

# PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

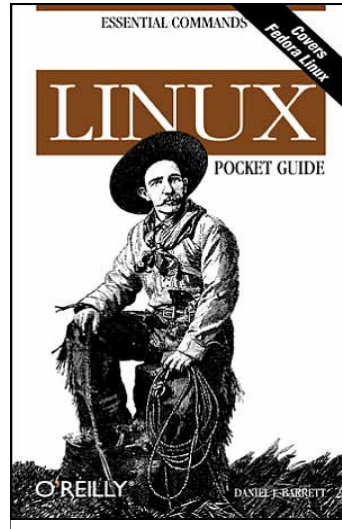
November 2010

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, November 21, 2010

- 11:00 -11:25 am Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase 50/50  
ROOM # 311 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,  
ROOM # 301 Raffle. (pg. 1)
- 12:35 - 2:00 pm ProcessKO, FixWin,  
ROOM # 301 Hamster Free Video Converter (pg. 1)
- 2:05 - 3:30 pm More programs and 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,  
ROOM # 311 Computer troubleshooting, Info Exchange
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close

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



“Linux Pocket Guide gets you up to speed quickly on day-to-day Linux use. The book begins with general concepts like files and directories, the shell, and X windows, and then presents detailed overviews of the most essential commands. You'll learn each command's purpose, usage, options, location on disk, and even the RPM package that installed it. Throw in a host of valuable power user tips and a friendly, accessible style, and you'll find this practical, to-the-point book a small but mighty resource for Linux users.

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### Windows SIG

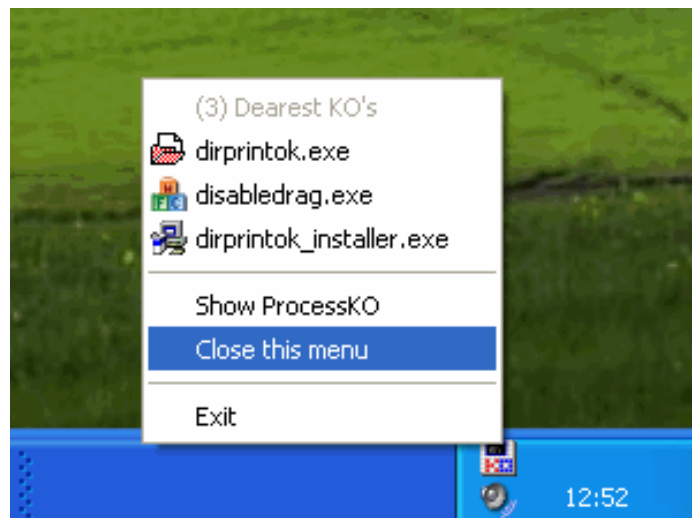
Here is another one of those process killers, again free, only 51 K, download it from:

<http://www.softwareok.com/?seite=Freeware/ProcessKO>

Quote from the web site: ProcessKO is for professionals and experienced users, with very good PC "know-how" (knowledge)!

ProcessKO is a small useful tool designed to quickly kill any running or hanging process / program. It is not uncommon amongst developers or program-testers that the program they are testing either doesn't function properly... or that one cannot even close the program (using the Taskmanager). What's more, it's usually always the usual suspects

that give the trouble. ....ProcessKO does not have to be installed and can be executed easily from the desktop. It's one small, portable utility for Windows PC-s and is also a small usb-stick friend :)"



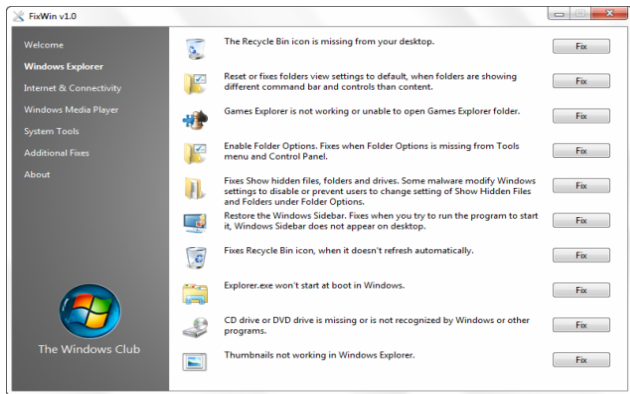
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The Windows Club makes available another one of their freeware utilities. Only a 174 KB download. I recommend you get it here:

[http://majorgeeks.com/FixWin\\_d6302.html](http://majorgeeks.com/FixWin_d6302.html)

From the web site: "While there were several tutorials and how-to's already available on the Internet to deal with such annoyances, Fix-Win as a single utility was conceptualized, to fix some of the common annoyances which may be faced by a Windows user. ....The solutions to repair and fix 50 common Windows annoyances, issues & problems have been categorized under 5 tabs, viz : Windows Explorer, Internet & Connectivity, Windows Media, System Tools & Misc Additional Fixes.

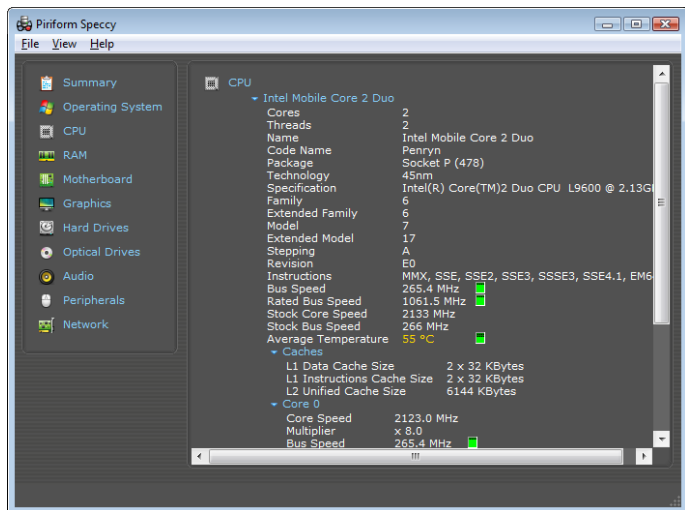


### Hamster Free Video Converter - great program, a must have!

From the HAMSTERsoft website:

"Hamster Free Video Converter helps you to change the codec or system type between all popular video formats. You can also adjust AudioVideo bitrate, Frame Rate, and even cut any piece of your movie. The latest version of Hamster Free Video Converter has de-interlace feature. Besides, you can increase volume of your video files. The process of conversion is extremely fast....It requires no special knowledge to convert video files. The Wizard will help you to do all the settings when you are at a loss. Use the batch conversion mode to save your time and effort. "

Download the 288 KB hamsterfreevideoconverter.exe Online Installer from <http://videoconverter.hamstersoft.com/en/download> and follow the simple instructions. The size of the footprint, after the installation amounts to 38,9 MB.



### Dick's Clicks

By Dick Ramette, President,  
Computer Club of Green Valley, Arizona  
October 2010 issue, Green Bytes  
<http://gvcc.apcug.org/>  
[rwr ramette\(at\)mindspring.com](mailto:rwr ramette(at)mindspring.com)

Do you sometimes feel that your brain, like the *Old Gray Mare*, "Ain't what it used to be/ Many long years ago?" Oh, I'm not thinking about how we forget where we parked the car. No, I mean there are factors largely under our control that are making daily changes in HOW we perceive and remember. This is something relatively recent in our lives, and it's worth noting.

Long after Aristotle's view that the function of the brain is to "temper the heat and seething of the heart," the dogma of the 20th century was that the brain/mind organ, though open and malleable during its early years, becomes mature and rigid by the time one enters, say, junior high. New things, like algebra and a foreign language, can still be learned, but only using the neuronal network that the brain/mind already has established. However, the 21st century certainty is that brain plasticity is the rule, that the habits we pursue literally rework the complex interactions between our brain cells. For example, a writer who makes the leap from pencil and paper to keyboarding will subtly evolve new ways of thinking, planning and expressive style.

Old brains really can learn new tricks. The brain of our beloved Howard Benedict is doubtless rewiring his visual cortex to aid an enhanced sense of hearing, and of touch as he learns Braille. Brains are works in progress.

Such ideas appear early in Nicholas Carr's new book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. He argues convincingly that our brains, attuned to linear thought and deep reading habits just 20 years ago, are now hammered relentlessly by our non-linear and flighty love affair with the Web. As we jump from link to link, seeking some nugget of information, we grow impatient, and so do our neurons, being all too willing to wade in "the shallows." We find it trying to read entire articles, let alone full books. Skimming comes to be preferred by the brain because it is given little choice by the nature of the internet. It becomes less likely for information to go from sensory memory to short term memory and into long term memory. And some don't care, saying, "I don't have to remember it because I can easily look it up again."

In Chapter 8, *The Church of Google*, Carr describes the origin of this masterwork, its name a play on *googol* which is 10 to the 100th power, and goes on to discuss the philosophy and technology of the worlds greatest search engine, whose goal is to gather all knowledge in easily deliverable snippets, "ensuring that we are forever inundated by information of immediate interest to us - and in quantities well beyond what our brains can handle." The data mining not only of information but of user browsing habits is a gigantic enterprise. We users don't perceive the extent to which we are manipulated by algorithms.

I had a call last month from a GV woman who asked me to pick up her computer and donate it to the Club. It seems she'd decided to defect from the digital world and all its enticements. Few of us in CCGV will choose that option, because Google *et al* have successfully addicted us to the point of no return. And we feel pretty good about that. But this book makes me question the wisdom of faithful worship via the Googleplex. Chapter 10, *A Thing Like Me*, ends with the unsettling observation that we are welcoming the frenziedness of technology into

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## The “i” and “e” Digital Gadgets

By Mike Morris, Editor / President,  
Front Range PC Users Group (FRPCUG), Colorado  
<http://www.frpcug.org> twriterext (at) gmail.com

Over the past few years, I have received numerous questions about the meaning of various terms, such as MP3, BlackBerry, etc. These questions have come from FRPCUG members, participants in the computer classes taught by FRPCUG and offered through the Fort Collins, CO Senior Center, and many others.

Those questions led to a Digital Gadgets presentation at a FRPCUG meeting with the presentation material posted on the FRPCUG web site, and to this article. Actually, to a series of articles, because it is not possible to include sufficient information in just one article.

Please note that the company names and product names discussed below are all trademarks of their respective companies.

There exist today (August 2010) a profusion of digital gadgets that have names that begin with the letter “e” or the letter “i.” The “i” gadgets are products from Apple, Inc., such as the iPhone, iPod and iTouch, and iPad. The “e” gadgets are mostly eReaders from many different manufacturers. It takes some work to sort out these gadgets. Are they phones? Computers?

Something else? The “e” gadgets are available with many different capabilities, depending on manufacturer. That, of course, makes the “sorting out” more of a challenge.

I have attempted to at least start that sorting process with this article. Please note that I do NOT claim to offer you a comprehensive list and description of products in these two categories. My goal here is to provide background and references on selected products so that you may explore the capabilities of these gadgets in greater detail. Much of the information for this article was extracted from Wikipedia. The Wikipedia links are provided at the appropriate places in this article.

I will start with the “i” gadgets. The Apple iPhone is a smartphone, and the iTouch is, among other things, a portable media player (a version of the iPod). A smartphone is more than just a phone. Wikipedia defines a smartphone <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smartphone> as: "...a mobile phone that offers more advanced computing ability and connectivity than a contemporary basic 'feature phone'. Smartphones and feature phones may be thought of as handheld computers integrated within a mobile telephone, but while most feature phones are able to run applications based on platforms such as Java ME or BREW, a smartphone allows the user to install and run more advanced applications based on a specific platform. Smartphones run complete operating system software providing a platform for application developers."

Today's smartphones are part mobile phone and part handheld computer (see “Cell Phone or Hand-Held Computer: That is the Question” at: [http://frpcug.org/presentations/cell\\_phone\\_computer\\_rev1.pdf](http://frpcug.org/presentations/cell_phone_computer_rev1.pdf)).

From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ipnone> is this description of the iPhone:

“An iPhone functions as a camera phone, including text messaging and visual voicemail, a portable media player, and an Internet client, with e-mail, web browsing, and Wi-Fi connectivity. The user interface is built around the device's multi-touch screen, including a vir-

tual keyboard rather than a physical one. Third-party applications are available from the App Store, which launched in mid-2008 and now has well over 200,000 "apps" approved by Apple. These apps have diverse functionalities, including games, reference, GPS navigation, social networking, and advertising for television shows, films, and celebrities.”

And from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Itouch> is this description of the iTouch:

“The iPod Touch (stylized, trademarked, and marketed as iPod touch), is a portable media player, personal digital assistant, and Wi-Fi mobile platform designed and marketed by Apple Inc. ... The iPod Touch adds the multi-touch graphical user interface to the iPod line. It is the first iPod with wireless access to the iTunes Store, and also has access to Apple's App Store, enabling content to be purchased and downloaded directly on the device.”

“The iPod Touch and the iPhone . . . share the same hardware platform and run the same iOS operating system. The iPod Touch lacks some of the iPhone's features and associated apps, such as access to cellular networks, or a built-in microphone and camera (and speaker on older models).”

Selected Apple links for these products are:

### iPhone:

iPhone4: <http://www.apple.com/iphone/>  
iPhone comparison: <http://www.apple.com/iphone/compare-iphones/>

### iTouch:

iTouch: <http://www.apple.com/ipodtouch/>  
iTouch Features: <http://www.apple.com/ipodtouch/features/>

The latest “i” product from Apple is the iPad. From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ipnone> is this description:

“The iPad is a tablet computer designed and developed by Apple. It is particularly marketed as a platform for audio and visual media such as books, periodicals, movies, music, and games, as well as web content. At about 700 grams (25 ounces), its size and weight are between those of most contemporary smartphones and laptop computers. Apple released the iPad in April 2010, and sold 3 million of the devices in 80 days.

The iPad runs the same operating system as the earlier iPod Touch and iPhone . . . .

It can run its own applications as well as ones developed for the iPhone. Without modification, it will only run programs approved by Apple and distributed via its online store.

Like iPhone and iPod Touch, the iPad is controlled by a multitouch display . . . .

The iPad uses Wi-Fi or a 3G mobile data connection to browse the Internet, load and stream media, and install software. The device is managed and synced by iTunes on a personal computer via USB cable.”

You can certainly get tangled up in the language with these gadgets. Wikipedia calls the iPad a “tablet computer,” and it is interesting to note that it does not have phone capability (at least not yet). The Wikipedia definition of a “tablet computer” is “. . . a complete computer contained entirely in a flat touch screen that uses a stylus, digital

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pen, or fingertip as the primary input device instead of a keyboard or mouse which may or may not be included” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tablet\\_computer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tablet_computer)).

Well . . . OK, the iPad is a “tablet computer;” that is, a complete computer (except that it does not include multitasking). It is “marketed as a platform for audio and visual media.” So how is this different from a smartphone, which has many of the same (or at least similar) capabilities? Size is one distinction. “The iPad’s touchscreen display is a 25 cm (9.7 in) liquid crystal display (1024 × 768 pixels) with fingerprint-resistant and scratch-resistant glass.” One model has both Wi-Fi and 3G (a mobile phone standard) connectivity, but not for phone use. It is used for mobile internet access.

Selected Apple iPad product links are:

<http://www.apple.com/ipad/>  
<http://www.apple.com/ipad/guided-tours/>

For a list and comparison of the Apple “i” gadgets, connect to:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_iOS\\_devices](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_iOS_devices).

So, the iPad is to be used as “a platform for audio and visual media.” That leads us to the second set of Digital Gadgets, the “e” gadgets. Until the release of the iPad, the “e” gadgets were all eReaders.

A very short vocabulary lesson is needed here. An eReader (again, from Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_e-book\\_readers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_e-book_readers)) is “. . . an electronic device that is designed primarily for the purpose of reading digital books and periodicals . . . to display content to readers.” And, of course, a digital book is now called an eBook.

The iPad provides access to eBooks, but it includes capability for other digital media as well. All the other eReaders (at the moment) are dedicated to eBooks. There are many eReaders available today. That Wikipedia “eBook Comparison” article mentioned a moment ago lists over 40 different products (August 2010) from many different manufacturers (those based on the “electronic paper” technology—see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic\\_paper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_paper)). You probably have heard of at least a few of them:

**Amazon: Kindle**  
**Barnes and Noble: Nook**  
**Sony: Reader**  
**Foxit Software: eSlick**

It is important to note that an eReader is a device dedicated to reading eBooks, although computers and even some mobile phones can read eBooks (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-book>). Another important fact about some eReaders is that they do not have the capability to transfer eBooks from the eReader to a computer.

Most of the eReaders have, by today’s standards, small amounts of internal memory (up to 4 GB). However, some devices include SD memory card capability. Selected devices, for example, the “(e)-books purchased from vendors like Amazon or Barnes & Noble.com are stored ‘in the cloud’ on servers and ‘digital lockers’ and have the benefit of being easily retrieved if an e-reading device is lost. Not all e-booksellers are cloud based; if an e-book is stolen, accidentally lost, or deleted, in the absence of a backup it may have to be repurchased.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-book>)

There are also many different eBook formats. The Wikipedia “Comparison” article lists 16 different formats. None of the devices

are compatible with all formats.

The electronic publishing phenomenon is not without controversy. The Wikipedia “E-book” article lists a number of advantages and disadvantages. One issue of concern is privacy (from the Wikipedia “E-book” article):

“E books and software can easily track data, times, usage, pages, and details about what one is reading and how often. Similar to this is the growing amount of data available through Google search engines, Facebook, and through data mining. For the first time in history it is now far more easy to track and record what specific people might be reading. The notions of privacy, private writing, solitude, and personal reading are changing.”

There is also what Wikipedia calls (also from that Wikipedia “E-book” article):

“Artistry and Author’s Vision - An author who publishes a book often puts more into the work than simply the words on the pages. E-books may cause people ‘to do the grazing and quick reading that screens enable, rather than be by themselves with the author’s ideas.’ They may use the e-books simply for reference purposes rather than reading for pleasure and leisure.”

One of the major advantages of electronic publishing is that eBooks are less expensive than printed books. There are, at the very least, hundreds of thousands of eBooks available today, and the number is growing rapidly every day. All major book publishers offer eBooks.

True, new e-books from commercial publishers must be purchased. However, there are a considerable number of e-books available for free. For example, visit the Digital Book Index (<http://www.digitalbookindex.org/about.htm>). This site claims to:

“. . . provide links to more than 155,000 full-text digital books from more than 1800 commercial and non-commercial publishers, universities, and various private sites. More than 135,000 of these books, texts, and documents are available free, while many others are available at very modest cost.”

Another source of eBooks is the Google Books project; see:

<http://books.google.com/bkshp?hl=en&tab=wp>  
<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/agreement/>  
<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/agreement/#3>

There is even a website called Scribd (<http://www.scribd.com>), which describes itself as “the largest social publishing and reading site in the world.” Scribd claims that “. . . you can easily turn any file—such as PDF, Word and PowerPoint—into a web document and immediately connect with . . . readers and information-seekers . . . Scribd users have shared tens of millions of free and for-purchase documents and books ranging from vampire fan fiction to research reports and business presentations.”

My objective with collecting this information on the “i” and “e” gadgets was to get you started on your way to becoming an informed consumer. If you examine the information in the websites listed in this article, and carefully read the information in the websites of the products you are interested in, you will, indeed, reach that goal.

Here are some product websites that will help you with your “homework”:

Amazon Kindle:

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon\\_Kindle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Kindle)  
<http://astore.amazon.com/Kindle.-20/about>

Barnes and Noble Nook:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barnes\\_%26\\_Noble\\_Nook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barnes_%26_Noble_Nook)  
<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/nook/features/index.asp>

Sony Reader:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sony\\_Reader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sony_Reader)  
<http://ebookstore.sony.com/reader/>

Foxit Software eSlick:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ESlick>  
<http://www.foxitsoftware.com/ebook/overview.html>



the end of the story

(Continued from page 2)

our souls.

**Thoughts of the Month:**

"Everything that human beings are doing to make it easier to operate computer networks is at the same time, but for different reasons, making it easier for computer networks to operate human beings." George Dyson

"The calculator, a powerful but highly specialized tool, turned out to be an aid to memory. The Web is a technology for forgetfulness." Nick Carr

the end of the story

**Finicky Flash**

By Rick Curry, President,  
Channel Islands PCUG, California  
August 2010 issue, The Outer Edge  
[www.cipcug.org](http://www.cipcug.org) [president\(at\)cipcug.org](mailto:president(at)cipcug.org)

Flash is a special sort of movie player program that runs inside your browser. It usually opens a rectangular window inside the browser. Often a video advertisement, a movie clip, television clip, or a flashing repetitive cadence of words will be in this rectangle. It can also be complex enough to play a video game.

Toby (CIPCUG tech guru) has shown us how to block Flash using the NoScript add-on to the Firefox browser because Flash can be a source of continuous nuisance in the form of distracting images and sounds as well as being powerful enough to serve as a way for malicious programs to get inside your computer.

Alas, with all of its faults, many useful websites will not run without Flash. There will almost certainly be times when you find yourself telling NoScript that it is OK at a particular website (like your bank). So we want to have Flash installed.

Much like Windows or other programs, Flash gets updated to fix problems and introduce new features. Fortunately, Flash is configured to automatically tell you when it needs to be updated. Unfortunately, the netherworld of Internet-based thieves has come up with ways to pop up a window that look just like Flash telling you to update.

So if a window pops up and tells you to update Flash, treat it like a phishing scam where someone is pretending to be your bank and is sending you a false link. Do not do what it says to do. Close that window and ignore the instructions just the way you would ignore the email message that tells you:

HI! WE ARE YOUR BANK!  
>>>click here and see what happens <<<

We must not click on links to get our Flash updates. Type in the addresses by hand to check for new versions of Flash, for now. It is a nuisance, but it is the best way to be safe for the time being. Close all of your open browsers and any pop-up windows, like the one telling you to update Flash. I check with Task Manager at this point to make sure that all of the browsers have been closed, but that step is very rarely necessary and somewhat dangerous if you do not know what you are doing.

Next open a new copy of your browser and see if you actually need any updates from the official Flash website by typing in this address:

<http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about>

If you use NoScript, make sure you allow JavaScript on this page! Your current Flash version will be displayed under the big rectangular picture. It is on the right under the heading "Version Information." Further down the page is a table listing the latest versions of Flash. If you are already running the latest version, you are done. If you want to get the latest version of Flash, you can get it here:

<http://www.adobe.com/support/flashplayer/>.

My children just told me that they are having Flash programs hang (stop and never resume) while displaying: "loading." They also told me that clearing the browser cache, closing all browsers, and then starting over seems to always be the fix.

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These strange problems reported in Flash are reason enough that most of us should check for updates to Flash. While writing this article, I started checking. The first two computers at my house needed to be updated, and I never saw any update notice for either machine. Just make sure to go to the real website for your Flash updates.

If you update Flash and the update notice keeps coming back every time you start your browser, you may have picked up a virus or Trojan horse. If you think this has happened, it is time to seek assistance from a professional.

Happy computing!

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*the end of the story*

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## **Robotic Helpers Are Here Now**

**By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS**

**[www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com) [sberger\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sberger(at)compukiss.com)**

Having grown up watching Rosie the maid on the Jetson's and R2-D2 and C-3PO in Star War movies, most of us feel comfortable with the idea of robotic helpers. That's a good thing because there is no doubt that most of us will have a robot in our future.

Right now our factories are filled with robotic equipment. If you have been to the hospital lately, you might have seen robotic carts delivering medications and equipment. Surgeons are using robots to perform some surgical procedures. With so many robots around, it is not surprising that robots are moving into the home.

iRobot, an early entrant into the home market, already has Roomba, the vacuum cleaning robot, Scooba, the floor cleaning robot, Dirt Dog, the shop sweeping robot, Looj, the Gutter Cleaning Robot, and Verro, the pool cleaning robot. Friendly Robotics has Robomow, a lawn cutting robot.

The pricing for the Roomba, vacuum cleaning robot, starts at \$249. You can buy a Looj to clean your gutters for as little as \$99. I've seen both of these products, and they perform their tasks quite well. Early adapters are sitting back and watching the vacuuming, lawn cutting, and gutter cleaning being done for them.

And there is more to come. Our government is investing in robotics for everything from sniffing out bombs to directing air traffic. Even though these are not household robots, the technology will filter down. There is no doubt that we will find the technology from some of these government projects in the robotic aids that help us personally in the future.

Also, as our population ages, many manufactures are investing in robotics to help our seniors keep their independence. Health insurers, who have a vested interest in keeping our seniors as healthy as possible, are also looking at high tech devices including robotics to monitor the health of our aging population. The MIT AgeLab is working on projects of all sorts that will empower older people. Many of these include robots, like the Pill Pets, which are robotic pets that give reminders about medications and doctor's appointments.

We can expect many robotic breakthroughs to come from the Japanese who are looking to robotics to solve their population problem. Japan has the largest population over the age of 65, and the lowest birthrate. The Japanese are known for severely limiting the number of immigrants allowed into the country. All these factors add up to a lack of humans to perform necessary tasks. This creates a perfect scenario for the proliferation of robots. The Japanese government is

subsidizing all types of robotic projects. Sanyo has already introduced a human washing machine to give a sudsy massage to elderly patients. Toyota, the world's largest car company, recently announced that service robots would soon become one of its core businesses. Toyota has already showed off a two-wheel "mobility robot" that can carry a person or act as a porter, following its owner with groceries or any other cargo.

None of these robots look like Rosie or C-3PO. For the most part, the initial robots that enter our home will probably have many different shapes, sizes, and configurations. Yet, there is always the longing for a human-like robot. To that end, Honda has developed Asimo, a human-looking robot that can perform tasks such as pushing a cart and carrying a tray. It can also walk with humans and determine their position so it can interact with them. Asimo is multi-talented, he recently directed a symphony orchestra. While true humanoid robots have a long way to go, we will see great strides in the near future.

I understand that some people who have purchased the Roomba, have given it a name. I guess our human nature propels us to name the things we interact with. So perhaps your first step in getting ready for the robotic revolution is to decide on a name for your first piece of robotic equipment. Will it be Rosie, R2-D2, Robo, or Skip?

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*the end of the story*

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## **Electronic Ears**

**By Berry F. Phillips, a member of the  
Computer Club of Oklahoma City**

**September 2010 issue of The Monitor**

**[www.ccokc.org](http://www.ccokc.org)**

**[bfpdata\(at\)1access.net](mailto:bfpdata(at)1access.net)**

For many, the science fiction movie, Contact in 1997 starring Jodie Foster and adapted from a book by Carl Sagan by the same name, was their first introduction to SETI Institute for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence) and the largest electronic ear in the world. The Arecibo Observatory, featured in Contact, is the world's largest and most sensitive radio telescope with a dish at nearly 1000 feet across which is located in northwestern Puerto Rico. SETI would use this electronic ear to listen to sounds from outer space which was processed on several thousand volunteer personal computers in their search for alien civilizations. Today SETTI Institute uses the newly developed Paul Allen Array (ATA) which was a joint project with the Radio Astronomy Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley located 290 miles northeast of San Francisco, California at the Hatcreek Radio Observatory. The first phase of the of the ATA was completed and operational with 42 smaller dishes linked together on October 11, 2007, which was funded by Paul Allen, one of the cofounders of Microsoft Corporation. This Large Number Small Diameter (LSND) is less expensive to build than the large dish and when fully developed to 350 six meter dishes will offer even greater search capabilities than the single dish design. Mr. Allen has contributed over thirty million to the project through the Paul Allen Foundation. Additional funding for the development of additional phases is currently being sought from a variety of sources.

Electronic ears are radio telescopes in the form of directional radio antennas used in radio astronomy. They are often used in tracking and collecting data from satellites and space probes. They differ from optical telescopes in that they operate in the radio frequency portion of the electromagnetic spectrum where they collect data on radio sources. Radio telescopes are typically large parabolic ("dish") antennas used singly or in an array. These observatories are preferentially located far from major centers of population and often located in valleys to shield

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**From The DealsGuy**  
 by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click  
 Greater Orlando Computer Users Group  
 December 2010

**Miscellaneous Comments**

I'm catching up on reading the newsletters I receive. I print them out on my Ricoh color laser so it's easier for me to read, and I noticed that the colored pictures I printed before the cartridges ran out were fine, but when I replaced the printer cartridges, the new pictures I printed had the lines. Since then, it seems to have improved and some small pictures printed OK. Several readers advised me it was probably dirt on the drum after last month's comment. Perhaps something ended up on the drum on the bottom of the cartridge when I changed it, and is working it way off, I really don't know. I haven't found anything in the manual about cleaning it.

I haven't heard how the FACUG cruise in January of 2011 is shaping up. We're still considering it, but it looks like we won't make it. Last year's FACUG cruise was a highlight for me. Some are leaving this cruise out because it's one day longer and costs more. Actually, I don't mind the extra day, in spite of the extra cost, because shopping at Cozumel is great and there will be no sessions that afternoon. The ship is better and Royal Caribbean is one of my favorite cruise lines. If you're favorite SIG is the PIG SIG, Royal Caribbean's food selection is exceptional.

One of the most interesting things about reading many user group newsletters is that some have regular articles, written by a member, that are always outstanding, but that's the only place it's published, unless an editor has seen it and uses it in their own newsletter. I once told Judy Taylor that I would like to recommend a few outstanding authors that I see each month so the entire nation could read their material, but it never came to pass because she already had plenty of items for her PUSH collections. There is certainly a wealth of great articles available to editors now.

**Loss Of Another User Group**

I received a message from Lou Vitale, President of Macon Users Group in Macon, GA, telling the members that the BOD had decided it was no longer logical to keep the group alive. It must have taken him a while to put that final letter together, but I disagree that they no longer have anything to offer the members. As usual, only a few people were willing to do the work and they probably got tired of working while others simply enjoyed the benefits. Yes, they do have almost nothing new to present that they haven't already done, but nothing can replace a member coming in with his machine in hand that has a problem, or stating his problem during the Q & A, and after a short discussion, his problem is most likely diagnosed. The Internet might have the answers, but who is going to explain it to you, except, perhaps, your grand kids. In the meantime, some malware or keyloggers might stop by, and God help you if that happens. The Internet can only help if you understand what you're reading and know what you're doing, and that's where a users group comes in. The members that weren't active in the group's work will be the real losers.

Lou Vitale was one of my favorite authors and I'll surely miss his writings. I have to think that if I looked at that message closely, I would see a few tearstains (confirmed by Lou). Lizzz Russell also wrote interesting articles, and I have sometimes quoted from both au-

thors. If you would like to read Lou's closing letter sent to the members, check my Web site where you'll find a link to read it <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>. Their Web site is already shut down.

As for their running out of presentations, I sometimes read about what was likely an interesting presentation from a source you might not consider. Most user group officers feel that everything should be computer related, but I don't necessarily agree with that. One group said they were having a local TV weather caster come in to demonstrate the use of computers in weather forecasting. Recently, another User Group had two guys come in from an HH Gregg store who did a presentation on 3D TVs. They answered many questions, and wowed the attendees with the live demonstration of 3D TV. They passed around the two pair of glasses they had so everyone got a chance to see this impressive demonstration with their own eyes. I know I was impressed. It was a job bringing the large screen TV and other equipment to do it. One slip and that large screen could have been shattered. Since I wear glasses, it's awkward for me to put the 3D glasses over my own pair.

The Post Office also has some unique operations that are, sort of, computer related. Other utilities might also have presentations. I'd like to see a presentation by the city or county explaining the computer that controls the traffic lights around town. The one installed locally cost over a million for the installation and cables were strung all over the area. However, in my opinion, they still don't work right. I've stopped many times for no one and it makes no sense that the traffic light can't "see" in this age of technology.

**Still Good**

Don't forget that the special discount on the KeyStone Learning Systems' learning courses is still good for December so it's not too late to



order if you haven't gotten around to getting a learning course you need. Robert Hodges has set up a 20% discount for my readers, and that's off ANY single user course until 12/31/10. When purchasing, use the coupon code "DealsGuy" when placing your order. You are also welcome to use your credit card.

**Will The Real Security Stand Up?**

Trying to secure our computers is an ongoing challenge, but I didn't realize how tough it is becoming for everyone until I read this article in Information Week. In some ways, this article leaves you wondering if it's even possible to properly protect your computers any more. This article is lengthy and written for professionals, but quite informative. <<http://www.informationweek.com/news/security/antivirus/>

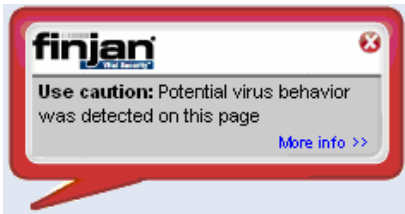
*(Continued on page 8)*

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showArticle.jhtml?articleID=227700363&queryText=Greg%20Shipley>. Perhaps a secure machine is impossible, but it also boils down to an alert computer operator.

### More On Safe Web Surfing

Finjan SecureBrowsing <<http://securebrowsing.finjan.com/>> is a browser extension that checks links in search results and Web sites. Each link is marked as safe (green) or potentially dangerous (red). SecureBrowsing warns users about potential threats before they click on search results, or other links on web pages, allowing them to explore the Web safely. This service helps the user make intelligent choices when surfing the Web, with few security worries.



Finjan SecureBrowsing performs real-time code analysis of the current content on each of the rated Web pages, and potentially malicious and undesirable behavior is automatically detected, even if they have never been categorized.

According to their Web site, while browsing the Web, you come across numerous Web sites that use Active Content to enhance your Web experience and capabilities. Active Content supports capabilities such as changing images when the mouse moves over them, popping up windows, displaying advertisements, and supporting advance design elements. These capabilities are also used by hackers to change your system settings, or even install spyware applications. Finjan SecureBrowsing alerts you, before you visit these pages, to any potential malicious Active Content, allowing you to enjoy a wealth of Web capabilities without jeopardizing your PC and private information.

Finjan SecureBrowsing also identifies potentially malicious code such as spyware, hacking code, viruses, and code that tampers with your PC system settings. Such malicious code can even try to steal your private user name and passwords when you visit your online banking Web site. Finjan SecureBrowsing identifies all of these threats in real time by analyzing the behavior of certain active content that could be used maliciously (such as JavaScript, VB Script, ActiveX and Java applets). Download this browser add-on at <<http://securebrowsing.finjan.com/>>. I read about this in Charlotte Bytes, newsletter for Charlotte County Computer Group Corporation <<http://www.cccgc.net/>>. Their newsletter always has great content and one of the members told the editor about this one.

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.

Bob (The Cheap skate) Click  
<bobclick at bellsouth dot net>.  
Visit my Web site at  
<<http://www.dealsguy.com/>>.



## From the Editor's desk

Hi PACCsters!



### Must Read List!

- Dick's Clicks ..... by Dick Ramette
- The "i" and "e" Digital Gadgets ..... by Mike Morris
- Finicky Flash ..... by Rick Curry
- Robotic Helpers Are Here Now ..... by Sandy Berger
- Electronic Ears ..... by Berry F. Phillips
- From The Deals Guy ..... by Bob Click

I'll see all you at the November 21, 2010 meeting. PJK

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
There may be some changes soon to the APCUG web hosting and with it the URL. The switch is to take place by December 19, 2010. As of now, that is all I know about it. I will let you know as soon as it happen, by e-mail of course!

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

(Continued from page 6)  
them from electromagnetic interference (EM).

The world's largest full dish as mentioned previously is the Arecibo radio telescope which while fixed in the ground is steerable by means of a moving receiver. The largest individual radio telescope of any kind is the RATAN-600 located near Nichny Arkhyz, Russia which consists of a 576-meter circle of rectangular radio reflectors, each of which can be pointed towards a conical receiver. The largest radio telescope in Europe is the 100-meter diameter antenna in Effelsber, Germany which also was the world's largest fully steerable telescope for 30 years until the slightly larger Green Bank Telescope was opened in West Virginia, United States, in 2000. The third-largest fully-steerable radio telescope is the 76-metre Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire, England. China officially started construction of the world's largest single-aperture radio telescope in 2009, the FAST with a dish area as large as 30 football fields which will stand in a region of typical Karst depressions in Guichou and will be finished in 2013.

There are numerous operational radio telescopes of different sizes around the world. European astronomers have created a high speed network of 16 radio telescopes from six continents at one source in space combining observational signals. This virtual telescope delivers better resolution than any single telescope on earth. The linkage combines 16 radio telescopes from six continents via a high speed network which makes it easier to react to so-called targets of opportunity-transient events such as supernova explosions and gamma-ray boasts in space.

The very latest development is that the first major radio telescope, for many decades, will be built in Britain and will listen to the sky at FM frequencies, providing vast quantities of data to a supercomputer in Holland, paving the way for unexpected new discoveries.

Giant electronic ears are listening all over the world for alien civilizations and so much more as we attempt to unravel the mysteries of the universe. What was once called science fiction is becoming science reality in the ever evolving technical world of radio astronomy. Stay tuned!



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

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

OCCUPATION.....

INTERESTS.....

RECOMMENDED BY PACC MEMBER.....

**Dues: \$25 per year.**

**Make your check out to: PACC and send it with your application to:**

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

*cut here.....cut here*

***PACC HELP LINE***

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

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COMPUTER AREA</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
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](mailto:pacccomm@aol.com)

**FOR SALE**

**Your ads PACCsters?**

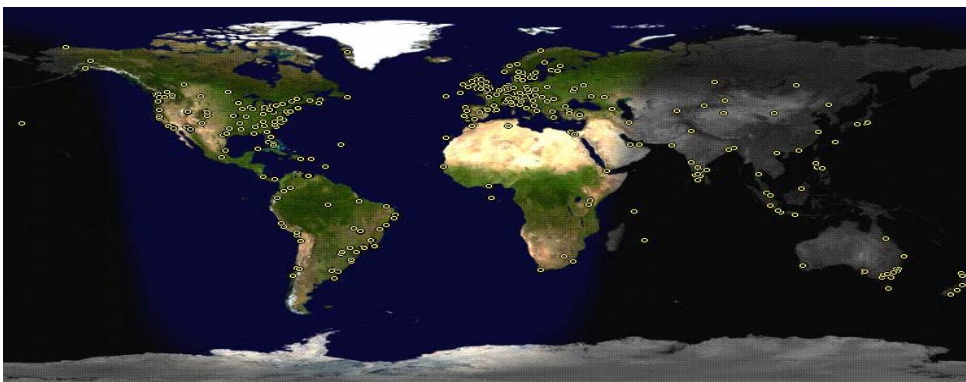


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## NEXT PACC MEETING IS ON NOVEMBER 21, 2010

PACC 1975 - 2010  
IN ITS THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR



# PACC TALK

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***NEXT MEETING: November 21, 2010***

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!  
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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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