PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club **March 2008**

MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 16, 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. PACC BOD ELECTIONS (pg. 1)**
1:00 - 2:15 pm ROOM # 301	**Mz Vista Force v1.7, EAV Antivirus Suite, PageNest Free Offline Browser (pg. 1)**
2:30 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 301	**What's new in Linux …... ?? Ubuntu 7.10 Gutsy Gibbon ...**
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**

What is inside....

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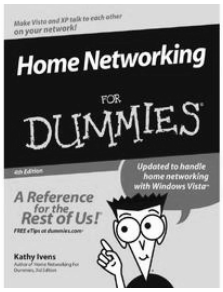
Windows SIG

Mz Vista Force v1.7 — Freeware

Fro the M. Zacharias web site: "Mz Vista Force is an updated version of Mz Ultimate Tweaker, to work on Windows Vista. The interface, the -apply tweaks- and -load- engine are rebuild. It also comes with much more new Tweaks. Mz Vista Force features: Performance Tweaks Windows Tweaks Internet Optimizer Registry Optimizer StartUp Manager Services Manager Backup - Restore Service".

Only a small download at 832 KB. Get it from here:

http://download.freewarefiles.com/files/MzVistaForce.exe



*** RAFFLE ***

Covers both Windows XP and Windows Vista.

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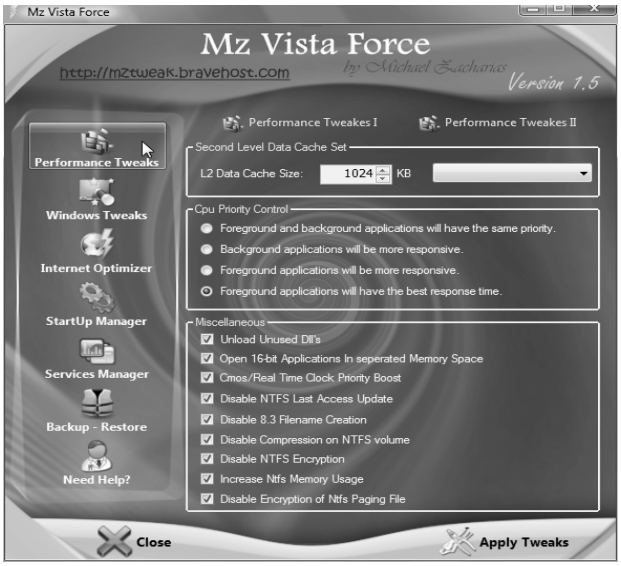
***** ELECTIONS *****
Sunday, March 16, 2008



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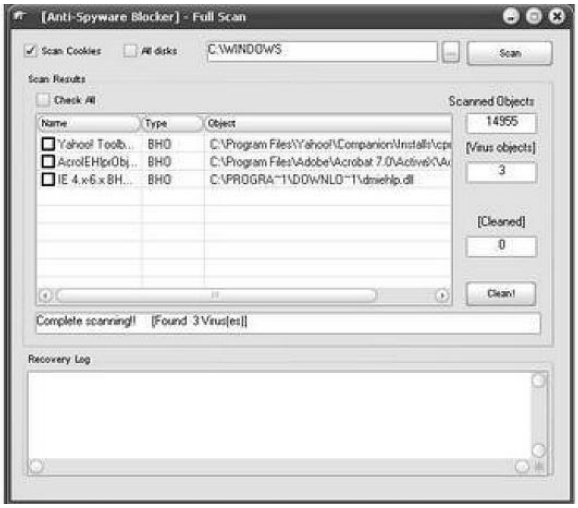
From EAV Software:

"EAV Antivirus Suite can detect and eliminate spyware, Trojans, key loggers, adware programs, browser hijackers, cookies, spy bots, trackware, and other malware, even new and unknown ones, on your PC. EAV Antivirus Suite will scan all running processes, local files in real time automatically once you run the software. Once spyware or other malware appears, even if it hides in other programs, EAV Antivirus Suite will display a signal for warning and will eliminate it consequently. Meanwhile, this software will clear all spyware-system-linked files as well as relative registry files. EAV Antivirus Suite can recover all damages with Internet Explorer caused by JavaScript and ActiveX viruses. And it can also help you to fulfill anti-hacker Windows settings."

Easy 1.65 MB download from here:

http://www.download.com/ EAV%20Software/3260-20_4-103983.html



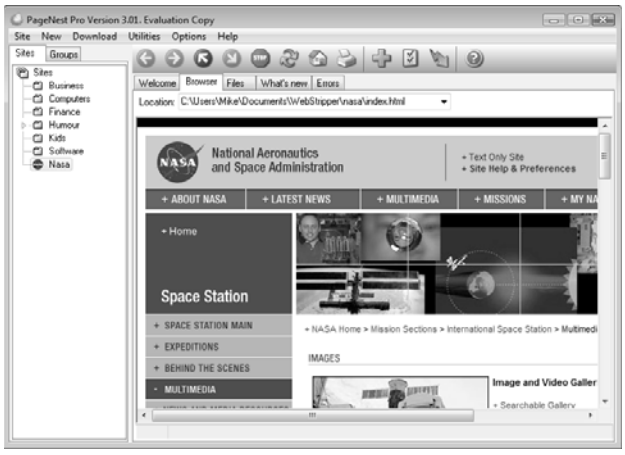
Go to **http://pagenest.com/index.html** and follow the download links to **PageNest Free Edition.** Only 1,738 KB download.

Web Site quote:

"**PageNest Free Offline Browser**

Copy your favorite webpages to hard disk with PageNest. Give PageNest the address of a website and it will copy either the page, or the entire site (whichever you prefer) to your hard disk. It will create an exact copy of what you see in your browser including the text, html, images and css

Use PageNest to create a 'cache' of pages you read regularly. Use PageNest to store copies of websites so you can read them when you are not connected. Use PageNest to archive sites before they change or disappear."



The New, The Best, and The Worst

February 2008

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster,
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Do You Ubuntu (yet)?
A Linux Update

In February of 2002 I wrote here:

"*It has been said that Windows XP is less buggy than its Windows 95, 98, and Me predecessors; damnation by faint praise. XP is also more expensive, can only be used on a single computer, and presents many incompatibilities with existing hardware and software. It hogs resources. That led me to wonder how Linux is coming along.*"

Replace "XP" with "Vista" and history repeats itself. Furthermore, add that online security has dramatically worsened and that the security of Windows Vista is at best only marginally improved.

At the time I got a copy of the Red Hat Linux 7.2 distribution (list price $60), included in a 1000+ pages "*Linux Bible*" and proceeded to evaluate it. I found that the limited software included in the distribution was nice and useful, but trying to install additional programs from the Internet was a nightmare.

Six years later desktop Linux has matured beyond recognition. Lindows, later renamed Linspire, was the first distribution making it a one-click operation to download and install software from a large online library. Originally the cost of acquiring Linspire and a one-year subscription to the library was $100, but more recently the service has been available for free. I am still using an older version of Linspire daily, mostly for Web browsing, accessing email, and playing Freecell, Yukon or MahJongg.

In 2004 Marc Shuttleworth, a South African by birth, started a free new Linux distribution called Ubuntu ("humanity towards others"). In 1999 he sold Internet security software he had developed to Verisign for about $575 million. He spent $20 million of that on an 8-day trip by Soyuz to the Space Station and had plenty left over for a free software project. By now Ubuntu has become the most advanced and popular desktop Linux distribution, with the help of numerous volunteer contributors.

Ubuntu undergoes continuous upgrades as new and improved software is being developed and tested. Twice a year, in April and October, a new version is released. The latest version is numbered 7.10, for October of 2007, and is nicknamed "Gutsy Gibbon." (The next issue in April, version 8.4, will be named "Hardy Hero." You get the drift).

I installed Ubuntu side-by-side with Windows XP on my desktop computer, equipped with an AMD Athlon64 X2 4800+ dual core processor, 1 GB of RAM and an nVidia GeForce 7600 graphics card. I put it in a separate Linux partition on my hard drive previously used for Linspire. Before committing to the installation I ran Ubuntu off the CD to verify that it was compatible with my hardware.

Once installed, Ubuntu was ready to go. It automatically set up my connection to the Internet with **Firefox**, and with my permission

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downloaded a large number of updates and additions released since October.

The **OpenOffice.org** suite of programs, comparable to MS Office, was ready to go. I already had been using the Windows version of OpenOffice Writer so there was no learning curve whatsoever.

The Gimp, an advanced graphics program similar to Adobe Photoshop Elements and with comparable features, came preinstalled. I also found **drivers** for my HP 812C printer and my Epson Perfection 3490 Photo Scanner. With all the necessary tools at hand I had no difficulty producing the January newsletter, including typing the articles, downloading articles from other user groups, and designing the layout and the new masthead. I printed the newsletter ready for Xeroxing and used OpenOffice Writer to save a separate version (omitting treasury data) to pdf format for distribution on the Internet. Ubuntu provides many additional Linux programs:

- **Thunderbird,** well-known program.
- **Pidgin,** an Messenger graphical multi-protocol instant messaging client, capable of using AIM/ICQ, Yahoo!, MSN, IRC, Jabber, Napster, Zephyr, Gadu-Gadu, Bonjour, Groupwise, Sametime, SILC, and SIMPLE all at once.
- **GRAMPS,** genealogy program capable of GEDCOM files that are used in such programs as FamilyTree Maker for Windows. It can produce reports in various formats, such as text, HTML and PDF.
- **Gnucash** can track finances in multiple accounts, keeping running and reconciled balances. It has a graphical user interface, double entry, a hierarchy of accounts, expense accounts (categories), and can import Quicken QIF files and OFX files.
- Multiple **sound** and **video** programs for burning and reading CDs and DVDs, ripping and creating audio CDs, recording sound clips, playing movies, etc.
- **Popular games**, including **aisleriot** (anagram of solitaire)**,** a large collection of card games, including Freecell. Also **blackjack**, **glchess**, **gnome-sudoku,gnometris** (Tetris), **gnomine** (minesweeper), **mahjongg,**and many others.

Additional programs can be installed with the **Add/Remove**function. Some powerful Linux programs that are not (yet) specifically adapted for Ubuntu can be retrieved with the **Synaptic**package manager, an easy-to-use graphical program to download applications from the Internet. I used it to download and install **Scribus**, an advanced desktop page layout manager capable of producing commercial grade output in PDF and Postscript. Difficult to use for a non-professional, but it worked just fine.

Installation

It is easy to install Ubuntu and Windows on the same computer in separate partitions. Previously that required manually repartitioning your computer with a program such as Partition Manager, but the latest Ubuntu version, Gutsy Gibbon, includes its own Linux-based partition manager, **GParted**, and automatically uses it to scan your computer for available space and to reconfigure that space (with your approval) to install itself. During boot-up the computer displays a menu of startup options, including Windows or Ubuntu.

I evaluated the ease of installation on an old Dell Inspiron 3800 laptop computer, with a 600 MHz Celeron CPU, 320 MB RAM and 880MB free disk space. Installation alongside the existing Windows Me went flawlessly. The computer didn't have a network card, but Ubuntu recognized the PCMIA wireless network card and connected to the Internet after I provided the router parameters.

"Sounds Great, But Why Bother?"

For the same reasons people move out of the city to the suburbs: **security and cost**-of-living. To enjoy the best of both worlds, install Ubuntu side-by-side with a basic Windows program. No need for expensive MS Office or Adobe programs. Use Ubuntu for safe online access, and keep Windows for those few occasions were Linux does not (yet) provide the means. As time goes by, it will probably be possible to abandon Windows altogether. Give it a try!

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the end of the story

Botnet—The Evil Network

by Grant Fuller, a member of Big Blue & Cousins, Canada
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This one might even be too much for Webman. There is a community of evil geeks who own a number of computers that are used exclusively for delivering viruses.

Usually backdoor Trojans, the virus is designed to infect the average computer users machine when launched periodically from the evil geeks' "Zombie" machines. The virus does not necessarily cause problems on the targeted computers but it uses these average users' machines to deliver spam. With this chain reaction method, huge quantities of spam can be spread with very little chance of tracing it to the source. ISP's have admitted they spend more of their resources on combating these "Botnets" than the old-fashioned crackers and hackers.

"If you suspect you are being used as a pigeon for a botnet operator, it is worthwhile downloading a good, tested anti-virus application that has a tracking firewall. The usual symptom that suggests there is a botnet present is a dramatic slowdown in performance."

Aside from cluttering up the internet with spam, the botnet can deliver "denial of service" attacks. This is a serious financial concern for companies trying to establish themselves on the internet as well as institutions that provide important community services.

The usual routine is, the spammer, who wants to get a message out to the world, pays the botnet operator, who then sends the file to his zombies which in turn launches the spam to the innocent distributors. Sometimes, banks of computers in offices and institutions are commandeered by the botnet operator for this criminal activity.

In preparing this article, I could not find proof as to how the original

(Continued on page 5)

New Technology Terms

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS.com
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Words, words, words….In the fast-moving world of technology, new words and phrases are constantly introduced. In order to keep up with the times, you need to learn about the current terminology. This need not be a drudgery. In fact, it can be fun to see what new words and abbreviations are popular. Check these out and you can wow your friends next time computers and technology become the subject at the 19th hole or the neighborhood cocktail party.

SSD (Solid-State Drive)

This is a type of memory that you will be hearing more and more about in the future. It is a type of flash memory that has no moving parts. Some small laptop computers are appearing using SSDs for storing data instead of hard drives. Because SSDs have no spinning disks like the ordinary hard drives, they offer improved battery life for laptop computers. They also have better data access speeds than hard disks.

404

You may recognize this as a common message on the Internet. It indicates that the requested page could not be found. This may mean that the page has temporarily or permanently moved and is not currently available. However, recently the term 404 has come to have another meaning. It refers to someone who is totally clueless. From the error message "404 not found", this has become a slang term meaning that the person's brain could not be located. If you decide to call your spouse a 404, make sure that he or she has not read this column or you'll be in big trouble.

Crowdsourcing

Using the skills of a wide variety of people to do a job or perform a task is called crowdsourcing. The people who perform such a function are often found on the Internet. Although these people can be paid, often they are often volunteers.

Geotagging

This is technology built into a digital camera or part of a camera add-on device that is able to tag each photo with the exact location that the picture was taken. Photos can then be sorted based on where they were taken. They can also be plotted on maps.

HDMI (High-definition Multimedia Interface)

This is a newer audio and video interface that is often found on televisions, DVD players, video game consoles, video cameras, and other video equipment. This type of connector replaces older standard connectors like composite video, S-Video, component video, and DVI. HDMI carries both audio and video in one cable. It supports digital rights management systems. HDMI cables can be very expensive in comparison to older audio and video cables.

One Laptop per Child (OLPC)

Led by Nicholas Negroponte, this is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to design, manufacture, and distribute affordable laptop computers to children around the world. The laptops were initially called the "$100 laptop", but the final build cost almost $200 each. In 2007, the One Laptop per Child organization started distributing these laptop computers to children in developing countries. The laptops are bright green and white portable computers with special features like a sealed keyboard. They are called XO computers.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Search Engine Optimization is the process of tweaking a website to improve the volume of traffic that is produced by search engines. The idea is to give the website a higher ranking in the search engines thereby producing more traffic to the site. SEO includes using keywords and website design to get higher rankings with search engines.

Skype

This is an online service that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet. The software is free and there is no charge to call the computers of other Skype users. Your computer must have a microphone in order to use Skype. With the addition of a webcam, Skype callers from computer to computer can also place video calls where they can both see and talk to each other. Skype also allows you to call landlines and cell phones for a fee. Skype has other services such as instant messaging and file transfer.

FTW

This stands for "For The Win". You may remember it being a part of the game show "Hollywood Squares" where a certain square would be selected "For the Win." It is also used in some online games like World of Warcraft. It is now a popular term that usually projects a boast, as in "I did it FTW." It is often used ironically and sarcastically.

Bot

A bot computer is one that has been infected with some type of malware that allows the computer to be controlled by an outside entity. Millions of computers are bots that are now under the influence of malware distributors who use these computers to send out spam, attack other computers and websites, and carry out scams and identity theft. The computer owner is usually unaware that their computer has been compromised since this activity is performed in the background.

BotNet

A series of bot computers, sometimes as large as millions of computers is called a BotNet. The BotNet does the bidding of some entity that has compromised the computers and taken control of them by installing some type of malware.

Zombie

This term that means the same thing as a Bot. It is a personal computer that has been infected with a virus that allows an outside force to control it. Such a computer can be used to send out spam or attack other computers without the owner's knowledge. Millions of computers today are zombie computers. They are part of a Zombie Network of computers that are controlled by hackers.

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the end of the story

Moving on to Vista – Part 4

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Windows Vista is a resource hog. A year ago, when I reviewed Vista for TAPCUG, my advice was to not upgrade an existing computer and buy Vista, wait and get it with a new computer. Today I stand by that advice. There are no new major programs that require Vista to run. If you're content with the way your existing computer(s) run with Windows XP there is no real reason to upgrade.

When you do buy a new computer there are several features you should look for for it to run Vista well. The first is RAM (random access memory). I don't think any manufacturer is selling a new computer with Vista with less than 1 megabyte of RAM but if you really want Vista to work well with large applications (Microsoft Office, video editing software, many games) try to get 2 gigabytes of RAM. You wont be sorry. There is no point in installing more than 4 gigabytes of RAM. Windows cannot access memory above 4 gigabytes.

The other issue is a video card. Vista wants at least 128 megabytes of memory for video. For best results, the memory should be installed on the video card. Some computers steal the video requirements from your computer's RAM. It works but the card will run slower. 256 megabytes of video card memory is even better.

Many people don't partition their hard disks, I do. I suppose it goes back to the days when larger hard drives started to appear and our computer operating system couldn't recognize and use the larger space. Of course all that has changed now, Windows can almost any hard drive size most of us will install. When I had to partition my hard drive, to fully utilize it, I discovered other benefits. Its easier to make a backup copy of a smaller hard drive. If I create a partition for just my photographs, and I only need to make a new backup of my pictures, I can just backup the partition containing the pictures and not everything else. A faster and easier process. I can also install another operating system Windows XP or maybe Linux) on my computer by creating a separate partition and run it using a simple process called dual booting.

So I wanted to partition the hard drive that came with my laptop to use some of the excess space to store a backup copy of drive C. I bought a new copy of Partition Magic. I've used this program many times to partition drives on other computers. Unfortunately I discovered that Vista doesn't like Partition Magic. A trip to Symantec's home page showed that they have no updates for Vista. As I was wondering how I would solve this dilemma, I discovered that Vista has a new built-in Disk Management utility and one of its functions will partition hard drives.

To use the you first have to get to the Disk Management window. From the start button, go to the control panel. Click on System and Maintenance and scroll down to “Create and format hard disk partitions”, at the very bottom of the window. You will see what appears to be a table of every disk and partition installed on your computer. Among other things you'll see the capacity of each disk and the free space available. Select the hard drive that you want to partition and right-click on it. You need to free up empty space on the hard drive so on the drop down menu. Select “Shrink Volume” and specify the amount of space you want to free up in the Shrink Dialog box. The free space will appear in the Disk Management window as a black bar and labeled as “Unallocated”.

Now you are ready to create your new partition. Right-click on the “unallocated space”. From the menu select “New Partition”. Then you just follow the wizard that appears to select the size and type of partition you want to create and format it. It may sound complicated but if you follow the steps listed above its easy.

Windows assigns drives (hard drives, DVD drives, etc) in alphabetical sequence so if drive letters C, D and E were already used your new partition will be labeled drive F. Typically, when you buy a computer from a company such as Hewlett Packard, drive C will be your hard drive, drive D will be a partition labeled “Recovery Drive” (used to restore your computer to “factory condition” in the event of a catastrophic crash) and drive E will be a CD/DVD drive.

Its a cosmetic thing but I like to group all my hard drives and partitions together. You can use the Disk Management window to relabel your drives. Just select one of the drives, right-click on it and select “Change drive letter and paths”. When you left-click on “Change drive letter and paths” press the “Change” button and pick a new letter to label the drive. I usually start by re-labeling the Recovery Drive drive “R” to make the letter “D” available for a new hard drive or partition. Then I re-label the CD/DVD drive drive Z. When this is done, all the letters from D through Q are available for hard drives, hard drive partitions and flash drives.

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the end of the story

(Continued from page 3)

virus is delivered to the unsuspecting so I am assuming it is the usual method. Either the user clicks on a deceptive button while surfing the net and triggers a download, or an email attachment is opened unwittingly. The culprits often use a harvesting program that goes to the ISP server and gathers all their email addresses. Some mass mail programs actually send email to the addresses on the server at the same time they are collecting the addresses for future use.

Botnet applications are cleverly designed so they often escape detection by anti-virus software. However, some firewalls such as ZoneAlarm will track incoming and outgoing calls so if the user is patient enough to investigate each of the unidentified communiqués going on between the hard drive and the internet, the botnet may be found.

If you suspect you are being used as a pigeon for a botnet operator, it is worthwhile downloading a good, tested anti-virus application that has a tracking firewall. The usual symptom that suggests there is a botnet present is a dramatic slow down in performance. As always, it is a good idea to search the internet for the latest information on topics like this because the war between good and evil is forever evolving.

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the end of the story

All Computers Wait at the Same Speed

by Vinny La Bash, Member of the
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

I first heard that phrase about ten years ago at a geek conference in Seattle. A decade ago is earlier than the Stone Age in computer years. It was probably meant to make fun of the propeller heads that couldn't live without the fasted CPU on their motherboard. The geeks' concern with processing speed seemed ridiculous to those who understood that computers spend very little of their time processing information. They spend it waiting for us to tell them to do something. You would certainly find your life very boring if you had to spend 99% of your time waiting for other people to act before you could do anything.

What are we talking about? We're talking about keeping your system properly tuned so that you don't have to wait while it tries to do its job. It's no secret that Vista has had performance problems. Microsoft has promised that their upcoming service pack should resolve most if not all performance issues. We've heard similar kinds of promises from Redmond before, but this time they say they really mean it. In fairness, not every performance issue can be laid at Microsoft's doorstep, but it's always fun to blame them because they're such an easy target.

Vista puts great demands on your CPU due to Aero and other assorted graphical gizmos built into the product. They should have named it the Eye Candy OS. Responding to the user community, Microsoft also added security features and additional functions that were not present in XP. When you ask your CPU to do more, you're adding overhead. This means you need more CPU power or you live with a slower system. If Vista performance has been less than stellar, the good news is that you can do something about it other than buying a new computer. Here are some of the things you can do to make Vista more appealing from a performance standpoint.

You're probably tired of hearing this one. It's like mother telling you to eat your vegetables. You know she's right, but you don't want to hear it. ADD MORE MEMORY. Vista is hungrier for RAM than any of its predecessors, and with memory as cheap as it is, it doesn't make sense to keep it on a starvation diet. XP runs great on one gigabyte of RAM. Vista should have two gigabytes as a minimum, and you won't go wrong by installing even four gigabytes.

Even with enough physical memory, Vista can still act like a tired old dog if you have a lightweight video card. Go into the Performance Information and Tools utility in Control Panel, and check out your video card with the Windows Experience Index. You need a video card that's certified for Vista Premium and supports Direct X 10. Use the money you save on RAM to buy a good video card. Don't try to do this one on the cheap.

A real help to good performance is bringing your power settings to the High Performance option. Do this from the Power Options utility in Control Panel. The default setting is Balanced which is OK for XP but not Vista. The High Performance setting gives you full access to all the Power in the CPU.

Turn off the sidebar. While this feature is visually appealing, it has few socially redeeming traits. Turning off this feature can sometimes result in significantly faster startups and shutdowns. Disable the sidebar by right-clicking it. Select Properties, and remove the checkmark in the box that starts the sidebar when Vista wakes up.

Fine tune your indexing options. Vista has a great search feature, but it's totally dependent on indexing the files and programs on your hard drive. It's a mixed blessing. You have a fantastic search capability when you index all locations, but you take a performance hit. By indexing fewer areas, performance will improve, but your search feature will be less robust.

Vista won't let you turn off indexing completely, but you can disable indexing for locations that may not be important to you. Do this from the Performance Information and Tools utility in Control Panel.

Here's another "eat your veggies" type tip. Empty the Recycle Bin and adjust it so it doesn't take up more than 2% of your hard drive. Right click on the Recycle Bin, select Properties, and make the necessary adjustments in the dialog box. Don't forget to defrag your disk once in a while, and empty the Recycle Bin before you defrag, not after.

Open My Computer from the Desktop. Right click on the C: drive, select Properties and check how much space you have left on your hard drive. If you're approaching 90% or more, you need to take non-essential files and move them to another location. Vista needs free disk space to perform certain housekeeping functions, and if it has to hunt around for room or use virtual memory, your performance hit could be enormous.

Keep your device drivers up-to-date. Device drivers were designed to ensure that programs or hardware peripherals could "talk" to the system without problems and do their jobs properly. Newer drivers can improve 3D performance, fix bugs and other graphical glitches in games and video programs. Device drivers can avoid memory conflicts and prevent programs from squabbling over resources. Newer device drivers can support innovative features within applications, and ensure compatibility among different programs.

These are only some of the things you can do to improve Vista performance. Removing unnecessary startup programs, preventing spyware and virus infections, and updating old software are additional steps you can take. If your system is frequently hanging up or crashing after doing everything you can do to improve performance, then it's time to consider reformatting your hard drive and reinstalling everything, but that's another article.

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From The Dealsguy

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

Great Shows!

The International Builders Show came to town again this year and I worked in it several days. It's the largest show in the amount of freight (thirteen million pounds) of any show that has been held here, and close to the largest in area. The dock basin was piled high with crates of all kinds. There were five beautiful modular homes set up on blocks in the parking lot for people to tour. The modules arrived a week before the show opened, but all the homes were assembled with the finishing touches in time for show days. One was a three-story 2700 square foot model worth over a million dollars, which was actually sold during the show. One home featured technology of the future such as calling you or sending you an e-mail at work if something goes wrong. I'll write a separate article about that which will be available on my Web site soon. Kohler had their million-dollar computer controlled waterfall again this year, and it was fascinating to watch it making letters, words, ad phrases and other decorative things to fall, all completely out of water. Mr. Kohler himself flew in to look over the display.

Another show we worked was the Orgill Show:
http://www.orgill.com.
That is like a giant hardware store, but is a trade show (about 500,000 square feet of display area) with exhibitors showing their latest wares. Orgill is a large independent hardware distributor. Many exhibitors prefer not to take their booth's displayed products back home so some dealers come with large trailers and purchase as many products from vendor booths as they can carry, after the show closes. Some booths just leave their products, and volunteers from Habitat for Humanity collect as much as they can for that organization's projects. "Pallet pricing" and "coupon specials" are featured for dealers attending and the Orgill reps wear different colored blazers signifying their sales volume.

A coworker said an attendee was looking for me, saying he reads my column all the time, but my coworker unknowingly gave him incorrect location information and he never found me. I was very disappointed. It's not the first time someone has looked for me at a show, but they are often large areas and unless you know who to ask, getting together is difficult because most of us don't know much about where others were assigned to work, and my wife and I don't work all of the shows here.

March will bring the Electronic House Expo:
http://www.ehxweb.com,
one of my favorites. I won't be working it, but hope to look around. Central Florida Computer Society **http://www.cfcs.org** has already made arrangements for their membership to attend at no cost. I recommend that one if you are in the area.

Are You Ready To Tax Your Brain?

AlbyMedia has released version 1.1 of PIQE: Chain of Puzzles. It contains different types of challenging puzzles, has three difficulty levels and allows comparing your results with other players. It's a set of engaging puzzles giving you a real challenge. The game has progress check and result comparison features to provide you with detailed information on your development. The game has three difficulties, offering more sophisticated puzzles after you beat the easier ones. Please visit **http://piqe.albymedia.com** for a free trial of the product.

PIQE: Chain of Puzzles runs under Microsoft Windows and costs $14.95 (USD) for a single-user license. AlbyMedia offers user group members 15% discount on the PIQE: Chain of Puzzles. Use the coupon code ALBY-JMGJ at :
https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=15534-3.
Licensed customers get free technical support and free upgrades.
Direct download link:
www.albymedia.com/downloads/piqe.setup.exe
Company web-site: **http://www.albymedia.com**

Here's Another Freebie!

DVDVideoSoft, an Internet resource dedicated to free software, multimedia software guides and tutorials has just updated Free Video to Flash Converter. The new version features 30+ player skins and new easy-to-use web integration, just copy and paste html code to the site or blog. Convert video files to flash (SWF and FLV). Convert the whole movie or just a portion. Free Video to Flash Converter is available at
http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/products/dvd/Free-Video-to-Flash-Converter.htm
for free download. The program contains no spyware or adware. No activation or registration is required. Just download and use it.

Video to Flash Converter is already the 15th free program developedby DVDVideoSoft and has developed a line of free tools:

Free Video Dun, Free YouTube to iPod Converter,
Free YouTube to MP3 Converter,
Free YouTube to iPhone Converter,
Free Video to iPod Converter,
Free Video to iPhone Converter,
Free Video to MP3 Converter,
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All titles are available at:
http://www.dvdvideosoft.com/free-dvd-video-software.htm
for immediate download. Also here are lots of guides and tutorials related to different video tasks like burning and ripping DVDs, making DVD copies, converting between all video formats and more. All our programs run under Windows Vista/XP/2000. We respect our users' privacy and there's no spyware or adware.

Comfort Should Be The Golden Rule!

Comfort Software Group announces Comfort Keys 3.0, a successor to the popular hotkey management tool. The new version supports non-standard keyboard types (Ergonomic and Dell Inspiron 6000); speaks two new languages (Hungarian and simplified Chinese); has adjustable sensitivity for fast input of capital letters, spaces and other

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)
characters; has the option of hiding in the system tray and features an enhanced hotkey management window with a full list of hotkeys and new groups.

Comfort Keys is a multifunctional hotkey manager for Windows Vista, XP and 2000. The integrated clipboard manager extends the capabilities of the standard Windows clipboard allowing you to save an unlimited number of copied objects and reuse them as much as you want; and makes sure your clipboard data is saved in case of a power failure or hardware crash. It also features an advanced task switcher, sound control tools and a virtual keyboard that facilitates the choice and configuration of your hotkey combinations. You can quickly switch languages, convert the selected fragment of text into another language (or case), run keystroke macros, easily manage a window and even restart the computer using the keyboard.

Comfort Keys supports Windows Vista/2000/XP operating systems. A personal license costs only $29.95. A multi-user license ranges from $21.95 to $6.95. The company offers a 30-day money back guarantee on all orders. More information on Comfort Keys, as well as its free trial version, is available at:

http://www.comfort-software.com/hotkey-manager.html

Products can be purchased from Plimus, the official reseller of Comfort Software Group products. Major credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, Amex and Discover) are accepted. User Group members get 30% discount at:

https://secure.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1711308&couponCode=dealsguy.

Wow! What a Clock!

ALSEDI Group announces version 2.6 of PerfectClock. It delivers any number of realistic clocks onto the desktop or replaces your wallpaper with clock wallpaper. PerfectClock lets you know the time in the most convenient way by looking at stylish analog or digital clocks. Enjoy having as many clocks on the desktop as you need, each displaying the time for the defined time zone. You can use the wallpaper clock as a screensaver. PerfectClock supports scaling. You can set a label to a clock and customize fonts, color, position and other parameters. The Reminder feature is also customizable. On the official website are dozens of clock and wallpaper clock skins. It allows you to adjust hue, saturation, brightness and contrast to reach optimal appearance of the clock.

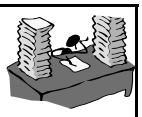
You can manually create a unique skin without being a programmer. ALSEDI Group has prepared a special offer for all new customers. Everyone purchasing PerfectClock can order a Personal Family Photo Clock Skin at no cost. It only requires selecting a frame pattern, sending a photo or two, and the skin will be delivered to you in three days. This skin makes a great present for family events. Visit **http://www.perfect-clock.com** to get the trial version of the program.

PerfectClock runs under Windows Vista/XP/2000. The Standard Edition costs $16.95 (USD) for a single-user license and the Professional Edition, supporting the Wallpaper Clock feature, costs $23.95 (USD).

Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on PerfectClock, as well as a free trial copy is available from

http://www.perfect-clock.com

From the Presidents desk



Hi PACCsters!

Once again here comes March with its annual election of PACC BOD.

In case you have missed it, you are reminded of the event elsewhere in this newsletter, also in the February 2008 issue of PACC TALK. To make their vote count the member has to be present at the meeting.

PJK

ELECTIONS FOR THE PACC BOD WILL BE HELD DURING THE PACC MARCH 2008 MEETING.

AS IN THE LAST FEW ELECTIONS THE ELECTION BOARD IS LIKELY TO PRESENT A SLATE.

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

Get a 20% discount on the registered Professional version by visiting:

https://www.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1717144&couponCode=GROUP20PERCENT

and 20% discount on the Standard Edition at:

<**https://www.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1695221&couponCode=GROUP20PERCENT**>.

Company web-site: **http://www.alsedi.com**

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

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR PACC: (Please print in CAPS)

NAME.....DATE.....

ADDRESS.....COMPANY.....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP+4.....

PHONE.....E-MAIL.....

OCCUPATION.....

INTERESTS.....

RECOMMENDED BY PACC MEMBER.....

Dues: $25 per year.
Make your check out to: PACC and send it with your application to:
Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435
cut here.....cut here

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.

NAME	COMPUTER AREA	PHONE	TIME
Agrawala, Vishnu	Hardware	724-612-1443	3 - 6:00 pm
Bailey, Rich	DOS, Batch Files, Word Perfect	766-3527	8 - 11:00 pm
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

If you would like to become PACC HELP LINE volunteer inform the editor by sending e-mail to: pacccomm@aol.com

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?

Classified ads. Buy, Sell, Trade. Members may place free ads (up to 5 lines).
For commercial ads send a inquiry to:
PACCCOMM@Aol.com

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E-mail: pacccomm@aol.com

NEXT PACC MEETING IS ON March 16, 2008

Pittsburgh Area Computer Club
Board Of Directors
***** ELECTIONS *****
Sunday, March 16, 2008

P A C C 1975 - 2008
IN ITS THIRTY-THIRD YEAR

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PACC TALK

NEXT MEETING: March 16, 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://pacc.apcug.org**

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