

# PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

February 2008

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, February 17, 2008

- 11:00 -11:25 am ROOM # 311 Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase 50/50 tickets (Optional), Setup Computers, Connect to Internet , Prep for Meetings
- 11:00 -11:25 pm ROOM # 301 PACC BOD Meeting
- 11:35- 12:05 pm ROOM # 301 Windows New Users Can we help you? V. Agrawala
- 12:30 -12:59 pm ROOM # 301 General Meeting, Raffle. (pg. 1)
- 1:00 - 2:15 pm ROOM # 301 Virtual Total, OperaTor Send To Toys 2.5 (pg. 1)
- 2:30 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 301 What's new in Linux ..... ?? Ubuntu 7.10 Gutsy Gibbon (pg. 6)
- 2:30 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 311 Hardware SIG Users Helping Users - guests included
- 1:00 - 3:55 pm ROOM # 311 Linux SIG, Members Helping Members, Computer troubleshooting, Info Exchange
- 4:00 - 4:30 pm Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close

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### Windows SIG

From the Virus Total web site.

“VirusTotal is a service that analyzes suspicious files and facilitates the quick detection of viruses, worms, trojans, and all kinds of malware detected by antivirus engines.

Specs:

Free, independent service, Use of multiple antivirus engines, Real-time automatic updates of virus signatures, Detailed results from each antivirus engine, Real time global statistics.”

The download is very small, only 80KB. It will install convenient addition to a Send To context menu. See picture on the right>>>>

Get it here: <http://www.virustotal.com/metodos.html>



\*\*\* RAFFLE \*\*\*

You need this manual if you are getting a new PC or have upgraded to Windows 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!

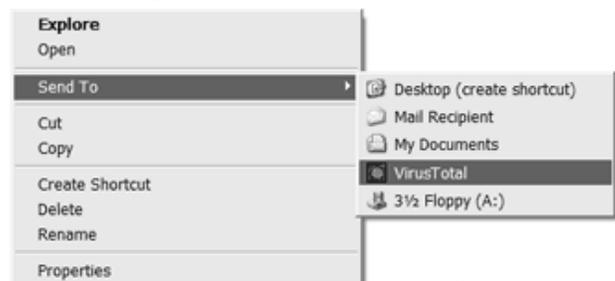


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Use Discount Code **DSUG**

“Sending files by email:

Create a new message with [scan@virustotal.com](mailto:scan@virustotal.com) as destination address of your email.

1. Write SCAN in the Subject field.
2. Attach the file to be scanned. Such file must not exceed 10 MB in size. If the attached file is larger, the system will reject it automatically.
3. You will receive an email with a report of the file analysis. Response time will vary depending on the load of the system at the time of placing your request.”



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Here is a great combo of programs to aid you in surfing the Internet anonymously without leaving any track after you are done.

“OperaTor - Opera + Tor. Surf anonymously

OperaTor is a software bundle that can be easily installed on a portable memory (pendrive, usb stick, hard drive) to allow anonymous surfing while at an internet cafe, library etc. It combines the power of the Opera Browser, The Onion Router and Privoxy.

*With OperaTor no data will be stored at the computer you plugged your portable memory into.”*

Visit the ArchTwist web site at:

<http://archtwist.com/en/opera/operator>

Download the combo of programs from either of these two places:

<http://operator.pbwiki.com/f/OperaTor-2.4b.zip>

<http://www.twango.com/media/archtwist.public/archtwist.10004>

The size of the download is 5,879 KB. Small price for the privacy!

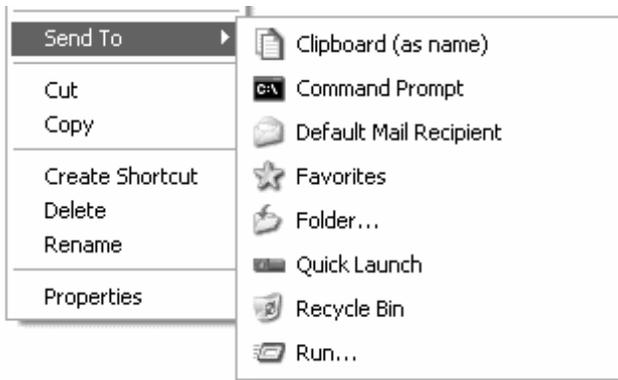


### Send To Toys 2.5

An excellent addition to the right click context menus. Free download of 737 KB from here:

<http://www.gabrieleponti.com/downloads/sendtotoys.exe>

See the picture for the names of the enhancements. Then see the



Web site:

<http://www.gabrieleponti.com/software/>

for the detail explanations. Very worthy download.

## TaxACT

The time of the year we all must face the inevitable. Tax time!

But at least the Second Story Software people are nice to us and provides a very good federal tax program. A free download after required registration.

Return e-mail will provide you with the customer ID and download instructions. There is much info at the web site on how to file electronically for a small fee. If you just want to use the program to calculate your tax and transfer your data to the appropriate forms, even the forms are available at the web site! Download size: 11 MB.

Start here: <http://www.2ndstorysoftware.com/>

find the FREE Standard Download button which will take you here:

[https://www.taxact.com/products/standard\\_overview.asp](https://www.taxact.com/products/standard_overview.asp)

The instruction for registration. When you get the return email with your ID download your TaxACT Standard.

For IRS publications and forms go here:

<http://www.2ndstorysoftware.com/reference/irs-publications.asp>

There is a wealth of information on the web site. Nearly fifty up to date instruction manuals in PDF format for various tax issues, or your particular situation. And all the forms you'll need.

Just get your Adobe Reader updated and you will be set to conquer



your tax return!

From 2nd Story Software web site: <http://www.taxact.com>

“Publisher's description of TaxACT 2007 Standard Edition

TaxACT 2007 completes your tax return the fast, easy way. TaxACT includes over 110 forms, schedules and worksheets, plus the interview steps you through completing your return, or you can enter directly onto the tax forms. TaxACT calculates your return for you, then reviews your return and alerts you of possible errors. Prepare, print and e-file your return for free. Version 1 has updated to allow electronic and print filing of 2007 tax returns.”

# The New, The Best, and The Worst

January 2008

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster,  
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.  
<http://swipcug.apcug.org>  
[swipcug\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:swipcug(at)gmail.com)

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## Needles, Haystacks and Processing

Finding the needle in a haystack is the proverbial example of an impossible task. Wrongly so. Spread the contents of the haystack out over a large area and get 1000 helpers to each check a small amount of hay. The needle will be found in less than no time. It is a basic example of parallel processing.

According to WIKIPEDIA (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SETI>), as far back as 1960 astronomers were speculating that any intelligent life forms present in the Universe might be detected by electromagnetic signals reaching us from space. Some astronomers started a Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) on a limited scale that over the years grew to include multiple radio-telescopes searching more and more radio bands for significant signals.

It soon became clear that looking for intelligent signals amongst the enormous volume of recorded data was even worse than finding a needle in a haystack. Parallel processing to the rescue! With an untold number of personal computers worldwide, capable of Internet access and sitting idle most of the time, an enormous amount of potential processing power was going untapped. The University of California at Berkeley (UCB), with sponsorship of The Planetary Society, started project **SETI@home** in 1999 to put many of those computers to work. They found many volunteers willing to download a small program on their computers, running in the background, to analyze small chunks of radio-telescope data for signs of intelligence and return the results. As of now there are some 3 million contributors, but nary a sign of intelligent life yet. In any case, the enormous amount of computer processing by this project far surpasses what the best supercomputer might be able to do, at least until quantum computers will have been perfected.

The success of SETI@home inspired many other volunteer computing projects supporting worthwhile scientific causes. According to *The Economist* (12-8-2007) these include design of drugs against AIDS, search for new prime numbers, climate modeling and many others. It requires some snappy programming skills to send small chunks of a large problem to thousands of computers, provide them with the means to perform a set task, return the results, and combine the results for final evaluation before sending out a new crop of queries. That task has been made easier with a dedicated program, **BOINC** (Berkeley Open Infrastructure for Network Computing), made available by UCB. Over 40 BOINC projects are in operation, including many life sciences, Help Conquer Cancer, and Discover Dengue Drugs.

Impressive as the computer power may be that is being exerted on these projects, there is still room for significant improvement. The short history of the PC not only includes a dramatic improvement in CPU processing speed, but also in auxiliary components that speed up graphics performance. In response to the extreme image rendition requirements of computer games, fast graphics cards have become available that use special processing chips and hardware to relieve the load on the Central Processing Unit. Rendering the millions of pixels that make up a screen image is perfectly suited to parallel

processing, a task for which the graphics chips are optimized. Further adapting these chips to participate in general purpose programming may be a way to increase the parallel processing power of a desktop computer anywhere from 10- to 50-fold. NVIDIA and AMD, the largest graphics-card manufacturers, are working on it. Nvidia has already set up a product line for non-graphics applications and is developing a specialized programming language to go with it.

Next time you hear complaints that something is like finding a needle in a haystack, tell them it's easy: many hands make light work.

## Foxit Reader for PDF Files

Acrobat Reader is now at version 8 and has been getting more powerful but also more cumbersome with each successive iteration. Steve Bass (*PC World, January 2008*) found a free program, Foxit Reader and Printer, that is compact, fast, and includes some nice extra features. I especially like that it allows searching all the PDF files in a directory for keywords. I tried that on a directory where I keep all the newsletter files since 2000 and got almost instantaneous results. Impressive! The print function works just fine. Foxit also has more sophisticated tools for annotating and writing PDF files and forms, but adds evaluation marks to the output unless you buy the Foxit Pro version (\$39). You may not need that, since there are several other (free) ways to create PDF files, including openoffice.org Writer and MS Office 2007 (with a special download from Microsoft). My Epson scanner can scan images and also output them as PDF files. But at \$39 Foxit is a bargain compared to Acrobat 8 Standard at \$299.

Download Foxit Reader and Printer free from <http://www.foxitsoftware.com/>. Linux versions are also available.

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## Microsoft patches still another patch

By Bob de Violini, a member of the Channel Islands PCUG, CA  
[www.cipcug.org](http://www.cipcug.org)  
[rjddev\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:rjddev(at)gmail.com)

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From the once is not enough department, Microsoft has, again, patched a patch. This time, it involves patch number MS07-069, which is a cumulative security update for Internet Explorer 6 installed on Windows XP Service Pack 2 only. Apparently the initial patch released on December's patch Tuesday caused computers to experience an unexpected crash or hang upon launching Internet Explorer. If you, like I, have updating set to notify but not download and install, or if you visit the Windows Update site on your own once a month instead of using Auto Update, then by all means please go to the Windows Update site and grab the fix as soon as you can. The fix doesn't require a reboot; it just makes a minor registry entry

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## New Gadgets for 2008

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS.com  
www.compuKISS.com  
sberger(at)compuKISS.com

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Every year my husband and I attend the Consumer Electronic (CES) in Las Vegas to see the latest and greatest high tech gadgets. This year didn't disappoint. We found everything from a Leggett & Platt's \$20,000 Starry Night bed with an HDTV projector, pop-up speakers, snoring sensors, iPod dock, automatic lighting system, and breathing pattern monitor to a General Motors Chevy Tahoe prototype car that drove itself. While I don't expect this GM prototype to make it to market anytime soon, some of the technology that it is built in will evolve and is sure to find its way into our future automobiles.

We also found a few more down-to-earth gadgets and gizmos. In fact, there were several devices that you may want to check out for your own gaggle of high tech products. For instance, if you hate cleaning the gutters, the iRobot Looj has you covered. This robotic gutter cleaner cleans a 60-foot section of gutter in just 10 minutes. Yes, you must use a ladder to place it in position, but you don't have to move the ladder multiple times as you do in regular gutter cleaning. The demos looked marvelous. iRobot also have robotic vacuum cleaners and floor scrubbers.

Although we have been hearing about wireless technologies for what seems to be ions, this year some of that wireless technology became mainstream. Wireless speakers, which up to now were feeble and erratic, have finally found their voice. The Griffin Evolve is a great example. It is a compact speaker system for an iPod. It has two wireless speaker cubes that can be placed in any room in the house. It sounds great and is also easy to use. At about \$300, this is a great solution to distribute music from your iPod throughout the house.

While prices of technology gadgets continue to drop, it seems that ink for that inexpensive ink jet printer often costs more than the printer itself. Well, thanks to Kodak, this trend may be coming to an end. The new Kodak printers are said to use 50% less ink and ink cartridges are reasonably priced at \$15 for color and \$10 for black.

Polaroid, another well-known name in photography has also released a breakthrough product. Their new inkless printer is made for printing pictures from a cell phone or digital camera. Not only does the printer use Bluetooth wireless technology, but it uses special paper that is embedded with 100 billion colored dye crystals. The colors appear when the printer applies heat pulses to the paper. This inkless technology is called Zink, for zero ink. The 2-inch-by-3-inch prints cost about 30 cents each and the printer sells for \$150, which is not bad for cutting-edge technology.

Although computers are not the focus of the CES show, there were many computer manufacturers showing their wares. Lenovo, the Chinese company who bought IBM's PC division three years ago has previously focused on their ThinkPad business laptops, but this year they introduced a line of consumer laptops called IdeaPads. These include facial recognition technology. Lenovo, Sony, and others will follow Dell's lead with the introduction of laptops in a variety of bright colors.

Bright colors were the norm at the show. There were MP3 players, cell phone, and gadget covers in every color imaginable. There were red and blue ladybug-shaped iPod speakers and speakers that pulsed to the beat in vibrating, changing colors. There was even pink

CAT-5 networking cable, whose purchase supports the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Oh, and you can expect to be even more confused by television display technologies in the future. Sony's \$2500, 11-inch Organic light Emitting Diode (OLED) was small but clearly better than anything else on the market today..... and it was only as thick as 3 credit cards. Mitsubishi's laser television was also a dramatic improvement. Samsung and Sharp announced backlit LCD televisions. While these technologies may take awhile to go mainstream, other manufacturer's announced Internet-enabled televisions that are sure to appear quite quickly. For instance, the Sharp Aquos Net television displays small icons called widgets that showed news, weather, and traffic data from the Internet right on the television screen. Also next year, when digital television goes mainstream you will see digital TV broadcasting in a variety of devices including cell phones, cars, buses, and anything else they can possible think of. One car at the show already had TV's in every door and drop-down television screens for every passenger.

While we may not all be interested in watching television all the time, we will find some of these new technologies making our lives just a little more pleasurable in the future.

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to prevent IE6 from crashing again.

Internet Explorer and G-mail

Rolling right along, there was some debate during December with regards to a "vulnerability" that exists when visiting Google's web-based e-mail site, Gmail, with Internet Explorer. When the "bug" was pointed out to the computer industry media, both Microsoft and Google denied the root of the problem was with theirs. Apparently, an investigator has claimed that IE improperly stores files in its cache and that the scripting of Gmail allows this to be exploited, which would allow someone to steal any user names and passwords for Gmail that have been entered since the last time the IE cache was purged. The simple way around this is to use a browser besides IE when you visit Gmail or, if you must use IE for checking your mail with Gmail, first purge the cache and all cookies and then log in to the site. To purge IE's cache, inside IE go to the Tools drop down menu and select Internet Options. Now, in the middle of the Internet Options box, click the Delete Cookies button and click OK in the box that pops up. Next, click the Delete Files button and click OK in the box that pops up. Now click the OK button at the bottom of the Internet Options box, and you're all set. There has been no other news about this issue, so using another browser or purging IE's cache is the only solution for now. By the way, the biggest risk for this behavior appears to be if you're sharing computer access such as that which is available at a public library or a shopping mall where you pay for a few minutes of high-speed Internet access.

Critical Updates for QuickTime

For those of you who are fond of using Apple's QuickTime media player, there have been a couple of updates released in December to fix a few critical security vulnerabilities. If you only updated QuickTime once during that timeframe, you might want to visit Apple's site to get the latest update. The most recent version of the player (without the iTunes add-on) is 7.3.1.70. While you're at the Apple

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Moving on to Vista – Part 3

by Neil Stahfest Software Librarian,  
Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA  
ncstahfest(at)msn.com  
www.tapcug.org

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Your PC's desktop is the largest, most user defined area on your PC's screen. It contains all your own shortcuts, folder icons and your personal desktop picture. The desktop is really just a personal file folder on drive C. That means that any work you do on the desktop is saved for you on Drive C and not lost when you turn the computer off. Of course any documents, pictures, etc. that are "saved" on your desktop can be moved or copied to other folders on your hard drive.

After a while some of, make that most of us, find our desktop becomes loaded with program icons and shortcut icons. Program shortcut icons are a convenient way to get to programs that you use a lot. Unfortunately, when you install new programs most of them add a desktop shortcut and soon you have a desktop full of shortcuts, making it hard to find a shortcut when you want it. Here are a couple of solutions to this clutter.

The left end of the taskbar contains a "Quick Launch Toolbar". By default, Windows Vista places one or two program icons here (i.e. Internet Explorer). You can drag a limited number of additional shortcut icons for your favorite programs to this area and save space on your desktop. A "feature" of the Quick Launch Toolbar is that you only have to point at the program icons there and left-click once to start the program. This might seem a little confusing at first if you are used to double clicking on a program icon to start it, but you'll probably get used to it pretty fast.

Program shortcuts on your desktop point to programs that are also listed in your Start menu. The most frequently used programs can be seen when you click on the Start button. On the Start menu, click on "All Programs" to see all the other programs installed on your computer. You may need to use the scroll bar to see all of them and you will probably find more programs than you have shortcuts on your desktop. So, once you confirm that a program shortcut points to a program listed on the Start menu, you can safely delete infrequently used desktop shortcuts.

A third approach to reducing desktop clutter is to consolidate shortcuts. If you have multiple programs that do similar tasks (i.e. A photo catalog and picture manipulation program), create a desktop folder named "Photos". Then drag your shortcuts into the "Photos" folder and you're done.

Vista comes with a new set of desktop pictures. Access to alternative desktop pictures is similar, but slightly different, from what you may be used to with Windows XP. Right-click on an empty area of the desktop and click on "Personalize". On the "Personalization" menu select "Desktop Background". An array of available pictures will appear. Scroll through the pictures, select one. Make a selection from "How should the picture be positioned" and click OK.

That's fine if all you want to use are the pictures that came with Vista. What if you want to use something different? Just follow the steps list above but when you get to the "Desktop Background", instead of selecting one of the available pictures, next to where it says "Picture Location" click once on "Windows wallpapers". You'll see a list of other areas that contain pictures and colors. Want to use a photograph that you saved to your computer instead? Click the

browse button. On the left side of the "Browse" screen, click on "Pictures". From the Picture folders on the right side of the Browse screen, make your selection, use the "How should the picture be positioned" if needed, and press the Open button to finish.

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site, you might want to download and install the Apple Software updater, which makes it very easy to keep QuickTime updated. Just click on it and watch it do its thing.

### HP computer vulnerabilities

For those of you who have Hewlett Packard laptops and desktops, there is a vulnerability in HP's Software Update software. This vulnerability can allow an attacker to turn your computer into a useless collection of metal and plastic that's completely unbootable. HP rushed out a fix in around four days, and it's now available for your download. Computer security experts suggest installing it even if you don't use the HP Software Update function at all, as just having the software on your computer makes it vulnerable. One catch — you have to run the vulnerable software to get the update to fix it. HP has had no comment about it at all, and there's no mention of it on its Web site. Please keep in mind that the HP Software Update software is completely separate from, and unrelated to, any other updating software that is installed on the computer like Windows Update or Microsoft Update.

### Windows Vista change

Shifting gears toward Vista, Microsoft has announced that, effective with Service Pack 1 for Vista due out in the first quarter of this year, those with cracked or counterfeit copies of Vista will no longer have their machines made to run in reduced functionality mode by the Windows Genuine Advantage validation tool. Instead, they'll just get nagged about once an hour to get a legal copy of Vista on their machines. Microsoft has said that this new stance is in response to customer and partner requests. Time will tell just how well this new policy goes over.

### Adobe Flash patch coming

This next item pertains to a good number of folks reading this and deals with an application that runs within the vast majority of the Internet browsers in use that's called Flash. This application enables you to see animated ads and other "mini movies" within your browser. There have been a couple of very widely publicized bugs in it, one of which has been patched. The other one is under investigation by Adobe, which has pledged a fix early this year. The way I read the security bulletin, it will probably be out by the end of January, and may already be out by the time you're reading this at home. As of this writing, the latest version of the Adobe Flash player is 9.0.115.0. This version number will, no doubt, change as soon as the second bug is patched. The Adobe security bulletin about the second patch can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2kktqs>. When you get there, you'll find it on the technical side of things, but there's a section titled "Preventative Measures for End-Users" which spells things out in plain English for the rest of us.

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## UBUNTU - IT WORKS.....



## UBUNTU IS GOOD LOOKING



## Make Vista Work Better

by Vinny La Bash,

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL  
www.spcug.org vlabash(at)comcast.net

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No matter how good an operating system may be, someone will complain that it could have been better. Vista is a very good operating system that some people find wanting. Some people are never satisfied, but that is not the issue here. Of course Vista should have been better, but Microsoft has only so much time and resources to develop a system, and Vista was late to market in addition to being less than perfect.

In this article we'll show how to make Vista work better for you, and that's all we can reasonably ask of any operating system. Let's take care of the power users first. Power users are too impatient for menus. They think menus are for wimps. After encountering Vista User Account Control they may have a point.

Left-click the orb at the bottom left side of the screen.

In the Search box type cmd.exe.

Right-click on cmd.exe and choose Properties from the popup menu. Select Pin to the Start Menu.

The Command Prompt is now always available from the Start menu. If you would like to make additional tweaks to the prompt, right-

click the shortcut from the Start menu and choose Properties.

The blinking cursor, otherwise known as the insertion point, tells you where you can type or insert text. The cursor can be difficult to locate because it's so thin, but Vista has a way to fatten it up.

Open Control Panel.

A dialog box appears. In the upper right corner, type "Optimize visual display."

The Ease of Access Center icon will appear. Select the link below the icon.

Locate the Make the focus rectangle thicker box and put a checkmark in it.

Set the thickness to whatever you like. Don't get carried away with some ridiculous number. Bumping up the thickness by one or two points should be sufficient.

When you install a large high resolution monitor, you quickly become aware of the relationship between high resolution and eye-strain. Vista provides a way to make text easier to read without having to sacrifice resolution.

From the Start Menu open Control Panel.

In the Search box at the upper right corner of the dialog box, type adjust font size.

The resulting list will probably consist of one item, Adjust font size. Select it and you can choose to accept the larger text option or click on the Custom DPL button and experiment.

Vista comes equipped with an excellent Snipping Tool that was originally designed for a different version of Windows. In its generosity, Microsoft chose to include the tool in every version of Vista except Vista Home Basic, which is fine because nobody should buy Vista Home Basic. Snippy lets you capture any portion of a screen, either rectangular or free form. You can then paste it into a document, email or save it as a graphic. Don't use it to copy and paste text for editing because a graphic image can't be edited like text. Here's how to get it:

From the Start Menu type snip in the search box.

The Snipping Tool should be at the top of the list. Right-click on it and select Pin to the Start Menu. You can also add it to the Quick Launch Bar if you like.

Vista has added several new wrinkles to the Quick Launch bar. It's been around since Windows 95, but it's never been more useful. If you hold the shift key down while right-clicking on a shortcut, you will see an expanded popup window with additional options. One option is to put the shortcut icon on the Quick Launch bar. You can still use the traditional drag and drop method, but having another alternative when the desktop isn't visible is always helpful.

When the Quick Launch bar is active, that means you can see it on the Task bar. If you need to activate Quick Launch right-click on a clean area of the Task bar. Drag your mouse to the Toolbars option, and select Quick Launch.

Each of the first ten shortcuts on the Quick Launch bar has its own custom keyboard shortcut. If the Calculator is the third icon from the left, press the Windows key and the number 3 and you activate the calculator. Limiting the number of built-in keyboard shortcuts may be Microsoft's way of telling you that more than ten items on the Quick Launch bar is too many.

Vista keyboard shortcuts are a great way of performing little tasks more easily. Instead of having to reach for your mouse, you can

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

### Looking Back

Time sure passes quickly. I wrote my first DealsGuy column in November 1994 and have never missed a month since. I am not a journalist by trade, nor do I pretend to be one, but I am flattered that this column has stayed popular as long as it has. Editors sometimes forward complimentary comments from their members about the DealsGuy column. Two groups print only part of it in the newsletters they place around their community to attract new members, and readers must become a member to get the entire column. I am also grateful for the many friends I made over the years through the column. I have been offered places to stay just about anywhere in the US.

Years ago, I received a request from a professional journalist to be added to my e-mail list for the column, and I told him I was honored by the request from him. He told me something that I have thought about a few times since. He said I had blazed a trail with the syndication of my DealsGuy column to user groups and that others would probably follow. At that time, most articles written were from the editor and the group's own members, mostly reviews, but some of the better ones were reprinted selectively in other newsletters. However, the DealsGuy column certainly has its hard-line critics. Some editors strongly dislike my column, and other editors feel I write too much about myself. In fact, I'm still reeling from one editor's strong comments at a conference. People sometimes request they be put on my e-mail list because their editor refuses to carry the DealsGuy column. A few editors only carry the product parts of the column because they say their members have no interest in my personal comments at the beginning, but I sometimes hear from UG members asking how to see the entire DealsGuy column.

In the early days of the column, it was not uncommon for user group people I met at conventions to ask how they could get into writing a monthly column as I was doing. I tried giving them tips, but how can a guy who began writing a column accidentally offer helpful tips when he himself doesn't really know what he is doing. Now days it's great to see so many authors writing interesting monthly columns that help provide a packed newsletter for any editor and there are many user groups with regular material from their own members. I guess that I'll stick with it a while longer since nobody else wants this job.

### Tax Tips

If you haven't done your 2007 income tax yet, don't forget about **Tax Act** <<http://www.2ndstorysoftware.com>> for computing your income tax for free, although I use the pay version because it brings forward information from last year's tax return (if you used it last year) along with some comparison features. You can even e-file with the free version. If you would rather someone else did the work, check when and where the AARP volunteers are working to help seniors out. There are other free ways to do your taxes on the Government site.

### Goodbye FedEx, Good Riddance

Remember my bad experience with FedEx delivery last month?

They refused my claim saying that according to their log the packages were delivered to the address and that's all they were required to do since no signature was requested. Actually, they could simply throw them out the window as they were driving by, throw them away if they were running late and enter "delivered" in the log, or even just set them beside the road, as they would have had to do in our case, at 9:06 PM according to their log. When I was told it wouldn't be delivered after 8 PM, my son closed the driveway gate. They don't seem to have my conversation with the Phoenix office in their log, yet they called me back the next morning to offer a delivery time because the packages had been in the truck for two days. No packages were ever found at the address and their letter denying the claim says they hope they can count on my continued business. After another bad experience, not a chance!

### They Claim To Simplify Launching

This is designed to replace the standard Quick Launch. The program emulates the standard features of Quick Launch while including lots of grouping and menu options, a many useful plug-ins and some skinning abilities. True Launch Bar helps clear your desktop working space by removing randomly placed shortcuts and organizing them in convenient groups and menus. True Launch Bar provides users with a brand-new functionality enabling ultra-fast access to any of your PC contents!

True Launch Bar stores shortcuts in the same folder as Windows Quick Launch. All the icons installed into Quick Launch are automatically installed for True Launch Bar. True Launch Bar can be docked into the taskbar; you can simply drag your shortcuts onto the toolbar or menu by pressing any of the mouse buttons. Right button dragging activates a Context menu, grouping links into popup menus. The Virtual Folders feature allows you to add any folder as a menu and control it through Windows Explorer-like context menus. It can be any folder on your disk or on a local network (Favorites, Programs, Recent, etc.), as well as file system folders such as My Computer, Control Panel, Printers, etc. Toolbar buttons will not only launch the applications, but also act like small applets. If you add a Media Control plug-in onto the True Launch Bar, the button will become a real control center of the media player with Stop, Play, Pause and volume adjusting options.

True Launch Bar runs under Windows 9x, NT, 2K, XP, 2003 and Windows Vista. 25% discount makes the cost \$14.90 (USD) for a single-user license.

Links to purchase with the discount are: Personal License (one person, one or more computers) (\$14.90);

**<[http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?  
productid=51538&pc=7L0L7](http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=51538&pc=7L0L7)>**

and Home license (one copy on multiple computers and multiple users) (\$35);

**<[http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?  
productid=53346&pc=7U014](http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=53346&pc=7U014)>**

Licensed customers are entitled to lifetime technical support and free updates. Additional information on True Launch Bar, as well as its fully functional evaluation version with a 30-day trial period is available from <<http://www.truelaunchbar.com>>.

Download link: 32-bit version:

**<[http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install/  
truelaunchbar42.exe](http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install/truelaunchbar42.exe)> (4,30MB)**

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

64-bit version:

<<http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install64/truelaunchbar64v42.msi>> (4,69MB)

Company website: <http://www.tordex.com>  
E-mail: [info@tordex.com](mailto:info@tordex.com)

### Another Free PDF Maker

Patrick Sullivan reads the DealsGuy column in The DataBus, a great newsletter from The Dayton Microcomputer Association Inc. <<http://www.dma.org>>, and he sent his favorite application for converting a file to PDF. He said a friend needed a free one and his search found PrimoPDF at <<http://www.primopdf.com/>>. He says its PDF file is not as small as Adobe Distiller creates, but he is well satisfied with it and has not found it to implant ads for itself. There is now a new release on their Web site, but he has not tried it because his version works fine.

### This Product Offers Canned Replies

IT-Services Thomas Holz announces the release of version 1.0 of Textmodules for Software Support, a set of ready-to-use replies to quickly answer typical software-related questions by e-mails. The product is absolutely free and comes as an add-on to the new version of ReplyButler for Outlook. Enlarge the assortment of reply patterns and make your reply on the fly.

With a proper set of text modules, you can answer your e-mails quickly. In Textmodules for Software Support, you'll find 55 new text modules properly sorted into 18 folders. The modules include typical phrases, answers to common problems, questions for details and more. In addition, there are many reply patterns related to office work and journalism. It uses the correct name and gender in the addressing phrase by itself, securing against any typos in names.

You can get Textmodules for Software Support free of charge, as well as the trial version of ReplyButler for Outlook at <<http://www.replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php>>.

ReplyButler for Outlook runs under Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003/Vista and Outlook 2000/2002/2003/XP/2007, and costs 15.00 (EURO) for a single-user license. The company offers user group members 25% discount on the purchase of ReplyButler Business Edition. Licensed customers get the fully-functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on ReplyButler for Outlook is available at our Web site. (DealsGuy note: I included this item for the free part of it, but was unable to get through using their e-mail address for information about using the discount on their business version. Try a contact from their Web site.)

Product page:

<<http://replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php>>

Product download link:

<[http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButlerE\\_Freeware.exe](http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButlerE_Freeware.exe)>

Free add-on link:

<[http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButler\\_TextLib\\_SoftwareSupport.exe](http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButler_TextLib_SoftwareSupport.exe)>

E-mail: <[presscontact@itsth.com](mailto:presscontact@itsth.com)>



## From the Presidents desk



Hi PACCsters!

**ELECTIONS FOR THE PACC BOD WILL BE HELD DURING THE PACC MARCH MEETING. DETAILS WILL BE IN THE MARCH 2008 ISSUE OF PACC TALK.** 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)

press two or three keystrokes. There are those keyboard shortcuts that are common to all versions of Windows and now there are some new ones. Among the new features introduced in Windows Vista, is a new set of shortcut keys that are used to launch various programs or perform different tasks. These new keyboard shortcuts are listed below.

Windows Key + G (cycles through the Gadgets)

Windows Key + L (locks the computer)

Windows Key + U (activates the Ease Of Use Center)

Windows Key + X (cycles through the Mobility Center)

Windows Key + Spacebar (moves the focus to the Sidebar)

Windows Key + Pause (opens the System Properties portion of Control Panel)

CTRL + + Tab (opens persistent Flip 3D) :

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the end of the story

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@bellsouth.net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>  
Visit my Web site at  
<<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.



the end of the story

**ATTENTION:**  
**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](mailto:pacccomm@aol.com)**

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 Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435  
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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**

**Your ads PACCsters?**

NAME	COMPUTER AREA	PHONE	TIME
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Cutrara, Phil	Geoworks	766-0274	
Fisher, Bill	Cobol, Word Perfect	367-8996	7 - 9:00 pm
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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PITTSBURGH PA 15212-6435

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## NEXT PACC MEETING IS ON February 17, 2008

PACC 1975 - 2008  
IN ITS THIRTY-THIRD YEAR



# PACC TALK

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***NEXT MEETING: February 17, 2008***

The Pittsburgh Area Computer Club (PACC) holds its meetings the **THIRD** Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be in room 311 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.

**Classified ads.** Buy, Sell, Trade. Members may place free ads (up to 5 lines). Articles should be prepared in plain ASCII text. **WITHOUT** formatting. Deadline for articles is the 25th of the month. Send them to P.J. Konecny, P.O. Box 557, Monroeville, PA 15146.  
**PACC homepage can be found at: <http://paccapcug.org>**

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