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Keeping Up

By Paul Howard, NCTCUG

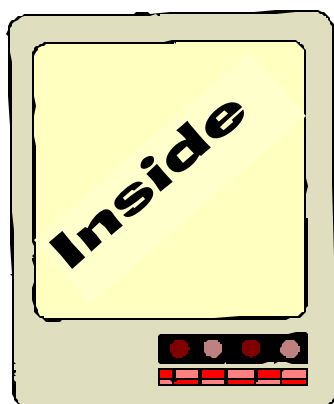
Yes Yogi, you're absolutely correct — it's *deja vu* all over again! Started up the computer on October 16th, and it wouldn't boot. The Maxtor 120 gig I installed in my primary machine in March when the original 80 Gig IBM drive failed, was laying on its back with its digital feet up in the air. Guess the SMART warning of imminent drive failure meant something — although the drive's worked for several months after that dire message started gracing my boot up screen.

I picked up an 80 Gig Western Digital hard drive that evening, and installed it. The good news was the installation went smoothly, and I could access the 120 Gig Maxtor. I backed up my data files, e-mail, etc. to multiple CD-Rs. Thoroughly strange was the installed size of the new hard drive — it only formatted to 32 Gig.



And as I was in the midst of getting some of the software pieces I needed for various chores, Norton Anti-Virus advised me that I'd encountered a W32.Blaster.E.Worm virus on the backup computer. Proceed to pull out hair — just what you need in the midst of maximum computer anxiety. Nothing else may work, but the old "critical emotion detector circuit" installed in every technological device will always engage when you're chewing your fingernails to the third knuckle, and helpfully provide additional challenges.

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Siegel Reports

By George Siegel, PIBMUG's Special Correspondent

This month [May 2003] George Siegel tackles dumb applications he can do without, provides a way to prevent virus attacks, and tells users how to avoid hoaxes.

The Sorry State of Software...

For the last six months or so, I've become increasingly irritated by the ever growing amount of junk that comes with every new software release. You know what I'm talking about—registrations, cookies, tray icons, background processes, pop-up screens, newsletters, affiliate programs, ad infinitum.

At first, I thought maybe it was just me; heavy workload and all that. Then, a couple weeks ago, I helped an old friend set up his new PC and I reinstalled all of his 1997-vintage software including PhotoShop, PageMaker, MS-Office, and a half dozen other major apps. I finished in record time. No hassles, no online anything, no sales pitches. It felt great.

Then, over the next few days, I had to deal with the following:

A PC that had suddenly slowed to a crawl after the installation of the 164MB printer driver. (Yes, 164MB of "full printing system" on a \$99 inkjet printer). I replaced it with the 1.12MB lite version from the vendor's website and all returned to normal.

A cheesy checkbook program that analyses your entries in order to make recommendations on how to get out of debt, and apparently is in a position to offer you a bank loan. George Orwell would be proud.

A new computer that had no Internet Explorer and no Internet Connection Wizard. The two choices were to sign up for—and launch—the preloaded AOL or the preloaded DellNet. My cable-connected client didn't want either one. I finally found Internet Explorer as a hidden file and set up the necessary icons but it was a sad waste of 45 minutes. And of course there were the usual viruses, spyware, pop-ups, etc.

In the midst of all this, I realized the cause of my frustration. My role has traditionally been to "add" software and configuration elements to make a computer do that which a client needed. Today's software does too much, (When was the last time you needed to imbed a sound file in your Word document?) I now spend my time loading additional software to block or remove features that no one wanted in the first place. This is nonsense and we shouldn't be accepting it.

So here's where you come in. As user group members, you've probably tested more versions of more apps than most users. Make a list of the most recent, stable versions of all the various applications that don't have all the junk features. The minimum requirement is that they be Y2K compatible and run on 32-bit Windows. Once you have the list finished, you can make it clear to your computing buddies that there is simply no reason to ever pay for newer versions of those programs until—or unless—the junk is removed, and any real needed improvements in functionality are added.

Here's Where To Start

MS-Office 97 does everything that most businesses will ever need. No reason to buy anything newer. If your new PC has Word 2002 bundled with it, remove it and load Office 97. You'll never have to spend another dime for an office suite.



Quicken 2000 (or thereabouts) — It's just a check-book!! Whatever version you have, keep it. If your new computer has a newer version bundled with it, delete it and load your existing version. It will run faster and work just fine.

Okay, you get the idea, right? It will give you a great opportunity to tick off software companies while enhancing your user group position as champion of the little guys.

Hey, Protect Yourself, Willyya?

You may remember the last time we had a beer, we briefly discussed the general gullibility of new and untrained Internet Users, and our ability, through experience, to quickly see through most of the scams and phony one finds on the Web.

Recently, I was at the office of a client with about six employees, all of whom recently received e-mail accounts. In no time at all, they were receiving all sorts of spam. I learned that they had all been engaging in various risky activities including sending each other email greeting cards on a regular basis, each trying to outdo the other.

I explained that things such as e-cards are a no-no because they exist primarily to gather names for spammers. I went on to say that no one would spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to put up a sophisticated e-card system unless they had a way to recover their costs. And that even on the web, you can't get something for nothing.

Their response? The sites seemed friendly. Indeed, the sites themselves as well as the e-cards have been created with a disarming, warm and fuzzy feel.

Then the client asked me how to make the spam all go away. I had to tell them that it was too late. They had to either live with, and spend time and energy constantly fussing with spam blockers, or change their e-mail addresses.

I find that my admonishments to clients regarding safe practices are either ignored or rebelled against. It's probably that I'm pressed for time and tend to use a very direct approach ("Stop that, you idiot.")

The job of every user group member is to use your demeanor and verbal skills to present the best practices employed by experienced users in a positive, compelling way. Teach them what would be roughly the online equivalent of street smarts. The idea is to not only give users the needed information, but also to convince them that doing things correctly is much "cooler" than being duped by every ploy that comes along.

Hey, I Got A Virus!!

Want some golden rules to prevent getting a computer virus?

1. Don't trust any attachment; scan each one.
(But what else is new...)
2. Update your antivirus signature today
3. Do a quick, free internet scan with
www.commandondemand.com

Or, if you use MS-Outlook and are tired of playing this silly game, then download and install the Outlook e-mail security patch, by itself or included in one of several other service packs. It blocks all conceivable active attachments and is nicely described at www.slipstick.com/outlook/esecup.htm

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Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. George Siegel is a top-notch computer consultant specializing in networking, a long-time PIBMUG member, and advisor to the last four presidents.

ACTUAL PHOTO OF GEORGE
USING DIRECT APPROACH



New Year's Resolutions And Your Computer

By Ira Wilsker

This is the time of the year that many of us make New Year's resolutions, promising to keep them, and eating black-eyed peas to insure our good luck and good fortune. Despite the many hours per week that a lot of us spend on our computers, we often neglect resolutions that can make the time we spend computing more enjoyable, productive, efficient, and secure.

Resolve to reduce Internet irritants, those pesky spam mail solicitations, pop-up ads, assaults on our machines from hackers, and attacks by computer viruses.

Resolve to follow the three most important words in computing, which are:

Backup, Backup, and Backup.

Resolve to finally dump those big national Internet providers that so many of you subscribe to and complain about, but never get around to canceling.

Resolve to subscribe to a local provider.

I hate the spam mail that I receive. I am tired of the solicitations for personal physical enhancement, cheap prescription drugs (often without a prescription), Nigerians offering to make me rich, home refinancing, and lonely females offering to make me happy. Harvesting our email addresses from a variety of sources is something that we can do little to prevent. Checking with our internet service provider (ISP) and software publishers on their privacy policies, and selecting the possible option to "opt-out" of their giving away or selling our personal information may help reduce future spam, but will do little to stop the spam we are currently receiving.

Sadly, some of the largest national ISPs default to "opt-in", meaning that if subscribers do not explicitly tell them on an annual basis that our information is not to be sold, then they will imply our consent to sell our personal information. Many software products (and many other consumer items), solicit our

email address with the product registration. Reading the fine print will typically offer the choice to opt-out, and hopefully prevent the company from selling our information to third parties.

Many of our local ISPs now offer email filtering as either a part of their basic service, or as a nominally priced premium service. Using the SpamCop blacklist, or third party filtering provided by companies such as Postini or BrightMail, our local ISPs tend to filter out more spam mail than do some of the large national providers, many of which offer no spam filtering service.

As a bonus, some of the email filtering services also remove many of the email born viruses before they can reach our computers. Either as a freestanding product or as a supplement to ISP filtering, third party spam filtering services or software should be considered.

If using broadband Internet, such as cable or DSL, it is imperative that a good software firewall be utilized. For dialup users, a firewall would also be a good idea. A firewall can make it more difficult for hackers to get access to your computer while online, and can help reduce the chance of a "back-door Trojan" or spyware from sending personal information from your computer to unknown outsiders. As has been discussed in an earlier column, Zone Alarm (www.zonelabs.com) and Outpost (www.agnitum.com) are excellent firewalls, and free for personal use. In addition to a firewall, an anti-virus program, frequently updated, is a necessity for all computer users.

To try to eliminate the spyware that may be infesting our computers, and transmitting our personal information to unknown parties in cyberspace, the use of a spyware killer is also important. One of the best ones available is the free Ad-Aware, available from www.lavasoftusa.com.

Be sure to keep firewalls, antivirus, and spyware utilities current, as their publishers often post up-

dates to the software.

Another way to help secure the Windows PC is with the "critical updates" released by Microsoft. In 2002, Microsoft released about 70 critical updates. These updates typically close newly discovered security flaws found in browsers, email programs, media players, operating systems, office software, and other vulnerable products. These updates can be freely obtained and installed by going online, and clicking on START - WINDOWS UPDATE and allowing Microsoft to send individualized updates.

One warning to users of Windows 95: check for updates immediately, as Microsoft is about to cease all support and updates for that version of Windows.

Hard drives are machines. They all do eventually wear out and fail. A full backup of the hard drive, with periodic incremental backups of new files, will enable the disaster of a hard drive failure to be easily recoverable. At an absolute minimum, critical data files should be backed up frequently. Backing up to writable CDs or DVDs, or an external hard drive, using any of a variety of backup utilities, is great insurance. One step in recovering from a hard drive failure is often booting off of a

floppy; now is a great time to make that bootable floppy, sometimes called a "rescue disk".

Most of us spend a great deal of time online, and many of us also overspend on internet services that bog us down with ads, spam mail, slow service, busy signals, and frequently knock us offline when least expected. Many of you also overpay for the inferior service that some of the large national carriers provide. Switching from the national carrier to a local ISP, such as Eonet, advertised on this page, can be a great move in terms of improved service, as well as a big money saver. Local ISPs may save those who use the national services over \$200 per year, providing better service for far less money.

Finally, resolve to stay informed by continuing to read this column every week, and listening to my twice-weekly radio shows on KLVI.

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



The Beige Box Is DOA

By Robert Newcombe, PIBMUG

Or is it? Robert tells us about his experience with a beige box...

You heard it at recent user group meeting: beige computer boxes are “dead.” At a recent PIBMUG meeting, Rick Clayton of Via Technologies claimed that the clones we’ve all come to love are history because of the company’s EPIA Mini-ITX motherboards. It gets better. Clayton also said creative computer geeks (OK, he didn’t say “geeks”) are building computers that don’t look anything like the bland boxes PCs have looked like for the last 15 years. During his presentation, I couldn’t understand why anyone would waste time building a non-computer looking computer. (“Form follows function,” right?) But at the end of the evening, I had an opportunity to build my own because I won one of these motherboards in the raffle.

Pick A Box, Any Box

I had never built a computer from scratch before. On the Internet, I found crazy looking computers that others had built with these boards. A Lincoln Log cabin. A Millennium Falcon. A rubber doll. (I wouldn’t want to touch that keyboard.) Even a cardboard box. I gathered from all this silliness that people are simply “expressing themselves.” And nothing expresses myself better than “value”—my wife calls it “cheap”—so I decided to build this as, uh, cheaply as possible: under \$200.

The board comes with an amazing assortment of connections, negating the need for extra cards. All I needed were a power supply, hard drive, floppy drive, CD burner, CD drive, and RAM.

I looked at an old 486 (my wife has been bugging me to get rid of it) and tried to fit the board into it, but this required serious metal cutting. I considered the cardboard box idea, using the power supply from the 486, but I was afraid I’d hook it up wrong, start a fire, and burn down the house. (Yes, I think

that way.) So I decided to spring for a new box, but pulled the floppy and CD drives from the 486. (See, honey, I’m still using it!)

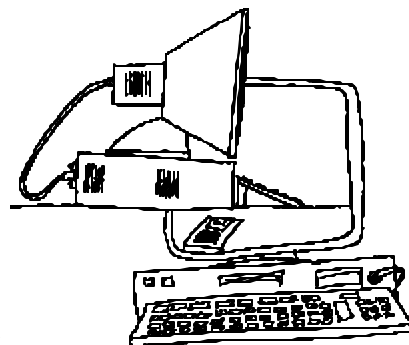
At Fry’s, I found lots of computer boxes, including mini cubes designed specifically for these boards. Great looking, but way over my budget. Two teens were fawning over the see-through sides of tower-style boxes. While the kids salivated, I thought, a clear box with a light inside? Why would anyone want to be able look in on a computer? There’s nothing to see—no moving parts, except the fan, which you can’t see when it’s moving.” I picked the second cheapest: a mid-size tower with six fans.

One Of Those, Two Of These

I had seen an ad for a stick of RAM, a 512MB DDR, for \$40, but the salesman said they were out. “We have one for \$65—but it’s a good one.” “You mean the sale one wasn’t good?” I asked. “Do you want it or not?” he responded without answering my question. I bought it.

Next stop was Best Buy for a \$32 (after rebate) Samsung 48X CD burner. Since my existing burner is only 8X, this seemed plenty fast. I had planned to buy a 40GB Western Digital hard drive for \$45 (after rebate), but they had a WD 80GB for \$70 (after rebate) so I splurged. My total cost for the computer, including taxes and rebates, was \$255.02. Over budget, but with lots of RAM and hard drive space (and rebates).

The tower came with no instructions, and the motherboard’s glossy User’s Manual was obviously written for people who know more than me: “This setting determines whether DRAM timing is configured by reading contents of the



SPD (Serial Presence Detect) EPROM on the DRAM module.” What the...?

It took me four frustrating tries (including a sliced finger and a trail of blood all over the box. Hey, beige is dead, right?), but I finally got the motherboard in place, with everything lined up properly. It was only then that I finally realized just how small these motherboards are: it looked like Mini-Me sitting next to Yao Ming in that commercial.

Inserting the RAM was easy, but it took almost two hours to get all the drives mounted and cables plugged in. There weren't enough power thingamajigs for the six fans, and it took me way too long to figure out that I had to daisy chain them.

Ready, Fire, Aim...

Ready for the “smoke test,” I plugged the power cord, mouse, keyboard, and monitor in, and, with the WD boot floppy inserted, I nervously pressed the beige power button. To my amazement, it booted up and recognized all the drives! I covered the box and screwed everything in place. Installing an operating system could wait for another day, I thought as I uncorked a celebratory bottle of Charles Shaw wine.

Now for the rebate forms. (I always make sure everything works before I fill these out.) The CD burner form needed the serial number. I looked all over the box. Not there. I looked through every piece of documentation that came with it. No serial number. I looked at the rebate form again. The fine print said, “Write down serial number before installing.” I know companies do everything they can to make completing rebate transactions difficult, but this was the worst I've seen. And then it dawned on me. “That's what the clear side and light is for. To read the serial numbers after you put the computer together!”

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MSCONFIG

(Microsoft Configuration Utility)

Secrets To Your Computer Startup

By Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC Organization, Inc., San Antonio, TX

Do you ever wonder what takes your computer so long to start up? In most cases the reason for that is that computer manufacturers and software developers think you need or even want all those programs and accompanying little icons to startup every time that you turn your computer on. By the time Microsoft, Compaq or whoever your computer manufacturer is, and a few software companies are done with your computer you probably have 10 or more different programs running into each other every time your computer starts. Most of the programs that startup when your computer starts up are being shoved in there vying for room for no reason at all, but you can prevent that. I used to work as a computer technician at a national computer chain store where they charged a pretty penny for this little operation but you can do it at home armed with a little knowledge.

First of all, MSCONFIG stands for Microsoft Configuration Utility. If you click on Start, run, then type MSCONFIG you will see 6 tabs. On the far right you will see Startup.

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A Trip Down Microsoft Office History Lane — Another Day At The Office...2003

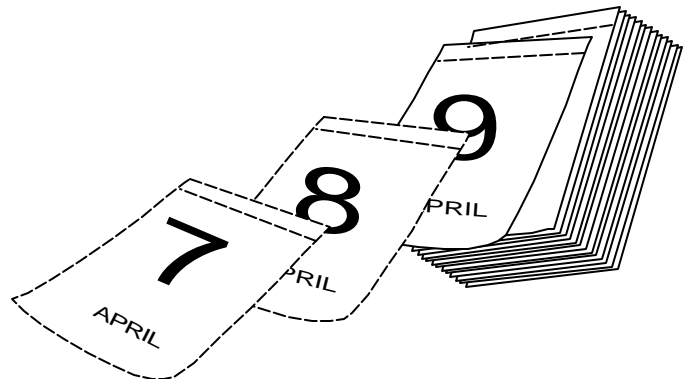
By Bruce Pechman, The Muscleman of TechnologySM www.mrbicep.com

With the imminent release of Office 2003, and the newly branded Microsoft Office System, I started to ponder the Office family pedigree from a historical perspective. It seems there are so many configurations, releases, editions, and individual applications that make up the Microsoft Office System family. I wanted some answers to some very pressing questions. Instead of reviewing Office 2003, I uncovered and compiled some interesting anecdotes and facts about the Office family pedigree in general. You will probably see oodles of reviews about Office 2003 ad nauseam in the months to come, so sit back and enjoy the “sideshow.” I would like to thank Lisa Robbins with Waggener Edstrom and Aaron Ricadela from Information Week for providing me with historical information that made this article possible.

Let's start off with a trip down memory lane for some Microsoft Office firsts. According to a Microsoft white paper “Key Events In Microsoft History,” the very first incarnation of Microsoft Word took place on 9/29/83. On this date, Microsoft introduced its full-featured word processing program, Microsoft Word for MS-DOS 1.00. OK, that might be too far back, but the first release of Microsoft Excel for Windows occurred on 10/6/87. Excel was a smash hit and just nine years later on 5/17/96, Microsoft reported that more than 30 million people worldwide use Microsoft Excel—making it the most popular spreadsheet program of all time. Wondering about the roots of PowerPoint? PowerPoint was actually developed by a company called Forethought, Inc. and was acquired by Microsoft on 7/30/87. Speaking of PowerPoint, according to the Nerdy Books newsletter, “there are over 250 million PowerPoint users and approximately 30 million presentations are given every day.” For you database fans, Microsoft announced the availability of Access Database for Windows on 11/16/92 at Fall Comdex.

Now let's test your memory skills. How many versions of Office for the Windows platform have been released? Would you believe seven! Sure—many of you knew about Office 97, 2000, Office XP and certainly the new Office 2003. But the other 3 lesser known are Office 3.x, 4.x, and of course, Office 95. For you trivia fans, Outlook first appeared in Office 97. Another first for Office 97 is what became known as the Office “Developer Edition.” This edition was aimed at developers to learn how to build solutions with the new features of Microsoft Office 97. There are over one million developers who use Microsoft Office to build business solutions. In fact, according David Bennie, group Manager at Microsoft, there are about 245 million people worldwide that use Office products. It's no mystery that Microsoft makes up 90% of the Office Suite market. Office 2000 introduced the option of a “Premium Edition” that bundled some previously stand-alone applications such as Publisher, Front Page, and PhotoDraw.

By the way, not included in Microsoft Office, but still considered in the “Office Family,” are Microsoft Project (first announced on 9/18/95), Microsoft Visio, and Microsoft MapPoint. If you are wondering about Microsoft PhotoDraw, Waggener Edstrom confirmed that no new versions are planned and the PhotoDraw team has been deployed to work on future Microsoft .Net technologies. New programs, depending upon the edition of Office 2003 you choose are InfoPath and OneNote.



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Click on the startup tab and there you see what loads up when your computer starts. Many applications put items in your startup group that are absolutely unnecessary such as Real Player streaming audio, calendar birthday reminder, bill payer reminder to name a few. Even if you have 512 megabytes of RAM or more I don't recommend that you load any unnecessary applications on startup, hopefully you will know about aunt Jenny's birthday before your computer tells you. Its like the guy who is unpacking the family car at the beach, he dropped the family off near the water so they are there ready to have fun but dad has to go park the car ½ a mile a way then walk through the hot sand loaded down with the sun tan lotion, towels and ice chest. Do you really think he needs to carry any more? Even without the beach balls and rafts he's lucky if he doesn't fall and spill the sun tan lotion all over the towels – yes that would be a mess.

After you turn your computer on it has to wake everything up (BIOS, network card, ports, etc.) load all its drivers, the bare essential applications, and the fonts. The only startup items you absolutely need are:

- ScanRegistry
- TaskMonitor
- SystemTray
- LoadPowerProfile
- Your antivirus software

There is an extensive and regularly updated list of startup files and what they do here http://www.pacs_portal.co.uk/startup_pages/

startup_full.htm. As of February 27, 2003, this guy had 2,277 files listed. I applaud his enthusiasm, but he really should get out more often. The general rule of thumb is — if in doubt leave it alone. After you uncheck the boxes of unneeded items and click Apply, OK, you will be asked if you want to restart or exit without restarting. You can do either, but you will not reap the benefits of unloading the items until after you restart. After you restart your computer Microsoft will give you a message that says you have run the MSCONFIG utility and wants to know if you are satisfied with the results. If you do not want to see this message again, check the box. You should notice an immediate improvement in performance and stability, all for free and you did it yourself the all natural way without adding more programs such as Ram Booster or an “optimizer” program which only leads to more memory use and possible software conflicts.

MSCONFIG is not available for Windows 95, NT, or 2000. However there is a free “Startup Control Panel” at Mlin.net that will work just as well for Windows 95 and if you are using Windows NT or 2000, you can download the official, Windows XP version of MSCONFIG on the Tech Guide Web site.

Bruce is recently retired from the Army and is a regular volunteer at the “Doctor is In” each Friday at the Learning Center. He is A+, Network+, I-Net, certified as well as a Microsoft Certified Professional in Windows XP, and provides on-site computer services to individuals and businesses.

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You know the irony of all this nostalgia is these dates don't seem all that long ago, yet according to CNET, Office and other desktop applications accounted for 37 percent of Microsoft's \$6.46 billion revenue in one quarter. According to Microsoft in 2001, approximately 55 percent of the world's 120 million licensed Office customers still have the 97 version. Approximately 5 percent have Office 95, and the remaining 40 percent have Office 2000.

The future of the Office franchise is still very much a subject of speculation, but industry analysts say there is a good chance the next Office version may go by the moniker “Office.Net” and possibly adhere to the .Net platform's subscription-based services model.

Lockergnome's Win XP Tips

By Chris Pirillo, Chief Lockergnome

Windows Update Transfer Details

Windows Update hasn't been faring too well lately; it's caused a few users some unnecessary headaches. It'll say something along the lines of: "Here, I think you need this patch." When, in fact, you don't. Mike Vigneau passed along an interesting tip for those of us who want to know what's happening when we're using this particular Microsoft tool.

This tweak has been confirmed with Windows XP and 2000 systems, although it may work in earlier versions of Windows as well. What we're going to do is set the transfer dialog to "debug" mode. This way, we can keep an eye on what's happening - at each stage in the process. Fire up the Registry editor and fly to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE \ SOFTWARE \ Microsoft \ Active Setup. Enter a new String Value and label it: "SteppingMode" (sans quotes).

Edit the String and give it a value of Y. The next time you use Windows Update, its actions should be a little more descriptive. If you ever wish to disable the verbosity, simply switch this value to N. If you

want another way to grab these downloads, consider using the Corporate version of Windows Update (a quick search on Google will provide the appropriate URL).

Driver Queries And Wasted Space

What's the quickest way (in Windows XP) to get a list of the currently loaded drivers including module names and descriptions)? Get out of the GUI; you're better off at the command line for this tip. Browse to your desktop folder for simplicity's sake usually found at C:\ Documents and Settings \ [Username] \ Desktop). Now, at the command line, enter: "driverquery /V > drivers.txt" (sans quotes). That /V provides a more "verbose" output. Other notable switches include /FO (which formats the output as a table, list, or comma separated values) and /SI (which provides details about any signed driver).

Open that freshly-created drivers.txt file and you'll be in business. On a more entertaining note, do you remember the music that played when you first started Windows XP? Ya know, the one that sounded like an Enigma tune? If you wanna hear it again, you can find it at C:\ WINDOWS \ system32 \ oobe images \ title.wma. Of course, if you want to free up 3 MB worth of space, you can delete it and the intro.wmv file sitting next to it.

Built-in Spell Checker

Quite honestly, there's no excuse for spelling errors anymore. Typos were frequent in the days of the typewriter; misspellings were common in the handwritten letter era. Though there's virtually no quick way to spell check a word when you're in anything other than a "Microsoft Office Spell Checker" supported application.

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Lockergnomie Tom Maenner had issues with the feature in Outlook Express after he upgraded to Windows XP. "I had to locate 'csapi3t1.dl_' on the Windows XP CD and expand it as 'csapi3t1.dll' in this directory: C:\Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\Proof. Worked like a charm."

I'm not certain if this will work on every machine, but it's worth trying if the tool isn't operational for you. If you dork up words every other minute, consider turning on the "Spell Check before Sending" feature in your default e-mail client. It's and its, than and then, their and they're, or any other homophone may slip through the cracks. Butt at least you won't look like a total fool—just a parshal one. Even online, credibility counts.

CompactFlash Formatting

Digital Media (the non-Lockergnome kind) is wonderful when it works. Most people use it in their digital camera or PDA (as do I). Transferring data from a portable device to the PC is relatively painless. Lockergnomie Glen Fabian pointed out something recently posted to COMPACTFLASH.ORG (the CompactFlash Association): "By default, Windows XP will format any CompactFlash card of 64MB or more with FAT32 format. Digital cameras and other devices use the FAT (FAT16) format and can not operate with a FAT32 formatted card. Either format your CompactFlash card in your camera or select FAT format to format your CompactFlash card in a Windows XP PC."

Even if you don't use CF media or Windows XP, this is something to keep in mind. And do you need another reason to own a laptop? My Pocket PC is a Walkman of sorts; I put new MP3s on it every day. However, transferring them via any USB (1.1) connection is slow as molasses.

I picked up a PCMCIA CF adapter for under five bucks a few weeks ago (they're inexpensive to begin with). Trust me, that will speed up the process. Visit PCMCIA.ORG for more information.

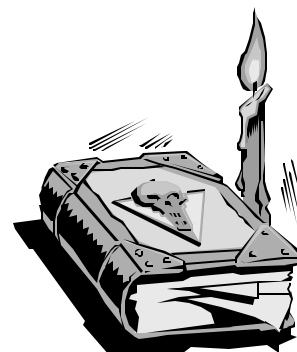
Media Access Control

It's no secret that 802.11b networks are not very secure; we've discussed this point at length in the past. When you enable wireless connectivity through your access point, you should filter out non-registered MAC (Media Access Control) addresses if your WAP supports this feature. A MAC address is unique to every network card on the market. Any Wi-Fi device may see your wireless access point, but it won't be able to use the WAP unless its MAC address matches the (manually entered) filter. Nice, huh?

Okay, so how do you determine a network card's MAC address? Either use WINIPCFG or IPCONFIG. You're looking for a hexadecimal string - twelve digits long (six sections of two hex characters each). This is easy to find when you're on your own machine, but what about those connected to your network?

As your home network expands, this information will become increasingly important. You could use your router's DHCP table to view the addresses, or you could use Windows XP's GETMAC command line utility (also available as a free Windows 2000 Resource Kit download).

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Actual lockergnomie tips book

Selections From The DealsGuy

Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group

Who's Next?

I read that Symantec is buying PowerQuest Corp. for \$150 million and should complete the purchase by the end of the year. I'm not sure if it will affect user groups, but as you know, Symantec dropped user group support a few years ago and PowerQuest cut the financial support they were giving Gene and Linda Barlow last year. It is, however, a fact that PowerQuest is more than pleased with the job that User Group Relations (Gene's Company) still does for them and I doubt they will want to lose that kind of product support. In the meantime, if you are thinking of purchasing a PowerQuest product, I wouldn't wait long to go to [<http://www.ugr.com>] and take advantage of the low UG prices, just in case. Who knows, with such a great track record, perhaps Gene will also be selling Symantec products. Makes sense to me!

Correction

Last month I talked about flag screensavers at [<http://www.improbable.ukgateway.net/flag3d/flag3d.htm>], but Paul Witheridge e-mailed me that I wrongly described the site offering Canadian flag

screensavers. Here is the correction I received: "Bob, there was only ONE Canadian flag and a good selection of others including US, UK and Australia but the BIG bonus is that it will make a flag out of any BMP you add to the folder! Too bad you misinformed your readers and a lot of non-Canadians will miss out on a good screen saver thinking that it's Canadian only." Sorry for that mistake folks, and I thank Paul for the correction.

Still Good

I'm pretty sure that great Serif offer of free software and mouse for just the cost of shipping is still good. Call 1-800-55-SERIF to order. The various free programs are actually on just one CD ROM. The negative side is that now they often send you special offers for all kinds of products.

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [Bob-click@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns and many interesting articles I have taken from various users group newsletters.



Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC) Meetings

Power and water outages (due to Isabel) at the Fairfax County Government Center will prevent our September meeting from being held. Meetings for the remainder of the year will be held at a different venue—Verizon Online, 1880 Campus Commons Drive, Reston.

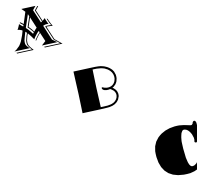
WAC Meeting will be held on December 13th, 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM. You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC AnswerLine (voice) at (703) 370-7649. Also see WAC's Web Site at

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



Hunt for the Lost Font

By Mick Topping, Springfield, Missouri User Groups, mtopping@mchsi.com



Did you ever lose a font? A year or so ago I made up and printed a sheet of business cards that I was happy with. Last week, I gave away my last one. (I go through about one card a month.) When I opened the business card again (in Corel Draw-7), it complained that it could not find the font Andy Bold, and asked which font to substitute.

Let me mention that I am not much of a font person. I usually couldn't care less about which font to use. I am an engineer, more interested in the meaning of the words than in how they are drawn. Arial, Courier, and Times New Roman are about all I ever use. But for my business card, I wanted something to reflect my casual insouciance, and convey the fact that I have a passion for informality, and that I am really not looking for work. Since I had put a good 10-15 minutes into the original font selection, I was somewhat concerned, and more than somewhat irritated that it was no longer available. So, I decided to hunt the critter down.

First, I looked for "Andy" in every font folder on 3 computers. (I couldn't remember which machine I had used to print the cards.) Nothing like **Andy Bold** anywhere. Then I remembered, Windows applications (for the most part) keep their fonts in the C:\Windows\Fonts folder, and most applications just reach into this folder to use a font. And applications rarely delete their fonts when they are uninstalled. So any font that was ever put on a computer is likely still there, unless major surgery has been done. This fact pointed to my laptop computer as the culprit, as I had recently done a clean-install of WindowsXP, whereas the other computers had been little changed over the year. Regular experimentation had caused numerous apps to be installed on the laptop, then when the new version of Windows was installed only those apps still needed were re-installed.

But which of those non-reinstalled applications came with the Andy Bold font? First a web-search on "lost font"—wow, I am not the only one who has lost a font. Over 300 web pages containing

"lost font", none of which were very promising. Many of the links were inactive, and advertising overwhelmed others, and I was getting nowhere. Another search on "**Andy Bold**", only a few hits this time, and here was a "Bulkeley Valley Christian" school web page, with a note that to appreciate the page you needed to have Andy Bold installed on your computer. And there was a link promising to let me download AndyB.ttf ! Unfortunately, it was another broken link. Most likely, someone had remembered that the fonts are copyrighted, and shouldn't be downloaded.

In frustration, I finally gave-up, and printed 2 new sheets of business cards in Balloon... or Plump or Poster Boldoni, not sure which. Of course, the new cards were not out of the printer when I had another thought—maybe someone at Microsoft had considered this problem. Sure enough they had. It is not easy to find, but once you know where to look,

<http://www.microsoft.com/typography/fonts/default.asp> has a search engine that will allow you to find which applications came with which fonts.

A quick lookup, and there was what I needed.

Andy Bold is distributed with Microsoft Home Publisher, part of the never used software that had come with my laptop. A quick dig through my stack of CD-ROMs, and there it was, in the MHP\Fonts folder, an icon labeled AndyB.ttf. I drag it over to my Windows\Fonts folder, and it automatically installs, and I can now print my cards like I want them. Unfortunately, I have a 2-year supply of them done with the other font. Anyone want a card? Aw come on—please take a card.

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

Treasurer's Report For FY 2003

Paul Howard, NCTCUG Treasurer

FY'03 — 10/1/02 - 9/30/03

Revenues	
Pizza SIG Donations	\$171.00
Donations by Check	\$590.00
Corporate Matching Donations	\$75.00
Total Donations	\$836.00
Dues	\$1,100.00
Interest Income — CD Account	\$41.65
Total Revenues	\$1,977.65
Expenses	
Insurance	\$100.00
Annual VA Corporation Fee	\$25.00
APCUG Membership Fee	\$50.00
PO Box Rent	\$160.00
Admin. Postage	\$7.46
Total Administrative Expenses	\$342.46
Printing Membership Brochures	\$24.04
Total Membership & PR Expenses	\$24.04
Newsletter Postage	\$240.35
Newsletter Printing	\$687.14
Total Newsletter Expenses	\$927.49
Total Expenses	\$1,293.99
Results from Operations	\$683.66

Treasurer's Remarks

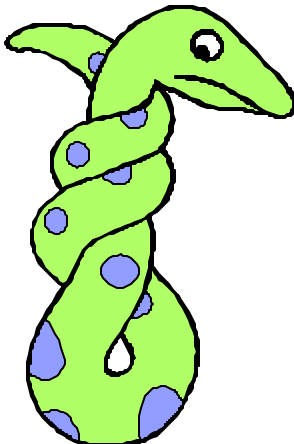
We've had a very successful year financially, thanks to the generosity of our members.

Donations from Pizza SIG, and member donations are greatly appreciated and provide a sound footing for the user group.

The Verizon Foundation matched the contributions of an employee / member to the group, made possible by our non-profit, educational status.

(Continued from page 1)

This lovely Blaster.E worm exploits (surprise!) yet another windows security hole — Symantec's recommendation was to download the appropriate Micro\$oft patch first, before attempting to use the removal tool. Fortunately, I was able to do that — this worm frequently impedes your ability to get to the internet. After patch download and installation, I ran the Symantec removal tool several times, and did several full system scans, and was unable to find any trace of Blaster.E — hopefully, that's the last of it.



Then the primary machine with the new hard drive got hit with the W32.Welchia.Worm, exploiting the same Windows security hole as the Blaster worm. To make a long story short, I spent lots of time downloading and installing Windows XP updates from Micro\$oft's web site. So, the moral of this week's story is that beyond getting all your virus definition files updated on a daily basis, you need to keep checking the Windows update web site, download and

(Continued from page 14)

install the patches that appear there as well. And, if you're using a dialup modem connection, pack a lunch.

In truth, you probably need to be selective about the patches, and keep checking sites you can trust for commentary on whether the Windows updates are reliable and necessary. Do you really want or need a 39 meg download of .NET ecommerce stuff for what you're doing, or are likely to do? There are no easy answers — though some would claim you should move to a Sparc Station!

Well, I tore apart my cable rat's nest, and took both computers to the NCTCUG BOD meeting on October 20th. Enthusiasm for tearing into computer problems far exceeded the attendees' interest in a business meeting — what a surprise! We managed, however, to get the newsletter assembled and labeled, business meeting accomplished, and resolve my computer problems. Roger Fujii waved the new

drive at my nose, and asked what ever possessed me to install two configuration jumpers on the option block. I pointed to an illustration in the set-up instruction sheet. Roger suggested I read the accompanying instructions — which called for two jumpers only in rare circumstances on older computers. What? Read the directions when installing new hardware — what fun would that be?

After the offending extra jumper was removed, and the drive properly optioned, the remainder of the missing 48 Gigs appeared. After a treatment with Powerquest's Partition Magic, the remainder of the drive was formatted and added to the existing partition. The gang then tweaked the networking options on the two computers, and I was back in business with my criss-cross cable network between the machines. For some reason, the 80 Gig drive is now labeled "Paul's One Jumper Drive" in the directory.

(Continued on page 16)

NCTCUG Information

NCTCUG, Post Office Box 949, Arlington VA 22216

Club Information call: 301-577-7899

Web Site: www.nctcug.org

Officers and Directors

All officer terms expire 2003

President	Jim Rhodes	703-931-7854
1st VP	Ron Schmidt	301-577-7899
2nd VP	Roger Fujii	703-280-1243
Treasurer	Paul Howard	703-860-9246
Secretary	Roger Arnold	301-946-7770

Director: term expires

Bob MacFarlane	2004	703-533-0259
Blair Jones	2004	202-362-7344
John Keys	2004	703-451-0896
Nick Wenri	2004	703-759-3938
Fred Cook	2005	703-921-1749
JJ Davies	2005	703-379-9222
Sy Fishbein	2005	703-536-5894
Dean Mires	2005	301-931-2400

Article Submissions

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

Membership Policy

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

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

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Articles Editor

Ron Schmidt 301-577-7899

COMPUCENTER BBS

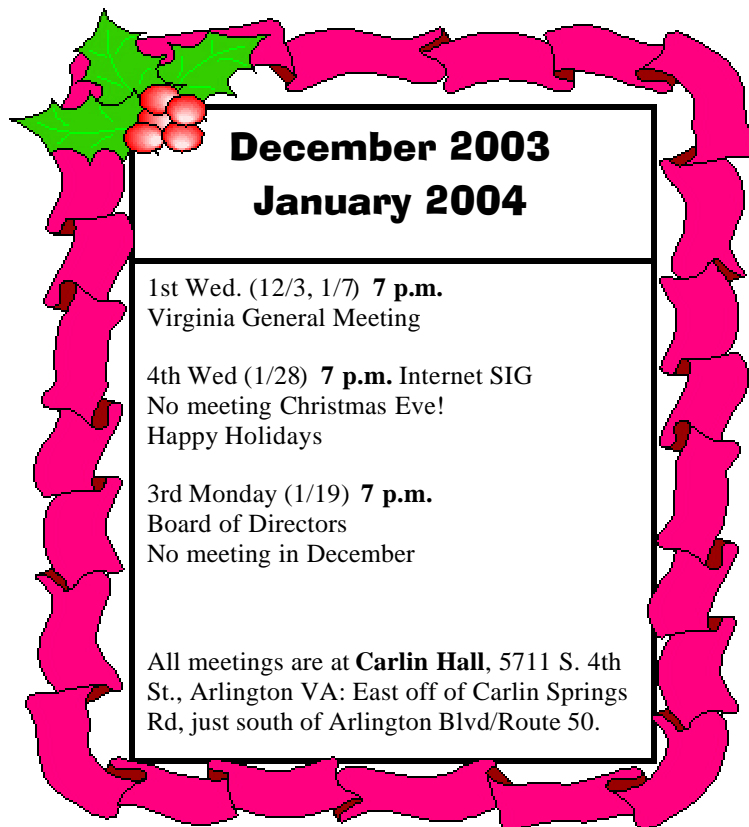
Is no longer in operation. It has been replaced by the 'compucenter' mailing list at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>

If you are moving

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

Thank You!

Two nights later, the gang worked on a machine Chuck Throneburg brought in. This computer had a 4 Gig hard drive, but the computer was only recognizing two gigs. Partition Magic to the rescue again. No option jumpers were involved this time. Partition Magic created and formatted an additional partition in the empty space, then appended it to the original partition. Total time, less than 20 minutes. Much more time was expended trying to get a "plug and pray" sound card to install. After an hour of multiple re-installation attempts, the PCI card was abandoned, and an ISA card was installed. Five minutes to locate a driver, and the 'Windows Sound' was wafting through the speakers.



December 2003
January 2004
1st Wed. (12/3, 1/7) 7 p.m. Virginia General Meeting
4th Wed (1/28) 7 p.m. Internet SIG No meeting Christmas Eve! Happy Holidays
3rd Monday (1/19) 7 p.m. Board of Directors No meeting in December
All meetings are at Carlin Hall , 5711 S. 4th St., Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50.

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Arlington VA 22216



Happy New Year!

First Class
