

PACC TALK


Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

January 2008

MEETING SCHEDULE Sunday, January 20, 2008

- 11:00 -11:25 am Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase
ROOM # 311 50/50 tickets (Optional), Setup Computers,
Connect to Internet , Prep for Meetings
- 11:00 -11:25 pm PACC BOD Meeting
ROOM # 301
- 11:35- 12:05 pm Windows New Users
ROOM # 301 Can we help you? V. Agrawala
- 12:30 -12:59 pm General Meeting, Raffle.
ROOM # 301 (pg. 1)
- 1:00 - 2:15 pm DriverMax, CSVed 1.4.4, NetSetMan 2.4.1
ROOM # 301 (pg. 1)
- 2:30 - 3:30 pm What's new in Linux ??
ROOM # 301 GNOME Desktop (pg. 3)
- 2:30 - 3:30 pm Hardware SIG
ROOM # 311 Users Helping Users - guests included
- 1:00 - 3:55 pm Linux SIG, Members Helping Members, Com-
ROOM # 311 puter troubleshooting, Info Exchange
- 4:00 - 4:30 pm Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close

What is inside....

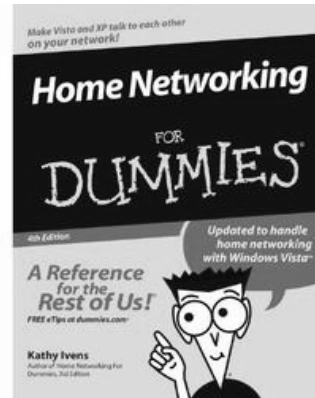
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Windows SIG

Is your PC slowing down? It could be there are some driver versions that are old for the task and need updating. Or there are more than one and Windows can't decide which to use and takes a long time. Quoting from the Innovative Solutions web site:

“**DriverMax** is able to display a complete report of all drivers (versions, release dates) installed on your system. This feature can also be very useful when you want to analyze the differences between the drivers installed on different machines.”

To the right see the picture of the interface. Great piece of freeware, add it to you collection if you please?



*** RAFFLE ***

Covers
both
Windows XP
and Vista.

Go on Safari with your user group and you can receive **FREE O'Reilly gifts and an on-site visit with Tim O'Reilly.** With the O'Reilly Network Safari Bookshelf, you have access to over 1,000 of the top technical books online using your web browser. And with Safari's advanced search capabilities, you'll find the answers--and code samples--you need fast. Go to <http://www.oreilly.com/safari/ug> to learn more!



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<http://www.innovative-sol.com/drivermax/index.htm>

At only modest 2.628 KB download it is a worthy download!



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This is a great freeware program needed by anyone to manipulate the CSV file you might have played with but gave up on.

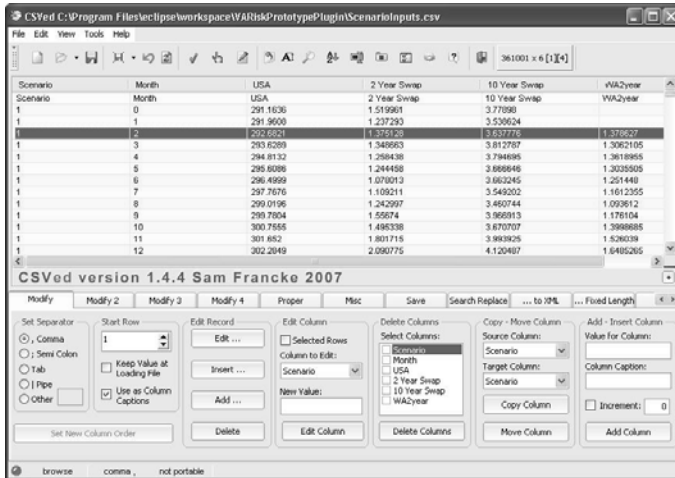
“CSVed is an easy and powerful CSV file editor, you can manipulate any CSV file, separated with any separator. “

The 883 KB download is here:

<http://csved.sjfrancke.nl/index.html>

Very good explanation on CSV ("Comma Separated Value") is available at **Creativyst Software web site**

<http://www.creativyst.com/Doc/Articles/CSV/CSV01.htm>



NetSetMan 2.4.1

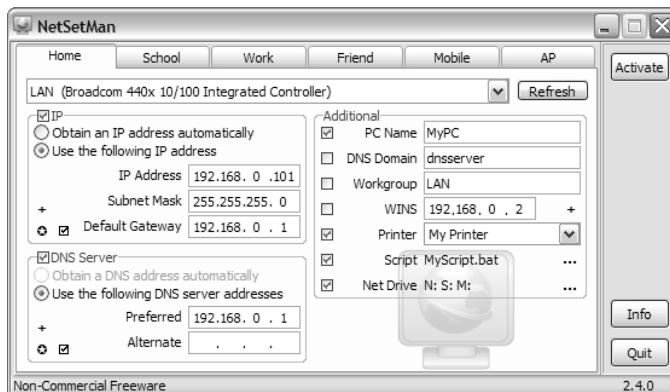
Freeware, as long as you do not make money with it? To explain this you go to the web site!

“Are you tired of changing your network configuration on your laptop or computer every day? Always the same procedure?

NetSetMan is a network settings manager which can easily switch between 6 different, visually structured profiles including:

IP Address, Subnet Mask, Default Gateway, DNS Server, Computer Name, Workgroup, DNS Domain, WINS Server, Default Printer, Network Drives, Scripts (BAT, VS, JS, ...) “

Get it here: <http://www.netsetman.com/> only a 1,175 KB download



Weird Windows Behavior

By Sandy Berger, compukiss.com

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Have you ever been completely dismayed by your computer? Does it seem to do unusual things that you can't trace back to any of your actions? Well, you are not alone. This happens to all computer users. In the computer world, unusual things sometimes happen. Here is a list of some weird computer behavior and how to combat it.

Icons disappear

Right-click on any open area of the computer desktop, then chose Arrange Icons By. If your icons have accidentally become hidden there will be no checkmark in front of Show Desktop Icons. Just click that option and your icons will reappear.

Unusual windows appear

Windows has a lot of keyboard shortcuts that can be accidentally accessed. For instance, when I started this column, I wanted to hit the Shift key and the letter “h” for the word Have. However, my finger slipped and I hit the Ctrl key and the letter “h” instead. A window popped up asking what I wanted to Find and Replace, which is not at all what I intended. If this ever happens you to you can usually just close the pop up window, but occasionally you have to look a little further into what happened. For instance, when working in Microsoft Word, if you accidentally hit Ctrl+N, a new window will appear making it look like you just lost your entire document. If you look closely you will be able to figure out that all you have to do is close the new window and the document you were working on will reappear.

If you can't figure out what happened or you get caught in a loop, restarting your computer will usually bring you back to normal.

Lost toolbars

As noted before, an errant key press can cause a problem. This time the culprit is one of the F keys. Accidentally pressing the F11 key can make the toolbars disappear. This is often used as a feature when you want to show something in what they call “full screen mode”. If this happens to you, just press F11 again to make the toolbars return.

The toolbar moves

Have you ever had the toolbar that usually appears on the bottom of the screen show up on the side or top of the screen? There is an easy way to get it back where it belongs. Just place your cursor right next to, but not on, the Start button. Then hold the mouse button down and drag the toolbar back where it belongs.

Dramatic slowdown

A dramatic slowdown can mean that your hard disk is filling up. The computer uses the hard disk as sort of a scratch pad when it computes, so when your hard drive starts to fill up, it can slow the computer down significantly. Click on My Computer and highlight the drive called Local Disk (C:). Look at the Details area to see how much space is free. You should have at least 10% of your hard drive

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free. If you don't, a hard drive cleanup is in order. Delete unnecessary programs and backup old files and photos to an external drive or CD so you can delete them from the hard disk. You can use the Disk Cleanup utility to empty the recycle bin and delete unnecessary temporary files. To access it, click on Start, choose All Programs, then click on System Tools where you will find Disk Cleanup listed. It will walk you through the cleanup. Once your hard disk has more free space, your computer will perk up considerably. You might also consider defragmenting your computer to speed it up. The Disk Defragmenter utility is in the System Tools area. Remember there are other things like viruses and spyware that can also slow down your computer.

No sound

Sometimes the sound gets muted by mistake. Look at the taskbar at bottom of the screen. In the right hand side you will see a small icon that looks like a speaker. If it has a red X on it, the sound has been muted. Click on the icon, then click to remove the checkmark in front of the word Mute. If you don't see this icon, go to the Control Panel and choose Sounds or Sounds and Audio Devices where you will find a place to uncheck the Mute option. Many laptops and some desktops also have a volume button on the keyboard which you can use to mute and unmute the speaker.

Mouse shatters

If your mouse is hard to control or acting erratic, it may need a cleaning. An optical mouse with a flat bottom just needs a cleaning with a damp cloth. If your mouse has a roller ball on the bottom, remove the ball and clean the rollers inside the mouse with a Q-tip soaked with isopropyl alcohol.

Hope this gets you through some of those weird Windows moments in your life.

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the end of the story

GNOME 2.20 is the latest version of the GNOME Desktop: a popular, multi-platform desktop environment. GNOME's focus is ease of use, stability, and first class internationalization and accessibility support. Based on Free and Open Source Software, GNOME provides all of the common tools computer users expect of a modern computing environment, as well as a flexible and powerful platform for software developers.



Moving on to Vista – Part 1

by Neil Stahfest, Shareware Librarian,
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I tested a pre-release version of Windows Vista last year. I thought that the eye candy was nice but there really wasn't a lot about the program to make it worth upgrading my PC to use it. Since then I've heard stories about problems with Vista that made me even reluctant to upgrade to it. But, things happen. I "needed" a new laptop to demonstrate programs for the Flight Simulator S.I.G. <wink><wink> Many of you will be buying new computers in the next year or so, so I'll share some of my experiences and impressions with you.

I took the plunge in August 2007 and bought a new HP laptop. And of course it only comes pre-loaded with Windows Vista. (Note - If you buy a new PC, make sure you get at least the Vista Home Premium Version. The Home Basic Version is crippled, you won't like it, and the manufacture may even provide the Premium version as a "free" upgrade.)

I opened the box, plugged in the battery charger, turned the PC on (per the instructions) and the computer worked. HP pre-activates Windows Vista saving you from going through the exercise of activating it. I had to answer a few questions of course; name, password, my preference for mydesktop, etc. Nothing too difficult. So now I have Windows Vista and it works.

Connection to my wireless home LAN was important to me; fortunately Vista made that very easy. Just follow the Internet Wizard, a click here, a click there and you are connected. The first thing I used the Internet connection for was to check for Windows Vista updates. There were about 18. I'm not sure what they were all supposed to do, but for now, I decided to trust Microsoft and installed all of them.

The next few days were spent playing with the computer, learning what things did. I sure miss the days when you got a "real" manual with a PC. It took me five days to discover a pressure sensitive strip at the top of the keyboard that lets you increase and decrease speaker volume by sliding your finger over it. Searching the Hewlett Packard web site I located a manual for my computer (in .pdf format) and downloaded it for future reference.

I never have cared for the touch pads that they put on laptop PCs to provide a mouse function but this one works pretty good. Still, I prefer a real mouse. Unfortunately, this laptop doesn't have the standard mouse connector like my old laptop. HP only provides USB connections so none of the mice I have will work on it. A check at the web site of my favorite PC supply store indicated that they were out of stock. As luck would have it, later the same day, I was walking past the writing supplies area in my local Safeway when I spotted a laptop mouse manufactured by Targus. For \$19 and change I bought a cute little two button USB optical mini-mouse (no mouse pad required) with a little thing on the connecting wire that lets me pull out as much or as little wire as I need. Problem solved! (Update - I lost my original mouse after about three weeks. I discovered that Office Max sells a variety of mini-mice made by different manufacturers. I bought another Targus mini-mouse.)

Personal computers are very personal. I spent most of the first week that I owned this computer, customizing it. I added utility and appli-

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ation programs that do what I need to do the way I like to do it. Vista may offer "better" ways to organize and present information. If so I'll probably discover them. In the meantime my desktop looks similar to my old Windows XP computer, littered with desktop icons that are shortcuts to various programs.

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Moving on to Vista – Part 2

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One of the most irritating things about Windows Vista is the repetitious messages that appear whenever you attempt to install a new program. First you see a box with that asks, "Are you sure you want to run this program?" Once you get past this point, you see another box which says, "Unidentified program wants access to your computer", "Allow" or "Cancel". In some cases, once the program is installed, every time you attempt to run it you see a warning, "A program needs your permission to continue".

I suppose this is part of Microsoft's attempt to improve security and protect users from "malware". For a long-time, "experienced", Windows User, these warnings seem like overkill. One of the first things I did was to search the Internet for a way to turn them off. Microsoft will tell you not to do this (it weakens their security system) but, for the knowledgeable user, here is the solution. Click Start --> Control Panel. In the left panel, make sure that you are in the Classic View. Double-click User Accounts. Click "Turn User Account Control on or off". Clear the check box and click OK. Reboot the computer.

I'm not sure if I like the new Vista Start menu. You open it by left-clicking on the Start button or pressing the Windows key. The colors are more brilliant in the new menu and the order of some things has been changed to place things that are used more frequently near the top. For those who prefer something closer to what you see with Windows XP, Microsoft has provided an alternative. Put your mouse pointer on the Task Bar at the bottom of the screen and left-click. In the window that appears click on "Properties". Click on the Start Menu tab; then click on the button for a "Classic Start Menu" and click OK. Notice that at the bottom of this page is a hyper-link (blue text) "How do I change the way the Start Menu looks". Click on it to see the many options.

For those who want to change the right half of the NEW Start menu, place your mouse pointer on the Task Bar at the bottom of the screen again and right-click. In the window that appears click on "Properties" and then Start Menu tab and click on the "Customize" button. The top half of the screen shows all of the items that are available and the manner that they are available (you'll probably have to scroll down to see everything). Point and click to turn items on and off. Experiment a little. Turn things on and off. You can reverse the selections that you made if you don't like them or click on the "Use Default Settings" button to restore everything to the original condition. Note that you can do the same thing if you select the "Classic Start Menu" instead of "Start Menu".

There was one "last" convenience item that I wanted to add to my desktop. I like to go directly to "Computer" (it used to be called "My

Computer" in Windows XP) for fast access to hard drives and file folders without going through the Start Menu. This is easy to set up in Vista - just right-click on an empty area of the desktop and click on "Personalize". On the left side of the window, under "Tasks", click on "Change Desktop Icons". Under "Desktop Icons", click on "Computer" so a check mark appears in the box next to it.

Before you leave this window, notice that you can also change the icons that are used for each of the selected items. You can also pick one of the default icons, click on the "Change Icon" button and select an alternate from a library of icons. If you change your mind about the icon you picked you can click the "Restore Default" button. When you are finished with changes click OK.

Next month we'll look at more things you can do with the desktop.

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the end of the story

Using Imaging Software For Backup

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There are many hard drive backup programs on the market that tell you that they can make an "image" of your hard drive. This allows you to restore your programs and data in case of a hard drive crash. They also will transfer everything on your hard drive to a new drive. Among these backup programs are well-known names such as Symantec Ghost, Acronis True Image, R-Drive Image, Image for Windows, Paragon Drive Backup and a host of free imaging applications. In terms of making a complete backup of your hard drive (operating system, applications and data), they are very successful. However, what happens when your hard drive crashes or you decide you want a new computer? Will these applications solve the problem of restoring your applications and data quickly and easily? Let's look at the generic methods they use for these situations.

Basically each of these programs makes a "bit-map" copy of your hard drive that is usually compressed and may be encrypted. This, I'm sure, is a statement that needs some explanation. First, the words "bit-map." Everything stored on your hard drive is encoded in the binary computer language. This language is composed of 1's and 0's only. This limitation is imposed by the electromagnetic character of hard drives as well as the "pits and hills" of optical media. So a "bit" is one character, a one or a zero. A computer word is a "byte" which is composed of eight "bits." The imaging software is examining every bit on your hard drive and copying it to the backup media. In order to save space, the bit-map is compressed before it is written to the backup site. The method of compression varies with the software used. Sometimes, the compressed file may be written in a proprietary format that can be read only by the specific application that originated the backup. In other words, Ghost's image file can't be read by any program other than Ghost.

So now we have a bit-map image of our hard drive on whatever we chose for the backup media. In my case I use external hard drives. If I were to store the backup on a partition of my original drive and that drive failed - I would lose the backup. So store it somewhere else if you ever expect to need it.

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What does this image file contain? It has the entire contents of your hard drive. That means operating system files, including the Windows Registry, all of your software applications and all of your data. It also has all of the hardware driver information that Windows needs that relates to your hardware. That includes drivers for your motherboard and processor, network card, USB ports, printers, scanners, video cams, etc. This is a very important point, especially if you want to clone your drive to a new computer. More about that later.

Since an image file contains a complete copy of your hard drive it can be very useful in restoring individual files. It can also be used to restore an entire hard drive in case of a drive failure. There are several methods available for this process. Some image file programs allow you to create a bootable disk (floppy or CD-ROM). When the computer is booted from this disk, it will install the image file program and can then be used to restore all the files on the backup. This includes the operating system files. In other cases you have to first install the operating system and then the image file program before you can restore the rest of the files. In both cases, it is not necessary to reactivate Windows as changing the hard drive is not enough of a change to cause Windows to demand that you go through reactivation.

Microsoft instituted a copy protection process called "activation" with the release of Windows XP. This has been continued with Vista. The activation of Windows plays a very important role in any situation where hardware changes are made to your computer.

If you have a brand name system that you did not have to activate it only means that the manufacturer pre-activated it for you. In the activation process, a small file is placed on your hard drive, and sent to Microsoft, that contains the information related to these ten items:

- Display Adapter
- SCSI Adapter
- IDE Adapter (effectively the motherboard)
- Network Adapter (NIC) and its MAC Address
- RAM Amount Range (i.e., 0-64mb, 64-128mb, etc.)
- Processor Type
- Processor Serial Number
- Hard Drive Device
- Hard Drive Volume Serial Number (VSN)
- CD-ROM / CD-RW / DVD-ROM

This file contains a number based on the identification of the first item in every category. The file also contains the complete product key for your Windows installation. Every time your computer boots, this hardware is checked to determine if any changes have occurred. You can make changes to your hardware. However, "substantial" changes will result in a notice that you have to reactivate Windows.

The XPinfo software, whose name is shown at the top of Figure 1, can read your activation file and compare it to the reported hardware. The report for my computer shows that none of the hardware has changed since the last activation. Also, in the figure you will notice that there are eight checked items out of ten. Should the figure drop below seven unchanged or never installed items, Windows would have to be reactivated. The interesting point is that the NIC or internet card carries three votes. Changing this card to a motherboard with a built-in NIC might put you on the way to reactivating Windows.

Suppose that you decide to move your hard drive to a new computer or you want to "clone" your old drive to a new drive in a new computer. Your hardware will have made a substantial change and it will

be necessary for you reactivate Windows. But that is not the only catch in this situation. If you restore the entire image file to the new computer or simply clone the hard drive, the Windows Registry from your old computer will not have the correct hardware information. It may or may not boot. If it does boot you will receive warning after warning that files are missing. There will also be requests for driver disks for the new hardware. So when you move to a new computer, the only files in your image backup that can be used without difficulty are the data files. Even the applications that were running successfully on your old computer will really have to be reinstalled on the new computer. This is because the Registry not only stores hardware information, it also has all the information on the location of all files required to run your applications. Although you might think that the .exe file is all that is needed to run an application, you would be surprised at the number of subsidiary files that are required. Sometimes, do a search of your computer for files with a .dll suffix. These are the library files that are required by applications running under Windows. These files are also shared by many different applications at the same time. There are hundreds of library files on any Windows computer. They make up a large part of the more than 2 GB of files in the Windows folder.

As long as you use the image file backup to restore files or hard drives in your original computer, it will work beautifully. The problems arise when you want to upgrade to a new system. Then, the image file is less useful.

**Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years.*

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the end of the story

Using a Restore Point

by Larry Bothe,

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Recently, while in a big hurry to get a lot of work done before leaving on vacation, my computer started up with a blank screen. No mouse, no images, no text, no error message, no nothing. I had no choice but to just shut it down using the on/off switch. I then tried to start it again, this time watching very carefully to see what happened (I was getting coffee the first time). It went through the BIOS start (black & white screens with text) OK; then gave a brief color flash of the Windows XP logo, then nothing. The hard drive activity light was flashing so I knew the machine was trying. I was encouraged by the Windows startup sounds, but never got an image.

I recalled that the evening before I had received a warning from my computer security software that some program was trying to make a change to something it thought was a danger. I was in a hurry and I OK'd it without reading it thoroughly. Thinking back I decided that perhaps I had OK'd a bad thing that resulted in changing some setting in the operating system (Windows XP Home). I then crossed my fingers and tried starting the machine in Safe Mode. You do that by turning on the machine and then repeatedly pushing the F8 key until

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you get the black & white screen that lets you select the startup mode. Using the arrow keys I selected Safe Mode and pressed Enter. I lucked out and it started in Safe Mode.

Once in Safe Mode I decided to restore the system settings to an earlier point in time when everything worked correctly. In Windows XP every time you shut down your computer it takes a snapshot of your operating system settings and saves them into what is called a restore point. If you later install a program or get attacked by a virus that alters your system settings such that the machine no longer runs right you can in theory go back to some prior point in time when the machine ran correctly and restore the settings to what they were then. That's called a restore point. Note that you have to uninstall the offending program or get rid of the virus before you attempt a restore. Otherwise the program or virus will just alter your settings once again. Also note that going back to some prior restore point will not delete any files you created and saved after the restore point you select. You won't lose any data. However, I had never tried this before so didn't quite know what to expect.

In order to get into the routine you do Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore. After clicking System Restore you select Restore my computer to an earlier time, and then follow the prompts. The routine lets you choose a date you want to restore to. I had to think about that. It ran well the previous day, but that was the day the settings were changed. I chose to go back 2 days to be sure I was well before the bad thing occurred. I finished the restore procedure and the machine restarted perfectly. It turned out to be a really good use of the restore point feature in XP.

I mentioned above that you must first get rid of whatever changed your settings in the first place before you do the restore. If you don't then you risk that it will simply alter your settings once again and you'll be right back where you were with a sick machine. In my haste to fix my computer I didn't take that corrective action, so when it restarted the malware once again tried to alter my settings. And once again my security software caught it and presented a warning. Being a bit smarter this time I clicked on Deny instead of Allow (OK). After the machine came up running properly I used my security software (Zone Alarm Security Suite) to do a full system scan for any malicious software. It did indeed find one bad thing (in addition to several spyware items), which I told it to remove. I guess that was it because I have had no more trouble. No, I can't tell you exactly what the offending malicious software was because I didn't write it down, and I have slept since then.

I learned several lessons from this little episode. A good suite of computer security programs is worth every penny you pay for it. Even cautious computer users like me can get caught up in a virus problem. When your security software presents a warning you need to pay attention; I won't be so quick to click on Allow in the future. Finally, the System Restore feature in Windows XP is worth its weight in owl feathers. It is easy to use and very effective under the right circumstances.

Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an honorary member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a time back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. Larry presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from the plastics industry and currently teaches people to fly airplanes. He also performs pilot examinations for the FAA.

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the end of the story

Connected or Discombobulated?

Ramblings by Judy Lococo,

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Everywhere you look today, someone is always talking about "connectivity" and how our new, improved world demands it. The more I see of this phenomenon, the less I think we are connected. The Internet and identity thieves have made us a nation of anonymity, and paranoid anonymity at that. We are electronically connected, but are losing the ability to look into people's eyes, read their body English, listen to the voice inflections, and interact one-on-one with another human being.

It's even impossible to keep up with all the acronyms! WiFi, DSL (I remember ADSL), URL, etc., have become entrenched in our lives so much that we no longer flinch when we hear one of them. And they keep stacking up at warp speed, so that even the nerdiest of us has to visit a website occasionally to find out what one means.

The morning newspaper used to be a shared experience at the breakfast table. Now it's read online with only the parts that a reader prefers coming across the screen, and you don't discuss your opinions with the rest of the family, nor listen to theirs. You no longer have to scan through the business section to find the crossword puzzle. You don't have to pore through the sports pages to find automobile tires. IOW (another TLA), you don't even have to talk to a soul without being considered rude.

Going to an office is not nearly as important as it once was. Now employees can work an 80-hour-week at home, without health insurance or retirement benefits. But you can work in jeans or sweats, so there's considerable savings on wardrobe.

The chat rooms are so rampant with predators that parents are restricting their children's surfing, and rightly so. But these chat rooms are yet another example of not connecting with a real, live, breathing person, only an image, which may or may not be accurate.

Email has replaced letter writing to the extent that I have to wonder if script handwriting will also be obsolete soon. Remember calligraphy? Have you seen any within the last three years? Will the dictionary of the future have "u r 2" as a comeback phrase? Will schoolchildren even be taught English grammar or typing?

And, of course, how could I not mention the answering machines, voice mail, and all other means of not speaking to people who are trying to contact you. If you reach a person on the first attempt, are you supposed to believe that person is not busy? Is this why nobody bothers to answer their phone any more, only return phone calls? If all one does is return phone calls, what happens when the one you're calling also only returns phone calls?

As if all the time spent behind a monitor isn't enough, our automobile windows are now designed to keep others from seeing you. So if there is actually a person around who is considerably higher up on the social ladder than you are, you have to roll your window down for them to see you! How gauche is that?

I have to admit, I'm just as guilty as the rest of the world of spending too much time on email and INet (look it up already...) It is a lot of

(Continued on page 8)



From The Dealsguy
by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group
February 2008

I've used FedEx twice and it was a complete disaster. The first time, a few months ago, they delivered the packages I sent my son to the wrong house, which was actually unoccupied, but the tracking said it was delivered. Luckily he found them three days later when checking that house (he owns it).

I recently sent two more packages to my son's home. I tracked the packages on the Web site and when it showed the packages on the truck for delivery, I called to make sure their gate was open that day. They live a quarter-mile back from the road with a gate at the entrance. The package was not delivered that day, but at 6:46 PM the tracking showed it would be delivered the next day. At 8:30 PM the next night and no change with the Web site tracking, I called FedEx to see why it was not there and was told they had no way to communicate with the driver, but the package would not be delivered that late. My son closed the gate.

FedEx called me the next morning to give an approximate delivery time, but discovered that the delivery was actually made the night before at 9:06 PM. My son hurried to look, but the packages couldn't be found. My son's house is not visible from the gate at night because it's back down the drive, so obviously with the gate closed, the packages were left beside the road, but there is a large sign on the gate with the address and phone number to call. Why can't they communicate with their driver? They said that because I didn't request a signature, I am out of luck. Actually, they are out of luck from now on with my money. I submitted a claim anyway.

Problem Resolved

Last month I mentioned a reader had tried the free Advanced Windows Care Personal (from my November column), but in order for it to fix the problems, he needed to upgrade to the pay version, so he stopped there. I later received a message from Ira Wilsker telling me it worked fine without upgrading, and that he had demonstrated it to their group. My proofreader also tried it with no upgrade demand, so I downloaded it and it removed what it found without upgrading to the pay version. I don't know where my reader went wrong, but he's going to try it again. Sorry for the mix-up.

No Operating system? What's a Hypervisor?

I saw this article

<http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=202401578>

about using servers without operating systems. This doesn't affect home users, but could it in the future? I found it interesting.

I severely edited the items below so thoroughly check their Web sites for full information. I have not tried them.

A Firefox Add-on

iMacros for Firefox was designed to automate online activities within the Firefox web browser. With iMacros, users can create macros to automatically check the same sites every day, remember pass-

words, complete web forms, and upload or download files, among other activities. They say, "Whatever you do with Firefox, iMacros can automate it." Notable examples include stockbrokers who create macros to extract online stock quotes, shoppers who use them to automatically compare prices at online stores and website owners who use them to get daily downloads of their page rankings.

iMacros for Firefox allows users to share macros and scripts in a way similar to how they share bookmarks on the many social bookmarking websites. After creating a new macro, users can use just one click to share it with their friends as a link, or by distributing the link via e-mail and social bookmarking websites. Also, by embedding it in a website or by blog for public access. Script sharing is now so popular that iOpus has even created a special site for script-sharing on del.icio.us.

The iMacros for Firefox software is free for personal and commercial use. Users may opt to upgrade to the business version with guaranteed response times and advanced features. Additional information and the software download link are available online at:

<http://www.iopus.com/imacros/firefox>.

Alternatively, the software may be downloaded directly from the official Mozilla site for extensions at:

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3863>.

Help For Your Video File Conversion

Video Mobile Converter v1.0 supports digital video files in the following formats: .AVI (audio video interleave), .ASF (advanced systems format), .MOV (QuickTime movie), .MPG/.MPEG/.MP4 (moving pictures experts group) and .WMV (windows media video). Once you choose a video, Video Mobile Converter loads the video and lets you define how much video to convert. Users also have control over the video and audio quality during the conversion process. Users control the height and width of the video, its frame and bit rate as well as its overall quality. Users also control the sample rate, bit rate and overall quality of the video's converted audio, along with the option of splitting video files during the conversion process enabling very large video files to become smaller and more easily managed.

Lastly, Video Mobile Converter can output the converted video in the following formats: .3GP and .3G2 (for use on 3G network mobile devices that use GSM or CDMA network protocols), .MP4 (for use on mobile devices, such as iPods classic, iPod nano, iPod touch, iPhones, cellular phones and other mobile devices), and .PSP (for use on Sony PlayStation Portables).

Video Mobile Converter v1.0 runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows, including Vista and costs \$29.95 (USD) for a single-user license. User group members get a 20% discount. For some reason they didn't respond to my request for the special ordering procedures so, you can e-mail Michael Kaba <mailto:sales@geovid.com>. Could be the because of the holidays. Licensed users are entitled to the fully functional copy of the software, and free updates. Further information, as well as a free, fully functional evaluation copy is available from www.videomobileconverter.com.

For more information: www.geovid.com.

Download link:

<http://www.videomobileconverter.com/download/videomobileconverter.exe> (9.3 MB)

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Help For Your Web Site

Our software package, SeoAdministrator, is a popular professional tool for webmasters and SEO specialists. We released a new module called "Site Analyzer" that will be of interest to all webmasters including those who look after personal websites. The new module helps you to keep a website free of errors such as broken links. Regular use of Site Analyzer will ensure that problems are quickly and easily spotted so they can be fixed. Download a free demonstration of our easy-to-use tool from here:

<www.seoadministrator.com/seoadministrator.exe>

Site Analyzer, Developed by FlamingoSoft of Vancouver, BC, is designed to automate the vital web management task of monitoring and improving web site performance.

Site Analyzer performs comprehensive scans of a specified website and alerts web managers to a range of common problems including broken links, faulty image links, errors in HTML code and missing meta tags using a variety of report formats. Site Analyzer can also create sitemaps in both human and machine formats ready for uploading. The link vendor will be able to see which pages are "overloaded" with external links and perhaps suspend link sales on those pages.

System Requirements: Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP/Vista

Priced from \$70 (Standard) to \$150 for Expert edition, we are offering this great software to user group members at 50% discount (\$75 instead of usual price of \$150) which includes lifetime support and free upgrades. Use this link

<https://usd.swreg.org/cgi-bin/s.cgi?s=1613&p=1613seo&v=3&d=0&q=1&t=s=1613&p=1613seo&v=3&d=0&q=1&t=>
for the 50% discount.

Check their Website URL for full info.

<<http://www.seoadministrator.com/>>

Pacific Business Centre
Att: FlamingoSoft
#101 - 1001 W. Broadway
Suite 381
Vancouver, BC V6H 4E4
Canada

Easier Way To Remove USB Devices

USB Safely Remove enhances the native Safely Remove function in Windows and enables you to remove and unplug any USB removable device in one mouse click or hotkey. It can give correct names to the devices, lets you rename them and find out what application or process is locking the USB device, preventing it from safe removal. It's easy to unplug the wrong one by mistake because many of them have the same name. Unlike the native Windows option, USB Safely Remove shows all USB devices currently plugged into the computer and lets you remove any of them and the program gives correct names to the devices on its menu. The software is primarily aimed at those users who have more than one USB device.

USB Safely Remove 3.2 runs under Windows 2000, XP, 2003, Vista and is available immediately for \$20 (US) from SafelyRemove.com. User Group members can purchase the program at a 25% discount. Use the coupon code: CUG25 on the Buy Now page. Licensed users get unlimited functionality without nag screens, free technical sup



From the Presidents desk

Hi PACCsters!



As we start a thirty-third year of PACC existence let me give thanks to all the helpers during the last PACC meeting. Getting together over a pile of food seems to have a calming effect, Steelers notwithstanding. Well there is always another year and Cowboys did not make it either.

We will have another party come December 2008. Eh?

I hope to see you all on the 20th January. Lets get a good start for the new year. Lets here the tale of gifts you got during the holidays.

PJK

The PACC web site has recently migrated to another server. The old bookmarks you may have in your browser will therefore not work.

Please change your address of PACC Web site to the following URL: <http://pacc.apcug.org>

the end of the story

(Continued from page 6)

fun to laugh out loud at a joke that somebody forwards, or follow a link to a You Tube video. I am not addicted, but afraid of what will I will have to face if I don't check it daily. I guess you could say I'm not connected, I'm tethered. <BWG>

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the end of the story

port by e-mail and free lifetime upgrades. More information on the product, as well as a free trial copy is available from:

<<http://safelyremove.com/ug>>.

Download link:

<<http://safelyremove.com/usbsafelyremovesetupug.exe>>

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (most not offering a discount). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. 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
<bobclick at bellsouth dot net>.

Visit my Web site at
<<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.



the end of the story

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IF YOU HAVE NOTICED THAT THE EXPIRATION DATE ON YOUR LABEL DOES NOT REFLECT CORRECTLY YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS OR HAVE AN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WANT TO SHARE SEND E-MAIL DIRECTLY TO: pacccomm@aol.com**

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PACC HELP LINE

Help is available to PACC members on various computer topics by contacting one of those listed below. It is recommended that the initial contact with any of these experts should be made via the PACC WEB SITE. In this way others can benefit from the questions and responses. Be courteous and call only during the listed times.

FOR SALE

160 GIG hard drive for sale. Seagate brand. 4 year warranty left. Only \$40 Contact Vishnu Agrawala 724-612-1443

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Konecny, P.	Windows, DOS 6.2x, MS IE,, Hardware	795-6075	8 - 9:00 pm
Natto, Nick	Lotus, Word Perfect	341-2538	After 5:00 pm
Sinchioco, Perry	Win 3.1, Antivirus	247-1538	7 - 11:00 pm



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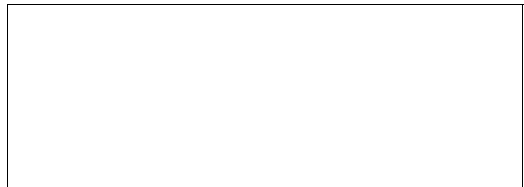
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NEXT PACC MEETING IS ON JANUARY 20, 2008

PACC 1975 - 2008
IN ITS THIRTY-THIRD YEAR



PACC TALK

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NEXT MEETING: January 20, 2008

The Pittsburgh Area Computer Club (PACC) holds its meetings the **THIRD** Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be in room 3.11 at Point Park University, Wood St. and Blvd. of the Allies. The doors open at 11:00 am and close at 4:30 pm. Bring your PC!
NOTICE THE EXPIRATION DATE ON THE MAILING LABEL OF YOUR NEWSLETTER. You won't get your newsletter if you let your membership expire. Renew your Memberships !!! Send a check or money order for \$25 made out to 'PACC' and addressed to Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435.

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