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Pandora — A Free Music Resource

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The Internet is filled with free resources, but some are better than others. Here is one of the best free music resources on the Web.

Pandora is one of my favorite music websites. Just surf over to www.pandora.com and type in a song or an artist that you like. Pandora analyses your choice and creates a music station with similar-sounding music. It will then play comparable songs that it thinks you will like. You can add more music and/or artists to the station to refine your choices. You can also tell Pandora whether or not you like the song that is playing. It uses your likes and dislikes to refine the songs it chooses. You can create up to 100 different stations with different types of music.

Pandora was created by the Music Genome Project, a group of musicians and music-loving technologists who have broken music into hundreds of music attributes or “genes” such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, orchestration, arrangement, lyrics, and harmony. They then use high-tech methodology to analyze the musical qualities of each song and rendition.

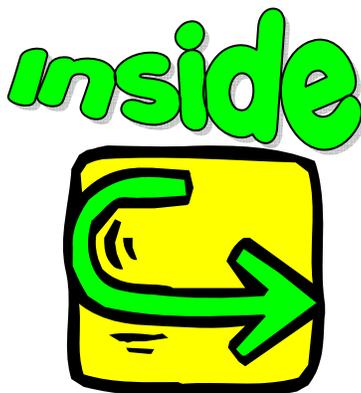
The results are uncanny. I created several music stations with different genres that I like and in almost every case I was presented with similar music that I found very pleasing. You can experiment with different combinations. For instance, putting James Taylor and Willie Nelson together gave me an interesting, but likable mix of music.

Pandora is pretty smart. Typing in The Christmas Song and choosing Diana Krall as the artist gave me a whole station of mellow Christmas music which is just what I was looking for. Typing in The Nylons and Take 6 gave me a nice selection of acappella and harmonistic music.

Pandora also lets you bookmark songs or artists so you can remember what you liked. You can look up more information about artists and songs right on the site. Two clicks will lead you to iTunes or Amazon where you can purchase the music. You can also share your music by emailing your stations to friends.



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How Does Windows Handle USB Devices?

By Dave Gerber, Program Chair, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
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One subject that often comes up is how Windows handles USB (Universal Serial Bus) devices and what you can do when USB devices don't work as you expect. First, let's talk about the two versions of USB that you'll probably encounter:

USB 1.1: these were the first widely-available devices and usually ran at a speed of 1.5 mb/sec. They were meant to replace old-fashioned serial and parallel (printer) connections that ran at only a fraction of the speed and could connect only one device at a time. While this speed was OK for slow devices like mice and keyboards, it wasn't useful for transferring large amounts of data, like from digital video cameras. For faster speeds, you needed SCSI or FireWire (IEEE 1394) connections. Since these were used mostly on the Mac, you often needed an add-in card for your computer to use them, which is one of the inconveniences that USB was supposed to alleviate.

USB 2.0: typically runs at the much higher speed of 480 mb/sec, which is faster than the original FireWire standard and much faster than SCSI. This is more appropriate for large data transfer, such as to external hard drives, and necessary to connect CD or DVD burners. However, some people still prefer FireWire for devices like video cameras, because FireWire is really a network that allows devices to be more interactive.

So how do you know which USB you have? If your computer was made sometime in the last few years, chances are its USB ports are version 2.0, which are backwards-compatible with 1.1 devices. One way you can tell which version your computer has is to look at the Device Manager in Windows XP:

- ⊙ Press Windows Key + Break to open Device Manager (or click the Start button, then right-click My Computer and select Properties).
- ⊙ Click the Hardware tab, then click Device Manager.
- ⊙ At the bottom of the list, click the plus sign next to Universal Serial Bus controllers.

If your computer has is equipped with USB 1.1, you'll see a device or two called a Host Controller or Open Host Controller.

If your computer is equipped with USB 2.0, you'll see a device or two called an Enhanced Host Controller or USB 2.0 Controller.

Any USB device you buy will have the regular USB trident logo and any high-speed USB device will have the red, white and blue high-speed logo.

If you connect a high-speed USB device to a low-speed USB port on your computer, Windows will probably give you a message that the device can run faster if you connect it to a high-speed port. A USB 2.0 internal expansion card costs about \$20 and a USB 2.0 notebook adapter (fits in the PC Card slot) costs about \$40.

The most common problem people have is when they connect a USB flash drive (sometimes called a thumb drive) to a computer and the computer doesn't recognize it.

First, let me say that these are great devices. Connect one to your computer and it works like a removable hard drive.

When you connect a USB device to a computer running Windows XP, the computer will detect it immediately. When that device is a USB drive, you'll probably see a message on the taskbar that Windows detected a new device, followed by a dialog box that asks if you want to open the drive to see its contents, play a movie and other choices. Windows will also assign a drive letter to the device. But sometimes you won't get this dialog box, and when you open My Computer manually (Windows Key + E), you won't see the device listed. That means there's a drive letter conflict.

Here's how you fix it:

- ⊙ Select Start/Control Panel, then double-click Administrative Tools. (You may also have Administrative Tools directly on the Start menu.)
- ⊙ Double-click Computer Management.
- ⊙ On the left side of the Computer Management console, select Disk Management.
- ⊙ On the right side, you should see a device listed as a removable drive, probably with the same letter as another drive you're already using.
- ⊙ Right-click the white bar where it shows the letter, then select Change Drive Letter and Paths.
- ⊙ Select the letter, then click the Change button.
- ⊙ Pick a letter not already in use from the list, then click OK.
- ⊙ Click OK on the warning message, then click OK again. (I assign U: to all USB flash drives, since I never use more than one flash drive at a time.)
- ⊙ Close the Computer Management console. When you go back into My Computer, you should see the USB drive with the new letter.

Another common problem is running out of ports. When USB started being implemented, the idea was that you would daisy-chain the devices together. So computer manufacturers would put in only two ports (always in the back) and only one port on laptops.

For a variety of reasons, the daisy-chain idea never caught on, and computers made today typically have four ports in the back and two in the front, for quick access.

If you run out of ports, you can fix the problem—as with so many others—by applying cash. Buy an external USB hub for anywhere from \$10 to \$40, depending on size, number of ports and power. A hub will split a single USB port into several more. The better ones have their own power supply, so your devices don't have to rely on the computer for powering the USB connection. When there isn't enough power to go around for all the devices, they can go offline.

This brings me to the last problem I'll mention: USB devices going offline because of reasons unrelated to power shortage. This was fairly common when you had many devices connected using USB 1.1 in versions of Windows older than 2000, where the devices had to supply their own software to get USB to work. (Native USB drivers were first included with 2000, then made more robust in XP—and Vista, presumably). If this happens, simply unplug all the USB devices, then plug them back in one-by-one. If any are daisy-chained together, connect the parent devices before connecting the child devices.

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Secure Your Flash Drive Cap

By Fran Damratowski. Refurbishing SIG Leader, Chesapeake PC Users Group, MD
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Have you ever misplaced your flash drive cap? No need to ever do that again. Secure it with a button. You will need

- ⊗ a shirt button,
- ⊗ some heavy thread such as carpet thread,
- ⊗ double sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam,
- ⊗ double sided sticky tape, and
- ⊗ some colorless nail polish.

What To Do

- 1) Run the thread diagonally through two of the buttonholes and secure with a square knot.
- 2) Place the knot on the top of the button not on the flat bottom of the button.

(Continued on page 11)

Fooled You ! — I Really Hope Not

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

I am presenting the following illustrations to show that what you see isn't what you get! The first two purport to be a secure links (https://) to paypal.com. However, when you hover your pointer over the links, you will see the true link. If you have made recent changes to your account, you can safely open your browser and type in the PayPal URL which is http://www.paypal.com. The others eliminate the pretense by presenting a text link which is not the true link either.

Another bumper contains 12 links—all to the same different URL. What you see is free.music.mp3, what you get is as you see in the illustration. What you see is not what you get!

These spammers know of the popularity of PayPal and its parent eBay! They are here playing on the possibility of a dispute over payment regarding a transaction.

These links may cause you to lose all of the money in your bank account quickly.

There is another spam scam going around promoting "undervalued" stocks touting the message that the stock should be bought now! They are trying to make you think that they are providing you with "insider" information so that you can make a killing! NOT! These are usually sent by third parties who are trying to manipulate the subject company's stock, and the company may not even know what is going on. You loose the money in your bank account a little slower!

Of the hundreds that I have received over the past months, none have warned of the stock going down! The news that you don't know as a potential investor is when the spammer started the promotion, and when the spammer is going to sell. Only the spammer knows. Short selling is much riskier!

If you are concerned about some of the spam you have received regarding stocks, this is an interesting site: http://www.spamnation.info/stocks/index.php If you would like to know about other spam, try their home page: http://www.spamnation.info/

(Continued on page 5)



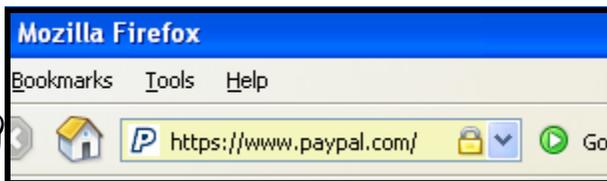
Here's a good one. Subject: David has a secret about your Vegas Vacation. The spammer's name and address is stated as: "Vegas Online Inc. - 4598 River Glen Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89103 USA" There is a River Glen Dr. in Las Vegas, but not that number. The web site title is Toronto Pharmacy! The domain name rxsvintus.com in the link was registered through a Chinese company by the registrant giving a Fiji Island address. These liars want your business?

The "human engineering" involved in these messages reveals the nature of many of us. We tend to believe

what we see and read without question. We are also a bit greedy. Enough of us fall for these come-ons to make it extremely profitable for the spammers.

None of the spammers want to help you! They have no interest in you! Their only interest is your money! **Delete the messages and keep your money.** You will be ahead of the game...

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At left is an image of the address bar when the PayPal URL is typed directly into it. Notice that the PayPal site has converted it to a secure page!



Domain Registrant: TOTALNIC-1
 Alex Rodrigez
 Alex Rodrigez
 PO box 109 WP 1432
 Lappeenranta NA 53101
 FI
 Telephone: +358.207818027
 Fax: +358.207818027

Current Registrar: CAPITAL NETWORKS PTY LTD
 IP Address: 221.4.246.3 (ARIN & RIPE IP search)
 IP Location: CN(CHINA)-GUANGDONG-GUANGDONG
 Lock Status: ACTIVE
 DMOZ: no listings
 Y! Directory: [see listings](#)
 Web Site Title: Toronto Pharmacy
 Data as of: 14-Jun-2005



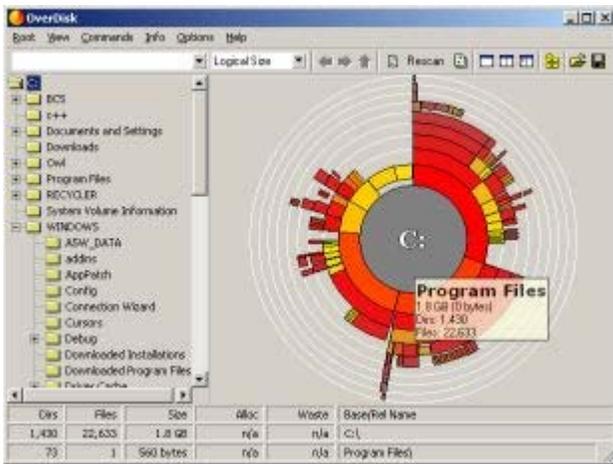
Fun With Freeware

By Cary Quinn, Member of the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO
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Here are a couple of utilities I have been using lately to correct a couple of bumps in the road to a positive Windows experience.

OverDisk (v0.11 beta) (freeware)

<http://users.forthnet.gr/pat/efotinis/programs/overdisk.html>



Elias Fotinis, a programmer from Greece, is one of those programmers you often find on the net who in their spare time writes little apps and utilities to solve some personal issue they might have getting the operating system, or some other program, to work the way they want it to.

One of the programs he has written is a disk space monitor called Overdisk. It basically scans a drive or folders of your choice and tells you how much space is being taken up by the files therein. One special difference with Overdisk though, is the way it graphs that data to your screen.

Instead of representing the files as a pie chart, or bar graph, Overdisk shows a breakdown of folders and files as a series of concentric rings, as if you were looking down onto the disk itself and seeing the files laid out below. But it's even better than that.

When you mouse-over a particular section of the chart, a tooltip window will appear to give you more information about that particular folder (size, number of subdirectories, and the number of files); and if you click on a specific point of the chart you can drill down to get the same information for individual files. Clicking on the center of the chart takes you back up the directory path, or you can click on the tree view on the side of the screen to better select a particular folder to view.

I find this utility most useful when trying to identify what parts of a drive need to have a cleanup, or which folders I need to prioritize for backups.

Taskbar Shuffle (free, but accepting donations)

<http://www.freewebs.com/nerdcave/taskbarshuffle.htm>

From the home of the nerd cave, comes a pretty nifty little tool that answers a minor nit I have had with the Windows Taskbar for a while—why you cannot drag and drop the programs listed on the taskbar to better arrange your programs to your preference. With Taskbar Shuffle, you can. That seems pretty simple, and it appears to work quite seamlessly within the OS.

The utility leaves an icon running on your system tray that you can use to turn it on or off, or close it down completely. I've been using it for a few months, and haven't noticed any conflicts with other windows or programs that have caused me to want to shut it off.

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Recovering Files From A Hard Drive

By Vinny La Bash, a Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida
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Have you deleted a file that you need and you don't know how to get it back? The first step is to make absolutely sure that it has been deleted. Open your Windows Recycle Bin and double-check. Is it in there? If so, simply right-click on the file and choose Restore.

If you have emptied the Recycle Bin the next step is to restore the file from your latest backup. You do back up your data regularly, don't you?

Unfortunately, there is no native "Undelete" command in Windows XP. This is a mystery because Microsoft had a nifty undelete feature in Windows 3.1 which somehow disappeared in Windows 95 and subsequent versions of the operating system. This is abysmal for Windows users, but profitable for third party software developers.

It's important to understand that when a file is deleted it is not actually removed from your system. Windows deletes only the first letter of the file's name and replaces it with a marked for deletion character. This makes the file "invisible" to windows, and if Windows needs the space for something else, it has no qualms about overwriting your valuable data.

What this means is that if you accidentally delete a file, you have a limited amount of time to recover it before windows stores something else over the same space. It may not happen right away, but it will happen eventually.

Since there is no way within XP to recover a lost file, you have to turn to a third party solution. The good news is that there are several excellent programs that will do the job easily. The even better news is that these programs are free. Isn't that nice?

Use Google or your favorite search engine to find FreeUndelet, PC Inspector File Recovery, or Undelete Plus. All of them work well though you may find one easier to use than another. That's a matter of personal preference.

You need to be cautious about this. If you download the utility directly to your hard drive, you run the risk of storing the undelete program over the very data you are trying to recover. If you have a second hard drive, you can download to that or better yet, download directly to a thumb drive. That avoids all danger of losing important data, and it has the additional advantage of immediate portability.

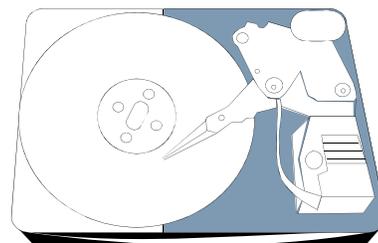
The programs all work similarly. Direct any of the programs to a specific disk and you will get a list of all deleted recoverable files on the drive. You may also get a description alerting you that the file(s) may be wholly or partially recoverable. That's good to know.

Direct any recovered files to an external hard drive if you have one. Don't save anything to your hard drive until you have recovered everything you need. Use Windows Explorer to manage the recovered files. Group them into categories to sort or group the files so you can easily determine if they are program files, data files or something else. Some files may have data missing if Windows overwrote some of the sectors where it was stored.

If after all this you haven't been successful, your best alternative is to consider a data recovery service. These can be a devastating drain on your wallet, so don't use these services to recover saved game files.

Do some comparison shopping as rates can vary considerably. Good luck and watch those sticky fingers when they hover near the delete key.

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McAfee SiteAdvisor

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

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Now, however, safe surfing just got easier. Now there is a wonderful free program that warns you about dangerous websites.

The McAfee SiteAdvisor is a small piece of software that works with your Internet Browser (either Internet Explorer or Firefox). It tells you in an easy graphical format which websites are safe and which harbor spyware, viruses, excessive pop-ups, or online scams.

McAfee has a system of automated spiders that patrol the Web constantly checking out websites. They assess the safety of each website including how much spam is generated from signing up for information at that site and how much spyware, adware, and other nasties might be attached to downloads from that site. The SiteAdvisor will also alert you to sites with excessive pop-ups and those that are possible phishing sites. Besides the automated testing, McAfee has a team of individuals who assess the sites. They use a detailed analysis as well as feedback from individual users.

To use the SiteAdvisor, you simply download the free program. The program is very small, so it downloads and installs quickly and it doesn't slow down your Web surfing.

After installation, a small SiteAdvisor rectangle will appear either on the top (Internet Explorer) or the bottom (Firefox) of the screen. When you visit a site that SiteAdvisor considers safe the rectangle turns green. Sites that have serious security problems will turn the

rectangle red. A yellow rectangle means that the website may have some problems or issues. You can click on the SiteAdvisor symbol to get more information about the website that you are visiting and why it is considered safe or unsafe.

This information is invaluable when surfing the Web. With SiteAdvisor installed you don't have to be fearful that signing up for more information or a newsletter will set you up for spam. You don't have to worry that downloading software will install spyware. In fact, SiteAdvisor takes much of the fear out of investigating and trying new things on the Internet.

Another great feature of the SiteAdvisor program is that when you do a search on Google, Yahoo! or MSN, SiteAdvisor's safety ratings appear as a red, green, or yellow circle next to the search results. You can easily see if a website is safe before you visit!! What a pleasant and useful service. If you want more information before you click on the search engine listing, just hover your mouse over the SiteAdvisor icon and a window will pop-up giving your details on the site's ratings.

Everything that I just described about the SiteAdvisor is available in the free version. McAfee also offers a Plus version that is available for \$19.99 per single user or as a 3-user family pack for \$39.99. The Plus version offers even more peace of mind by alerting you to dangerous links in email and instant messaging programs. The Plus version also has a password protected mode that can actively protect your computer against dangerous websites. This version is perfect for anyone who wants a little extra protection. It is also great for shared computers and computers that children or grandchildren use.

[see <http://www.siteadvisor.com/>]

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The Windows XP Services Manager

By Dick Maybach, Member of the Brookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey
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Windows, like any multi-tasking operating system, is complex, with dozens of processes running, even when your PC appears to be idle. Some of these are independent, but many rely on other processes. In simpler times, our computers did only one thing at a time, but few of us want to return to the days when, for example, everything stopped during printing. Fortunately, XP provides some tools to help you understand what is going on behind your back, and one of the more helpful of these is its Services Manager. First, a caveat – this will help you figure out what only the benign processes are doing; it is not effective in identifying viruses and spyware, which often hide from you.

To start the manager, right-click on My Computer and then left-click on Manage. When the Computer Management Window opens, click on Services and Applications, double-click on Services, and click on the Extended tab at the bottom of the window. (You will want to enlarge the Window to see all the information.) You can now see a list of all the services available on your machine. My laptop has about 100 services, about 60 of which are running as I write this article. If you single-click on a service, you can see its status and description. For example, on my laptop the ClipBook service has the following description, “Enables ClipBook Viewer to store information and share it with remote computers. If the service is stopped, ClipBook Viewer will not be able to share information with remote computers. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start.” The Manager also shows that this service is disabled on my laptop. You can learn more by double-clicking on the item. Again for ClipBook, the executable file is C:\Windows\system32\clipsrv.exe. Clicking on the Dependencies tab shows that this service depends on the Network DDE and Network DDE DSDM services and that no other service depends on it. You can learn more about these dependent services by clicking on their names in the window.

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The companies that provide the software supply the descriptions. Microsoft’s descriptions are helpful, but others can be less so. For example, Symantec SPBBCSvc is described as, “Symantec SPBBC.” In such cases, you can try a Web search for the name, although I ran out of patience before I found out what SPBBC does.

As is common for Windows programs, you can sort the services list by clicking on a column heading. For example, clicking on Status, lists the started service last; clicking on it a second time shows them first.

If you suspect that a service is causing problems, you can turn it off by double-clicking on its name and then clicking on the Stop button. This stops the service only for the current session; it will start again when you restart Windows. Thus, this is a safe way to trouble-shoot process problems. You permanently stop a process by double-clicking on its name and changing the Startup type from Automatic to Manual or Disabled. A disabled service never runs; and a manual one can be started by clicking the Start button. If you do this, keep a record so you can reverse anything that causes problem.

While you have the Computer Management window open, look at its left pane. In particular, click on Disk Management (under Storage) to see a text and a graphical description of all the hard and removable disks on your system. This shows the partition sizes and types, what file system they contain, how full they are, and their health. If you right-click on a partition in the graphical display, you can explore it, change its drive letter, or (be careful) format or delete it.



Basics: Software With New Computers

By Hilton Kaufman, Member Of The Chicago Computer Society, Illinois
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When a typical consumer buys a computer, some software or programs normally comes with it. Just what is included will vary with price and brand, but usually includes an operating system as a minimum. It is possible to get a custom built machine without any software if this is actually wanted.

I recently bought an HP Media Computer, that I consider an overkill machine, for home use. A lot of software comes with it. There are several separate programs for working with audio-visual files and DVDs, two money management programs, several games, two internet browsers, two office suites plus an extra word processor, a security program, and probably a few other small programs.

In the vast majority of computers delivered today, the operating system that is included is some version of Windows XP. This includes a number of possibly useful programs in a folder or directory called Accessories. For many people, this will be all that is needed to get good use out of a computer.

The manufacturer of the machine very likely included some additional programs. Maybe this brings you up to your required level of software. If you do need more, the included programs may provide deals or better prices on the others that you need.

Check out what you have before rushing out to buy more.

Hilton Kaufman serves as the technical support person in the procedures writing unit of the Illinois Department of Employment Security. As such, he uses the software provided to him to create forms, convert documents into PDFs, advise members of his unit as to how to use the available software, and similar tasks.

For his home computer, he can go all out and get a powerful machine that allows him to do things like playing games and surf the web without getting in trouble. He has prepared a number of articles aimed at novice users on the basics of standard computer programs.

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Microsoft Windows Media Player should be adequate for playing most music and video files and comes with the operating system. The major competing program, *RealPlayer*, also seems to have come with the operating system. (I believe there is some sort of legal requirement that it be included.) In addition to playing music, you can also do things like listen to the hourly online BBC news headlines.

I personally do not use either of the money management programs, *Microsoft Money* and *Quicken*. I may be a bit paranoid but I do not put personal financial data on a computer that is regularly connected to the Internet. Spyware gets on computers too easily, even with good defenses.

I find several of the games to be fun to play, as well as good to kill time when I don't want to do anything serious. The virtual pinball machine comes complete with arcade noises and has the same motif as the last real one that I had a chance to play some years ago. *Free Cell* is a thinker's card game with most deals possible to win. There is also a straight solitaire game that is quite popular among long-time computer users.

Both *Internet Explorer* and *Netscape* are included. My Internet service provider seems to prefer to work with Internet Explorer. The default setting that came with my machine was *Netscape*. Other browsers can be downloaded if wanted.

There is a minimal level word processor, called *Word-Pad*, that comes with Windows operating systems. For many computer users, it is perfectly adequate. It will do letters and small plain text documents, such as an article for publication in a computer club newsletter, quite well. There is a choice of font styles and colors. A common starting document, such as a letterhead, can be saved and renamed when used for another document.

Microsoft Works and *Office* are collections of related software or suites of programs for office purposes, with *Office* being the one for professional users and large offices. Both have word processors that are more pow-

erful than *WordPad*. Most home and small business users have no reason to use anything more powerful than *Works*.

Without getting into a lot of details, I can say that *Microsoft Office* is a very powerful and versatile office suite. There are increasingly expensive versions available with programs of interest to limited numbers of users. I received a 60-day free demo of the bottom of the line version of *Office* with my computer. If I upgrade during the trial period, I need only to pay the upgrade price for even the most expensive version.

Some sort of security program came with the program that would be good for a limited time unless I paid a subscription fee. Windows XP also has an adequate firewall for most users. I removed the security program since I am subscribing to an excellent one through my Internet service provider.

While the included programs you get can vary greatly with the brand and price of the machine, those that come with Windows XP remain constant. You can have a machine built to order with hardly anything in it or fully loaded. The default word processing suite from Dell seems to be a *Corel WordPerfect* one, but you can order a Microsoft suite for a slightly higher price. An off-the-shelf Media Center machine will routinely come with a lot of stuff.

While each machine is different, you should learn what you already have before adding more programs. You may already have something that will do what you want or will enable you to get a discount on what you want to add.

(Continued from page 3)

- 3) Cut the thread long enough to secure it with enough play to remove the cap.
- 4) Cut a small piece of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam about the size of the button.
- 5) Remove the backing from one side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place a small piece of the double-sided sticky tape on the sticky side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam. (The double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam does not hold well without the sticky tape. The tape alone does not hold well either.)
- 6) Securely attach the flat side of the button to the sticky tape.
- 7) Trim the excess tape and foam using an x-acto knife.
- 8) Remove the backing from the other side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place another piece of double sided sticky tape on the foam.
- 9) Securely attach the button foam and tape to the flash drive cap.

- 10) Secure the other end of the thread to the flash drive or lanyard.
- 11) Leave enough play to easily remove the cap, but not get tangled.
- 12) Use the colorless nail polish to secure the knots so they don't become undone.
- 13) After the nail polish dries trim the thread.

Or

You could go to your local photo shop and buy a \$2+ button size lens cap keeper (or cap retainer) and modify it as needed. Most of them appear to come with elastic bands that are placed around the lens barrel as opposed to a leash that can be attached to another part of the camera.

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Windows XP Upgrade To Vista

By Vinny LaBash, Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida
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Previous versions of Windows always accepted an installation disk as proof you had a legitimate copy of Windows. This entitled you to install the upgrade version of the latest release of the operating system. Vista doesn't work the same way. The only thing it will recognize is a copy of Windows already installed on a hard drive. Why Microsoft did this remains a mystery, but perhaps there really are things that mere mortals are not meant to know.

Don't go out and splurge on a full version of Vista. Read on and save some money. There are four primary versions of Vista:

- ☆ Vista Home Basic
- ☆ Vista Home Premium
- ☆ Vista Business
- ☆ Vista Ultimate

The difference between the full and upgrade versions of each variation of Vista ranges between \$72 and \$155. Even though Vista is a big improvement over XP, why spend the extra money for a full version if you don't have to?

If you're attempting to upgrade from a version of XP or Windows 2000 that's already installed on your hard drive, the upgrade version of Vista will install as soon as it recognizes the older version of Windows on your system. However, if you've formatted your hard drive, Vista refuses to accept an installa-

tion disk from a previous version of Windows as evidence that you do indeed own a legitimate copy of Microsoft's flagship product.

Fortunately, there is a legitimate method to work around this otherwise severe and unnecessary restriction. There is an undocumented procedure that allows you to do a full clean install of Vista to a physical hard drive without a previous version of the operating system installed.

The setup program in the Vista upgrade is the tool that lets you perform a full clean install of the product. In addition to XP and Windows 2000, Vista will recognize a copy of itself that has not yet been activated. What if we install Vista twice? We are going to install Vista, and then "upgrade" to Vista. Before you do ANYTHING, please read the entire 20 step procedure first. I'll wait while you do this. OK, let's get started.

- 1) Boot your PC from the Vista DVD.
- 2) In the dialog box that comes up select "**Install Now**". **DO NOT** enter the product key at this time. You'll do that later.
- 3) Turn off the option that that says Automatically activate Windows when I'm online.
- 4) Another dialog box comes up. Confirm the Vista installation without the product key.
- 5) Tell the installation program what version of Vista you're installing. Don't fib about this.
- 6) This step is important. Select the "**Custom (Advanced)**" install, **NOT** the "Upgrade" install.



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<http://www.nctcug.org/waugp.html>

- 7) Wait for the install program to copy files. Your system will probably reboot several times. Don't touch anything. Let the install complete.
- 8) Eject the installation DVD **WITHOUT** activating Vista.
- 9) Reboot to make sure everything is working OK.
- 10) Reinsert the Vista installation diskette and run setup again.
- 11) Click "**Install Now**".
- 12) Select Do not get the latest updates for installation. You can do that later.
- 13) Enter the product key.
- 14) Turn off the option to Automatically activate Windows when I'm online.
- 15) Now select "**Upgrade**," not "Custom (Advanced)." This is where you do the actual "upgrade" to Vista.
- 16) Pay attention! Don't do anything while the setup program copies files and does a reboot.
- 17) At some point the system will ask if you would like to boot from the DVD. Decline the invitation.
- 18) No matter what happens on the screen, leave the keyboard and mouse alone. Resist the urge to do something. Vista setup is making all the right choices for you automatically.
- 19) The Thank You dialog box will eventually appear. Click Start.
- 20) Vista's login screen will come up shortly. Enter the user name and password you created during the first installation.

Congratulations! You're finished upgrading to Vista, but you still have a housekeeping chore to perform. You have to activate Vista within 30 days of installation or it will cease working properly. To activate Vista:

- 1) Reboot your machine.
- 2) The Welcome Center appears.
- 3) Click Show more details.
- 4) Click Activate Windows now.
- 5) Activation will now take place automatically over the internet.

It is unknown why Microsoft programmed this procedure into the setup program. My conjecture is that the procedure was implemented for the convenience of programmers while testing the product and someone decided that it was too much trouble to remove. Another possibility is that when Microsoft management gave the order to stop development and concentrate on fixing bugs, there was no time to remove the feature before product release. Whatever the case may be, let's use Microsoft's perhaps unintentional gift to save a few bucks.

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Surprising New Search Engine

By **Sandy Berger, CompuKISS**

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Google has been my search engine of choice for several years, but recent developments have made me change my alliance to a new search engine.

Perhaps you read about it. A few weeks ago, 20 million of AOL's customers Web search queries appeared on the Web. These included the user's ID, the query they typed into the search engine, and other information.

Newsmakers picked up on the story because of some of the dramatic Web searches performed. For instance, AOL user 2708 searched for "I hate my ex boyfriend," "how to humiliate someone," "free angry stuff to send to an ex lover," and "makehimpay.net". User 17556639 looked for even more vicious information with searches on "how to kill a wife", "photo of dead people," "decapitated photos," "wife killer," and "steak and cheese." (Guess they got hungry.)

After the sensationalism died down, many people realized that the true story was that search engines are keeping a collection of information that can lead to a personal dossier of an individual. AOL's information included user numbers that were identified by cookies, but users can also be identified by Internet addresses, bringing them closer to our true identities.

All of the big search engines keep such information. Recently Google, AOL, Microsoft, and Yahoo were subpoenaed to turn over information of this type to the Justice Department. Of the big four, only Google refused to release the information.

In response to this story, one search engine, Ixquick, immediately issued a press release stating that they are taking steps to provide privacy protection for their users. Ixquick stated that after a search, they will immediately and permanently delete all personal search details.

I was impressed by a company who thought that protecting our privacy was more important than gleaning information from our searches and selling data for marketing purposes. I had never heard of Ixquick, but I immediately surfed over to www.ixquick.com. I was impressed with what I found.

Ixquick, which is owned by a Dutch company, is a metasearch engine. That means that it searches several databases to get its search results. Ixquick uses Yahoo/Alta vista, Gigablast, Ask Jeeves/Teoma, Open Directory and 7 other search engines. It is available in 18 languages.



Washington Area Computer User Group

WACUG Meetings will be held on June 16 & July 21, 2007 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm . at the Fairfax County Government Center, 2000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA .
Topics: June 16th Meeting - PC Clinic and Simultaneous Learning Session

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/>

NCTCUG Meeting Topics

June 6: CyberDefender's Alan Wallace will give tips on how to surf on the internet, keep your computer malware free, and how to protect your identity.

For more details, see the NCTCUG website at <http://www.nctcug.org/mtgtopics.html#jun6>

Ixquick marks the search results with stars, one star for every search engine that chooses that particular Web site as one of the ten best results for your search. This effectively gives you the relevancy of the search results. Also, the Ixquick interface is clean and easy to use. It allows you to quickly choose if you want your search to find only one of the words of your search phrase, all of the words, or the exact phrase. There is also a place where you can easily enter words that you may want to eliminate from your search. You don't need to fool around with pluses, minuses, or quotation marks as you do with some popular search engines.

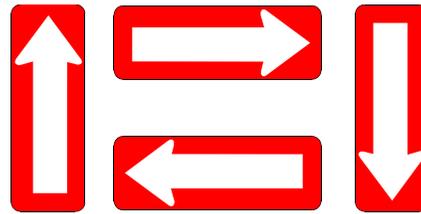
I was extremely impressed with the Ixquick's International Phone Directory.

Just type in a name and city or state and you can actually find people. Ixquick's Reverse Directory can tell you who's calling when you enter a telephone number. With Bigfoot and most other people directories now charging for people searches, this is an extremely useful free search tool.

Ixquick also has a comparison shopping service and an image search feature. Like Google and others, Ixquick offers a search toolbar.

After using Ixquick for a few weeks, I can honestly say that I have been very happy with the results. Using it in conjunction with Google gives you a wonderfully wide selection of search results. If, however, you want to really keep your searches private, then you will want to use Ixquick exclusively. After the recent AOL debacle, I feel that Ixquick is providing a great service not only as a search engine, but also as a leader on privacy issues.

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.



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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.

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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/>

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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 1)

Pandora is ad-supported so you will see ads for everything from gym shoes to cell service. I found the ads to be unobtrusive, but if you want to get rid of them, you can pay to eliminate them. For \$36, you get 12 months of unlimited use with services exactly the same as the free version, but without the ads.

Since the ads don't bother me, I'll continue to use the free version of Pandora. It's an entertaining website that provides much listening pleasure to keep me company when I am working on the computer.

If you are into music, you may also want to check out two other music resources.

MusicIP Mixer [<http://musicip.com/>] and Goombah [<http://www.goombah.com/>].

Like Pandora, both of these sites provide intriguing music adventures.

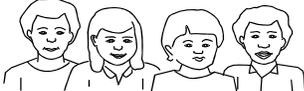
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June/July 2007

1st Wed. (6/6, 7/11)
Note the rescheduling of the July 4 meeting to July 11!
7 p.m. General Meeting
 Topic June 6: Cyberdefender

4th Wed (6/27, 7/25)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (7/16, none in June)
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.



Happy Fathers Day

NCTCUG, Inc.
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First Class

