PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

April 2009

MEETING SCHEDULE
Sunday, April 19, 2009

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 - 12:00 pm ROOM # 301	Windows New Users Can we help you? V. Agrawala
12:00 - 12:30 pm ROOM # 301	General Meeting, Raffle. (pg. 1)
12:35 - 2:00 pm ROOM # 301	How to properly register and setup shop on E-Bay …... by John Duda (pg. 1)
2:05 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 301	EASEUS Partition Master Home Edition (pg. 1)
2:05 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 311	Hardware SIG Users Helping Users - guests included
1:00 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 311	Linux SIG, Members Helping Members, Com- puter troubleshooting, Info Exchange
3:30 - 4:00 pm	Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close

What is inside....

Windows SIG

EASEUS Partition Master Home Edition   is a freeware equiva-
lent to the now famous but never free **Partition Magic**.

The file size is manageable 9,020KB and you can get it from here:
http://www.partition-tool.com/

You can downloaded from many locations, but try the EASEUS web
site first. If you do prefer downloading from elsewhere try these ven-
erable web sites: Download.com, Majorgeeks.com, PCWorld.com,
TUCOWS.com.   You can also type these URL's into your browser

*** RAFFLE ***

**Data
Recovery
Software -
Data Recovery
Wizard V4.3.6**

Presentation
How to properly setup shop on E-Bay
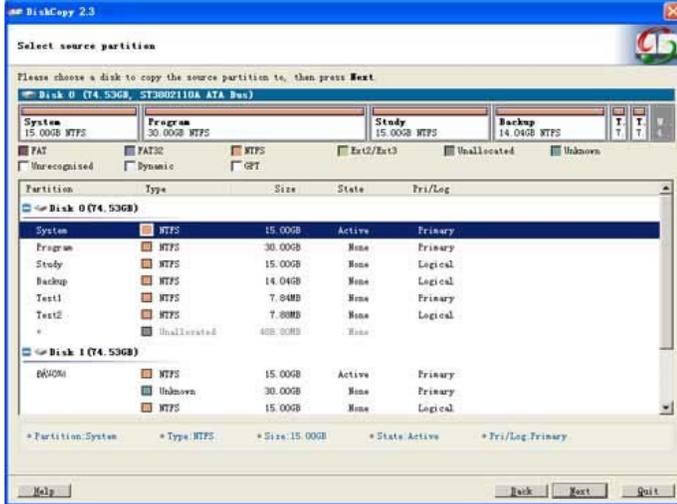#### by John Duda

John Duda has been selling "stuff" On E-Bay for several years now
and he is willing to share with the PACC members some of the
things he learned, so you can avoid the beginners mistakes. He may
not tell you all his secrets but whatever he will tell you will be gold!

directly: **http://www.easeus-software.com/download/epm.zip**
    or   **http://www.easeus-download.com/download/epm.zip**

From the EASEUS web site:
"As Partition Magic alternative, EASEUS Partition Master Home
Edition is a FREE disk partitioning utility that offers a range of pow-
erful functions such as resizing partitions, copying partitions, creat-
ing new partitions, deleting partitions, formatting partitions, convert-
ing partitions, exploring partitions, hiding partitions, changing drive
letters, setting active partitions, and a handful of other functions.
What's more, the freeware works perfectly with hardware RAID and
Windows 2000/XP/Vista (32 bit) Operating Systems. Your data is
completely protected during all operations. Why not free download
EASEUS Partition Master Home Edition now to enjoy it like the
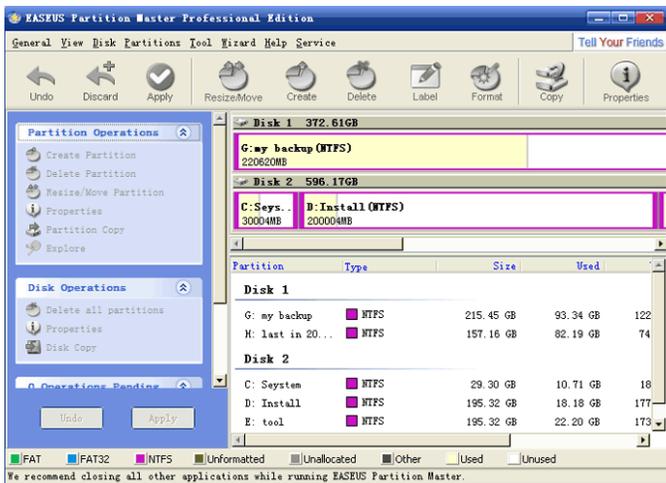
commercial program Partition Magic?"

In addition to this great freebie, here is an another one:

EASEUS Disk Copy - Freeware
File size: 2083KB get it here: http://easeus.com/disk-copy/
From the web site:" EASEUS Disk Copy is a potent freeware pro-
viding sector-by-sector disk/partition clone regardless of your oper-
ating system, file systems and partition scheme. The sector-by-sector
method assures you a copy 100% identical to the original. Disk Copy
can be used for copy, cloning, or upgrading your original small hard
drive to a new larger drive. Simply speaking, it can copy anything
from the old hard drive including the deleted, lost files and inaccessi-
ble data. "

To complete the trio of these free programs, download the
Data Recovery Ebook   from:
http://easeus.com/data-recovery-ebook/
File size is 4434KB = 147 pages PDF document, but well worth
downloading.
From the web site:
"The electric book introduces the construction of hard disk, the the-
ory of data saving, construction of file system, the reasons of data
lost and the examples of data recovery in detail. This book is easy to
understand with a lot of graphs and pictures in it. With the help of it,
the general user will never be upset of data lost. It also enable you to
become a data recovery expert quickly."

the end of the story

Moving on to Vista – Part 13
by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA
www.tapcug.org   ncstahfest(at)msn.com

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The chances are the first peripheral device you purchased for your
computer was a printer. You may have even received a "free"
printer when you purchased your computer. Vista makes it easier
than ever to connect a new printer to your computer than ever before.
The Plug-and-Play feature really works (unless, like me, you have
an old laser printer that Windows Vista does not support. :-( ).

So you connect your printer, follow the Printer Wizard's directions, it
works and you're happy. But wait. Have you examined your printer
to discover all of its functions?   Did you know that many modern
printers, even the inexpensive models, can print on both sides of the
paper, print sideways on the paper (called landscape mode), print in
gray scale as well as in color and allows you to control print quality
(to save ink when you don't need high quality print). Here's how to
find out what you can do and manage it.

Create or open a document using your favorite word processing
program or WordPad. At the top of your screen, click on "File" and
then scroll down to "Printer Settings" and click again. When the
"Printer Setup" window opens, click on the "Properties" button. At
this point what you see depends largely on your individual printer.

In the case of my HP printer, I see a window with tab labeled "Paper/
Quality", "Finishing", "Effects", "Basics", "Color" and "Services".
Selecting the appropriate tab allows me to select print quality
(Normal, Draft, Enhanced, etc.), Portrait or Landscape mode , page
order, color, single or two sided paper printing and many other
options. In the case of my HP printer, when I select two sided paper
printer, the printer prints on one side of the paper and then an on-
screen message shows me how to reinsert the printed sheet in the
paper tray to print of the other side. These print options are actually
determined by the printer, not Windows. Windows just provides the
means to control the printers features.

Windows frequently provides more than one way to do the same
thing. Desktop icons provide a shortcut to run programs listed in the
Start Menu. You can easily create new desktop icons my opening
the the Programs section of the Start Menu, Selecting a program,
right clicking on it and drag it to a blank area on your desktop.
When you release the right mouse button a short menu appears with
the option to "Create Shortcuts Here" . Select it, and left-click once
to create the icon. You can rename this icon to anything you wish.

If you right-click on a desktop icon, one of the menu option is
"Properties". Select Properties and left-click once.   Under the
"Shortcut" tab notice the entry line labeled "Shortcut key". It
probably contains the entry "None". By selecting a suitable key
(letter or number), you can create a key combination shortcut to your
program. It's a convenient way to access frequently used programs,
spreadsheets and documents.

Before we leave this menu, notice the button labeled "Change Icon".
When you left-click on this button you'll see an array of icons that
you can use to substitute for your default icon. Pick an icon, click on
the "Okay" button and then click on "Okay" again. Your new icon
will appear on the desktop.

the end of the story

Computer Speed, RAM and Virtual Memory
Written by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL
www.spcug.org
bwsail at yahoo.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

One of the more frequent questions raised is: "will adding more physical memory (RAM), speed up my computer"? The answer is a qualified "maybe". The first thing you need to be aware of are the built-in bottlenecks that can slow down your computer. Programs and data move through your computer at different speeds in different locations. The central processor (CPU) is usually the fastest data handler in the system. The hard drive is the slowest and everything else, including the RAM, is intermediate in data handling speed. The speed of processing data in RAM is measured in billionths of a second, or nanoseconds, and the speed of accessing data on the hard disk is measured in thousandths of a second, or milliseconds. So, ideally, you want all the processing to go from RAM to the CPU and back to RAM. Unfortunately, that's not always possible even if your system has the maximum amount of RAM installed.

Every computer running Windows, from several generations back, uses "virtual memory" in addition to RAM. The definition of "virtual memory" is based on redefining the address space to "trick" programs into thinking they are using large blocks of contiguous memory. Virtual memory is a space on the hard drive, frequently called a "swap file" or "page file". This is a block that is mapped for temporary storage of programs, data, and operating system essentials. This technique gives an application program the impression that it has contiguous working memory (address space), while in fact it may be physically fragmented.

Virtual memory was designed at a time when RAM was much more expensive than space on a hard drive. Even though RAM is now much less expensive, the latest versions of Windows (XP & Vista) still depend on virtual memory. In fact, much of the operating system kernel ends up in virtual memory. This kernel memory also controls the allocation of data to virtual memory. Consequently, it is not really possible to eliminate virtual memory when you are running Windows XP or Vista. If you do disable virtual memory, Windows becomes unstable.

In a 32 bit computer running Windows, the maximum memory that can be accessed by the CPU is 4 gigabytes (2^{32}). It can not access addresses beyond 4 gigabytes (GB). (A gigabyte is a billion bytes.) Not every computer can accept 4 GB of RAM. Some older computers are limited to 512 megabytes (MB) and still run Windows XP quite successfully. However, if you have a newer computer whose motherboard can accept 4 GB of RAM, you may not be able to fully access all of that RAM. In some cases, RAM is shared with the graphics system. This is usually referred to as an "integrated graphics card". In such a case, up to 1 GB of your RAM may be used by the graphics leaving only 3 GB for the rest of the system. Then Windows takes 2 GB of space leaving only 1 GB for user space (programs and data). Even if some of this is placed in Virtual memory, the CPU still has only 4 GB of addresses. If you have a graphics card with its own memory, Windows will allocate 2 GB to kernel memory and 2 GB to user memory. Since some of the kernel memory will be in virtual memory, your total memory will be a combination of physical memory (RAM) and virtual memory (hard drive), but the total will not exceed 4 GB in a 32 bit computer. Remember, the 4 GB limit applies to the number of addresses that can accessed by the CPU. Those addresses can be on the graphics card, the hard drive or in physical memory (RAM).

Windows sets up the memory system by dividing memory into pages. The most recently accessed pages are in RAM. Any pages that have not been referenced in a while are written to the file on the hard drive. According to Microsoft the paging file in a 32 bit system can be a maximum of 16 terabytes (one terabyte equals 1000 gigabytes). So the total virtual memory pagefile system can exceed the 4 GB limit by a considerable amount. However, no more than the 4 GB can be actively handled at time. The inactive pages are stored on the hard drive.

Virtual memory not only operates at the speed of the hard disk data access, it also requires special handling before it can be used by the CPU or sent to the video screen. Pages on the hard disk have to be read into RAM to be used. That also means that the space they will take in RAM must be vacated. If there was data there, it must be written to the hard drive, before the new pages can be read into RAM. This paging process must also be managed. Some memory is used just to keep track of which pages are in RAM and which are in virtual memory. This is the role of the Virtual Memory Manager. All of these processes of reading and writing to and from RAM require time. As a result, virtual memory use does slow the computer more than the amount that is just due to the slower speed of disk access.

Before you decide that you need 4 GB of RAM to solve your speed problem, you need to determine how much RAM your computer is designed to accept. Computers in today's market are sold with anywhere from 1- 4 GB of RAM. However, only a few years ago, computers were designed to accept a maximum of 1 GB of RAM or less. So you need to check your owners manual to see what the maximum RAM is for your computer. Then, if you don't know how much is installed in your computer, bring up the device manager window from the control panel. The first page will tell you how much physical memory you have in your system. You can also see the distribution of physical memory and virtual memory by bringing up the task manager (Ctrl-Alt-Del) and clicking on the Performance tab.

There are several other possible solutions to this problem. One is to look at your hard drive. If you have an older computer with an IDE drive, replacing it with a drive that has a SATA interface will speed up the data handling in virtual memory. Another change would be to purchase a graphics card with 256 – 512 MB of RAM and install it in place of the integrated video. That would release the RAM that was being shared with the video card.

The best, and most expensive, alternative for speeding up your computer is to replace your 32 bit computer with a 64 bit system. The 64 bit computers can access 16 exabytes of RAM (2^{64}). That is 16 million GB of RAM. Most of the 64 bit computers in todays market do limit physical RAM to anywhere from 8 to 256 terabytes. Not that we're getting into any really large numbers here, but the amount of RAM in a 64 bit machine is more than adequate to reduce virtual memory to a bare minimum. The catch is that 64 bit machines have other problems, especially with the limited availability of 64 bit software and drivers for peripheral devices. So before you decide to switch to 64 bit computing you need to check out whether or not drivers are available for your peripherals.

Finally, if your hard drive is heavily fragmented, this will also slow down data reading and writing. Simply defragmenting your drive

will speed up the drive input and output. It may also improve the computer's boot time. As you can see, there are a number of things to consider if you need to speed up your computer.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.

———— *the end of the story* ————

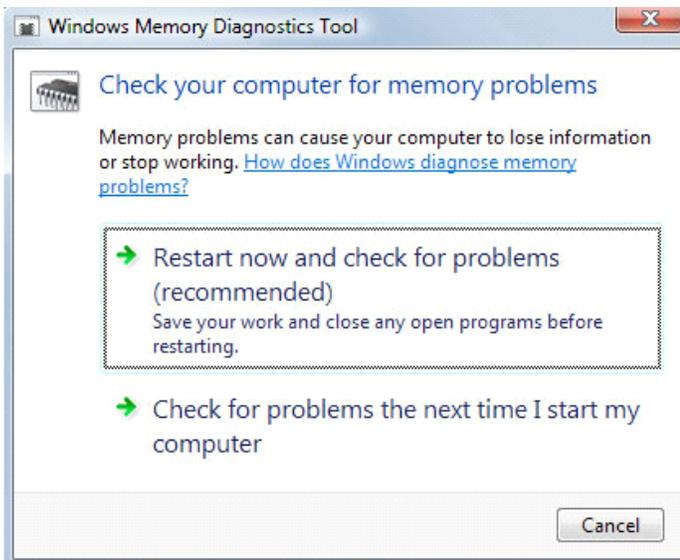## Diagnosing RAM Errors in Vista
Written by Vinny La Bash, a member
of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL
www.spcug.org
vlabash (at) Comcast.net

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

There is nothing useful that can happen in your PC without RAM. That's why it's essential to have high quality, reliable memory chips installed on your equipment. Defective RAM shows up as application errors, messages that your operating system is not quite right, and stop errors which bring your system down hard and unexpectedly.

Testing you machine's RAM with Vista's Windows Memory Diagnostic will either find your problem or assure you that your RAM is in tip-top condition.

With your system up and running, close all applications before launching the diagnostic tool to prevent data loss. Click on the Start orb, select Control Panel, and click the System and Maintenance icon. Select Administrative Tools, and from the right pane click on the Memory Diagnostics Tool icon. An alternate way of starting the tool is to click on the Start orb, type Memory in the Start Search text box, and then click the Memory Diagnostics Tool icon.

When the dialog box appears left click on the portion that starts with Restart now.

The dialog box will close and your computer will restart. Eventually the Windows Memory Diagnostic Tool's dialog box will appear and the test will begin automatically.

Watch the white progress bar as the test advances through its various stages. You will be able to track progress as the tool repeatedly writes information to memory and then reads the data to verify that nothing changes from the write to the read.

The default is a standard memory test, but there are two other types of memory tests available to you depending on how much time you want to devote to testing, and how thorough you wish to be. Pressing the F1 key will bring up the Options screen.

Locate the Test Mix section and choose either the Basic or Extended mix. The Basic mix runs a decent basic test, but is superficial in comparison to the Extended mix. Up to eight hours can be required for the Extended mix, so don't run it unless you have exhausted all other options.

Each test mix was designed with certain default cache settings which are optimized for that particular test mix. You can change the defaults and create a custom mix of your own, but unless you have an advanced level understanding of how memory works and is tested, you are probably better off leaving the default settings alone.

Some analyses use the cache on the microprocessor to see if the microprocessor is retrieving data properly from the memory modules. Other tests disable this cache to force the microprocessor to access all its data directly from the memory modules.

The tests are run twice, but by pressing the Tab key you can access the Pass Count section and specify how many times you want to repeat the tests. Make your changes and save them by pressing F10.

Messages will appear on the Status area if problems are found. If you wish to do other things while the tests are running, you can because if problems are found the Windows Memory Diagnostic Tool will reroute data around the trouble areas and allow Vista to restart without crashing. When you return, look in the notification area to access the test results. The System Event Log also stores the test results. Look under MemoryDiagnosticResults.

What if Vista won't boot? Start the system and continually press the F8 key until the Windows Boot Manager appears. The Windows Memory Diagnostic option is at the bottom of the screen and you can select it with the arrow keys.

If it's impossible to get to the Boot Manager, run the tool from the Vista installation disk. Follow instructions until the Install Now prompt appears. Look for and select the Repair Your Computer option. You will find the Windows Memory Diagnostic Tool on the System Recovery Options menu.

The Windows Memory Diagnostic Tool is an excellent utility, but it sometimes delivers a false positive. In addition, many knowledgeable people believe that hardware based testers are superior. Regardless, the utility is an excellent diagnostic instrument provided it is used with those limitations in mind. :

———— *the end of the story* ————

File Management – Part One
by Ron Hirsch, Contributing Editor,
Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida
www.brcs.org   ronhirsch1439 (at) comcast.com

What exactly do I mean when I say file management? And, I can hear you saying "Who needs to fool around with that stuff. I have too many real things to concern myself with. My computer takes care of all those things anyway, doesn't it?" Well, the answer is yes and no. If you went into a restaurant to dine, would you rather select your own choices from the menu, or just have the waiter bring you what he feels like bringing? Very few of you will answer with the latter. But, most people don't bother to establish/customize their file preferences on the computer. It's easier to just take what the computer has been set to do. And, they don't have to learn anything (they think) if they just accept all the defaults.

Please note that I'm making the assumption that you know how to use a mouse, and right or left click on things. And, when I say "scroll down" or drag, you know what to do. If you haven't reached this point yet, I think it's time to take a very basic beginner's course before proceeding.

The simplest way to understand the way your computer stores things is to consider the following. Suppose you saw a line of text as follows -
USA\Florida\Boca Raton\123 Broadway\2nd floor\room 24\gray file cabinet\top drawer\3rd folder\2nd document.

I'm sure that everyone would understand exactly where to look for the document in question. **The line above is actually a descriptive *path* to get you there**. Well, computer hard drives store things in a very similar way. A path to get to a document in your computer might be -
c:\My Documents\Letters\Personal\Aunt Emma's Birthday.doc

This path states that the filename is "Aunt Emma's Birthday.doc", and it is in a folder named "Personal". That folder is a subfolder of "Letters", which is a subfolder of "My Documents", which is a folder on the hard drive C. To define paths in computer language a "\" is used to separate the various elements of the path. Note that this information is not case sensitive. That is, upper or lower case makes no difference. Just having learned this already puts you well on the road to understanding file management.

File management includes things such as establishing certain folders which will be the storage areas for your documents, and other files. You direct where files will be stored in various of your programs by saving your files in folders you establish or define. This makes things easier when you want to do backups also. Many programs allow you to specify what those folders are. So, when you go to save a file, that folder comes up as the default. A common cry from beginners is "I saved the file, but I don't know where it is."

Within a folder you can have sub-folders. For example, if you had a folder c:\letters, you could put in subfolders for business, personal, club, etc.. This way, you have an organized filing system. If you have a file drawer that you use for filing things, most people will have separate folders or hangers for different categories. Throwing everything in the same area make it much more difficult to find things, just as putting all your different socks into the same drawer, unpaired, and mixed up, makes life tougher also.

Most people are intimidated by their computers. Remember, it's only a machine, and you should be the boss, not the computer. The more you understand, the more in control you will feel. But, that doesn't just happen. Like all things in this world, you must make it happen.

Reading these articles, and doing the practice can help you along the road to that end.

Once you become reasonably proficient in the subjects to be presented, you will be prepared to move files around, copy them to a floppy or ZIP disk to back them up, or delete them. The exercise below should help you in this area.

Please note that the protocols used here are applicable not only to PC's, but also to Mac's. These protocols are very logical once you understand them. The term "Windows" will be used throughout the article. This means that all versions of Windows, 95, 98, ME, or Windows 2000 will follow the same procedures

EXERCISE NUMBER 1

1. **Open up Notepad** - if you don't know where it is, click on the **START BUTTON** on the bottom left of your screen **START>PROGRAMS>ACCESSORIES**. Double click on Notepad, and the standard Windows text editor will open. Notepad is simply a small program in which you can generate and edit text documents. It offers almost nothing in the way of formatting, but is a bare bones text editor, as opposed to WordPerfect or Word which are capable of elaborate activities.

2. **Type "This is a test." in the Notepad window.**

3. **Save the document by clicking on FILE>SAVE.** A window will open. At the top of the window is an area with the notation "Save in". It will probably show your C: drive. If not, use the scroll arrow to select the c: drive. Once you have done this and double-clicked on it, there should be a listing below of all the folders on the C: drive. Scroll to the one named "My Documents", and double click on it. (My Documents folder is a standard folder that Windows installs.) The focus is now on that folder. Next, go down to the bottom of that window and in the field at the bottom, select "all files(*.*)" just to see what else is in that folder. There is a field with "File name" alongside of it. In that field, type testfile.txt. Then click on the save button. You have now saved that file in the "My Documents" directory. Now, exit Notepad.

4. **Open Windows Explorer.** If you don't know how to do this, it's time you learned. Click on **START>PROGRAMS>EXPLORER**. Or, click on the Windows key and the "e" key on your keyboard at the same time. Navigate around to display the list of folders on the C: drive. If that's not what showing, find C: on the left and double click on it. This should bring up the list of all the folders on the C: drive. Find the My Documents folder, and double click on it. There should be at least one file there, the one we just saved called "**testfile.txt**".

5. Before continuing, I suggest that you configure Explorer to show all file extensions. This makes working with Explorer easier. At the top of the Explorer Window, click on **VIEW>OPTIONS**, and then uncheck the line which reads "Hide file extensions for the types that are registered."

This is the end of part 1 of Learning Basic Windows skills. Next month, the second part of this will cover moving and copying files, along with setting up new folders. If you find this material useful,

you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site www.brcs.org. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference.

———————— the end of the story ————————

There Is More to Music than the iPod®
Written by Mike Morris, Editor,
Front Range PC Users Group, CO
http://www.frpcug.org   twriterext (at) gmail.com

There is more to music—and more to life—than the iPod. I think I can prove that statement with the words that follow. Please don't misunderstand me. I admire the iPod as a successful product—a success technically and financially—even though I don't have one. However . . . .

I need to start my "proof" by saying that in previous articles that I have written for this newsletter, I made a claim to being an Old Analog Guy (as a reminder, the acronym = OAG and is pronounced "ogre"). It is with that persona that I bring this subject to your attention.

I just completed a catalog of nearly 300 old LP's that belonged to a family member who died last year. And when I say old, I mean some of those LP's have release dates more than 50 years old. Some of the recordings are much older than that. There are many memorable, and even historic, performances recorded on those albums.

A small part of that music has been re-released on CDs. But there is much of that music—almost all Jazz—that you will not currently find in any digital format. So put down your iPod (or one of its imitators) and please listen to what I have to say.

I decided to create a database for this catalog using Microsoft Access®. One significant issue, as you might expect, is just how much information to include in the database. This database is for family use—not for radio station or other broadcast use. I did, however, want to make a record (no pun intended) of whatever information was necessary to properly document the collection. The most significant decision was related to the track (song) names, sequence and times on each side of each LP. Clearly, if I needed to document that information, both the data entry task and complexity of the database were going to be much higher. If the average number of tracks per side is 4 (it is probably higher), and I wanted to include all that information, then I was faced with a data entry task of 4 x 2 x 300 = 2400 entries (plus all the other information I wanted to include).

"No big deal" you say—there are many much much larger databases in the world. You are correct. But remember, I am an OAG (please correctly pronounce that acronym). Therefore I was looking for an "easy" way to complete this task. Credit is due to Ken Campbell of radio station KRFC (more on that in a moment), a local public radio station, for a solution. Ken told me about an online music database called allmusic.com (http://www.allmusic.com) (yes, it is spelled with all lower case letters). It turns out there are many online music databases (a Google® search turned up more than 68,000, using the phrase "online music database"). The allmusic.com database was the best for my catalog project for the following reasons:

1. A successful search for an artist will provide an Overview, a Biography, a Discography (a list of all albums by the artist known to the database, with title, date and label), Songs, Credits, and Charts and Awards.
2. From the discography, one can click on an album and get infor mation (usually) on the album tracks (including times), composer(s), recording date(s), release date, label, format (LP or CD), the label's catalog number, and, for some albums, a review of the album.
3. The search options include artist/group, album, song, classical work.
4. There is substantially more information about the Jazz genre that just a list of names and dates. For example, on the Jazz "home   page," there are a number of "Related Essays" on Jazz, including   "A Brief History of Jazz."

For a project such as the cataloging of an existing music collection, with LP's that are up to 50 years old, this database is the best choice by far of all of the databases examined or considered. It is the equivalent of an encyclopedia, and the functionality makes searching easy, with related data presented on a single page. The ability to link from a list of albums (discography) to a single album (or CD reissue) provides very efficient searching for a project of this type. That is not to say that it is error free. There are albums not included in the database—the web site makes no claim that it contains every album ever released. There are also tracks missing from some albums (or the track order in the database doesn't match the order on the disk). An album may be in the database, but not in the artist's discography. And, there are numerous problems with release and recording dates. Still, the "pros" far outweigh the "cons."

There is a feature offered by this web site that is unique. Each page (any of the choices listed in item 1 above) has a "Corrections to this entry?" option, allowing the user to submit corrections. Those corrections are then researched for confirmation (if the web site statement is correct) before they are added to the database. That feature was used extensively during the research for this music cataloging project—although not every error or missing item was submitted.

For my project, the search by artist was the most effective. If an album was not listed in the artist's discography, a search by album was the alternate choice. Although the database has many very early jazz albums, there were a few albums in the collection, both old and new—or at least "newer"—by well-known artists that were missing from the allmusic database. So, although not perfect, the allmusic database is an excellent research tool, and you don't need the iTunes media player (or any other media player) to use it.

The database is not limited to research, however. You can listen to short sound bytes from some tracks, and there are links that allow you to buy selected tracks or albums (correction – CDs).

OK, so your iPod and the iTunes media player are great for listening to (and buying) current and even "relatively" old music. But the iTunes media player is not going to help you—to same extent as the allmusic database will—find classic old Jazz performances (and perhaps classic performances from other genres). And, you must have the iTunes media player installed on your computer before you can do any searching with it.

You may be wondering why I am talking about online databases and why I consider a good online database important to my "proof." Yes, there is a relationship. But before I offer the conclusion, I have several comments on other databases.

Another online database used rarely was Gracenote®, a wholly

More On Digital Picture Frames.

I talked last month about problems reading the internal memory in my digital picture frame. Since then, it's been an education trying to put it into service. The old adage, "you get what you pay for" must apply here. I received no help from "Smartparts" (the company) tech support. At first, the message was that the lines were busy, call back later, but never any luck. Now the message has changed to "No one is available to take your call." I tried their Web site's tech support, but with no response there either.

I used their Optipix™ software to process the pictures and load them into the digital frame's internal memory, but they went into that "eternal bit bin." I eventually got them into the picture frame's memory (no folder) and not on the SD Card I had added. I then copied them from the internal memory into a folder on the SD Card I plugged into the picture frame. So far, so good, but when I tried turning the frame on to display them, it was showing all the pictures I had on the SD Card, even from other folders I had previously put on it, but it retrieved nothing from the internal memory.

I can't seem to select a certain spot for retrieving the pictures. When I remove my SD Card, the frame runs all the pictures it can find in its internal memory, including the samples not in a folder. It seems like I should put each picture set into a separate SD Card by itself. A bit frustrating, but, oh well!

A friend purchased eight digital picture frames on line as gifts to his family, but two came through DOA and the Internet distributor would not replace them. First he deleted the sample pictures in the memory of one of them to set it up, but then could not load pictures. He spotted a small hole and tried a paper clip to see if it was a reset. All the sample pictures came back and he loaded his pictures again, and then deleted the samples. He also purchased more digital frames from another on-line merchant and two had problems, but he got those replaced. He said that with those, he could select the folder to get a slide show from. I checked the book for another friend's frame and it also lets you choose the retrieval source.

I had problems when I tried putting text captions on some of my pictures. At first, I thought it didn't find them; until later when I found it was running them last. Huh! How did that happen? The FAQ on their web site says "Most digital picture frames run the pictures in the order they are copied to the memory." Wow, it's getting complicated, but I guess I can do that. Oh well, hopefully it will eventually do "something" I would like. I'm suggesting that you ask lots of questions if you are buying a digital picture frame.

Another New Toy!

I saw an ad for a HP color laser jet printer for $199.99, but I've seen those ads before and was never happy with the price of the cartridges because new printers do not come with "full" cartridges. The sale was at Office Depot and I also shopped at a local computer shop that supports our user group and offered a Ricoh color laser jet for the same price. He printed the spec sheet and it came out on a machine that also featured duplex printing (both sides). It impressed me and it was $379 for club members. I receive several newsletters in PDF format and can't live with reading that much on my screen. I've been printing them out by first printing the odd pages, and then reverse the page sequence to turn them over and print the even sides.

My present HP laser curls the paper a bit and even though I try to straighten them, sometimes that printer runs two pages through at once when printing the opposite side and ruins the page sequence. A duplex printer would sure simplify all that, so my choice was made. I went back to Office Depot and saw a HP printer with duplex capabilities for the same price, but after asking how the warranty worked, I returned to the other shop and purchased a Ricoh duplex printer from them.

Unpacking the machine when I got it home was a bit frustrating because trying to figure out the many protective tapes and metal stops to remove by looking at their pictorial brochure, and in which direction and sequence to do it, was confusing. I later found a PDF manual on the installation disk. I called their tech support number and a guy picked up the phone and proceeded to help me, also offering suggestions. He was based in Atlanta, Ga. and spoke excellent English. What great tech support! I called again later with the same quick response. Oh yes, the store salesman didn't tell me the new machine was an all-in-one multifunction printer. I noticed that when I unpacked it.

I printed some newsletters the other evening and watched that printer run them out while I just sat there, and in COLOR. The new printer is a treat, and so was the Ricoh tech support. I copied a color brochure today and that was simple, and a treat also.

FACUG Spring Conference

My wife and I attended the FACUG/APCUG Conference and it was a nice weekend. There were about 140 attendees from several Florida user groups, but a few were from other states. There were less sponsoring vendors this year, but that void was filled with other interesting presentations such as "Cloud Computing," "Doterati," "Wikis," "Twittering," "Second Life" and "BarCamp." I had never heard of BarCamp, but it is an intriguing event where you sign up to speak for fifteen minutes about "anything you want" and this "Unconference" concept is gaining popularity all over the world. Doterati is for people locally that work, study, speculate, ask, and answer questions about interactive marketing, media and technology. <http://www.doterati.com>. In just a year, they have 500 members and expanding. Watch the FACUG videos for more information.

A lot was packed into the weekend and it was nice to see friends, especially an attendee there from my hometown area in Michigan. Most of the sessions are available for viewing at

<**http://www.facug.org/ConferenceSpring/conference-s.asp**>. Two presentations were by APCUG President Jay Ferron, one on Security, and another on Windows 7. If you skipped it, you missed an enjoyable conference.

Government Discount

I wouldn't ordinarily include this, but a few readers work for the government and law enforcement agencies, and perhaps some others might qualify. ElcomSoft Co. Ltd., a leading provider of various password recovery solutions, announces the availability of a special discount. <http://www.elcomsoft.com/special.html> The new discount program enables government entities, military branches, criminal investigation and law enforcement agencies, and police and emergency services to order selected ElcomSoft password recovery products at a discount. The new 20% discount is in addition to any volume or bundle discounts already offered by ElcomSoft.

Check the URL above for products covered and information about ordering.

Protection For Your Computer

I have not tried this and there's no discount, but the lifetime membership concept sounded OK for the column. I have edited their announcement to shorten it and we found no reviews on it.

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South West eCommerce announced the availability of Spyware & Adware Remover 2009, a new version of the privacy protection software ensuring optimal system performance. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 delivers features to protect valuable data from getting corrupted or stolen, stop hackers and hinder ID theft.

Spyware can transmit secret personal information such as name, address, credit card number, social security number, driver's license number, and passwords. Spyware & Adware Remover provides users with protection from the widest range of threats, and prevents recurrence.

Spyware & Adware Remover helps find what's eating a computer's resources by detecting and eliminating malware and adware running in the background. It removes disturbances and blocks annoying pop-up ads. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 runs under Windows 98, XP, ME, 2000 and Vista. The one-time membership fee is $29.90. Lifetime Membership includes unlimited downloads and support. Further information on the product, and its free evaluation copy, is available from <www.webdefenders.net>.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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.

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owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America. Gracenote is used "…for digital media recognition of CDs, digital music files, and streaming audio. With the most comprehensive database of music information in the world, the Gracenote Media Database contains information for more than 80 million tracks and 6 million CDs…." This database is normally linked to media players, such as Winamp©, to automatically identify music on a CD or from a download. It provides album title (and, in some cases, an image of the album cover), and track names—if you connect through a media player (or other audio/video equipment with the enabling software installed that is connected to the internet).

If you connect to Gracenote directly from a browser (http://www.gracenote.com/), the search options are artists, albums, tracks. A successful search on an artist returns a list of albums (a lot less than the allmusic database) released by that artist that are known to the database. It is important to note that the quantity information in the Gracenote advertisement makes an explicit reference to CDs. The album information is similar to that in the allmusic database, except that there are no track times. There are, however, links to the lyrics of some tracks—for those songs that have them. Also the "Buy" buttons are much more prevalent, and much more obvious in the Gracenote database, compared to the allmusic database.

Another online database examined briefly was Rhapsody®, http://www.rhapsody.com/home.html, a service provided by RealNetworks.com, better known for its Real® media player. The company claims to provide "Technology and services that help people enjoy

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Results of March 15, 2009 BOD Elections:
The only positions changed from last year are the president and exec. VP. All other position remain the same. Good Luck JD!.
 John Duda is the PACC president, and Pavel J. Konecny is the Exec. VP.

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

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the end of the story

digital entertainment whenever and wherever they want."

Connect to the Rhapsody website and the first thing you will notice are the annoying animated ads. Get beyond that and the search options are artist, keyword, track, album, composer, video, lyrics, and playlist. If a search for an album is successful, you can, for most albums, get track information by clicking on the album image—but that track information (no times) is very probably going to be from a more current CD release, not from the original LP, depending on how old that original LP is and how popular the album was. However, there is nowhere near the same level of information available from this database, compared to the allmusic database. The Rhapsody database is organized for listening to (or buying) music that is already known to the user, either by song name or by artist (in my opinion). It is not an effective research tool for finding information on old LP's.

It is not necessary to have the Real player installed in order to search the Rhapsody database.

Now listen up everyone! Here is my reason for talking about music databases:

There is some great old music out there! In all genres. Please don't get so comfortable with your iPod that you ignore that music. Especially when you have a resource such as the allmusic online database to help you identify it, catalog it, find reviews on it and find some history of it.

I suspect that many of you reading this article (I hope there are many readers) have some of that "great old music" sitting on your shelves or in your cabinets. Or perhaps stored away somewhere. If so, "unstore" it. You will, I am certain, enjoy that music, especially with the added information available from the allmusic database.

And that is what I mean when I say "There Is More to Music than the iPod."

Here is the additional information I promised on radio station KRFC:

Front Range PC Users Group (FRPCUG) has a partnership with KRFC, 88.9 FM in Fort Collins, CO. KRFC provides "Community powered music, news and entertainment." For more information, connect to http://krfcfm.org/. FRPCUG provides computer maintenance help to KRFC, and, in return, KRFC helps expand the knowledge of FRPCUG activities within the local community. An internet audio stream is available from the KRFC web site.

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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	724-553-8051	3 - 6:00 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

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

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NEXT PACC MEETING
IS ON APRIL 19, 2009

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PACC TALK

NEXT MEETING: *April 19, 2009*

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 NEWSLET-TER.** 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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