

PACC TALK

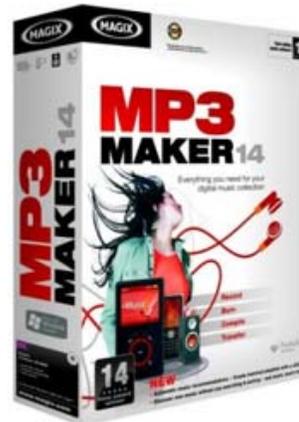
Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

July 2008

MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, July 20, 2008

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



*** RAFFLE ***

With the advent, or should we call it a march of MP3 players, this is one of the best programs to handle your MP3 files.



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Windows SIG

The free and god stuff:

MagicDisk

"MagicDisk is freeware. It is very helpful utility designed for creating and managing virtual CD drives and CD/DVD discs. For anyone who deals with CD-based programs – it is a MUST. MagicDisk allows you to use almost all CD/DVD image without burning them onto CD or DVD in order to easily access your favorite games, music, or software programs ---- It works like a real CD/DVD-ROM: You can run programs, play games, or listen to music from your virtual CD-ROM. Allowing you to run your game images at over 200x faster than from a conventional CD/DVD-ROM. "

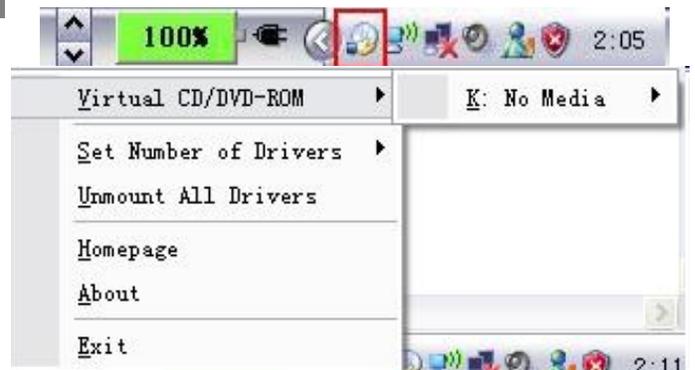
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Small 1,264 KB file which you can download from here:
<http://www.magiciso.com/tutorials/miso-magicdisc-overview.htm>

For tutorials go here:
<http://www.magiciso.com/tutorials/tutorials.htm>

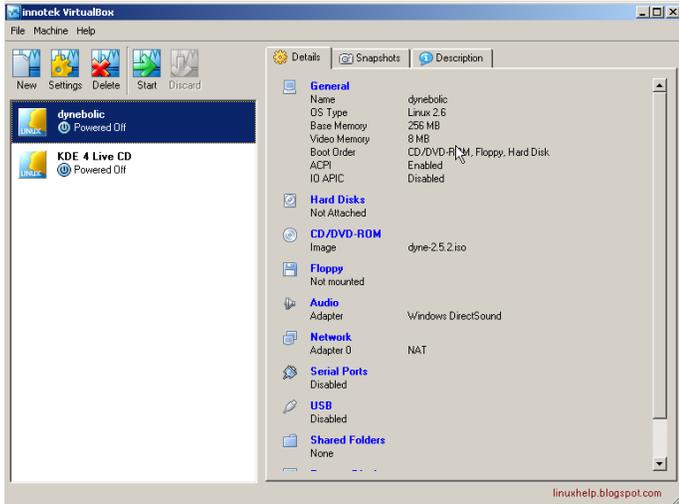


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VirtualBox Acquired buy SUN in February 2008 remains free.

From the web site: "VirtualBox is a family of powerful x86 virtualization products for enterprise as well as home use. Not only is VirtualBox an extremely feature rich, high performance product for enterprise customers, it is also the only professional solution that is freely available as Open Source Software under the terms of the



GNU General Public License (GPL).", "Presently, VirtualBox runs on Windows, Linux, Macintosh and OpenSolaris hosts and supports a large number of guest operating systems including but not limited to Windows (NT 4.0, 2000, XP, Server 2003, Vista), DOS/Windows 3.x, Linux (2.4 and 2.6), and OpenBSD. ..."

VirtualBox-1.6.2-Win_x86 22,067 KB can be downloaded from here: <http://www.virtualbox.org/> (Innotek/Sun Microsystems)

Advanced WindowsCare Personal

"Advanced WindowsCare Personal provides a convenient way for non-technical users to perform routine maintenance and apply system optimization tweaks without the need to become a computer geek." Get the 6,399 KB file from:

<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindows-careper.html?Str=download>

Released on: July 7, 2008
Runs on 32-bit Windows Vista™, XP, and 2000



the end of the story

FOR SALE

Date: 7/13/2008 — 4 GIG USB flash drive - \$15, Hard drives @ 20 cents per GIG. 160G, 200G available. Contact Vishnu: vka@zoominternet.net

The New, The Best, and The Worst - May 2008

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster,
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Tales of Woe

Sorry, Folks, but this month I can't think of any New and/or Best to report on, only Troubles, with a Capital 'T.' So let's get started.

Spinrite 6.

Son Mike's computer recently refused to boot, and his main concern was the potential loss of some recent data files that he had not yet backed up. Regrettable, but it happens to the best of us - literally. The local school system lost all the students' test results of the current term because the computers crashed. The data were not securely backed up. Whom to blame? No one other than the operator, IBM, symbol of computing excellence. According to the local paper, the IBM representative claimed that this had never happened before and could not be explained. Sound familiar?

Back to Mike. When it was clear that he could not boot from the hard drive, not even in safe mode, the next step was to use a Windows XP setup disc and use its Repair function. Windows labored mightily, trying to repair his drive, but kept getting bogged down with a variety of obscure error messages. At one time he got a DOS prompt that allowed him to list the files on his computer, but when he tried to copy them he was denied access. When we booted his computer with a Live Ubuntu Linux CD he could also see his precious files, but access was again denied.

There is a lesson to be learned from this. The Windows XP operating system runs on a partition configured in the NTFS format. When data files are saved in that format, Windows XP (and Vista) by default protect those files from access by others. That is a nice safety feature for those who really need it, but it makes the data unavailable over your network, or evidently even from a DOS prompt. You can beforehand designate specific data files to be shared, but it is a lot of bother, easily forgotten. Here is the lesson: store all your data files on a separate partition set up in the older FAT32 format, and they'll be available whenever and wherever you need them. Even better, also back them up to an external drive in FAT32 format.

At this point I remembered reading about a terrific file recovery program, Spinrite 6, available for \$89 from Gibson Research Corporation, owned and operated by Steve Gibson, the well-known computer guru (www.grc.com). We downloaded the program and converted it to a bootable disc. After booting Mike's computer with the Spinrite disc it immediately announced that his drive was subject to imminent failure. Well, that's what we spent the \$89 for. We started the file recovery mode, with a warning that this could take a loong time, think 24 hours or so.

Several days later, after running something like 60 hours during which the program every so often would get bogged down and had to be restarted, the program had progressed to 93% completion and refused to go any further. No indication that any files were available to be recovered.

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Mike installed Windows XP on a new drive and put the old wreck in an external hard drive enclosure connected to a USB port of his computer. The old drive was unreadable at this point. Still unwilling to give up, Mike tried the old standby, Windows' checkdisk with the /F parameter (for "fix") to let Windows try to repair salvageable parts of the drive. It worked! After several repeats of the procedure he was able to recover most of his lost files that meanwhile also had become accessible. So much for Spinrite, mark one up for good old DOS.

Acronis

After creating the Spinrite disc, and before using it on Mike's computer, I tested it on my desktop computer by doing a routine check of my hard drive, expecting it to be in perfect shape. To my surprise Spinrite halted about 5% into the inspection because the hard drive was overheating. Newer serial (SATA) hard drives are equipped with a SMART program that reports many operating parameters of the drive. Windows can't read SMART, but Spinrite can. On inspection I found that the cooling fan for the hard drive compartment was kaput. It was easily replaced by the local people who built my computer, but even then the drive continued to overheat, a clear warning that it may fail any time.

I bought a new 500 GB Maxtor drive (on sale for \$99!) which came with a utility, "MaxBlast" to copy an exact image of my setup to the new disc, avoiding the necessity to reinstall everything. The way it wanted to go about it was to do a three-way partition of the 500 MB drive, similar to the 3 partitions in the old (250 MB) drive, but twice as large. It was going to copy everything on the old drive to the new drive, including my Linux programs in their partition, with the warning that the Linux system would no longer be bootable. That was not what I had in mind, I just wanted to copy an image of the C: partition from the old to the new drive. Since MaxBlast turned out to be version 10 of disk manager Acronis, I gave Acronis-11 a try in the hope that it would be more flexible. I uninstalled MaxBlast and tried to install Acronis 11, but it balked. I tried to remove all traces of MaxBlast from the Registry, but Acronis still wouldn't install. I uninstalled as much as possible of Acronis and tried to reinstall MaxBlast. No luck; darn. So much for Acronis.

After clean installations of Windows XP and Ubuntu Linux on the new drive, Windows could not find my Internet connection. After struggling several days I finally realized that my motherboard needed to be software-configured and that I did not have the correct drivers. Thanks to the local availability of the guys who originally built the system I got the correct drivers and all was well. Ubuntu never had any problem. It downloaded and installed the required Linux drivers automatically.

Ubuntu

Windows Vista is not the only operating system with compatibility problems on installation. Ubuntu and other Linux distributions have more than their share of installation problems. Most of these appear to be due to proprietary graphics systems for which Linux has no drivers (yet). I have been recommending for years that people ought to start using Linux, but on both occasions where I convinced someone, it turned out that Ubuntu was incompatible with their systems. Computers with integrated graphics and many laptop computers have low-cost proprietary hardware (made in China) that is attuned to Windows, but unlikely to have Linux drivers. Standard graphics cards from major manufacturers are more likely to have Linux drivers available, and those based on the NVidia chip set have Linux support from the manufacturer.

You can try to run Ubuntu from the CD-ROM without installing it on the hard drive, a so-called "live" installation. If that works, your system is probably compatible and you can proceed with a permanent installation. If it doesn't work, not much is lost since the distribution is free. In any case, Linux is a large program and requires at least 256 MB of RAM and 10 GB of hard drive space.

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the end of the story

From My Vista
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Just about every year I make some sort of 'major' effort to move forward with technology in some way on my primary home workstation. I periodically wipe out the machine and start a fresh OS install from scratch. I reasoned that as laborious a reinstall is, I may as well bite the bullet and this time make the move to Vista. What made the timing right was that Microsoft gave Windows Vista Ultimate 32-bit w/SP2 for those who attended the APCUG 2008 LDC. Here's my experience.

Check Compatibility

When loading an OS it is important to make note of your hardware and key software. Vista Update Advisor will highlight any hardware or software compatibility issues of which to be aware. In my case, the only issues to address were applications that would be replaced with new Vista versions—no big deal. In terms of hardware, my machine checked out OK. Last I had heard, my ATI All-In-Wonder 2006 video card was not yet supported in Vista, so I double checked the AMD (they now own ATI) website and confirmed there are now Vista drivers and software. It's a Go!

Backup Data

Next, I made backups of all my important data. This time around I used an external USB hard drive and just dragged and dropped the data to a 'backup' folder. I wanted to start fresh and clean, so I didn't bother making a backup of my Windows or Office user settings. There aren't any new BIOS updates for my motherboard, so I was all set to go.

Time for Install

I started the install process around 8 p.m., electing to wipe all partitions on the hard drive. My first boot to the desktop post install was shortly after 10 p.m. So far, so good. And, considering this is a P4 2.4GHz machine, I was rather impressed. Vista's graphics worked from the get-go because the ATI All-In-Wonder 2006 uses an ATI Radeon 9600 compatible chipset for which Vista loaded drivers. Sound worked. Networking worked. I expected SOMETHING to be wrong, due to all the horror stories I had heard! My machine even received a 3.2 on the "Vista Experience Index". That means I can use Aero! Now we're cooking!

Post Install Issues

A notice appeared that Windows detected hardware and needed to install drivers. My system's motherboard has an integrated Realtek AC'97 sound card. Unfortunately there isn't a Vista driver for the

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MIDI interface. If I want to hook up MIDI devices in the future, I will probably need to disable the built-in sound card and install a properly supported one to gain MIDI interface functionality.

Watching TV is one of the things for which I built this machine, and I expected to use Vista Media Center. This is where my second issue came up. While AMD (they bought ATI) has released updated Vista drivers and software for the ATI AIW 2006 video card, they didn't actually 'fix' the issue with how the ATI Hydravision software accesses the TV Tuner. I searched around for a solution and came across a Home Theater application called "Beyond TV" by SnapStream. So far that seems to solve my issue. Beyond TV has a ton of cool features (worth looking at even if you aren't going to Vista).

Reality Check

In my consumer opinion, lack of proper drivers for an OS is the fault of the hardware integrator and not the OS maker. AMD is blaming Microsoft's changes in DirectX 10 D3D (which happen to address performance and security) as why the ATI TV Tuner software doesn't work. Well, AMD, how come SnapStream could figure it out? AOpen has not released any new drivers for their implementation of the AC'97 chip on my motherboard. I can live with AOpen's choice because most people don't use the MIDI interface feature of sound cards. AMD has no excuse for not supporting an expensive video card that is bought for the very feature they aren't supporting. My buying habits will be adjusted accordingly in the future.

Supporting Apps

Along with Beyond TV, I installed what I consider 'Base Supporting Apps'. These included Avast! Antivirus, Notepad++, Pidgin, Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash Player, Adobe Shockwave Player, TrueCrypt, PrimoPDF, and WinSCP. Office Ultimate 2007 is going to round out the Office Suite. Everything installed smoothly. No issues, arguments, or contentions between apps.

Where I Stand

My machine has paid its dues many times over and the driver issues didn't affect my ability to use what I needed, so I was OK with that. Others with more particular needs should be aware that integrated soundcards, atypical hardware, old devices, and fancy graphics capture cards may require special attention. Replacements may need to be considered. I'm not suggesting everyone run out and install Vista. This is now the fourth time I've installed Vista on a machine—first time on one I plan to use regularly. All said and done, the experience has been pleasant and not anything like the horror stories I've heard. At the time of this writing it's been about two weeks and all continues to work well. This article was typed on that system using Word 2007 and sent to the editors with Outlook 2007.

From my vista, Vista works just fine.

Vista Upgrade Advisor:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsvista/sta/buyorupgrade/upgradeadvisor.msp#x>

Compare Vista Editions:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsvista/editions/choose.msp#x>

SnapStream Beyond TV:

<http://www.snapstream.com/products/beyondtv/>

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the end of the story

For Anybody

Who Has Thought About Trying Linux

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For anybody who has thought about trying Linux, it has become easier than ever before with Ubuntu 8.04 LTS Hardy Heron. As with most Linux distributions, Ubuntu is available as a free download and is freely distributable. It is even available already installed on Dell computers. The most common method is downloading the ISO image from Ubuntu's website (<http://www.ubuntu.com>) and burning it onto a CD.

From the site, you can download the Desktop version or Server for 32-bit and 64-bit systems. There is even an option to download what is called an alternative version which is just the installer and does not include the LiveCD portion, which also includes an installer. If you are like me, until a couple months ago, and living on dial-up or you do not have a CD burner handy or just don't want to put in that much effort then you can order a free CD through the corporate sponsor of Ubuntu, Canonical, ShipIt department. I have been very pleased with the speed with which their CDs arrive. Alternatively, the website contains links to vendors where you can buy the CDs from under \$5 to more, and they can handle large orders as well.

Once you have your CD in your hot little hands, trying Ubuntu is as simple as placing it in your CD-ROM tray and rebooting your system. If system will boot from the CD and after a short moment you'll be greeted with the Ubuntu welcome screen.

If you want to "try before you buy," then you can choose the default "Try Ubuntu without any changes to your computer" and your hard drive will not be touched during your session unless you choose to. You don't even need a hard drive to select this option; you just will not be able to install it from the session.

If you are more certain or just daring then you can go straight into the installer and in about 60 minutes (45 minutes if you know what Different Strokes For Anybody Who Has Thought About Trying Linux by Drew Kwashnak you are doing) you're booting to your new Ubuntu installation.



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Viewing the Bigger Picture

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At the risk of being the bearer of bad news, I have to say that none of us is getting any younger. User groups tend to be populated more by senior citizens than by any other age group. As we age, we find the need for more and more assistive aids, including those that will help us to use our computers more comfortably and efficiently.

Many of us will find, as time goes on, that our vision is not what it used to be. We may find that our eyes fatigue as we read information on the computer monitor, and we may find that some of the smaller fonts and graphics on the screen require us to squint and lean forward into the display.

In this article, I will discuss two screen enlargement programs that might help us minimize our visual difficulties as we use our computers.

The first program I want to talk about is called Magic Lens Max. I downloaded an older version of the program from Giveawayoftheday.com and was very impressed with what it could do. I e-mailed the program's author and told him what a terrific program it was and I have demonstrated it to various groups who provide services to the blind and visually impaired. Additionally, the cost of the program is only \$39.95. I went ahead and purchased a copy of the most recent edition and was even more pleased with what the author had added since my downloaded version.

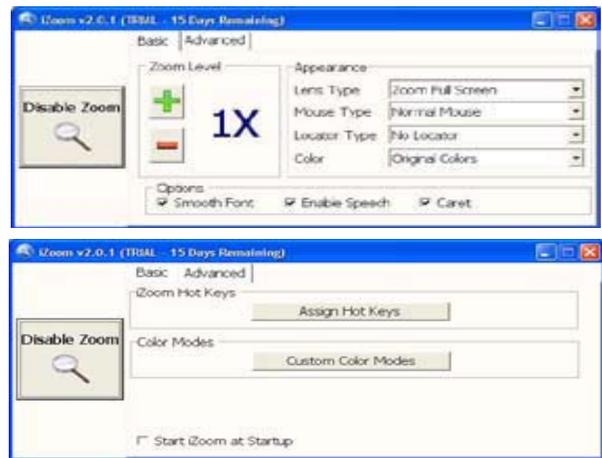
Magic Lens Max provides a variety of ways to magnify the computer screen, from resizable moveable lenses, which magnify directly over where your mouse or cursor is working, to a full screen magnification option, which slows down the screen refresh very minimally. You have some color contrast options to choose from with this program as well as an invert colors option for light text on dark background. The magnification levels can be selected from 50% (which is non-magnification) up to pretty much infinity. Anything above 350% starts to blur a bit, although there are options to sharpen. Be-



low is the Magic Lens Max option screen: The Magic Lens Max icon that resides in the system tray can be single-clicked to turn on or turn off the magnification.

This is an excellent program that is both useful and affordable. If you are interested in testing it out, go to www.visionsuit.com. You can download a 30-day demo of the latest version. If you decide to purchase Magic Lens Max, once you have paid the \$39.95, you will be sent a registration code that can be entered into the demo, and it becomes fully functional.

The second program I evaluated for screen magnification allows for an additional option: speech along with the magnification. This program is called iZoom, and can be obtained from <http://www.issist.com/>. I really like the customizing options available in iZoom. These can be accessed from the initial menu when iZoom comes on, or once the menu is closed, you can reopen it quickly by clicking the mouse on the iZoom icon in the system tray. Here are the option screens:



iZoom allows for default or customizable hot keys, several sizes and colors of mouse pointers, color combinations supplied with the program, as well as custom color modes, several sizes and shapes of "locators" that help the user find the location of the mouse pointer, and a choice of several lens shapes, as well as full-screen magnification. iZoom magnifies from 1X to 32X.

The negatives I have found in iZoom are as follows: First, when using the lens mode, you have to place the lens first over what you want to interact with, and then move the mouse pointer within that lens. Second, from about the 3X magnification up, the display becomes more and more pixilated which can be a problem for some vision conditions, such as astigmatism, among others. Third, there is only one voice offered with the speech option and it is not a particularly pleasant one.

As you would expect, with additional options comes an additional cost. Again, you can download a 30-day demo of iZoom from the Website, and if you wish to purchase the program, the price is \$199.00. However, keep in mind that the two major commercial screen magnification programs, MAGIC from Freedom Scientific and ZoomText Plus from AI Squared, both weigh in at from \$300.00 to \$550.00, depending on how many options you wish to have. So, if you feel the need to view the bigger picture, give the demos of the above programs a try, and see if they will be of use to you.

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the end of the story

Moving on to Vista – Part 8

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Windows Vista is becoming more popular every day, but there are still several special features that few people are aware of! Besides the energy saving features I mentioned last month, there's another feature that goes largely unnoticed by the average user. It's about displaying time in multiple time zones using Vista's system clock. It works very well, particularly since we work with countries all around the world and are no longer confined to one time zone. It also helps when you intend to chat with a friend or family member who lives in another part of the country. Now, instead of calculating different time zones in your head, you can have a handy toolbar on your Vista computer that will tell the time for you.

1. The first step is to right click on the clock in your system tray at the bottom of your desktop.
2. Select Adjust Date/Time.
3. Click on the Additional Clocks tab at the top of the window.
4. Choose the checkbox that you want to show the additional clock.
5. Next, pick a time zone and give it a title.
6. You can add up to two additional time zones this way.
7. Apply your changes.

To see the additional times, just hover your mouse over the clock in the system tray.

Vista's Service Pack 1 is out, if you have automatic updates enabled on your PC its should already be installed. So what does SP1 do? Microsoft previously announced that Service Pack 1 would improve the operating system's performance and security. It would speed up file copying, waking up from sleep and hibernation faster and add and extract files from compressed folders faster.

When you install SP1 it apparently checks to see if you have installed previous updates and if it doesn't find them it installs them. Then in proceeds to install it's ?new ? features. I had used automatic updates to keep my installation current and Service Pack 1 installed quickly on my laptop without any apparent problems.

Did I see any improvements? <sigh> Not really. I saw no noticeable improvements in performance. As far as I could tell start-up time was the same and file copying was the same but the file copy ?fix? I had previously installed (see Moving Up to Vista – Part 7). Other people have reported similar impressions. One person reported Vista with SP1 compressed files faster than without SP1 but it is still slower than Windows XP.

What about new features? Frankly, the only one I looked for and found was the disk defragmenter. Pre SP1 when you selected the defrag function you had no choices. The function simply defragmented your all of your hard drive. With SP1 installed, the defragmenter first examines your computer and makes a suggestion as to whether your drives and partitions need to be defragmented. There's also an option to schedule defragmenting at regular time intervals. I don't remember if this was available pre-SP1.

If you select the ?button? to defrag your hard drive, you see a new screen which gives you the alternatives to defrag all of your partitions and drives or select specific partitions and hard drives to be defragmented. As with pre-SP1 Vista, you can defrag your hard drive(s) while continuing to use your computer. There is no specific information that tells you how badly fragmented your drives are or how much space is used. In my opinion, the disk defragmenter in Windows XP was more useful. For that kind of detail you'll need to use a third party disk defragmenter. I would say that Vista's defragmenter with SP1 is improved but still a disappointment.

And that's my general impression about Vista SP1. I'm disappointed. The speed improvements that were predicted just don't seem to be there. Maybe the security is improved but it's not obvious to me. Maybe Service Pack 2 will be better...

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the end of the story

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Ubuntu will scan your hardware and load the modules and drivers necessary for your system. If you have hardware that has proprietary drivers available, Linux cannot include them in the CD for legal reasons. Ubuntu works around this by providing a Restricted Drivers tool that lists all such hardware found on your system and provides the ability to download and install the necessary drivers in a click or two, legally.

Now that you have Ubuntu up and running on your system, what can you do? Plenty! Ubuntu brings you a full featured operating system complete with:

Firefox 3.05 beta web browser

OpenOffice.org 2.4 full featured office suite compatible with pre-Office 2007 Word, Excel, PowerPoint and some Access files.

Evolution personal information manager for email and calendar goodness, a Microsoft Outlook user can feel comfortable with. There is even plug-ins to allow Evolution to access existing Microsoft Exchange servers.

Pidgin multi-protocol instant messenger including Yahoo, MSN, AIM, Jabber, IRC and more.

Gimp (GNU Image Manipulation Program), a powerful Photoshop-like image editing program that includes filters, layers and a host of goodies.

F-Spot image manager for categorizing and minor editing of all of your pictures as well as easily importing pictures from your digital camera.

And much, MUCH more...

If Ubuntu doesn't come with a particular application, thousands of free applications are available from the Ubuntu online repository which are easily installed and updated from the Synaptic package manager.

When you decide to install Ubuntu onto your hard drive or virtual machine you only need to click the "Install" icon on the desktop to start the process. After seven or so easy questions the installer will

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

While working the IBM Rational Software Development Show, I visited with the guys maintaining the registration, cyber café and the classroom setup. They told me they were using VMware for the classrooms and one actual machine could support three or four virtual machines. Since each training class was for a different purpose, some virtual machines were set up for different applications. I assume that the best reasons for using virtual machines is the hardware saving, less heat and lower power consumption, which all translates to lower costs.

In another conversation, I had noticed that security people were not scanning the badges of attendees entering the exhibit floor, but there was electronic equipment there. I asked if there were RFID chips in the badges and they confirmed there were. When an attendee passes through the entrance, the RFID chip in his badge is detected and the data is recorded for various purposes. The technician also mentioned that while on the show floor, the attendee could also be tracked when he was near an exhibit. As the RFID chip nears the booth exhibit, a sensor detects it and even would know the time duration the person was at the exhibit. I assume that service would cost the exhibitor.

He told me the attendee could opt out of the RFID chip when filling out the registration form, but only about 1% do that. I wonder how many people who are always in a hurry to fill out the application even noticed that option on the form. I would prefer not to be tracked.

Are You Interested In A Second Life?

At a Central Florida Computer Society meeting <<http://www.cfcs.org>> **Hewie Poplock** and **Mike Ungerman** did a fascinating presentation on having meetings on the Net instead of in person, or even a combination of both. They used two projectors so the audience could see both laptop screens and what each presenter saw on their own screen. The displays sometimes included another member who joined them from his home. The presentation had a few glitches because they had not worked with it a lot, but Hewie and Mike are experts who will work out the bugs and refine the process to make it work.

They also demonstrated **Dimdim** <<http://www.dimdim.com>>, a free Web Working conference site, **Paltalk** <<http://www.paltalk.com>> where you can videoconference with up to 10 people, or voice and type chat to hundreds in public or private rooms, and **Microsoft Live Meeting**. They said the Association of PC User Groups is presently negotiating with Microsoft to obtain a license for Live Meeting for every APCUG user group and that there are several more applications that facilitate video chatting or conferencing; including a new Adobe site <<http://www.acrobat.com>> where you can try “**Connect Now**,” presently in Beta testing. Here is a comparison Web site. <<http://hewiep.googlepages.com/cfcs20080615>>.

Along the way, they also threw in a little about “**Second Life**,” a Web site that seems to have become a fascination for some folks and perhaps a sort of addiction for others <<http://www.secondlife.com>>. At “**Second Life**” you create a new, but virtual, life of your own, even creating and building just about any virtual item you wish. Second Life seemed limitless and you can buy virtual items, or sell vir-

tual items you have constructed, using “Linden dollars.” Some “residents” of Second Life have actually been able to earn a lot of real dollars by converting Linden Dollars into U. S. currency at L250=\$1. It was all completely new to me and the traffic on that Web site is tremendous. Hewie has a friend who spends up to 10 hours a day on the site.

Just Paste In A Note

How often do you want to write something down for future reference while you’re working on a project? Probably more than you realize. **Flashnote** can be helpful when you work with text and **Flashnote** is absolutely free software so it’s easy to take a look at it. Whether you’re recording a telephone number, saving a URL to reuse, or just copying pieces of text for editing, you could use a personal information manager or some other program for creating and saving text, but most of those options are slow. **Flashnote** is small, quick and convenient so here is a way to save time.

<<http://softvoile.com/flashnote/?s=news4.5>>

Keep Track Of Everything With This One!

Remembering all the things that have been planned can be a major nuisance, and when important tasks get neglected it can be really serious so here is a personal information manager. **EfficientPIM Software** announces the release of **EfficientPIM version 1.61**, the newest upgrade for its flagship tool, enabling you to maintain and secure personal information, make task lists and schedules, write notes, memos and even diaries to immortalize your memoirs. All this information can be password protected. With the Password Manager, you need to remember only one password to be able to record and find the others.

The Calendar display, Edit Note and Desktop Note functions have been improved from the previous version. You can literally stick some important notes on the desktop the way you do adhering paper notes to the fridge. **EfficientPIM** relieves your business life, enabling you to record, not only the information about your contacts, but all the events or appointments connected with them. The patented embedded search engine allows you to perform comprehensive searches, enabling you to find every piece of information you once recorded to the program.

EfficientPIM runs under Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, XP, 2003 and Vista and costs \$39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. A coupon code “**EFFI-OMRW**” gives user group members a 20% discount. Enter the coupon code in the **EfficientPIM** purchase page. This coupon code expires on Oct. 31, 2008. Licensed users are entitled to free updates and priority technical support for 24 months. More information is available at <<http://www.efficientpim.com/>>. Direct download link:

<http://www.efficientpim.com/download/EfficientPIM-Setup.exe>

Sib Icon Editor Goes Freeware

SibCode announces the release of **Sib Icon Editor 4.0**. The new version of this renowned icon editor is now being offered at no charge, and is available under a freeware license. Sib Icon Editor is a fast and lightweight image-editing tool designed for creating and editing icons, toolbars, navigation buttons, small logotypes and similar graphics. Fitting the niche between simplistic Windows Paint and the almighty Adobe Photoshop, **Sib Icon Editor** offers small-graphics

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designers a way to unleash creativity without the steep learning curve. Sib Icon Editor supports icons, toolbars, logos and other graphics of any size, color depth or aspect ratio. Both 16 and 256-color images are supported while 32-bit graphics gets alpha-channel support for creating images with no edge jaggedness. The alpha-channel comes in handy when adding semi-transparent shadows that look extremely effective on Windows XP and Vista. **Sib Icon Editor** offers a choice between a number of pens, sprays and paintbrushes. There is the usual bucket tool for filling the void, and there are gradients and chess fills to quickly achieve desired effects.

Only a few clicks will add a translucent or opaque shadow, modify opacity, colors, and gamma. Disabled icons are typically grayscale, so there is a tool for that as well. Tools for smoothing, inverting and colorizing images are also available. The resulting image can be saved in ICO, ICPR, BMP, JPEG or PNG formats. Sib Icon Editor can also convert Mac icons into Windows format. **Sib Icon Editor** is available for free at <<http://free-icon-editor.com/>>

Beep Beep What??

I had some space left and would normally include some kind of freebie, but here is a tip I found in “**Nuggets from Nuvo**” by Joe Nuvolini, a great monthly column in the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society newsletter, Bits Of Bytes <<http://ppcompas.apcug.org>>. What’s your state of mind when your computer does not come to life, but instead only gives you certain beeps? File this information away where you can lay your hands on it if, some day, that happens instead of booting. What do those beeps mean?

Visit <<http://networking.ringofsaturn.com/PC/beep.php>> to get a list of the beeps. I wish my readers could read all the newsletters that I see for the valuable bits of information they contain. Not that I would know what to do with that information, but some of you might.

That’s it for this month. I’ll have some other new product announcements on my Web site. 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 Cheap skate) Click
<[bobclick at bellsouth dot net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>.
Visit my Web site at
<<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.



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copy the files over to the hard disk. Depending on your system’s speed this could take about 60 minutes, more or less. It will even detect if you have Windows installed and offer to transfer over your files and compatible settings from your Windows accounts!

Of course, if the limitations of the LiveCD, such as settings are not saved from session to session, and you are hesitant to partition and install the full operating system on your hard drive Ubuntu offers yet another alternative called Wubi. Wubi is, from the Ubuntu website: “Wubi is an officially supported Ubuntu installer for Windows users



From the Presidents desk



Hi PACCsters!

You all probably tried the ZoomText 9.1 demo I gave you at the last PACC meeting, so I like to draw your attention to the article on page 5, “**Viewing the Bigger Picture**” by **Bonnie L. Snyder**. She presents **Magic Lens Max** and **iZoom**, two program for seeing and reading your computer screen better. Read the whole article and go to the programs web sites to learn even more.

Also, try the new Firefox 3.0. I have been using it for a month now and it blows away all the other Internet browsers!

See you at the meeting ! **PJK**

The PACC web site has recently migrated to another server. The old bookmarks you may have in your browser will therefore not work. Please change your address of PACC Web site to the following URL: <http://pacc.apcug.org>

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that can bring you to the Linux world with a single click. Wubi allows you to install and uninstall Ubuntu as any other Windows application, in a simple and safe way.

Are you curious about Linux and Ubuntu? Trying them out has never been easier!”

Wubi can be downloaded as an .exe file directly. With Linux the installation is not the end, only the beginning! Whether you try the LiveCD, Wubi or a full installation you will find a wealth of quality applications, refreshing freedom and a community unlike any other! If you have problems, questions or want to find out more then you need look no further than the third Wednesday of every month for the DACS Linux SIG at 7:30 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center!

Drew Kwashnak: Has been losing more nights of sleep with Linux since 2002 and just can't keep from downloading and trying the latest versions! When not working with Linux he works with ASP.NET and Microsoft SQL Server for a small financial company. He is also the DACS Linux SIG leader and a father of 3.

Links:

Ubuntu: <http://www.ubuntu.com>
Get Ubuntu: <http://www.ubuntu.com/getubuntu>
ShipIt: <https://shipit.ubuntu.com/>

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

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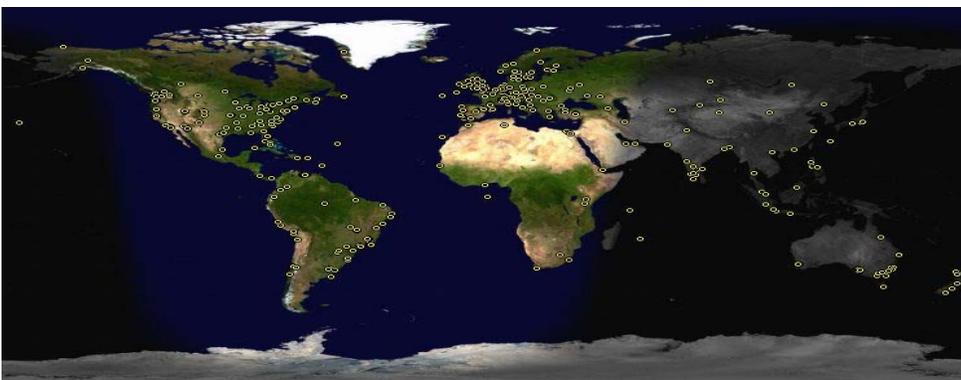
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cut here.....cut here

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
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



FOR SALE

Date: 7/13/2008
4 GIG USB flash drive - \$15,
Hard drives @ 20 cents per GIG. 160G,
200G available.
 Contact Vishnu: vka@zoominternet.net

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**NEXT PACC MEETING
IS ON JULY 20, 2008**

**PACC 1975 - 2008
IN ITS THIRTY-THIRD YEAR**



PACC TALK

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NEXT MEETING: July 20, 2008

The Pittsburgh Area Computer Club (PACC) holds its meetings the **THIRD** Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be in room 311 at **Point Park University**, Wood St. and Blvd. of the Allies. The doors open at 11:00 am and close at 4:30 pm. Bring your PC!
NOTICE THE EXPIRATION DATE ON THE MAILING LABEL OF YOUR NEWSLETTER. You won't get your newsletter if you let your membership expire. Renew your Memberships !!! Send a check or money order for \$25 made out to 'PACC' and addressed to Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435.

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

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