

The NCTCUG Journal

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Keeping Up

by Paul Howard (NCTCUG)

Smart Computing Magazine Drawing

Smart Computing magazine has concluded its User Group Subscription Program by providing NCTCUG with three subscriptions for door prize drawings beyond the three we'd been credited with under the program over the last few months.

Special drawings were recently concluded during our meetings, and the winners are:

Walt Fraser, Anne Chaloux, Tekle Ayele, Sy Fishbein, Mike Pafford, and Chesley Looney.

Consumer magazines published by Sandhills Publications include Smart Computing, PC Today, First Glimpse, and CPU – Computer Power User.

Webinar SIG Reminder

Meetings of the new SIG will use Skype. We suggest exchanging Skype “credentials” in advance with Mel, whose Skype address is: melvin.70 His email address is melvin22003@aol.com

The Webinar SIG will explore various tools for presenting material where the participants are not all located in the same room, but are connected by the Inter-



net. A high speed Internet connection, of at least DSL speed, is essential for participants in these meetings. You will also require a web cam, either a stand-alone unit, or one integrated into your laptop display. A headset, with microphone and headphone(s) seems to provide the best sound quality for the audio portion of these conferences.

Using a web cam mic, and computer speakers will work, but can result in some undesirable characteristics for the conference or webinar arranged with this choice of equipment: feedback and echos are common, and the automatic gain control (AGC) features of some software or equipment can sometimes allow other members of a conference call to unwittingly eavesdrop on conversations or other activities at locations with open microphones. We urge all participants to learn the location of the audio “mute” button on the software employed for webinars. The best results are obtained in rooms with closed doors, and no extraneous sounds, such as radio or TV playing in the background.

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Adding An NAS Drive To Your Network (Part 1 of 2)

By Ron Hirsch, Member & Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society
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A few months back, I presented two articles in Boca Bits on setting up a wireless home network. And, I reviewed the big advantages of using the Cisco program "Network Magic" to configure and manage your network settings, and elements.

With your network, you can share files, printers, et al quite simply. But, to share files from a given computer, for example, the computer having those files must be up and running. And if you want to share a printer on the network, the computer where that printer is installed, and of course, the printer, must be up and running.

There is a quick and easy way around this, and that is to use an NAS (network attached storage) device. This is essentially a hard drive, within an enclosure, which has a "mini" operating system included, which takes the place of a computer, and provides the user with a simple way to then connect the hard drive(s) to the network, and provide access to the contents thereon. Access to everything on the NAS device is available at all times.

And, many of these NAS devices also provide a USB port for use with printers and other accessories. Putting a hub on this port will allow the use of whatever USB devices that one wants to put on the network. For devices which require an installation, such as a printer, or scanner, the computer wanting to use that device must have had the install procedure run, just as one would do when that device is connected directly there.

Overview Of NAS Devices

There are several varieties of NAS devices out there. The three main flavors are

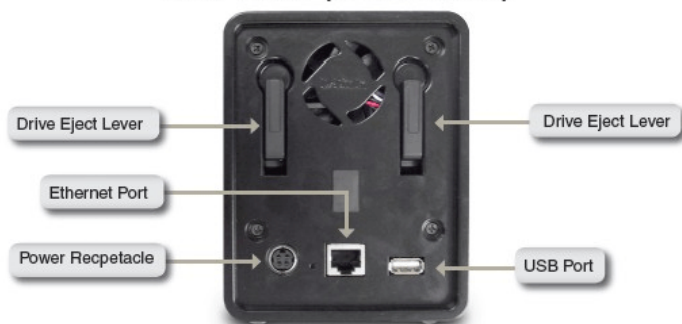
1. Small self contained units which include one or two hard drives, ready to go
2. Medium size units with no hard drives included. The user gets his own hard drives and installs them into the unit.
3. Large (and expensive) units, not really designed for home users, and also priced too high for home use.

Maximum File Size

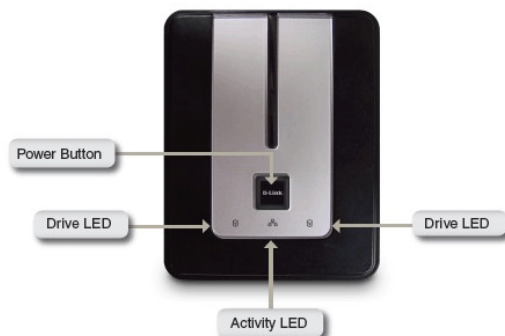
When I started looking into NAS units, there was one area where I was confused, since no units that I could locate could handle hard drives with the NTFS formatting capability. I wanted this to be able to store images created by True Image, for my system backups. These image files are usually 20-30 GB, but the limit in FAT32 and EXT2/EXT3 is 4 GB (minus 1 byte). So to store a 20 GB file from True Image, it breaks it up into 4 GB chunks.

Apparently, to use NTFS, which is a Microsoft format in Windows versions from Windows NT, XP, and onward, there are fees which one must pay to

Rear Panel (Connections)



Hardware Overview
Front View



Microsoft. And few manufacturers, if any, want to pay this fee, so they settle on either FAT32 (the older Windows file system), or EXT2/EXT3, which is a Linux file system. These choices are fully compatible with Microsoft Windows — all versions.

I finally decided to accept this formatting system, and decided that I would not use the NAS drive to store True Image backups. The read and write speeds, working on a home network NAS drive, are very much slower than working to an internal SATA drive in my machine, and also much slower than working to a USB drive connected to a computer. So I would just use the NAS unit to have all my data and files on the network, and instantly available to any computer on my network.

Which NAS Unit To Get

I did a lot of searching, reading user reviews, and checking prices. I hadn't realized that there were so many choices out there. I considered price, quality, ease of use, and many customer reviews on a variety of sites. I finally decided on the D-Link DNS-323.

This unit has an all aluminum case, holds 2 SATA drives, has an internal fan, seemed to be a well manufactured. And, the price for the unit from Amazon was \$158, with a \$30 mail-in rebate. I also ordered two 1TB drives to go with the unit. The total price of \$338 for everything is a very competitive total price, to get 2 terabytes of storage onto the network

This unit also has a USB 2.0 port on it, as shown below. So users can attach whatever USB devices they want to be available on the network

Putting It All Together

There was very little to assemble when everything arrived. The case and its front cover are very nicely manufactured, and show excellent quality. The front cover of the unit slips off very easily — actually too easily. Then the drives are merely slid into the case where their connectors engage the mating connectors inside the back of the case. Then the cover is put back on, and the assembly part is all done. [At left] are two pix of the front and back of the case. To remove the

drives, slip off the front of the case, and use the “drive eject” levers on the rear of the case.

One thing that the rear view does not show, nor did the manual mention it, is the small pinhole sized opening alongside the Ethernet port, which is the opening to insert the end of a paper clip, to reset the unit. I will discuss resetting later on.

In part 2, I'll review the process of installing the DNS-323 onto my network, and offer some tips on getting everything into smooth working order.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site <http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.php>. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose-leaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in Boca Bits.

(Continued from page 7)

Now look carefully at the left end of the ruler for the tab stop type indicator. The standard left-justified tab stop looks like a capital L. (Sometime you might want to click this L and look through the other types of stops for future use. Don't do it now.) Now you are ready to set your tab stops.

To plan your tab stops for the club list mentioned above, you will probably type the members' names beginning at the left margin, so you don't need a tab stop for them. You'll need two stops on the ruler: one for email address and another for phone number. To add a tab stop, merely click on the ruler in a spot which you think will accommodate your text, in this case, the email address. An L will appear on the ruler. Repeat this process a bit further along the ruler to set a stop for the phone numbers. When you have finished, check your list against the stops to see whether you have allowed enough space for the columns.

Now it's time to add the text. Beginning at the left margin, type the first name, then press the Tab key

(Continued on page 16)

Genealogy Online—

Using The Internet's Tools to "Dig Up" Your Family Tree

By Terri Neary, member of the ICON PCUG, Inc., New York The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of the ICON PCUG, August 2009 www.iconpcug.org [editor\(at\)iconpcug.org](mailto:editor(at)iconpcug.org)

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Everyone has their own ideas about how computers and the internet can help them the most. For me, it is my genealogy project. I am trying to find out who my family were, what they did, where they lived, and even how they lived. I would like to confirm or disprove several family stories and be able to give the generations after me a sense of where they came from. Trying to do this without a computer and the internet would be the equivalent of using a horse and buggy in the 21st century. But searching for your family history can be an expensive project. There are many ways to cut down the cost.

Now one of the easiest websites to search is www.Ancestry.com. However, this can be a pricy option unless you know of a library with a subscription to it. Personally I travel to the Bethpage Library to use theirs. The databases available on this site range from the basic Social Security Death Index, which gives you the option of writing to the appropriate department to get a photocopy of the original application, to the Federal Censuses, to Passenger Lists coming from multiple locations to multiple ports in the United States and over a thousand different databases in the United States alone. Each of these databases can give you information regarding your immediate line of family members as well as their siblings. Every little tidbit can help you to find more out and help to confirm or deny family stories. By searching their World War I Draft Registration Cards, I discovered that my grandfather, who died before I got to know him, was born in Hungary on the 24th of January in 1896. In addition, I learned that he was considered ineligible for the draft, not because he was an alien residing in NJ, but because he was missing the first joint of his third finger on his right hand. This small piece of information appears to help back up the stories I have heard of him losing this finger while a butcher at his brother's shop, though it does not confirm it.

Another site that can be expensive to use is www.heritagequestonline.com. However, many librar-

ies are paying for access to this site so it can be easily employed if you can locate which library near you that has access. Farmingdale allows you to log on from your home computer so it makes it even easier to use. Through this site you can search through the censuses, the Periodical Source Index for genealogical publications and many thousands of books for information on your missing relatives.

One of my favorite sites is one that actually connects you to multiple sites, some free and others not. It is run by Stephen P. Morse in San Francisco. His site, www.stevemorse.org, is designed for ease of use. The home page lists multiple databases including records from Ellis Island, Castle Garden in NY, Passenger records from New Orleans, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, as well as census records from the US, Canada, and Britain, in addition to Vital records and other assorted information that make it easier to locate that elusive relative. Steve Morse has designed his own search engines for each of the sites he lists that are easier to use than then the search engines on the actual sites. Using his Ellis Island search engine, I was able to find an aunt that came to the US in November of 1922. I had been unable to find my grandfather coming into the country, even though I was sure he was born in Europe, but with the information from the passenger lists, I determined that his first name must have been altered. When using most of the Morse site's search engines, you can limit the information you give them to search; for example you can put an "E" in for all spellings of what we spell as Elizabeth. My aunt's name was listed as Erszebet and it indicated she was going to live with her brother Malzas – a bad spelling of Mathias. With this information I will be able to track down additional information on his entry into the country.

Another site that is very good for searching vital records is run by the Church of Latter Day Saints, www.familysearch.org. They are updating their site

to include records from Ohio court records to Florida state enumerations. I actually find that I have the most luck using the computers available at a Family History Center, such as the one in Plainview. Using their records, you can obtain copies of actual birth certificates for relatives without having to pay the high fees that the actual source would charge you. They will charge you for copies, but it is usually much less than you than you would pay otherwise. In addition, there are members who will actually help you to determine where the records are held. The one thing I will mention is that the members will not try to convert you to their religion. They are only there to help you with your research.

A site that is maintained locally with many records is www.italiangen.org. They include databases for naturalizations and vital records for New York City as well as Nassau and Suffolk counties. These records are constantly being updated and are not limited to only those of Italian descent. They include on their site a form for obtaining actual copies of the records from the NYC Archives. I have found a great grandparent's death certificate number on this site and by using the Family History center obtained a copy of the actual certificate. It lists the cause of death as influenza on June 2, 1918 which appears to confirm another story that he had died in the flu epidemic of 1917 (which actually lasted several years).

Then, as much as people think that going to cemeteries is for visiting immediate relatives' graves, there is a great deal of information available if you can locate where your ancestors are buried. One of the easiest sites for this is www.findagrave.com. You can search this list by surnames, birth and/or death dates as well as location of the cemetery. You can also browse cemeteries for people who might be relatives of yours.

If you find one relative, it can be advantageous to actually visit the grave. Headstones often list multiple people, some of whom you may not recognize, and frequently families purchase graves near to each other. You might find an aunt or uncle just by looking at the next headstone. It used to be the custom that you

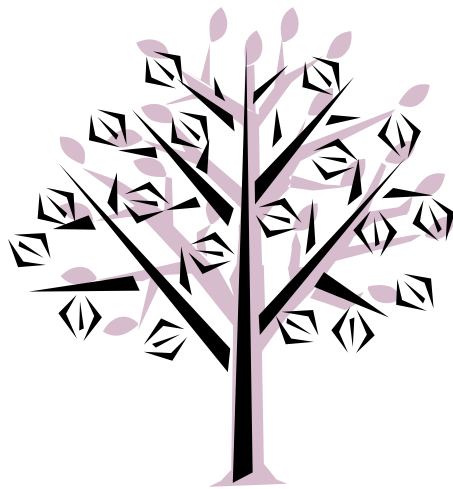
would take rubbings (with charcoal) in order to keep the record of what the headstone indicates, but with digital cameras you can get better images of the headstone of interest as well as those neighboring yours for much less work. If you don't find your family on Find a Grave you should try www.interment.net. Even though this site has fewer records than the other, it has multiple special collections you can search covering flooded cemeteries, California mission graveyards and Veteran's cemeteries.

Finally a site that most of us use on a daily basis, www.google.com, is a haven for a large amount of information. I recently began using this site to search out information about my relatives.

While I have not yet been successful, the NEWS section of Google links you to articles in multiple newspapers around the world. By entering a name you can find articles from the very current to archives pre-dating 1910. The articles come from major newspapers as well as some smaller ones and can give you an idea of what was occurring at the time of your ancestor's life. Comparing what you find or know about your family with what was going on in the world at the time can give you

a real sense of what their lives were like. Google News can help you to locate information about the "black" sheep of your family by possibly showing you the newspaper articles indicating what helped to make them the "black" sheep.

By researching your family, you can find out your history. You may be able to solve some family mysteries and prove your family stories. You can locate information about the possible murderer or embezzler as well as the great aunts and uncles who died in World War I. Since life is changing so quickly in this era of computers it helps us keep some things in perspective as you realize your great-grandfather came into the country with only \$10.00 in his pocket and no job waiting for him. Or that the census record indicates that the apartment your parents were born in had a rent of \$24.00 per month. Not all the information you want is available online, but the search for what is makes it fun.



Remote Computing — Helping Another Computer User

With Don Singleton dsingleton@apcug.ne presenting remotely with assistance from Judi McDowell, President, Quad Cities Computer Society, IL

By Joe Durham, Newsletter Co-editor, QCS www.qcs.or [joseph85_us \(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:joseph85_us@yahoo.com)

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Don Singleton dropped in on our club from cyberspace to share with us the exciting technology of remote computing. He is president of the Tulsa Computer Society, and also acts that APCUG coordinator and teacher for this emerging field of computers. Consider this scenario: someone calls you for computer help, they live across town or the river, it is perhaps a 30 minute drive or longer, you will usually have used up a good day's time in driving for a 30 minute house call. Now with remote computing software you can offer your knowledge and expertise right from your own home.

This technology has existed for a number of years. Our President, Judi McDowell, purchased Windows XP Pro when it was released because it has the Remote Desktop feature. She has used this for several years. Today however, remote computing has reached a critical mass of user awareness, and product development to become a very useful helping tool. Don presented remotely five free programs that work on Windows XP and Vista machines that offer different levels of ability and access for helping other people over the Internet, and also to doing teaching presentations on the web: CrossLoop, Microsoft Shared View, IBM Lotus' Unyte Presentation software, Adobe's ConnectNow interface, and LogMeIn. Our session began when Judi and Don connected via Skype to set up the voice portion of Don's seminar.

CrossLoop

The first program was CrossLoop. Judi started it on her computer as did Don. A small interface appeared. Don invited her to view his computer. CrossLoop generates a unique code each time it is started that you pass to the invited guest. This code acts a security feature.

When the connection was made we could see Don's Outlook Express screen. He proceeded to display his file manager, and then his iGoogle homepage. He then demonstrated that Judi had control of his computer also, but asking her to activate various tab movements

and settings on his desktop. The presenter has the ability to control this access. Don noted that in a large group setting it would make more sense to deactivate the mouse control access to keep the screen appearance orderly.

CrossLoop allows users to trade places. So Judi invited Don to view her screen and he plugged in an access code for this transfer. As a result the flexibility of this interface allows a helper to demonstrate things on their machine and then turn around and actually carry out those ideas on the other person's computer. It was remarkable that we could also see these transformations over the net from Tulsa and Rock Island.

Shared View

Microsoft's Sharedview program was displayed. Several members in our club have begun experimenting with this presentation and remote access software. In this setting you use Skype for voice and Sharedview for desktop sharing. As in CrossLoop you view the other person's desktop. But this program has a few more features and is more geared toward presentations and collaboration sessions. Up to 15 people can share the view on the net. With Sharedview an email invitation is sent that contains a url link to click. The presenter will see the person asking to join and accepts the session. Unlike CrossLoop, by default Sharedview does not give the user access to the presenter's computer, all you see it their desktop. There are controls on the presenter's side which can allow you to control their desktop, but they must activate it. Once the presenter moves their mouse the control is severed.

Lotus Unyte

IBM's Lotus Unyte software was the next remote client viewed. Judi and Don had some difficulties getting this particular software to work properly thought they were able to use it fine in a test session. You use Skype for voice contact, and Unyte for

desktop viewing remotely. An email invitation is issued as in Microsoft's Sharedview. Unyte has a paid version that has more features for \$30 per year.

Adobe ConnectNow

Adobe has created a remote presentation interface called ConnectNow. The remote desktop functions are similar to the other software covered by Don. The singular difference exists in the way you add users to the remote session. Rooms of 3 people are organized. You can see each person's ID within the room. So while ConnectNow has presentation features, it is more useful as a collaboration tool among like-minded workers.

LogMeIn

The last software examined was LogMeIn. This free software is geared to remotely access unattended computers. It just so happened that Don's main desktop went blank, but he had another computer that he was building on the network and he seamlessly was able to log in to this computer remotely and demonstrate that he could run programs on it. The free version doesn't allow you to copy or print files. All of these programs are user friendly. It is remarkable that we could actually share in this process, the visual presentation was seamless in all five software packages. Don noted that remote sessions need a broadband access speed to work, either a cable or dsl connection. He noted that there is Linux and Mac development of these products so that is an available option.

If you are interested in helping a fellow computer user remotely take the time to download and try out these various alternatives. Don offered to answer any questions about them via email. He is sending a copy of his Power Point Presentation to our webmaster so that it can be posted for reference. Be sure to visit our club web page at www.qcs.or for links and further information concerning this session. The QCS thanks Don for his fine presentation of this exciting field.

CrossLoop crossloop.com/

Microsoft Sharedview

connect.microsoft.com/site/sitehome.aspx?SiteID=94

IBM Lotus Unyte www.unyte.net

Adobe ConnectNow

www.adobe.com/acom/connectnow

LogMeIn secure.logmein.com/home.asp?lang=en

Fixing the Little Things— Using Tabs to Line Up Columns in Word

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Sometimes it's the little things going wrong with your computing that drive you crazy. For example, an email which took you half an hour to compose might not send correctly. Or suddenly the size of the type in a Word document changes. Maddening, isn't it?

One small, but common problem when you are using Microsoft Word or Word Pad often crops up when you try to create a list of items. Maybe you belong to a club, and it's your job to keep a list of the members' names with email addresses and phone numbers. You've been asked to print the list and bring it to the next meeting. Diligently, you type the list, using the Tab key to line up the columns neatly. It looks great on the screen, but then you print it. The columns waver all over the page. How could this happen? How can you fix it?

Tabs in computing are a holdover from the old typewriter days. The idea is that you can set tab stops along a ruler at the top of your Word or WordPad window that will help you create vertically even columns. Then, when you type, you merely press the Tab key on the keyboard to move the insertion point to the next tab stop. The problem is that Microsoft set up half inch automatic (default) tab stops which many people use rather than setting their own. Since individual characters (letters or numbers) are not the same width, just using the default tab stops will not guarantee even columns. You must set tab stops on the ruler yourself to ensure the desired results.

It's best to set the tabs for a simple list before typing because they can always be changed after the text is present. To do this, first make sure the ruler is visible. In Word 2003, click View in the menu bar and put a check mark next to Ruler. The ruler should now appear at the top of the document window.

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Thousands of Free Books Available Online

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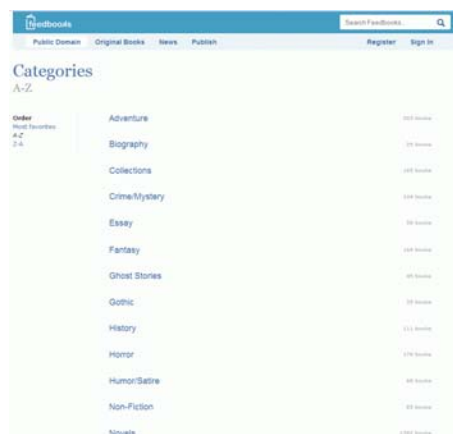
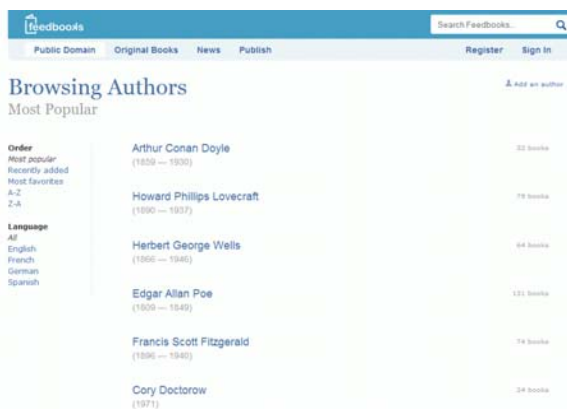
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<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com>
http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page
<http://www.booksshouldbefree.com>

I enjoy reading. I find that reading is intellectually stimulating, broadens my horizons, and provides vicarious experiences. My daughters grew up in a home full of books where they all became avid readers; this substantially contributed to their academic and professional achievements.

My students at LIT should be reading more, but the cost of books is a deterrent, and a trip to the college or public library is often an inconvenience. Many of today's students have grown up in the era of online information, email, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo!, and Google and to them "online" is their primary information resource. Now there are internet resources where anyone can read literature of any genre', including hundreds of

current textbooks, for free. Depending on the rules of the respective websites, these complete books can be read online in a browser window, or downloaded in a variety of formats, often including the popular and universal PDF format.

The granddaddy of the free online library is the Project Gutenberg at www.gutenberg.org. According to its website, "Project Gutenberg is the first and largest single collection of free electronic books, or eBooks. Michael Hart, founder of Project Gutenberg, invented eBooks in 1971 and continues to inspire the creation of eBooks and related technologies today." The mission statement of Project Gutenberg is simple but succinct, "To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks." Project Gutenberg has the full-length unabridged copies of over 30,000 titles on its servers, and links to over 100,000 titles located on other services. In addition to the printed word, Project Gutenberg also has hundreds of audio books available for download. About 400 of the audio books have a very realistic computer generated voice that provides the



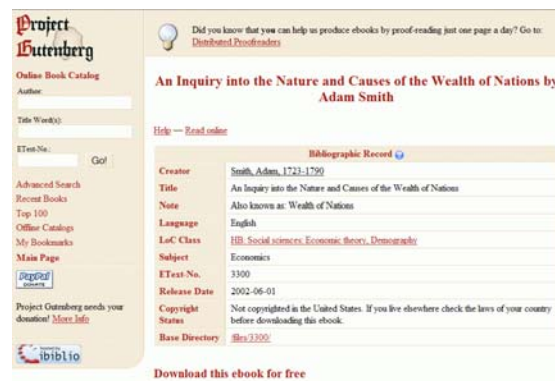
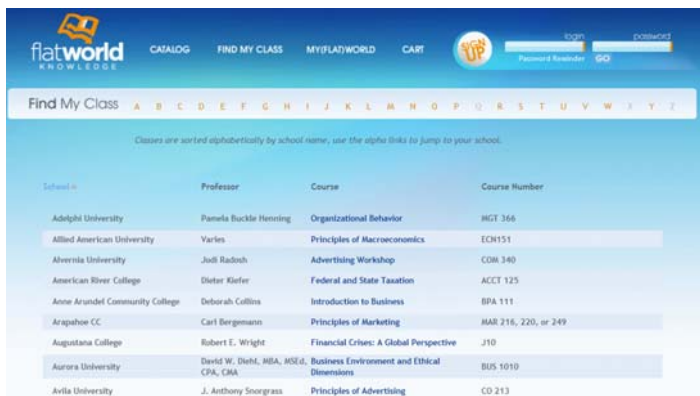
audio, and another 600 are recorded human voices. There are also about 150 recordings of mostly classical music, and a few dozen historically significant recordings from no less than the likes of Thomas Edison. Project Gutenberg has books available in many languages with the largest number being in English, and even some written in Mayan or Yiddish. I know people who download the audio books in MP3 format, burn them to CD, and play them in the car. I know of one individual who has downloaded several of the Edgar Allen Poe audio books, and plays them from an MP3 player as spooky stories for the kids around the campfire.

I teach economics every semester at LIT and try to instill in my students some of the history, culture, and philosophy that created our economic system. While he is briefly recognized in our economics books, Adam Smith is believed by many to be the father of classical economic philosophy. The full unabridged version of his most recognized tome “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations”, better known as the “Wealth of Nations” is on my recommended reading list. In the past the students had to compete for the limited number of copies available in the library or purchase a copy, an often difficult task for a cash-strapped college student. Today’s college student, or anyone for that matter, can simply go

online and read it on his monitor, or download a copy for future reference. This is but one example of how technology can be positively used to expand the minds of society, and provoke inspired thought and discussion. The book “Wealth of Nations” is but one of many thousands available for free online at Project Gutenberg.

While not as extensive as Project Gutenberg, one of my favorite free eBook websites is Feedbooks at www.feedbooks.com. Feedbooks are almost all in PDF format, and can be read unabridged online or downloaded for reading at the individual’s convenience. Feedbooks has books in four languages, English, French, German, and Spanish, and from hundreds of authors. Feedbooks’ selection is exemplary by having what may be the complete works of many authors, including Arthur Conan Doyle, 32 titles; Charles Dickens, 45 titles; Edgar Rice Burroughs, 68 books; Washington Irving; Henry David Thoreau; Jonathan Swift; and hundreds of other authors. Feedbooks is totally searchable, but I enjoy browsing my favorite categories, such as Novels (1382 books), History (111 books), Politics (32 books), Humor (68 books), and Non-Fiction (83 books). There is an extensive “Young Readers” selection composed of over 100 titles that would be good for parents to read to

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their children, or as a reading experience for the kids themselves. Titles include such classics as Grimm's Fairy Tales, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Peter Pan, American Fairy Tales, Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen, Black Beauty, and over a hundred other age appropriate titles.

Many of us are all too aware of the high cost of textbooks. There is currently a move on to publish current textbooks online for free. While this project is in its infancy, there are already many recently published e-textbooks available online at www.flatworldknowledge.com. It is worth noting that hundreds of college faculty have already adopted these free titles. Students typically have the option of reading the chapters online for free, or printing individual chapters for a nominal fee (about \$2 per chapter), printing the entire book, or purchasing a bound copy of the book. Faculty may request a free bound copy as well as support materials such as test banks, PowerPoint slides, instructors' manuals, and other supplementary materials, just like the existing commercial textbooks. Even for those who are not currently college students, these online free college textbooks can be a valuable resource for personal and professional enrichment.

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Waiting 17 Years For An Engine

A new search engine is due to come online later this year as a result of the Anti Car Theft Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-519). The National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) will provide a searchable database of Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) to avoid fraudulent retitling of salvaged vehicles. This system will provide an electronic means to verify and exchange titling, brand, and theft data among motor vehicle administrators, law enforcement officials, prospective purchasers, and insurance carriers, and allows state titling agencies to verify the validity of ownership documents before they issue new titles. It has taken thus far 17 years to accomplish a piece of legislation that a majority of Congress obviously agreed would benefit the public. When available, it will be found at www.nmvtis.gov/

At the end of 2008 Google controlled 72% of all searches in the US, Yahoo had 14%, and MSN 8%, for a total of 94%. So all the other search engines together have 6% market share. In future columns we'll explore what you may be missing. Did you ever want more information about some of the people in the news? There are lots of reference engines, and even a pronunciation engine that provides both phonetic and audible assistance from 50 resources.

The Internet is a great place to find information on any topic by letting your fingers do the walking on your keyboard. In future columns, we'll delve more deeply into search strategies and how to select the best tools for your needs. If you have any search queries, questions, or favorite search tools to share, send them to webwindow@hal-pc.org

Beverly Rosenbaum, a HAL-PC member, is a 1999 and 2000 Houston Press Club "Excellence in Journalism" award winner.

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Hang Ten — How To Get The Most Out Of Your Web Surfing

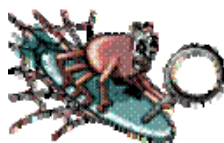
By Beverly Rosenbaum, a member of HAL-PC, Texas
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Many people consider “Google” to be synonymous with web searching, implying that it is the only search engine available.

Indeed, practically everyone uses the word “Google” as a verb to describe searching the Internet, much like “Xeroxing” is intended to mean photocopying. But Google is only one of hundreds of search engines and search tools available. And, depending upon what information you’re seeking, selecting the best one can improve the success of your search. This is especially true when searching for more specialized technical, legal, medical or scientific information. As an example, Google would be a poor choice when looking for job opportunities, while there are more than ten job search engines that would yield much better results.



So exactly how do search engines work, and why would you need them? They’re actually tools designed to retrieve content from Internet indexes based on criteria

defined by you, the user. These databases contain information collected from billions of pages and documents that are on the Internet. Google claims an index of more than 3.3 billion pages, and Yahoo more than 3.1 billion! Think of a search engine as a card catalog in a huge library, to help you locate the information you need without having to examine every single book yourself.

When you sit at your computer and submit a search, you are presented with a list of results almost immediately. The speed of this search varies from one engine to another, and the results are often different because each search engine uses a different ranking process.

And you’re probably wondering how search engines can collect information from so many pages that are constantly changing. To do this, they use software programs called “robots” or “crawlers” or “spiders” to continually follow hyperlinks from one document to another all around the Web. When these programs dis-

cover new links, updated pages, or dead links, they send that information back to their main site to be indexed. Google’s Googlebots fetch not only titles and text, but also copies of the page contents, and return them to their index stored on a huge set of computers. That is how you’re able to view from a Google search result a “cached” copy of how a web page last appeared, when the site may be currently unavailable. An estimated 30 billion web pages are linked to more than 100 million web sites, and every single page has a unique address or URL (Uniform Resource Locator) to specify its location. This address incorporates three components – 1) the protocol, 2) the domain name or IP address where the resource is located, and 3) the path and file name. The protocol identifier is separated from the resource by a colon and two forward slashes; for HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), the resource name would always begin with “www.” The parts of the domain name or IP address are separated with periods, and single forward slashes separate the domain from the path of the files.

So in this example

http://www.hal-pc.org/journal/2009/09_feb/index.htm
 the protocol is HTTP, the domain name is www.hal-pc.org, and [journal/2009/09_feb/index.html](http://www.hal-pc.org/journal/2009/09_feb/index.html) is the path for the index page of the February 2009 issue of HAL-PC Magazine. Site Maps Play an Important Role

To improve visibility and inform search engines about the pages on their site, webmasters create a text document outline of those links called a Site Map. This is a standard inclusion for web sites, and is always located at the root of the server. The URL for ours is www.hal-pc.org/sitemap.htm.

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The Site Map is an XML file that contains URLs for the site along with additional information about each URL (when it was last updated, how often it usually changes, and how important it is, relative to other URLs in the site), enabling search engines to more intelligently “crawl” the site. So the information from Site Maps augments the data collected in the “crawling” process. In addition, visitors to specific web sites often seek out and use the Site Map to find the page they need more quickly. This “bird’s-eye view” of the site’s content shows the structure and layout, and allows one-click access to all the topics. Visually impaired users who employ text readers to help them surf the Internet are also able to navigate web sites much more easily with a good Site Map. They are as important for human visitors as for the automated indexing “crawlers.”

You can imagine how single web pages that are not linked to any other page would never appear in the search engine results. Google first introduced the Site-map Protocol in June 2005 so web developers could publish lists of links from across their sites. The next year Google, Yahoo, and MSN announced their joint support, followed by other search engines, and state governments were the first to announce that they would use Site Maps on their web sites.

How To Search

I’m sure you’ve often entered a search term and either gotten too many pages of results or nothing at all. Here are a few rules to remember: The most important thing to do is keep the search simple - describe what you are looking for in as few words as possible. If you’d like to search for an exact phrase, enclose the words within quotation marks. You can exclude certain words by

appending them to the search terms, preceded by a space and then a minus sign (-). Placing a plus sign (+) immediately before the search term will yield only an exact match and no synonyms.

The biggest general search engines include Google (www.google.com), Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), and Ask (www.ask.com). While Google and Yahoo process search terms similarly, Ask allows you to enter your search in the form of a natural question, such as “How do I make a resume?”

Both Yahoo and Ask also provide kid-oriented search engines at kids.yahoo.com and www.askkids.com.



In meta-search engines like Dogpile (www.dogpile.com/), Mamma (www.mamma.com/), Clusty (clusty.com), or Copernic (find.copernic.com/), the keywords you submit in the search box are transmitted simultaneously to several individual search engines and their data-



bases of web pages. Within a few seconds, you are presented the results from all the search engines queried.

Meta-search engines do not have their own database of Web pages, they search the indexes maintained by other search engine companies. Most send their queries to smaller, free search engines and directories, but Dogpile uses Google, Yahoo, Ask.com, and MSN Livesearch. Many search engines blend into the results any sites that have purchased ranking and inclusion, so you’ll see “sponsored” links below or beside the search results.

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OAG Joins the Facebook Generation(s)! Part 1

By Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, CO <http://www.frpcug.or> [twriterext \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:twriterext@gmail.com)

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Hello everyone. I am writing to you as the Old Analog Guy again (a reminder: the acronym is OAG and is pronounced “ogre”).

You may find it surprising that this OAG has signed up for a Facebook account. I certainly surprised myself. However, I decided it was time to explore this ... whatever it is when an *older* cousin sent me a message saying “check out my photos on Facebook.” With help from my 17 year old grand niece, I think I have figured out (at least some of) the basic mechanics of using this social network.

I don't claim to understand the motivation behind the popularity of (electronic) social networks. The interests of advertisers in this phenomenon, are, however, very clear (more on that in a moment). The origins of this phenomenon (at least for Facebook) are in the east coast (US) universities around 2003 – 2004 (connect to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook_for_more_history_and_discussion_of_this_company). According to that Wikipedia article, “...within the first month [of launch], more than half [of] the undergraduate population at Harvard was registered on the service.” In 2005, Facebook launched a high school version, and in 2006 it was offered to the general public (everyone over the age of 13).

OK, I understand the interest in having friends and sharing conversation with friends. Even this OAG has a few friends (I think). What I *don't* understand is this willingness (compulsion?) to share (almost) every last detail of your life in a public (or “semi-public”) way. That seems analogous to running around in a football stadium without any clothes and with 100,000 (or 60,000,000—the number of US Facebook users estimated in May of 2009*) screaming fans watching. And, of course, in today's world, it has risks.

The current version of Facebook allows you to control what information to enter (and display). So . . . I am

now a Facebook registered user, and I think I may have learned a little about how to use it, and, perhaps ... possibly ... maybe ... a glimmer of understanding of why it is used.

The first page you see when you connect to Facebook is this:



To register you need to enter the usual contact information, plus gender and birth date. Your birth date is the **ONLY** personal information (other than gender) that you are required to enter (and you can arrange so that it is not visible to anyone).

Once you register and log in, you are connected to your “home page.” Here is what my homepage looks like at the moment:



Probably the first item that catches your eye is that large “670.” Yes, that is an advertisement, and advertising is the “fuel” that drives the social networking phenomena. So, if you find any or all of the ads objectionable (even for just being there), then you are, I am

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sorry to say, not a candidate for the “Facebook Generation” (I hope you are not too easily offended—after all every Google search results page has advertising). The ads (and “Suggestions”) change every few minutes, I think.

Before I go on with my description of the home-page—or any other page—I need to call your attention to the “Settings” button at the upper right of the page. If you use your mouse to move the pointer over that button, you will see a list of 4 choices:



Now click on the “Privacy Settings” choice, and you obtain access to a list of privacy controls:

There are several categories of these settings.

- Profile
- Search
- News Feed and Wall
- Applications

Washington Area Computer User Group

WACUG Meetings will be held on May 22 [note: 4th Sat.] and June 19 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. WACUG will hold joint meetings with OPCUG [www.olligmu.org/~opcug/] at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute [www.olligmu.edu/] at George Mason University, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA, known as the Tallwood Campus.

Topics

May — Become a Movie Producer in an Afternoon:
Converting VHS Tapes to DVDs

June — Gadgets: iTouch, Blackberry, iPhone

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/>

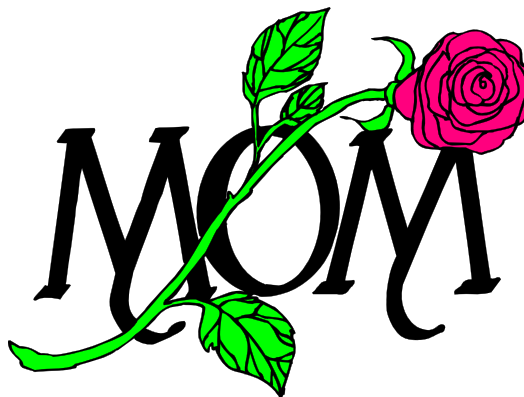
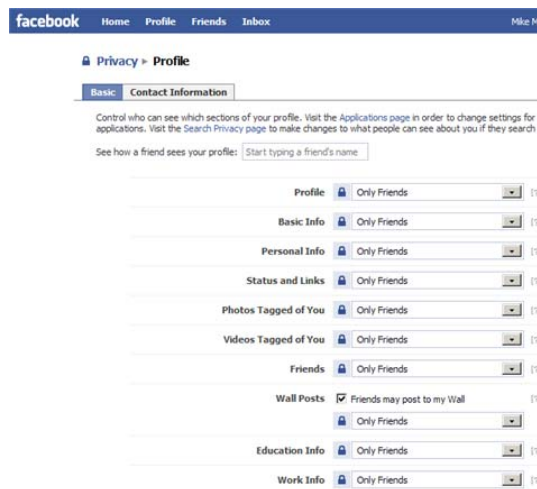


You can also block a name and/or an email address from this page.

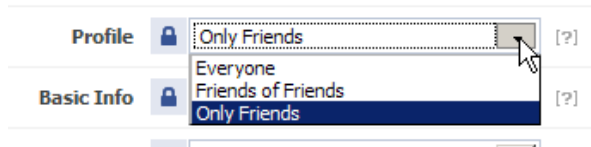
Here is how I have set my Profile privacy settings:

I have limited access to everything to “Only Friends” (another clue that I am still very much an OAG and have not made the transition to “Digital Man”).

The choices are:



I have limited access to “Only Friends” for all information, including Contact Information and Search Visibility. If your reaction is “. . . but no one will be able to find you,” my response is that my “friends” will find me.



For more information on Facebook privacy settings, connect to <http://arstechnica.com/web/news/2009/08/meshing-social-networking-and-privacy-on-facebook.ars>

Note that there are privacy settings for “News Feed and Wall.” Well folks, you need to learn the language.

News Feed is, as far as I can determine, the primary function of your homepage, and the Wall is another name for your Profile page. I will talk about those 2 pages in Part 2.



NCTCUG Information

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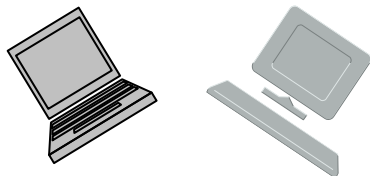
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All officer terms expire 2010

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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. Articles may be submitted in MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) or plain unformatted text (C/R only at end of paragraphs, no indents preferred) via email to the editor nctcugbj@verizon.net

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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/group/compucenter/>

If you are moving

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

Thank You!

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on the keyboard, type the email address, press Tab again, then type the phone number. Press the return key (Enter) to move to the next line and repeat the process. If, after you have typed in the whole list, you find some text getting cut off, you may need to move the tab stops. First, and very important, highlight the entire group of text. Then click on one of the L's on the ruler, hold down the left mouse button, and drag it to a new location, which will move the text with it. Until you deselect the text, you can adjust tab stops as much as you wish. Finally, save the document and, before printing, use the Print Preview command to see how it will look on the printed page.

If all went well, you should have perfectly even columns.

There are other ways, of course, to create lists like this. The Microsoft Office spreadsheet program Excel is a great alternative, especially if you want to sort the list. Word allows you to create Tables, which is another way to ensure even columns which can be sorted. But these are topics for another article.

May 2010	
1st Wed. (5/5) 7 p.m. General Meeting	<i>New!</i>
2nd Wed. (5/12) Online-Only Webinar using Skype <i>See page 1 for information</i>	
4th Wed (5/26) 7 p.m. Internet SIG	
3rd Monday (5/17) 7 p.m. Board of Directors	
Meetings are at Carlin Hall , 5711 S. 4th St., Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50. See website for directions to post-meeting pizza gathering.	



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