in Windows Explorer; then click *Properties* → *Tools tab* → *Defragment now* → *Analyze button*. If Windows says the disk does not need defragmenting, don't do it. Defragging the C: disk takes a long time, and seldom results in any noticeable performance improvement.

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



APCUG Deals

Judy Taylour, Chair, APCUG Benefits & Services Committee

APCUG does not endorse these products, the offers are sent to you for information only.

Red Mercury

<http://www.red-mercury.com/>

The discount is \$5 off instantly for any of the Acid-Solitaire collection games. If you buy more than one of the games in the collection, you get an additional \$10 off each additional game. The discount ends up being \$14.95 for the first game and \$9.95 for additional games.

WebEyes

<http://webeyes.us/>

\$24.95 / with discount \$19.95 – APCUG is the promotion code

The Internet Explorer software that allows you to adjust type size easily (144 pt) and eliminates scrolling. By clicking on “Read like a book” you can simply turn the pages like a book.

“If you need a little help reading Web pages, you will gladly pull out your wallet for this one!” Sandy Ber-

ger, nationally recognized computer expert and author at CompuKiss.com - Read the complete review at <http://www.compuKiss.com/visioncenterhtm/review380.htm>

LapWorks

<http://lapworks.net>

20% off all products – just enter APCUG20%OFF in the Promo Code Calculator. The discount is valid through June 30, 2006. LapWorks features Laptop legs to cool and elevate your notebook computer; laptop desks that are scientifically proven to significantly reduce heat build-up in your notebook computer; the SwivlPad is an ultra thin turntable or lazy susan that allows you to easily swivel your notebook computer to show the display to another person—it also works with LCD monitors, or similar size objects.

TrendMicro

www.trendmicro.com/offers/usergroup

PC-cillin Internet Security - \$29.95

Corel — 50% off

http://www.corel.com/promotions/cug_usd.html

WordPerfect Office X3: \$159

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X3: \$179

Corel Painter: \$229

Paint Shop Pro X: \$59

Corel Photo Album 6: \$29

Corel Painter Essentials 3: \$99

Prices are US Dollars

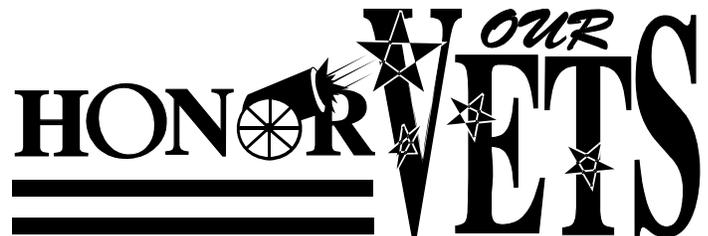


Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC) Meetings

WACUG Meetings will be held on November 18, 2006, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm . at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA [Topic: Internet Security, Debunking Internet Myths]

You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC AnswerLine (voice) at (703) 370-7649. Also see WAC's Web Site at

<http://www.wacug.org/>



Anti-Spyware Basics

By Dave Gerber, Dave's Bits & Bytes, A Periodic Newsletter for the Members of the Sarasota PC User Group and the World!!

Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida www.spcug.org <http://davebytes.com/>

You've just come home with your new computer. How delightful! Now you're ready to surf the web and download some music—legally of course—and send out a few emails to family and friends.

As you're about to plug in the networking cable you remember something the sales associate mentioned.

"Be sure and get some anti-spyware and security stuff".

"Bah," you figure. The guy is just trying to sell you more that you don't want or need, right?

Onward you go, dismissing the comment and salivating as Google pulls up page after page of amazing information about things you never knew existed. Need to know about livestock birthing? No problem! Have a hankering for finding just the right flap settings for your Cessna? Piece of cake!

But wait, what's with these 'extra' windows that keep popping up and obscuring your view? And why is it that your homepage is now set at www.somePornSite.com?

"Hmmm," you wonder, thinking back to what the sales associate said...

Welcome to the Net! You have just been hijacked and had your first "drive-by" install. No—not the type of drive-by from the gang downtown, guns a' blazing, tires screeching—it appears to have come from that "friendly" website who just happened to be pushing some 'extra' software onto unsuspecting users such as yourself.

The scenario above is an all too common occurrence—though, more than likely, excluding both of those searches via Google. And if you did actually perform those searches, you are indeed unique to say

the least. Just don't write me if you're a farmer transporting a pregnant cow in a Cessna. ;-)

And so, some basic security info is at hand. At least, enough to get you down the road to securely surf the Web with confidence.

Here's a list of things you should do before plugging into the Net:

1. Be sure you have both a firewall and anti-virus protection. Without either, it could be literally only 10 or 15 minutes before your system is compromised. Typically, free products give you bare bones applications, which is fine if you're not going to do any heavy surfing. Going to be online 3, 4, 5 hours a day? Make the investment and get a few extra perks.

2. Now that you have a firewall and anti-virus installed, you can go online. Make sure the operating system that came installed by the reseller has all critical patches from Microsoft installed. This single event, should it be skipped could be the most damaging. You see, malware writers know all the exploits and vulnerabilities in the OS, and write accordingly to take advantage of them to deliver their bundles of joy.

3. Find a dependable source for anti-spyware. Many of the most respected applications on this category are free, with some very nice paid versions as well.

Now doing those three simple basic things will get you started. You still need to read up about tweaking Internet Explorer, to help tighten its out of the box security (kind of like adding extra stuff to a new car). Then deciding what kind of security settings or software to use for email.

Hopefully you're not overwhelmed just yet. My purpose is to inform on a basic level for the new user. Once you're up and running, other subjects delving deeper into technical issues can be addressed.

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NCTCUG Ed. note: Be sure to check out the club website page on security:
<http://www.nctcug.org/protection.html>

(Continued from page 1)

WebRing.com combines aspects of a portal site (linking to WebRing-related information and resources), a directory site (providing categories of rings such as Business & Finance, Family & Home, Health & Wellness, and Hobbies & Crafts), and a search tool. Searching is helpful when you're not sure which category includes your topic of interest or when the topic may span categories. For example, searching on "gardening" located 128 WebRings. That doesn't sound like many, but remember that each ring includes a few, dozens, hundreds, or thousands of individual sites. Among the first 20 rings, Friends of the Garden <http://e.webring.com/hub?ring=friendsgarden> has the most members, 243 Web sites. Its cheery greeting reads "Welcome to Friends of the Garden Web Ring. We are the largest gardening Web ring in the WebRing Community! Please visit our members and if you have a gardening web page, consider joining! We welcome both the backyard gardener with his own home page or the commercial grower. All have something interesting to add to our virtual garden tour".

Navigating WebRing.com by topics provides a hierarchical view of its thousands of WebRings—for example, clicking the Science category yields about two dozen disciplines including Astronomy, Biology, Ecology, Energy, etc. Biology includes an amazing 3200 rings, while the new science of Nanotechnology has only one ring.

Ring hubs offer a unique search tool with two pull-down menu choices. You can enter a keyword and search only the ring whose hub you're viewing (the Ring choice), or search the entire WebRing.com list of rings (the WebRing search choice). Searching within the ring can help narrow search results. For example, the Amateur and Pro Photography ring has 87 sites. If I'm interested in English photography, rather than touring the entire ring—entertaining though that might

be—I can use the ring search for "England" and find the four relevant sites.

Clicking the Random link is like closing your eyes and hopping to an unknown site—it can be entertaining or not, depending on luck. Previous/Next links navigate around a ring's sites so you'll eventually return to your starting point. And Join Now is for Webmasters to enroll sites within a ring; this requires first creating a free account on WebRing.com.

WebRings don't replace search engines, directories, portals, one's own bookmarks, and referrals from friends for finding worthwhile material. And they only link sites that have chosen to enroll. But they're a useful and powerful tool for locating and navigating congenial and related Web sites, and they give topics such as gardening and photography much more a sense of community than do bare links from a search engine.

This article originated on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, <http://www.aarp.org/computers>, and is copyrighted by AARP. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, or transferred, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to AARP. It should be unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail Gabe Goldberg at gabe@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense.

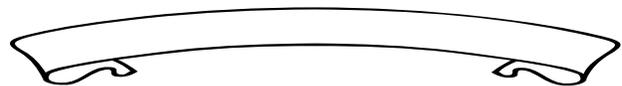
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August 2006 note from APCUG: We won't be receiving any more articles from Gabe Goldberg since his assignment for writing articles for the AARP Computers and Technology section of <http://www.aarp.com> has ended. You might want to send them an e-mail letting them know how important you think it is that AARP continue to feature computer how-to articles, reviews, etc. http://www.aarp.org/about_aarp/contact/
You can still read some of his articles online at: <http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/>

NCTCUG Ed. note: We will continue to print Gabe's articles that we had already received!

Club Election Notice

Elected at the October 4, 2006 Annual Meeting:
President James Rhodes
1st VP Ron Schmidt **2nd VP** Roger Fujii
Treasurer Paul Howard
Secretary Roger Arnold
At-large directors:
Bill Walsh **Mel Mikosinski**
John Keys **Nick Wenri**



Washington Area User Group Partners
Working Together For Our Members
NCTCUG.ORG WACUG.ORG
CPCUG.ORG

For more information see:
<http://www.nctcug.org/waugp.html>

29 Useful Bookmarks — Part 4

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET www.tugnet.org



The Web is a marvelous resource, and most of us come nowhere near tapping its full potential. I've attempted here to list 29 websites that without any necessary downloading provide exceedingly useful free non-specialized services and tools, that require no particular knowledge except how to navigate the World Wide Web.

16. Anybirthday <http://anybirthday.com>

A fun site that can divulge your friend's birthday or even tell you where to mail the card.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (<http://theskillspool.org>). He is a volunteer with TUGNET Help-Contact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

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17. TrackEngine www.trackengine.com

Notifies you via email of changes in Web pages that you select. You can preview the changes or view the whole page via email, with changes highlighted. Choose the Web address of a neighborhood theater, to see what plays are coming up. Or see every new installment of a favorite newspaper column, without having to buy the paper.

18. GovBenefits.gov <http://govbenefits.gov>

A source of information on over 400 government-funded programs that extend benefits for which you may qualify, including compensated volunteering. Features a confidential questionnaire designed to point you to the most likely matches.

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NCTCUG Information

NCTCUG, Post Office Box 949, Arlington VA 22216

Club Information call: 301-577-7899

Web Site: www.nctcug.org

Officers and Directors

All officer terms expire 2007

President	Jim Rhodes	703-931-7854
1st VP	Ron Schmidt	301-577-7899
2nd VP	Roger Fujii	703-426-5917
Treasurer	Paul Howard	703-860-9246
Secretary	Roger Arnold	301-946-7770

Director: term expires

Bill Walsh	2008	703-241-8141
Mel Mikosinski	2008	
John Keys	2008	703-451-0896
Nick Wenri	2008	703-759-3938
Fred Cook	2007	703-815-1423
JJ Davies	2007	703-379-9222
Sy Fishbein	2007	703-536-5894
Dean Mires	2007	301-931-2400

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 1978 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 8 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.

Advertisement Policy

Members' advertisements: Ads are accepted from members for non-commercial purposes at no charge. Copy should be sent to the Editor in the same format as article submissions. Commercial Advertisements: Ads are accepted from commercial advertisers at the rate of \$60 per full page, per appearance, with discounts for multiple insertions. Smaller ads are priced accordingly. Payment for ads must be made in advance of appearance. Advertisers must supply a permanent address and telephone number to the editor.

Reprint Policy

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COMPUCENTER BBS

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

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/compucenter/>

If you are moving

Please send your change of address to the club PO box as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.

Thank You!

(Continued from page 15)

19. AddALL www.addall.com

Use this site to find the very best price for a book you want to buy. Unlike most other comparison sites, it figures in shipping costs for your location. Links will take you to pages for magazine subs, music CDs, and videos.

20. jux2 www.jux2.com

Jux2 lets you receive and compare search results from two or three different search engines, or see what you're missing from your regular search results. (According to the site, competing search engines typically share fewer than 4 out their 10 top results.) Still in development, it's currently limited to Google, Yahoo, and Ask Jeeves.

21. Medem Medical Library
www.medem.com/medlb/medlib_entry.cfm

Searchable and browsable medical library, organizing contributions from 45 medical societies. Features a complexity indicator for each article, from "introductory" to "professional."

22. Metacritic www.metacritic.com/film

23. Kids-in-mind www.kids-in-mind.com Metacritic is an excellent source for movie critiques. For each film, it arranges its large variety of reviews from most to least favorable, and then tabulates the opinions, for an overall "metascore." (Additional Metacritic pages cover videos, music, and games.) For evaluating movies for children, or if you have a concern about violence, sex, or profanity, Kids-in-mind will rate and describe each film's content in those three areas.

NCTCUG, Inc.
P.O. Box 949
Arlington VA 22216

First Class



November 2006

1st Wed. (11/1)

7 p.m. General Meeting

4th Wed (11/22)

7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (11/20)

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.

