

PACC TALK

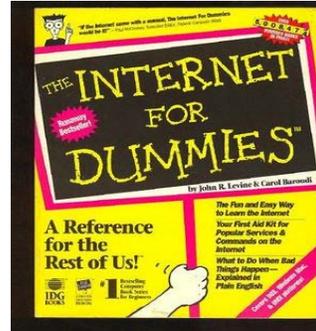
Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

October 2008

MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 19, 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 - 12:00 pm Windows New Users
ROOM # 301 Can we help you? V. Agrawala
- 12:00 - 12:30 pm General Meeting, Raffle.
ROOM # 301 (pg. 1)
- 12:35 - 2:00 pm Minimem, One Loupe,
ROOM # 301 PC Security Test (pg. 1)
- 2:05 - 3:30 pm More utilities
ROOM # 301 (pg. 1)
- 2:05 - 3:30 pm Hardware SIG
ROOM # 311 Users Helping Users - guests included
- 1:00 - 3:30 pm Linux SIG, Members Helping Members, Com-
ROOM # 311 puter troubleshooting, Info Exchange
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close



*** RAFFLE ***

A very good reference book for intrepid Internet ..*!.. ?

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

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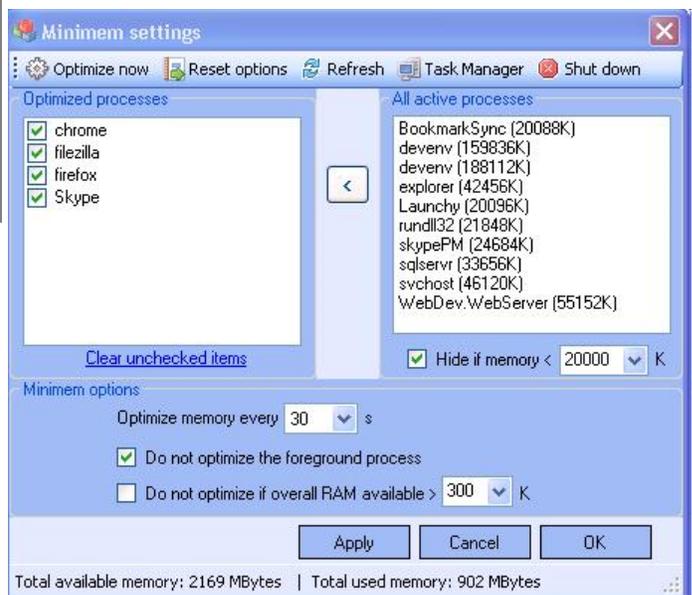
Windows SIG

The free and good stuff:

Get Minimem from : <http://minimem.kerkia.net/> only 392KB

From the web page: "Initially developed for Firefox only, Minimem now can reduce the memory footprint of any application. It runs in the background and can be set up to optimize as many processes as you'd like, using a very intuitive graphical interface. Unlike other memory optimization tools, it gives you full control over what applications you want to optimize, when and how often, as well as the possibility to only optimize memory when required and relevant."

While I always want to upgrade my PC memory, somehow I just did not do it yet! Instead when my system start slowing down I use an old standby **Tweak-XP Pro**, and run its memory optimization program. But that is also somewhat of a bother. As you can see, from



the screenshot the are several menu commands which are self explanatory. I tried Minimem, running it in the background, optimizing

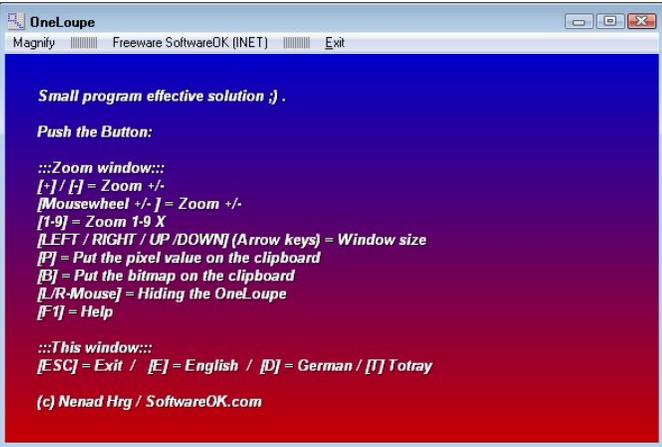
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Mozilla Firefox and MS Publisher during the newsletter writing and editing. It is working quite well so far! PJK.



One Loupe is another little treasure. It can do the magnifying glass bit nicely, and as you can see from the screenshot it has good



set of hot keys controls also. A tiny download of only 13.7 KB from:

<http://www.softwareok.com/?Download>

Go to the web site and find section in the middle of it that looks as the one below, you see the OneLoupe.zip there is last in the column. The other four programs may be of interest to you also.

Download Micro-Staff			
	CpuFrequenz.zip	13.6 KB	CpuFrequenz_1.01
	IsMyLcdOK.zip	8.4 KB	IsMyLcdOK_1.00
	NewFileTime.zip	19.5 KB	NewFileTime_1.00
	NewFileTime_Unicode.zip	19.9 KB	NewFileTime_1.00
	OneLoupe.zip	13.7 KB	OneLoupe_1.03

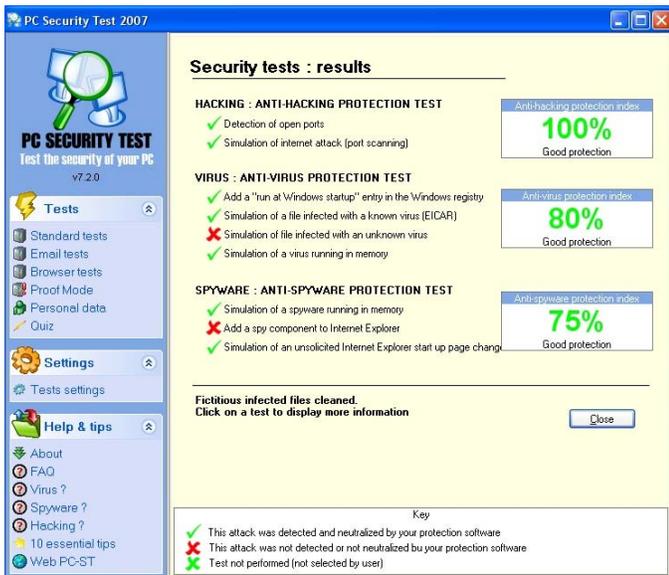
[Bei defekten oder fehlenden Download Kontrollen](#)



“PC Security Test is a free program for Windows that checks computer security against viruses, spyware and hackers.” A 1.0 MB download can be had from here:

<http://www.pc-st.com/us/download.htm>

An excellent tool to test your MS Windows PC security. After completing the test it produces a security index and tips on how to improve your PC security.



The New, the Best, and the Worst

September 2008

by Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group

<http://swipcug.apcug.org> swipcug(at)gmail.com

Could Cuil Cool Google?

Let me digress. I suspect that most of my readers, like myself, have reached that stage in life when our wisdom exceeds our wits. To make sense of our surroundings we must keep our glasses clean and a fresh battery in our hearing aid.

Recently my son, Mike, and I were watching a DVD from his vast collection (Batman Begins, in case you're wondering). Mike turns on the subtitles for me, so it wasn't until we took a break for some light refreshments that I noticed that my hearing aid battery had died. As I proceeded to insert a fresh battery, Mike marveled at the tiny disk that successfully powers a small in-ear hearing aid for several weeks. I told him that they are unlike watch batteries and that they are air-powered to the best of my recollection. Before the first use, they are activated by removing a small foil tab to admit air. Mike appeared to question my wisdom, if not my wits.

Just to be sure of the facts, back home I fired up Google and searched for "zinc air battery." That yielded 433,000 results, confirming that my recollection of the technology was correct. One of the results made me sit up and take notice:

Zinc Air Batteries.

With the removal of a sealing tab, oxygen from the air is introduced into the cell. A zinc-air battery usually reaches full operating voltage within 5 ...

I often have trouble getting a new battery to work right away and have been scratching the electrodes with a pen knife to assure good electrical contact. The incomplete reference snippet teasingly suggested that the battery simply needed 5 somethings (minutes maybe?) to activate. Maybe the scratching had nothing to do with it? I tried to retrieve the full article, but the link was dead and the cache was empty. None of the other Google retrievals mentioned anything about activation time.

I recently read about a new search program, called Cuil (pronounced "cool"), meaning "wisdom" in Gaelic. Reportedly it improves on Google by scanning articles for organization of ideas, instead of number of links. It was mostly created by former Google employees and can be accessed at www.cuil.com.

Early reviews of Cuil have been mixed, so I thought this was a good time to give it a try.

As a result of my query about "zinc air battery," Cuil produced exactly 8 results, including 5 virtually identical ones from a single vendor site, www.batteriesplus.com/. Not very helpful. So much for Cuil, as it stands now.

The same query on Yahoo yielded 4,270,000 results, with the first page mostly from hearing aid battery sellers that probably paid to be listed first. The teasing reference found earlier with Google was listed by Yahoo at the bottom of the page, but it also ended in 5... (what?).

I went back to Google and narrowed the search to "zinc air battery activation." That yielded the mysterious reference right on top, add-

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ing that the activation time was 5 seconds. Well, it takes longer than 5 seconds to insert the battery and check the hearing aid by holding it in the closed fist and listening for its feedback squeal.

With a magnifying glass I detected 3 tiny air holes under the tab in the positive top of the battery. Certainly, it would take some time for sufficient air to diffuse through those little holes to activate the battery. I ran a quick experiment, checking how fast the voltage builds up in the hearing aid battery after removing the seal tab, and found that it took about 1 1/2 minutes. With the battery under load in a hearing aid it may well take a little longer than that.

Next time my hearing aid needs a new battery I may only need to wait a few minutes for it to get up to speed.

Meanwhile I'll stick with Google for my searches until Cuil has added more wits to its wisdom.

Zinc-Air Batteries

Zinc-Air batteries, as used in hearing aids, are great performers in comparison to other types of batteries. On an equal weight basis they carry 4-5 times as much charge as lead-acid, nickel-cadmium and nickel-hydrate batteries, and 30% more than lithium ion batteries. They maintain a constant power output over better than 85% of the time to full discharge. Because of inexpensive ingredients: zinc, aqueous caustic, carbon and some plastic membranes, encased in a metal container, they are inexpensive to manufacture. The batteries are non-toxic and pose no danger to the environment on disposal. They are not a fire hazard, like lithium batteries.

They have two major shortcomings: a limited life time when air is admitted, and they are not rechargeable.

Zinc-Air batteries are fuel cells that consume zinc. In comparison to the much-ballyhooed hydrogen fuel cells, zinc is inexpensive, easily transported and stored, non-hazardous, and the spent fuel, zinc oxide, is easily regenerated electrically from renewable sources.

Large-scale experiments have demonstrated that the batteries can power city buses for a full day's use, using recyclable zinc-electrolyte cartridges for fuel. The US Army is a large-scale user of Zinc-Air batteries in battlefield operations. They provide 4 to 6 times the run time of conventional batteries, and are used with portable equipment, in locations where reliable electrical power is not available.

Desktop Publishing With Scribus

Now that the format of this newsletter is no longer restrained to eight Xeroxed pages for mailing, I will add some color and variety to the layout. That requires switching from the OpenOffice Writer word processor I have been using to a desktop publishing program, preferably inexpensive and easy to use.

I considered my old copy of MS PictureIt! Publisher, but that uses a proprietary file format not easily converted to pdf.

I found an offer of a free desktop publishing program online, Pages-Plus, list price \$129.99, with a special download offer for only \$10. Inexpensive enough to be worth a try. I paid my dues, downloaded and installed the program. The interface was not very intuitive, so I started with chapter 1 of the tutorial. That pointed me in the right direction and I eagerly went on to chapter 2. Surprise! The rest of the tutorial required downloading or ordering a CD at a cost of \$99.99! I

quickly lost interest.

I am much in support of OpenSource (free) programs, many of which are quite sophisticated, such as OpenOffice Writer and The Gimp. At one time I had looked at Scribus, an Open Source, full-featured desktop publishing program, available in versions for Linux, the MAC and Windows. At the time I was scared away by its extensive set of icons and cascading menus since I could not find a helpful manual.

I decided to give Scribus another try and went looking for online help. Happily I found an excellent tutorial at http://wiki.scribus.net/index.php/Get_Started_with_Scribus. I am still learning as I am writing this, but if the newsletter looks different when you read this you'll know that I learned at least the basics of Scribus and desktop publishing. As usual, it all seems so simple when you follow the tutorial, but when you are on your own the feared unintended consequences rear up. Fortunately there is a lot of helpful information to fall back on in the aforementioned reference, so I'm getting there.

Of course, the desktop publishing program is only a tool, and it will require new skills to design attractive layouts. Suggestions are more than welcome!

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the end of the story

Hacking 101

By Marjie Tucker, Editor,
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We are being bombarded with warnings about securing our data and the entry to our computers. Do you ever wonder what the big fuss is all about? How can a hacker possibly get into your data? And, what would he be looking for? Let's spend some time answering those questions.

How Does A Hacker Get In To Your Computer?

When you give your computer access to the Internet, you need an IP (Internet Protocol) address. The IP addresses that we are currently using have 4 octets with periods between them. They will be something like 192.168.100.1. When you access the Internet, that address is read by the router, modem, whatever that links you to your Internet Service Provider. Then it is read by the routers that route all the data through the Internet. This address makes it possible for you to send data, such as e-mail or requests for web pages. And, in turn, that same address is used to direct incoming e-mail and web pages into your computer. There are several websites and programs available that will translate these IP addresses into the name of the company that purchased them. In many cases, like our residential usages, the company name will be the ISP. For commercial use, it will be the name of the company that rents the block of IP addresses. Hackers use this IP address information to find their targets much like we use a physical address to find a house or office.

Once a hacker finds out your IP address it's relatively simple to send your computer a Trojan horse program, spyware, or a virus that will

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open a port that you usually don't use. Once that port has been opened, he can freely enter into your operating system and browse around just like he was there in person. He would look for programs that store valuable data like social security numbers and credit card account numbers. (Do you have that information entered into your Quicken or Money program?)

He would look through your My Documents folder for password lists and search your Internet Explorer favorites for financial sites where you saved the username and password. And, before he leaves he usually plants another Trojan horse that will give him the ability to take control of your computer in the future.

Commercial Websites

The most common way to hack into a company's website through the Internet is by using a Denial of Service attack. These DoS attacks use multiple computers to overload a website with bogus requests for information. The hacker usually creates a Trojan horse program that he sends into the computers of unsuspecting people (remember that program that was left behind when your computer was invaded above?) The message that he creates usually contains a header saying that it comes from an IP address that doesn't exist. When he is ready to attack, he calls up all the computers that he infected with his Trojan horse and tells them to contact a specific IP address. Those computers follow his instructions and send his preprogrammed message to that website. Servers that control websites always check to verify that IP addresses requesting information or webpage downloads are legitimate addresses. When a server is hit by a bombardment of these false address requests, it tries to track down every one of the fake addresses. Before long the server becomes overwhelmed by the fruitless process and crashes. When it crashes, the website will vanish and the hacker will be given access to a prompt for the server. He can then use Linux or DOS commands to request and view information on that server other servers.

How About Wireless?

Let's put this hacker into an airport where hundreds of people are sharing a wireless network. It's like leaving a child alone in a candy store. In this case the airport's wireless system usually provides the IP addresses through DHCP and he can easily look at the list of addresses that have been supplied. He can test each of the addresses for available ports and it's quick work to access the most vulnerable. The same principles apply in hotels and restaurants that provide wireless Internet access. If you have a wireless network in your home, our hacker can drive down your street using a laptop or PDA to search for wireless networks. This process is called Wardriving. If he finds one that has not been secured at all, he doesn't even have a challenge. If you have added a password, he simply has to crack the password.

What Tools Do They Use?

It's very easy for a potential hacker to find the tools of his trade. There are many websites that offer program tools and tutorials for using them. Here are some of the popular:

Anonymizers and Remailers - **Anonymizers** are online services that eliminate the trail of information that is left behind. These sites use anonymous proxies that a hacker can use to access computers and servers without leaving his IP address on any log. **Remailers** strip the header off a message and replace it with a meaningless header that can't be traced.

Command.com - When this command is typed into a server it will

basically give you administrative rights. You can then see all the folders and files. It's also very easy for the hacker to create a new administrative account that he can re-use in the future.

Password Crackers - These programs try random passwords at lightning speeds. They are usually very successful.

Key Loggers - Hackers frequently install these on computers, especially public PCs. The programs actually record every stroke that you make. Hence, when you type in a username and password, it has been captured.

Port Knocking - This is a method of externally opening ports on a firewall by mimicking the process you normally use to add a port to your firewall.

Wireshark - This popular program captures and analyzes the data on a network. It's used by hackers to find information they want and it's also used by network administrators to manage networks.

Aircrack - This program is used to crack wireless WEP and WPA passwords.

Metasploit Framework - This is a tool that can be used by hackers to search the Internet for sites that have dubious code. These are the sites that are the easiest to hack - especially when this program does the searching for you.

Networks identifying the types of data and the internal addresses of this data. It's a valuable tool for administrators, but can save a great deal of time for a hacker.

NMAP - This is a port scanner. Since a hacker knows that he needs to use a port to access your computer or network, he can use this program to see which ports you have open.

NetStumbler - This program finds any wireless networks that are in range.

Wardrivers drive through residential neighborhoods using

NetStumbler to search for available wireless networks.

Kismet - This program takes **NetStumbler** one step farther. It searches for wireless networks that are not broadcasting their SSID.

NSLookup - If you type a domain name into this program, it will give you the company's IP address

Traceroute - This is a very valuable troubleshooting tool for technicians. It will trace a packet on its route through the Internet. It shows every IP address it visits along the way.

Snort - This is an open-source intrusion detection system. It shows traffic analysis and packet logging on networks.

TCPdump - This is the most widely used network sniffer/analyzer for UNIX networks.

Net Cat - This has been called the Swiss army program for hackers. It performs many sniffing and cracking tasks.

This was really just some of the basics. But, if we know why security is so important, we may remember to take the right precautions. Hope your web surfing stays secure.

the end of the story



Hewie's Views and Reviews
 By Hewie Poplock,
 Windows SIG Chair, Vice Pres, Past President,
 The Central Florida Computer Society (CFCS)
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Welcome to this issue of **Hewie's Views & Reviews**. Be sure to visit **Hewie's Favorites** at <http://www.hewie.net/>.

- ++++ **My iPhone choice**
- ++++ **When a Special isn't and really is or My Homer Simpson Moment**
- ++++ **New additions to Hewie's Favorites**

September, 2008

++++ **My iPhone choice**

Recently the new iPhone 3G was released. Since I have one of the original units, I watched with anticipation for news about the new units and services. With the release, the faster web speeds was enticing, but spending more for the same service just didn't pass the justification test.

I have decided to keep using my iPhone 2G. (I don't know if that is an accurate description.) There are several reasons for my decision. With the new phones, came an updated operating system, which is a free upgrade for my unit. Even though there were some Apple system-wide down times, I was able to upgrade my unit from version 1.1.4 to 2.0.0 on the release day. I did get some errors and had to try a second time, but it upgraded successfully.

With the upgrade, I have much of the same functionality of the new 3G phones. I can download and install any of the third party programs that are now available. The new 3G is not needed to use them. I will discuss some of those programs in a future column.

I don't have the increased connection speed of the 3G network, but much of Florida is not covered anyway. The I-4 corridor from Daytona to Tampa has 3G coverage, but if I get a few miles off of the Interstate, I will not be able to take advantage of the new speed.

The older unit cannot do GPS, but does access Google maps and I have a separate GPS unit, anyway. Other than it being newer, the iPhone 3G holds no advantages for me to pay an extra \$10 for the same service. If I want to keep the 200 per month text messages there is an additional \$5, plus the \$199 or \$299 for the phone. I will keep using my original iPhone.

++++ **When a Special isn't and really is or My Homer Simpson Moment**

Last month I talked about the 2 Logitech USB optical mice that I bought from 1saleaday for about \$5 each plus \$5 each for shipping. One of the mice worked great and the other was DOA (dead on arrival). When I e-mailed the seller, they offered to credit my account if

I returned the bad one. That's nice of them, except the shipping would equal the refund, so I kept the useless unit.

At a tech meeting that I attended (The Tech SIG of CFCS), I talked about the situation and mentioned that the good mouse didn't have a battery and wondered how it worked. Everyone said that it must have a battery. I searched Google for the model to see if I could find a manual. The mice were shipped in plastic zip-locked bags with no documentation or product information.

I not only couldn't find any info, but found that the model was a Canadian unit, and not available in the US. When the good mouse died, I decided to open one of them. I pushed and pulled all of the buttons and cracks and a cover came off. Inside, there was a battery. I replaced the battery and the mouse again was working.

I then retrieved the other mouse from the throw-away box and opened it up. There was no battery inside and inserted the one AA needed. When I connected it to my laptop, the DOA mouse worked! "Duh" was my reaction.

I want to publicly apologize to 1saleaday.com (<http://www.1saleaday.com>). They were generous in offering me a refund and I was being a Homer Simpson by not realizing there should be a battery inside and to check it. I guess that's why tech support always asks if the computer is plugged in before trying to solve a problem.

++++ **New additions to Hewie's Favorites**

There are more new sites this issue, because we skipped a month.

USA.gov <http://www.usa.gov/>

U.S. Government's Official Web Portal for all government transactions, services, and information. It provides direct online access to federal, state, local, and tribal governments.

HP Smart Web Printing

<http://h20247.www2.hp.com/hho/cache/482779-0-0-225-121.html>
 Software to print usable web pages without cut off edges and blank pages

by-expression <http://by-expression.com/content/resources.aspx>

Expression Web forum and tutorials

Spam Return <http://www.spamreturn.com/>

Protect your privacy and avoid spam. Use Spam Return where no registration is required No Sign-up

Elance <http://www.elance.com/p/landing/buyer.html>

Outsourcing to freelance programmers, web & logo designers, copywriters, illustrators and consultants

timeanddate.com <http://timeanddate.com/>

Info that is time and date related, such as yearly and monthly calendars, countdown counters and world clock which shows current time in cities all over the world.

jooce.com <http://www.jooce.com/#>

Private online desktop with public sharing capabilities. View listen or share files photos music & video

Zamzar <http://www.zamzar.com/>

Convert files. Zamzar supports conversion between a wide variety of

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different file formats

Wordle <http://wordle.net/>

Generate "word clouds" from text that you provide to use however you like.

PlanningWiz Online Room Planner <http://v3.planningwiz.com/>

Software for Furniture Retailers and Manufacturers, Building Contractors, Realtors and more

bobble yourself <http://www.xmbaseball.com/>

Create a bobble head of you

Volition® <http://www.volition.com/index.html>

Oldest Free Stuff site on the Internet. Includes Coupons & mystery shopping info

Password Chart <http://www.passwordchart.com/>

Convert an easy to remember password. It works anywhere on any computer or offline & done in your browser

JOLT - Journal of Online Learning and Teaching
<http://jolt.merlot.org/index.html>

JOLT is a peer reviewed online journal that addresses the scholarly use of multimedia resources in education.

Audiko <http://audiko.net/>

audiko is a simple service which helps you to make a ringtone of your favorite song

JotForm <http://jotform.com/>

Web Based WYSIWYG Form Builder. Create and publish web forms using your browser

Mygazines <http://www.mygazines.com/>

Free to browse, share, archive and customize unlimited magazine articles uploaded by the Mygazines community.

Florida Computer Crime Center

<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Fc3/index.html>

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Computer Crime Center

Picnik <http://www.picnik.com/>

Edit photos the easy way - online in your browser

Starting in Second Life

<http://www.thinkerer.org/SLintChan/SLintroch.htm>

What you need to know to get started in Second Life. Lots of good help.

Buzzillions <http://www.buzzillions.com/>

Product reviews from Verified Buyers about Digital Cameras, Sporting Goods, Appliances, Mens and Womens Shoes, Toys and Video Games, and more.

ZabaSearch <http://www.zabasearch.com/>

Free People Search and Public Information Search Engine - Telephone Numbers and Addresses Revealed Free. No Registration Required. Instant Results

YouMail <http://www.youmail.com/home/index.do>

YouMail is a free online voicemail replacement with personal greetings

Anti-Virus Virus

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

www.compuKISS.com sandy (at) compuKISS.com

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I hate writing about computer viruses. It always reminds me of how many unscrupulous, money-hungry people there are in the world. Yet, there are times when I feel that I must write about a certain virus because it is causing so much havoc for everyday computer users. Unfortunately, that time has come again. In the past two weeks, my company has removed a very bad group of viruses from six different computers. So I feel it is time to send out a warning.

There are many different variations of this virus and its cousins. They have many different names, including Antivirus 2008, Antivirus 2009, SpywareScanner 2008, and AntiVirXP08. Some experts are calling them viruses. Some are calling them malware. Symantec calls them misleading applications. McAfee lists them as a PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). Whatever you call them, they are terribly invasive.

By most accounts, these awful applications piggy-back on programs that are downloaded from the Internet. However, some experts are warning that your computer may become infected by simply visiting certain websites, especially if your operating system and/or antivirus software is not up-to-date.

The gist of the matter is that once your computer is infected, you will begin to see pop-up windows that give an exaggerated report of the number of threats that your computer is infected with. The window may say something like "Your computer has become infected with 231 computer viruses and spyware." These pop-ups try to scare you into purchasing their antivirus or antispyware software. If you purchase it, they send you a registry key, but it doesn't work because the program they sell you doesn't exist. These viruses are also being spread by malicious websites that sell fake antispyware software.

On top of that, there are many other viruses or pieces of malware that can piggyback on the main virus. So this malware can dramatically slow down or even stop your computer. The infections being caused by these viruses and malware programs are extremely harmful and can be very difficult to remove. They often require a cleanup by a professional or a complete reformatting of the hard drive and reinstallation of the software.

As an everyday computer user, you need to be very careful about the software that you download from the Internet. Make sure that it is from a source that you know to be reputable or a website that has been recommended by a trustworthy source. You can also use a program like the McAfee Site Advisor to help you assess the validity of the website before you download the program. McAfee's Site Advisor is a small program that is used by your Internet browser to indicate the safety of websites. It is a free download available at www.siteadvisor.com and it is a valuable tool.

Also, as usual, be sure that you update your operating system and antivirus software regularly. Don't fall for any program that pops up on your computer trying to scare you into purchasing antivirus or antispyware software.

Yes, the bad guys are out there and they have a lot of computer savvy. So we all need to be smart about the software we download and the websites we visit.



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

Proper Credit

I wrote about Hewie Poplock and Mike Ungerman of Central Florida Computer Society working on the live meeting technique whereby members could join the meeting on line if they couldn't make it in person. I also gave you the URL to see the video of a meeting. They wanted everybody to know that it was not originally their intention to do this work, but Dave Dockery of Tampa Bay Computer Society <http://www.tampa-bay.org> convinced them to give it a try since he has been doing it successfully for some time. They are still trying to get the technique perfected and <http://www.ustream.tv> is just one of the URLs they use for a monthly or SIG meeting, but while it's a lot of work, it has its rewards. Check <http://www.cfs.org> for meeting information.

Another Type Of Upgrade

As most of you know, I live in a hurricane prone area. In self-defense, I've been installing hurricane protection on my windows and doors that are not already hurricane code rated. Remembering the year we had those three hurricanes one after another pass right over our heads, I recalled the dungeon affect with the plywood on the windows. I decided that Lexan would be a better covering as it would let the light in, and I could also see outside with little problem. It's taken a while, and some dollars, but I'm happy with the results. Even my wife can easily install the panels in just a few minutes to be ready for a storm. It also helps lower the price on my insurance, although my "hip" roof lowered that the most. A hip roof is a roof slanted on all four sides, with no gable ends.

Updating the insulation in our attic has helped lower our power bill considerably, although choosing the right company to do that job took a lot of questions for the insulation companies before we chose the right one. We wanted one who would also find and seal other spots where air could leak from the living area into the attic, and they found several important places that needed to be sealed. Our A/C ductwork had already been serviced for leaks a few years ago. Our power bill is now much lower than last year. The next project was new windows with low-E glass filled with argon gas, making them more energy efficient. It won't be long until the power company will be paying us each month. <G> However, I am also looking into a small photovoltaic system in the hopes it will help with our effort. Finding reliable installation and purchase information has been difficult.

Word of Caution; I have not tried any of the items listed below so do your homework if you're interested.

Share Your Artistry With The World

Acoustica <http://mixcraftlive.com> has introduced a free service allowing anyone to upload their music, podcasts or sonic creations to share with the world. The site allows artists to create an account, upload artwork and publish up to 100 megabytes of music. Each artist account has a forum and a blog to help foster a community and fan database. Each song can be ranked and, if popular enough, can appear on the top song charts. Artists can update an event calendar with their 'gigs' so that their fans can find out when the next performance is. The service is completely free and can be used by anyone wishing to showcase their sonic creations recorded with Mixcraft.

Mixcraft is a multitrack music recording studio for Windows computers and has recently been awarded the Computer Music Value Award and the Keyboard Magazine Key Buy Award. It is seen as the Windows equivalent of Apple's Garage Band for price and functionality. **MixcraftLive.com** adds even more value to the software and is intended to showcase the musical skills and talents of artists recording with **Mixcraft**.

Mixcraft now includes an additional 574 new music loops and over 300 new sound effects which are automatically downloaded on demand. These sounds are free to all **Mixcraft** customers. The loops include 13 exciting new Song Kits; **Breakbeat, Crunk, Drum N Bass, Electro House, Film Score, House DJ, Jungle Drum N Bass, Progressive Euro, Southern Hip Hop, Synth House, Tribal House, Underground Hip Hop, and Urban Street Mix!**

Would You Believe Eyeball To Eyeball?
(I can't remember where I read this one.)

Eyeball Chat is a free product that you can use for talking on the phone and seeing each other at the same time; that is, if you are both using the product. At <http://www.eyeballchat.com>, you can download the software to accomplish all this. Of course, there is more to it than that, but at least this product is free for you to experiment with. Check out their Web site and you will find further information.

Do You Love Games?

MyRealGames has launched a free gaming portal that provides downloadable and online casual games. The portal <<http://www.MyRealGames.com>> is aimed to ensure a great pastime for audiences of all ages. Arcade, puzzles, shooters, dress-ups, sports and more are all free now. The portal also features free games, which were only available in "try-before-you-buy" versions before. **MyRealGames.com** can be recommended to those who are tired of advertisements in games because they don't have disturbances like annoying banners between levels. The only thing obligatory is a visit of the site after a user exits a game. The games are available in both 2D and 3D, and have three working languages.

With more than two hundred games, **MyRealGames.com** has something in stock for everybody. If you're an arcade game lover, don't forget to check out Space Bubbles. There are extraordinary power-ups and amazing bonuses to discover within every puzzle! Enjoy endless hours of bubble blasting action:

<http://www.myrealgames.com/files/space-bubbles.exe>.

Exercise your billiard skills with the help of Billiard Masters or Cool 3D billiards, which you can play against computer or friends. The atmosphere of a comfortable place makes the game even better. Join billiard club at:

<http://www.myrealgames.com/files/billiard-masters.exe>.

Try Nuclear Bike. Complete levels as fast as possible to achieve maximum score points. Speed up! Traffic police can't catch you here:

http://www.myrealgames.com/en/play_online_nuclearbike.html.

Here Is Another Free Defragger, This One Has Rave Reviews!

IObit is proud to announce the release of Smart Defrag. Smart Defrag was in development for 1 1/2 years, tested by over one million users, and is now available to all PC users for free. Most users can-

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

not clearly know the current fragmentation status of their hard disk, and have no good control over performing the defragmentation. "We have taken care of PC users' needs in our free Smart Defrag" says Hugo Dong, president of IObit.

Smart Defrag features include:

- An "install it and forget it" feature that works automatically and quietly in the background of the computer.
- Besides defragmenting, it also places the frequently used data into the fastest area of the disk.
- Smart Defrag has the industry's leading defragmenting engine, specially designed for modern, large hard drives.
- Free for home, organization, and business and 100% safe from any spyware, adware and virus.
- Designed for Windows 2000, XP, Vista and future Windows 7.

Smart Defrag is now available in English and other languages. More information and free downloads are available at:

<http://www.iobit.com/iobitsmartdefrag.html>.

Everybody Talks About It, But Here is More Than Talk

Other than spam, a frequently discussed subject is the privacy of your computer. There is a place on the Web where there is help. Check into <http://www.saltmeadow.com/privacy> where you will find seven tools for working on the privacy of your computer. Some of them you may already know about them, and others you may not. Best of all, it is a collection of all freeware for your use.

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 Cheapskate) Click
<bobclick at bellsouth dot net>.
Visit my Web site at
<<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.



the end of the story

When to Turn Off Personal Computers

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.
A Consumer's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm

If you're wondering when you should turn off your personal computer for energy savings, here are some general guidelines to help you make that decision.

Though there is a small surge in energy when a computer starts up, this small amount of energy is still less than the energy used when a computer is running for long periods of time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning off

- the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes
- both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than 2 hours.

Make sure your monitors, printers, and other accessories are on a power strip/surge protector. When this equipment is not in use for



From the Presidents desk

Hi PACCsters!



Word to the wise! At the bottom of this page, starting in the left column is a tip you should all read: **When to Turn Off Personal Computers**. I started using Hibernate mode more than 3 years ago, after I realized that this is a state when the computer saves all data and applications to disk, and not even power outage can cause me an inconvenience such as data loss. Just power-up the PC and you are where you left off! We can talk more about the many computer states in the Sunday meeting. Looking forward to seeing you all there!

PJK

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

the end of the story

extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent them from drawing power even when shut off. If you don't use a power strip, unplug extra equipment when it's not in use.

Most PCs reach the end of their "useful" life due to advances in technology long before the effects of being switched on and off multiple times have a negative impact on their service life. The less time a PC is on, the longer it will "last." PCs also produce heat, so turning them off reduces building cooling loads. For cost effectiveness, you also need to consider how much your time is worth. If it takes a long time to shut down the computer and then restart it later, the value of your time will probably be much greater than the value of the amount of electricity you will save by turning off the computer.

Power-Down or Sleep Mode Features

Many PCs available today come with a power-down or sleep mode feature for the CPU and monitor. ENERGY STAR® computers power down to a sleep mode that consume 15 Watts or less power, which is around 70% less electricity than a computer without power management features. ENERGY STAR monitors have the capability to power down into two successive "sleep" modes. In the first, the monitor energy consumption is less than or equal to 15 Watts, and in the second, power consumption reduces to 8 Watts, which is less than 10% of its operating power consumption.

Make sure you have the power-down feature set up on your PC through your operating system software. This has to be done by you, otherwise the PC will not power down. If your PC and monitor do not have power-down features, and even if they do, follow the guidelines below about when to turn the CPU and monitor off.

Note: Screen savers are not energy savers. Using a screen saver may in fact use more energy than not using one and the power-down feature may not work if you have a screen saver activated. In fact, modern LCD color monitors do not need screen savers at all.

the end of the story

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR PACC: (Please print in CAPS)

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Dues: \$25 per year.

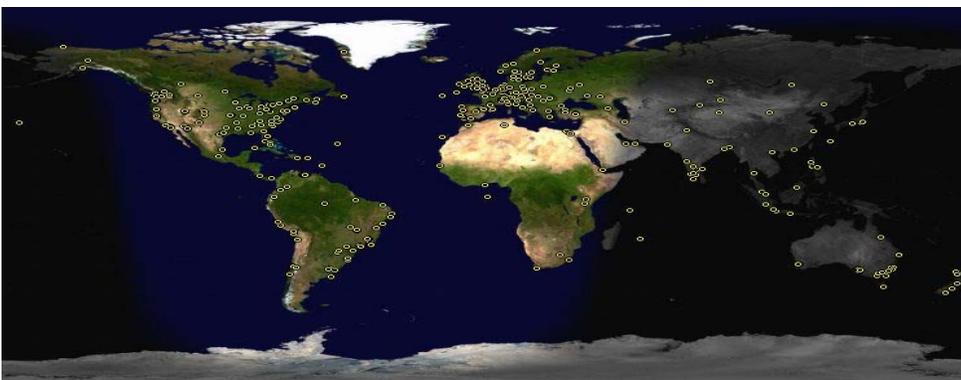
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Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435
cut here.....cut here

PACC HELP LINE

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

NAME	COMPUTER AREA	PHONE	TIME
Agrawala, Vishnu	Hardware	724-612-1443	3 - 6:00 pm
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 OCTOBER 19, 2008

PACC 1975 - 2008
IN ITS THIRTY-THIRD YEAR



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NEXT MEETING: October 19, 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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