

# PACC TALK

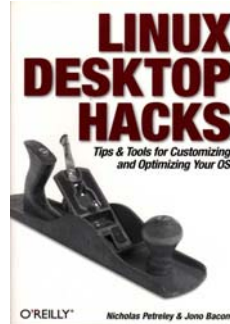
Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

December 2008

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 21, 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 Eat some food ...
- 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 ESF
- 12:35 - 2:00 pm NetWorx, Clipdiary, Lifextender,  
ROOM # 301 Net Scanner, File Recovery (pg. 1)
- 2:05 - 3:30 pm More utilities .....  
ROOM # 301 ESF (pg. 2)
- 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 \*\*\*  
With hacks that any user can follow, **Linux Desktop Hacks** demonstrates how easy it is to modify Linux to suit your desires. PJK



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!

### ATTENTION PACCSTERS

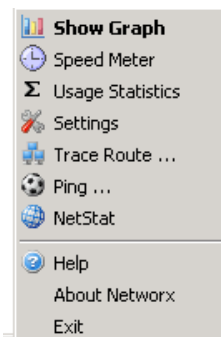
Sunday 21 December 2008 is our annual POTLUCK meeting where the primary purpose is to be sociable. Bring your favorite food, reveal yourself! All this, and PACC will contribute the cold cuts, soft drinks and of course the ambiance... Read Pres. Desk for more..

### What is inside....

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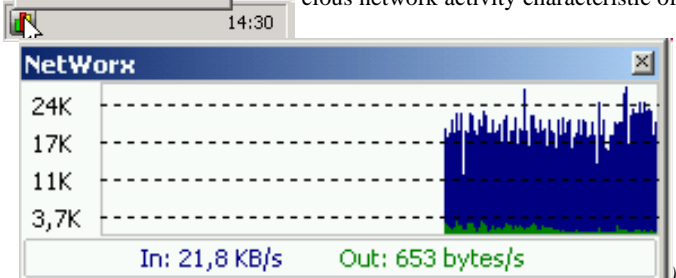
### Windows SIG

The free and good stuff:



### NetWorx

“NetWorx is a simple and free, yet powerful tool that helps you objectively evaluate your bandwidth situation. You can use it to collect bandwidth usage data and measure the speed of your Internet or any other network connection. NetWorx can help you identify possible sources of network problems, ensure that you do not exceed the bandwidth limits specified by your ISP, or track down suspicious network activity characteristic of

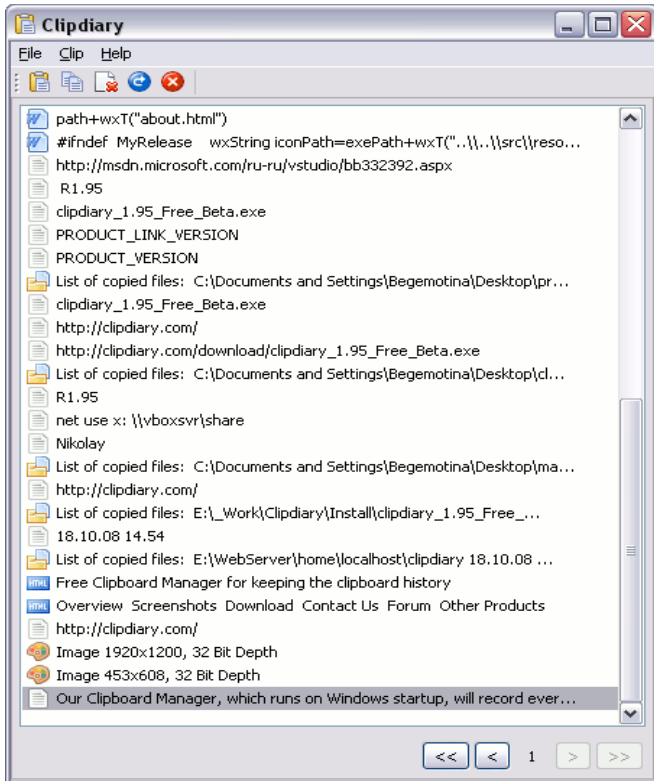


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Trojan horses and hacker attacks.” You have a choice of the 834 KB installer, or the 705 KB portable file. Download them from here: <http://www.softperfect.com/products/networkx/>

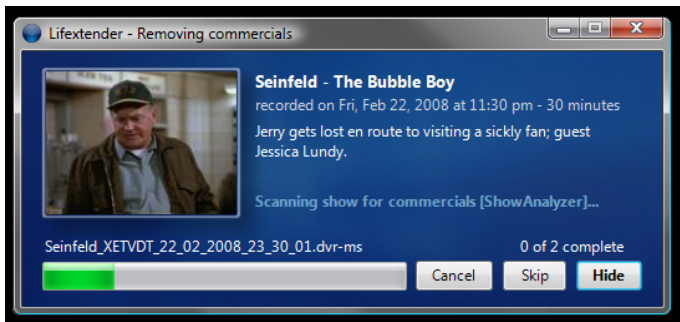
**Clipdiary.** “Maybe your computer is hanging and the program hasn’t saved the data, or maybe you copied some interesting information from a web page, but got distracted and forgot to paste it where you wanted? Or you may simply want to recall what you were doing at the computer a month or a year ago. There are many cases in which you might want to review your clipboard content.” File size is only 997 KB. Download it from here:

<http://clipdiary.com/download.php>



“Lifextender is pretty simple. It scans the directory where Media Center records TV for new TV shows. All new TV shows are queued up to be analyzed and scanned for annoying commercials. After a show has been analyzed, a new file is created from the original with commercials removed, around 3/4 the original size. The original show is then replaced by the new, commercial-free show. Rinse and repeat.” Lifextender v0.9.4.6 beta build 959.1 kb file can be downloaded from here:

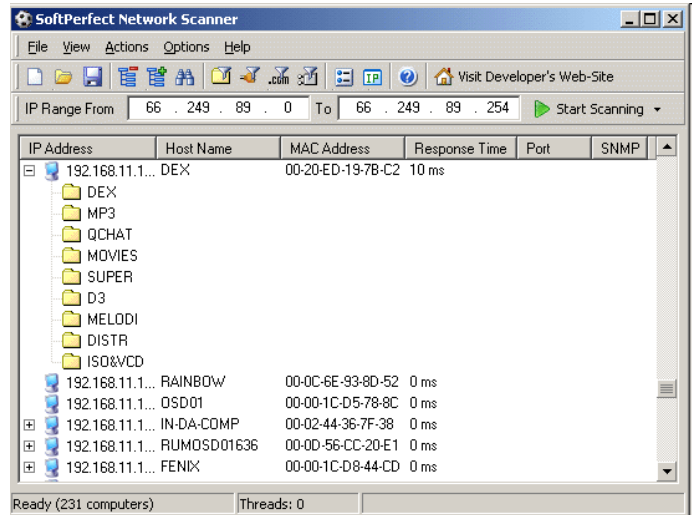
<http://www.lifextender.com/download.aspx>



“SoftPerfect **Network Scanner** is a free multi-threaded IP, NetBIOS and SNMP scanner with a modern interface and several advanced features. It is intended for both system administrators and general users who are interested in computer security. The program pings computers, scans for listening TCP ports and displays which types of resources are shared on the network (including system and hidden). In addition, it allows you to mount shared folders as network drives, browse them using Windows Explorer, filter the results list and more. SoftPerfect Network Scanner can also check for a user-defined port and report back if one is open. It can also resolve host names and auto-detect your local and external IP range. It supports remote shutdown and Wake-On-LAN.”

File size: 680 KB. Download it from here:

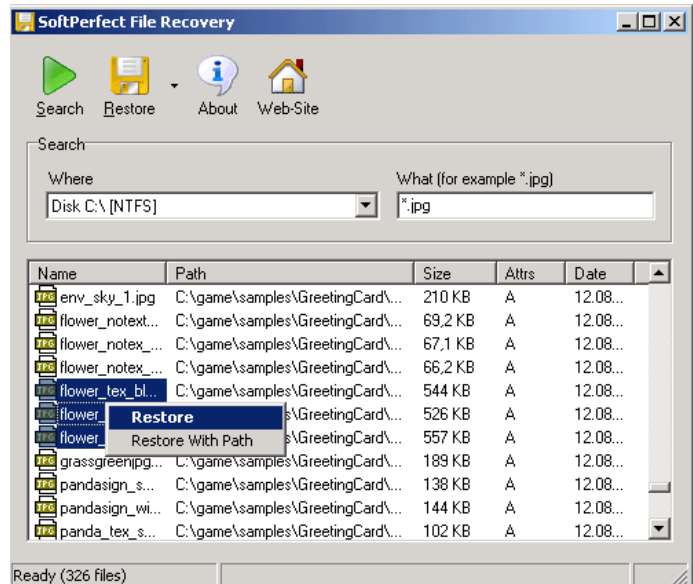
<http://www.softperfect.com/products/networkscanner/>



“SoftPerfect **File Recovery** is a free and useful tool to restore accidentally deleted files from hard and floppy disks, USB flash drives, CF and SD cards and other storage media. It supports the popular file systems such as FAT12, FAT16, FAT32, NTFS and NTFS5 with compression and encryption. If your important files disappeared and you can’t find them in the recycle bin, try this software product and get the files back to life. Easy to use, no installation is required.”

Only a 268 KB download! Get it from here:

<http://www.softperfect.com/products/filerecovery/>



## Freebies!

by Dave Bilcik, a member of the STPCC  
(Southern Tier Personal Computing Club), New York  
dlbilcik (at) yahoo.com

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It's the Holiday Season! Home & hearth, good food and lots of presents, those banking and Wall Street executives should have a fine time this year (Santa Claus made a special \*\*\*bonus\*\*\* trip just for them... Ho-Ho-Ho!). Now, what are you going to do for the Holiday? Be creative and "Have Yourself A Freebie Little Christmas." People may thank you. Discover (again) why it is called Christmas and not "Santamas" (<http://www.e-sword.net/>). You might find that you really like the story.

You have technology at your fingertips so think about what is important to the special people in your life and give something meaningful to them. The best part; it doesn't have to cost much to be meaningful. CD-Rs cost less than a first-class stamp, the most expensive 8 1/2 x 11 photo-paper you can get is under \$1.00 per sheet while regular paper is under a penny. Put something on that paper or CD that interests the people you are interested in.

Pictures, sound, movies and even free software are all good candidates if it means something to your special person. Picasa (<http://picasa.google.com/>) will help you with your pictures and slide shows. Print up a nice 8x10 of that "creative" place where you hung the mistletoe for your significant other.

If you have a crafter on your list, print up a collection of cross-stitch or quilting patterns; one spot to try is <http://www.alitadesigns.com/index.php> another is <http://www.freepatterns.com/>. Grandma might be happy to get your custom x-stitch collection but don't send her your mistletoe picture by mistake. However, be ready for some "cute" overload when prospecting for freebies on the crafting sites.

If music or video is your passion then cdburnerxp (<http://cdburnerxp.se/>) will help you with either one. It is a full featured burner that will let you make a custom CD or DVD any time you wish. Like classical music? A site that will point you to lots of free music is <http://www.classiccat.net/index.htm>. Don't violate any copy-rights and fire up your CD/DVD drive. That custom-mix lute CD is right at your fingertips.

Don't forget your web-cam or digital camera with movie mode. Give a CD or DVD with a video message telling that special family member what they really mean to you. If you are lucky, they will avoid you completely at the next family reunion.

The fact that you are reading this shows you have exquisite taste and a level of computer literacy way above the average. Help those friends who are less fortunate by cleaning up their sluggish computers. Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition (<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>) when installed and run on their machine, will give them back the performance that they have been missing.

The software is free, it helps a friend, costs only a little of your time, and proves your computer kung-fu is much stronger than theirs. Everybody wins!

Now that you have saved so much cash on creative, meaningful gifts for your friends and family, you can now reward yourself for all your efforts. Try <http://www.thinkgeek.com/> for loads of intriguing stuff.

Check out the Ion USB Turntable that will help you turn your vinyl music collection into digital goodness... the turntable outputs files in either mp3 or WAV format.

If the good will, optimism and hope of the season gets to be too much, try <http://despair.com/> for a big steaming cup of cynicism. It will help you to get back to work after the holidays.

My personal email address is [dlbilcik@yahoo.com](mailto:dlbilcik@yahoo.com) if you want to send me comments, questions or cash. Please put "Freebies" somewhere on the subject line so I will have some idea about its contents. Tell me about your best free software experience or your best cookie (... ever!) and I will pass it on.

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*the end of the story*

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## Broadsides

by Ron Broadhurst,  
a member of the Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc., Florida  
[www.spcug.com](http://www.spcug.com) [ringram728 \(at\) earthlink.net](mailto:ringram728@earthlink.net)

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These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites, and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips", "tricks", & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. enjoy and use as you will.

Ron Broadhurst

### HOW TO GET RID OF "SEND ERROR REPORT TO MICROSOFT"

Right click My Computer on the desktop or in the Start menu.  
Click Properties.  
Click the Advanced tab.  
Click the Error Reporting button at the bottom.  
Click Disable error reporting. You can select the checkbox under it if you still want to be notified when errors occur.  
Click OK.

Note that you can disable error reporting for the operating system only, or for programs only, by unchecking the appropriate box under the Enable error reporting option.

You can also configure error reporting only for specific programs by clicking the Choose Programs button.

### ALPHABETIZE START MENU LISTINGS

When you install a new program on your system, it will often appear at the end of your Start menu. Reorganizing files alphabetically in the All Programs menu does not affect how they appear in your start menu. In order to alphabetize your start menu, you'll want to click Start and select All Programs. On any file or folder right-click and then select Sort By Name. Now all of your Start menu programs are in alphabetical order. You can also sort subfolders in your Start

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menu the same way.

### MAKE YOUR QUICK LAUNCH ICONS BIGGER

Unlock the Toolbar  
Right click the QL toolbar  
Select the View tab  
Select large icons

### PIN AN APPLICATION TO START MENU

The Windows XP Start menu includes an area where two or more Microsoft applications, usually Internet Explorer and Outlook Express, are permanently positioned for easy access. You can add your favorite application to this same convenient location. Open Windows Explorer and locate the executable file for the application. Right-click the file and select Pin To Start Menu. The application will now appear in the Start menu. To remove an application, locate it, right-click it, and select Unpin From Start Menu. Alternatively, you can right-click the app in the Start menu and click Unpin From Start Menu.

### CHANGE SYSTEM SOUNDS

Through the Control Panel you can change your system's program event sounds. Click Start and Control Panel. If you're using Category View, click Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices; and Sounds and Audio Devices. If you are using the Classic View, click Sounds and Audio Devices. This loads the Sounds and Audio Devices Properties dialog box. Choose the Sounds tab. Select the sound you'd like to change in the Program events box, and then select a new sound from the Sounds drop-down menu. Or select a sound you've saved to the hard drive by using the Browse button to navigate to the sound file. Change as many sounds as you like. Save your changes as a sort of theme from the Sound Scheme drop-down menu above the Program events box. (Select the blank line and click Save As.) You can also choose to disable program event sounds. When you're finished click OK.

### SAVING E-MAIL MESSAGES

To save e-mail messages highlight the message you want to save, then click on File -Save As. Select where you want to save the message and then save it as a txt file.

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**Broadsides**  
by **Ron Broadhurst,**  
**Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc., Florida**  
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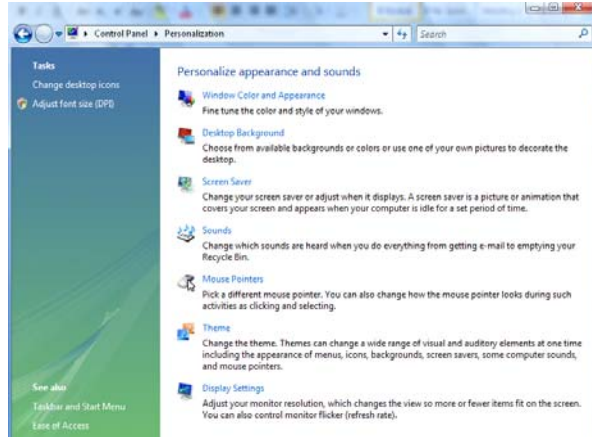
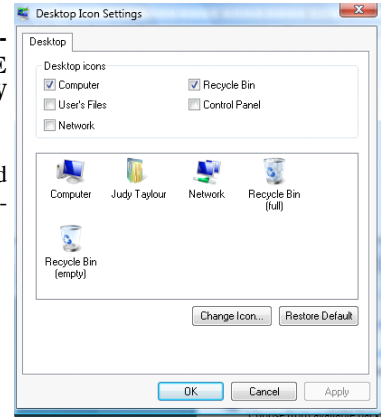
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Ron Broadhurst

### I ACCIDENTALLY DELETED MY RECYCLE BIN IN VISTA - HOW DO I GET IT BACK?

Go to Control Panel and click on the Personalization options:



Click Change desktop icons and you'll get this handy little dialog box: Click the Recycle Bin checkbox as highlighted above, click OK, and your Recycle Bin should reappear on the desktop.

### PRINTING E-MAIL ADDRESSES IN OUTLOOK EXPRESS

#### TO PRINT YOUR Email Addresses:

Print each name and address on one line:  
Open OUTLOOK EXPRESS click on File, Export, Address Book, Select Text File (Comma Separated Values) and click the Export button. Name the file, click Browse button to save in Desktop. and at the bottom line, SAVE it in Text File (\*.txt), click Next, Deselect everything except NAME and Email Address then click Finish. Click on the Text File and Print it.

#### OUTLOOK EXPRESS ADDRESS BOOK BACK-UP

From Outlook Express, click on Tools/ Address Book, then File / Export / Address Book

Choose a storage location and give it a file name. Click save e-MAIL SHORTCUT /

RIGHT click on the Desktop and choose NEW then SHORTCUT.

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In the Command line type **mailto: yourfriend@whatever.whatever**

For example **mailto: yourfriend@cfl.rr.com**

Then click Finish and you have a short-cut to your E-mail friend. Double click and your e-mail opens up ready to go.

### CONTROL PANEL SHORTCUTS

If you're tired of multiple clicks to get to your floppy drive, CD-ROM drive, D-Drive, E-Drive or to the Control Panel, you can put a shortcut on your desktop for instant access.

Open MyComputer, RIGHT click on the icon for your floppy drive, CDROM drive, E or D-Drive or whatever you want and then select "Create Shortcut". This will place an icon on your desktop for instant access to what you chose.

You can use this technique for any Folder you access frequently by putting the shortcut on your desktop. Now, your desktop becomes your operations center with quick access to any application, folder, or file on your PC.

### SHORTCUT FOR SHORTCUT

You can assign a Keyboard key combination to any Shortcut. If you RIGHT click on any shortcut icon and choose Properties, you can then type Ctrl+any letter to assign the key combination that will open your Program. It should be a unique key and something you will remember. e.g. S for solitaire. This would be of great help if you wanted to go to another program when you cannot see your Desktop.

the end of the story

## Mac versus PC

By **Sandy Berger, Compukiss.com**  
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We have all seen the popular Apple television commercials encouraging computer users to switch from Windows to Mac. Not only are the commercials convincing, but Apple has made some moves that make the Mac a viable option for computer users. In years past, the biggest drawback to purchasing a Mac was that Windows software was incompatible with a Mac. You couldn't use Windows software that was not available in a Mac version so switching from a PC to a Mac meant repurchasing all your software applications.

Then Apple made the move from Motorola processors to Intel processors. This made the Apple hardware compatible with Windows software. Any Mac that you purchase today is able to run both the Windows and the Mac operating system. You can do this by using a free Apple program called Boot Camp that is available to all Mac users. Using Boot Camp, you have to reboot the computer every time you want to switch between the two operating systems. Another option makes using Windows on a Mac even easier. If you purchase a simple virtualization product like Parallels, you can switch on the fly.

Being able to run Windows on a Mac has been a boon to Apple. In 2004 their market share in the operating system segment was a little over 3%. Today it is close to 8% and growing.

There are fewer worries when using a Mac. For the most part, Macs

(Continued on page 14)

## Advanced System Care Free V3

- Improve PC Performance -

By **Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;**  
**Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Radio Show Host**  
**iwilsker (at) apcug.net**

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WEBSITES:

**http://www.iobit.com**

**http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html**

One of the most frequently asked questions on my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM, Mondays, 6-7pm) has to do with improving the performance of a sluggish computer. One of the utilities I most recommended was the free version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care - Personal Edition, version 2. Recently IObit released an upgraded and updated utility renamed Advanced System Care Free V3, which IObit claims has over 10,000 improvements and updates. Being a fan of system improvement utilities, I had to download and install this new version, replacing the older version 2 that I have been happily using for about the past 18 months.

Going to the IObit website at [www.iobit.com](http://www.iobit.com), and downloading the new software was an easy experience, as I was given the choice of multiple download sites. I selected one of the Texas mirrors of MajorGeeks, a major download service, where the download counter of this new version indicates that over 1.5 million copies of this new version 3 have been downloaded from MajorGeeks alone. The download was about 7.6 megs in size, and downloaded remarkable fast for a download that size, to the credit of the bandwidth available at the Texas MajorGeeks website. Once downloaded, I clicked on the file to install it, and it recognized my older version 2, which it replaced. I was given the choice of language, and "skin" (background color scheme), and selected the white (really a soft light blue) as the easiest to read.

Once the install was complete, I chose to run the program. I was displayed a clean fresh graphical interface that on the left of the window gave the choices "Maintain Windows", "Diagnose System", "Utilities", and "Home". Whichever icon is selected opens the right half of the window. For my first test of the software, I chose to Maintain Windows. I was offered a check-box selection of "Spyware Removal", "Registry Fix", "Privacy Sweep", and "Junk Files Clean". I selected all of them and clicked on "Scan". In just a few minutes, Advanced System Care Free V3 detected 20 items it labeled as spyware (all were tracking cookies), 66 correctable errors

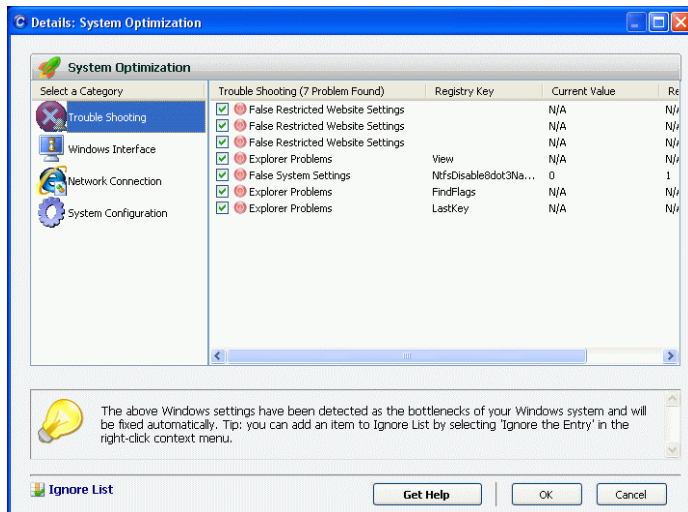


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in my registry, 29 privacy issues, and 394 megs of junk files that could be deleted. I prefer to not blindly follow what is found, so I clicked on each of the findings to review what was found. After some minor tweaking, I decided to accept what was found, and clicked on the “Repair” icon. In just seconds, all of the corrections and deletions were carried out.



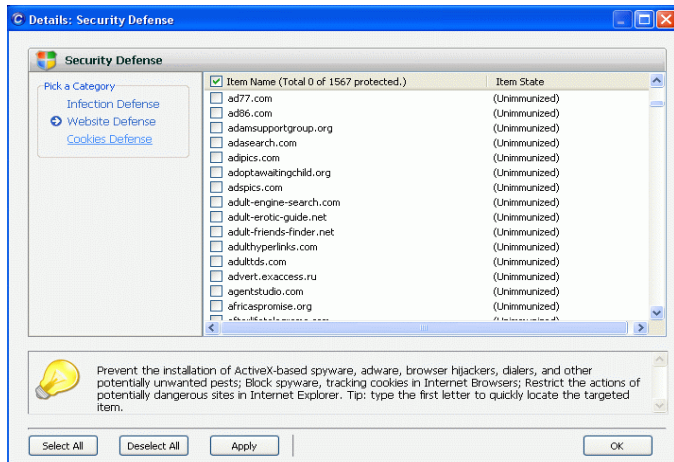
Selecting the “Diagnose System” icon, I was given the now familiar check boxes for “System Optimization”, “Security Defense”, “Disk Defragment”, and “Security Analyzer”. I checked all except Disk Defragment, as I had just recently defragged my hard drive using IObit’s free standing and excellent disk defragmentation utility, and wanted to save the time, despite IObit’s claim that the integral defragmentation utility is up to 10 times faster than some other competing products. System Optimization detected about two dozen “system bottlenecks” and corrected the system settings to improve performance. The Security Defense feature can immunize the com-



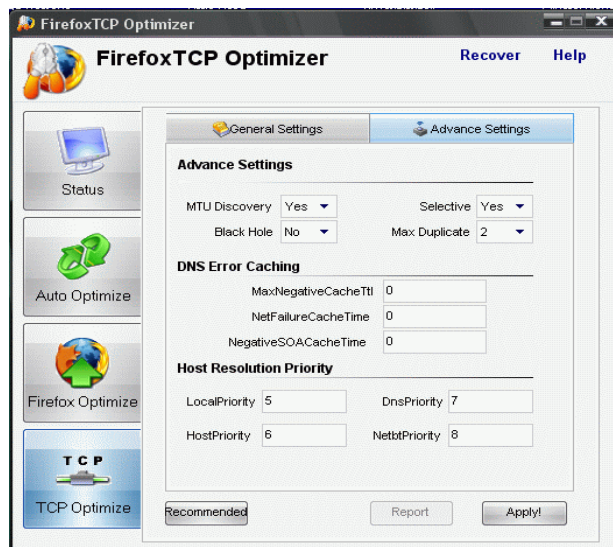
puter against thousands of malicious websites, illicit tracking cookies, browser hijackers, dialers, and other malicious software. Security Analyzer examines running programs to detect and disable any malware that may be currently running on the computer.

The Utilities selection offers 20 distinct utilities to tune-up the computer and its applications; examine the security settings and backup critical system files and settings’ and “Admin Tools” which includes an uninstall utility, as well as my personal favorite, a startup manager to identify and control what programs startup when the com-

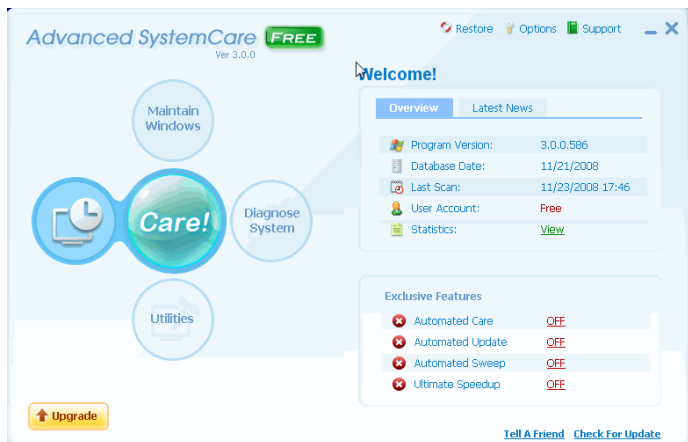
puter is booted. By cleaning up the startup, the computer will run



faster, boot quicker, and have fewer conflicts, because fewer programs will be automatically loaded. Under the Tune Up tab, I found that Firefox (my preferred browser) can be optimized for maximum performance.



The “Home” icon displays program version, database updates, most recent scan, user account (free or paid “Professional” account), and the cumulative results of the scans that had been performed. The center “Care” icon automatically runs the system optimization utili-



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ties, as a one-click performance improvement function.

As is to be expected, IObit has a comparison chart that compares the features of Advanced System Care Free V3 with its software competitors, both free and commercial. The features listed on the chart are “All-in-one secure, repair, clean, and optimize”, “Optimize and speed up PC and Internet”, “Complete registry care”, “Security features”, “1-click solution”, and “Price”. This software is compared to

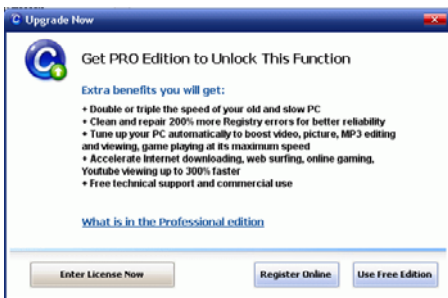
	Advanced SystemCare v3 Free	Cleaner	Registry Mechanic	Regcure	Tuneup Utilities	System Mechanic	Microsoft OneCare	Norton 360
ALL-in-one (secure, repair, clean, and optimize)	✓					✓	✓	✓
Optimize and speed up PC and Internet	✓				✓	✓		
Complete registry care (fix, clean, and defrag)	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Security features	✓						✓	✓
1-click solution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Price	Free	Free	\$29.95	\$29.95	\$49.95	\$34.97	\$49.95	\$79.95

seven major competitors (1 free and six commercial), and comes out feature rich compared to the competition. To be fair, some of the products listed have features and capabilities not included with Advanced System Care Free V3, but comparing system utilities and clean up programs, this program compares very well.

It is inevitable that users will ask why IObit would give away software this powerful; the reason is that IObit clearly wants the satisfied user to upgrade to the Pro version, which has more features and capabilities, and is currently on sale online for \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95) directly from IObit. The Pro version has additional performance improving features, a deep registry scan that roots out many more useless registry entries (the Pro version detected over 3000 useless registry entries on my computer, compared to only 66 in the free version), additional tune-up features to both improve hardware performance and web speed, and free technical support.

The excellence of Advanced System Care Free V3 has been recognized in the media with several awards, including high ratings from ZDnet, Tucows, Softpedia, Download.com, PC World, PC Magazine, and other publications. Download.com claims that Advanced System Care Free V3 is its number one most downloaded system utility, with about 9.5 million downloads, even though it has only been available for the past several weeks.

For those wanting a powerful, and feature rich utility to improve computer performance, the free version of Advanced System Care Free V3 would be a very good choice. For those who want additional features and capability, the Pro version, currently on sale for \$19.95, would be a very good choice.



the end of the story

## Why security precautions are necessary

By Bob de Violini.

a member of the Channel Islands PCUG, California

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First off for the holidays, there’s a story that illustrates just why you should always enable encryption on your wireless router (for those who use one) AND why you should be leery of any public computer for Web sites you need a password to access. A college student in Kentucky has been charged with identity theft, among other crimes, for planting malware on computers in his school’s library. The malware was a keystroke logger that captured usernames and passwords for any pages fellow students logged into. He then used this information to access their e-mail accounts and send out e-mails attempting to extort these same fellow students. He also used an unsecured wireless router to access these accounts, making it look as if someone else were actually sending the e-mails. The attempted extortion took the form of a threat to divulge personal information the thief had stolen from the compromised e-mail accounts. That leads me to our next item, WPA encryption.

As of the beginning of November, a pair of computer security researchers in Europe disclosed a technique they’d developed to partially hack WPA encryption used by a great number of wireless routers today. Before anyone thinks the sky is falling, rest assured it isn’t. Their hack involves only the traffic being sent from the router to a computer and only a small number of data packets can be cracked before the router resets its encryption. However, it is enough to be able to send just enough rogue data to a computer to compromise it with any number of known vulnerabilities. Specifically, it involves the TKIP protocol that WPA and WPA2 are allowed to use. The specifics of just how this trick is accomplished have been made available to hackers in many areas of the Internet, so it’s just a matter of time before it begins spreading. TKIP and AES encryption are selectable by the user in many wireless router configurations, and some have WPA with TKIP selected by default. I strongly recommend you check your wireless router’s encryption configuration, and if it’s set to use WPA with TKIP, you switch to WPA2 with AES if at all possible. This is especially important if you use a wireless router to run a network for a business. I have my Linksys wireless router set to use WPA2 with AES encryption. AES is significantly harder to crack than the older TKIP protocol. One final note on this, however. For AES encryption to work, both the router and the network adapter in the computer must be able to use it. Some older hardware may not support AES encryption, so an upgrade may be needed. If you’d like some more information, please drop me a line at the email address at the top of this article, and I’ll gladly send you a link or two.

### Scare of the month department

Even though Halloween has already passed, we have the Scare of the Month Department chiming in with some news. There is a new phishing e-mail making the rounds disguised as a warning from the U.S. Federal Reserve. The message bears the usual dire warning of a scam and contains links for readers to follow to get more information. However, there are a few clues that give the message away as a hoax, the biggest one being poor grammar. The links in the e-mail lead unsuspecting readers to a fake site that will redirect them to a search page for porn, which will download a PDF file with malware to their computer. The malware comes in various forms, including

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one that attempts to make your computer a member of a botnet. A brief notice can be had here, courtesy of USCERT: <http://tinyurl.com/66lzv9>. The link does go to the US-CERT site; I just used Tiny-URL to shorten the URL's length.

### Patches Galore Department

As I mentioned above, there have been some exploits on the loose for a bit for Adobe Acrobat, and the full program and the reader have been updated as a result. The latest versions are 8.1.3 and 9.0. Adobe has also updated its Flash player, standard fare in most browser installations, to version 10.0.12.36 to patch publicly reported vulnerabilities last month as well. Not to be outdone, Mozilla has also issued a patch for its Firefox browser and Thunderbird e-mail client. These patches address several bugs that have been brought to light in the past month to month and a half. The latest iterations of Firefox are 2.0.0.18 and 3.0.0.4. The latest version of Thunderbird is 2.0.0.18. I have read reports of some problems with version 3.0.0.4 and 2.0.0.18 of Firefox, with most of the reports being about version 3.0.0.4. The solution for those having problems after upgrading to 3.0.0.4 has been to go back to 3.0.0.3. I have updated my version to 2.0.0.18 and have had no problems. Some patches take longer than others to develop and test, however. One of the patches issued by Microsoft on November's Patch Tuesday took them seven years to develop and test. The bug it patched was first reported by a security researcher in March 2001. Microsoft claims that it tried patching it when it was first reported but wound up killing off most networking applications with the patches when they underwent testing. However, they didn't give up and finally found a way to patch the vulnerability earlier this year.

While we're speaking of Microsoft, it has announced plans to abandon its One Care concept of computer protection service and develop free anti malware applications for release in 2009. The new concept is code named "Morro." As usual, folks are coming down on both sides of pro and con when it comes to this development. Microsoft hasn't given a firm release date for the new software, but has said that One Care will come to an end on June 30. Well, that's all for now. Here's wishing everyone a joyous Holiday season and a Happy New Year! Always practice safe computing by keeping your applications and your anti-malware applications fully up to date. Make sure to run your anti-malware scanner(s) once a week, even if they don't flag anything in between scans.

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\* *Wi-Fi Protected Access* — From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA and WPA2) is a certification program administered by the Wi-Fi Alliance to indicate compliance with the security protocol created by the Wi-Fi Alliance to secure wireless computer networks. This protocol was created in response to several serious weaknesses researchers had found in the previous system, Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP). However, researchers discovered a flaw in 2008 that relied on older weaknesses to retrieve the keystream from short packets to use for re-injection and spoofing.[1] The protocol implements the majority of the IEEE 802.11i standard, and was intended as an intermediate measure to take the place of WEP while 802.11i was prepared. Specifically, the Temporal Key Integrity Protocol (TKIP), was brought into WPA. TKIP could be implemented on pre-WPA wireless network interface cards that began shipping as far back as 1999 through firmware upgrades. Because the changes required fewer modifications on the client than on the wireless access point, most pre-2003 APs could not be upgraded to support WPA with TKIP. The later WPA2 certification mark indicates compliance with an advanced protocol that implements the full standard. This advanced protocol will not work with some older network cards.[2] Products that have successfully completed testing by the Wi-Fi Alliance for compliance with the protocol can bear the WPA certification mark.*

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the end of the story

## Surviving the Switch to Digital TV

By Andy Marken, Marken Communications

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At the stroke of midnight on Feb. 17, 2009, the analog transmissions that have beamed free television over the air in the United States for over half a century will disappear for good. They will be replaced by digital signals, many of which are already broadcasting, in what will be the most significant change to television since the introduction of color.

The "digital switchover" brings with it higher image quality, better sound and a level of versatility and flexibility previously unattainable through free television. It also brings with it a number of significant headaches, as confusion over exactly who will be affected is inspiring panic in viewers fearful of being left behind in a haze of snow and static as the rest of the country moves into the future. Many of those who will be affected know that the deadline is fast approaching, but are unsure of how to prepare for it. Thankfully, a solution is simple, easily attainable and won't cost you a dime.

There are two major reasons for the switch from analog TV broadcasts to digital TV. First, digital signals offer superior image quality and allow for the transmission of high-definition signals over the air. This means that a properly equipped HDTV can receive local high-definition broadcasts that will look about as good as what you'd get from cable or satellite television.

Second, switching from analog to digital frees up real estate on the broadcast spectrum for other uses, as digital signals are more efficient and take up less bandwidth. Telecommunications companies like Verizon and AT&T have spent nearly \$20 billion to secure the rights to the frequencies that were previously occupied by channels 52 through 69, in the hopes of using that airspace to improve their wireless communication networks.

What the digital switchover is actually doing is changing the language that TV broadcasters use to communicate with your television. Since 1941, televisions in the U.S. have utilized a set of broadcast standards laid out by the National Television System Committee. Big broadcast towers sent out information over the air using these NTSC standards and were picked up by the television antenna in your living room. Inside your TV, an NTSC tuner interpreted the information and properly displayed it on screen.

The digital switchover is introducing a new language, a new set of broadcast standards, this one designed by the Advanced Television Systems Committee. On Feb. 17, those broadcast towers are going to stop speaking NTSC permanently and start speaking ATSC. But unfortunately, your old television set doesn't know how to translate ATSC into moving pictures and sound. Just about all televisions manufactured and sold after Mar. 1, 2007 feature ATSC tuners, but if you purchased a television any earlier than that, chances are your TV won't be able to pick up over-the-air broadcasts once the switchover occurs.

The solution: A digital converter box, essentially an external ATSC tuner that sits on top of your existing television and is linked between your antenna and your TV. The ATSC signals are grabbed by the same antenna you've always used, then passed to the digital converter box that translates the ATSC signals into something your NTSC television can understand. They are easy to hook up and available at a wide variety of stores, including big box stores like

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Best Buy, Wal-Mart and Target, as well as online retailers.

Digital converter boxes cost between \$40 and \$70 on average, but since the digital switchover is being forced upon consumers, Congress has stepped up and created the "TV Converter Box Coupon Program." Under this initiative, each American household is entitled to two \$40 gift cards that can only be used to purchase a digital converter box. Individuals can apply at the official Web site for the DTV switch. You can apply for coupons until Mar. 31, 2009; they expire 90 days after they are issued. You might want to apply for them sooner rather than later because the government has allocated a finite amount of funding.

TV viewers who pay for cable or satellite service need not worry. The digital switchover only applies to over-the-air broadcasts, so consumers who get their television directly from Comcast or DirecTV will not be affected at all, and service will continue uninterrupted and unchanged as the DTV deadline comes and goes.

There is, however, a subtler, unrelated analog-to-digital switchover taking place among cable companies, one that could affect subscribers. It has usually been possible to view a small number of basic cable channels by plugging the coaxial cable directly into a television set, bypassing a cable box entirely.

This was a quick and easy way to bring cable TV to many rooms in a home without renting multiple cable boxes. Unfortunately, this may not be possible in the near future. Cable companies like Comcast and Time Warner are slowly phasing out their analog cable services in favor of digital. By switching over, they free up more space on their cable networks that can be allocated to new high-definition channels and interactive services like "On Demand." The downside is that when all cable channels are converted to digital, renting a cable box will be required to see any channels at all.

Another point of confusion that retailers and manufacturers have been reluctant to clear up: consumers need not purchase an HDTV to weather the digital TV switchover.

In addition to the converter boxes, new standard-definition CRT televisions are still available, and they are required by law to include the necessary ATSC tuners. While an HDTV will allow viewers to take advantage of digital TV's high-definition potential, it's important to know that there is a lower-cost option available as well.

With the emergence of free, digital, over-the-air television that includes HD transmissions, it will be interesting to see if Americans, the majority of whom now pay for their television service via cable or satellite, might see the benefit of switching back to the old rabbit ears. While the selection of over-the-air broadcasts will never be as comprehensive as pay services, that same glut of content is often cited as an annoyance--lots of channels that subscribers will never watch.

Of course, all this will depend on how smoothly the digital switchover goes, and whether or not people are actually able to see the improvements on their screen. With just a few short months to go, having the right knowledge to make it through is absolutely crucial.

In Pictures:

10 Tips For Switching To Digital TV == <http://tinyurl.com/5tj8wq>

See Also:

Ask This Before You Buy An HDTV -- <http://tinyurl.com/57jfbu>

## Microsoft Releases

### Photosynth Panoramic Image Creator

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Advisor;  
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WEBSITE:

<http://photosynth.net>

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Many of us take a lot of digital photographs. I have hundreds of digital photos from two recent weddings; others may have vacation photos, family photos, scenic images, or other content. Would it not be interesting if a collection of photos with some degree of commonality could be seamlessly "stitched" together creating a 3-D panoramic view of the subject? For example, if I took the wedding pictures of my daughter's recent wedding, the images could automatically be merged into a single three dimensional, easily navigable image of the entire wedding ceremony and reception. The panoramic image can be manipulated, rotated, zoomed, and viewed from any direction. If I can do this with wedding pictures, imagine what you can do with landscapes, theme parks, or other images. This new service from Microsoft, known as Photosynth ([photosynth.net](http://photosynth.net)) is currently free, but does have several provisos, one of which is that all images created will be considered as "public", and can be viewed by anyone on the Photosynth website.

Photosynth is graphics intensive, and may not run on older computers lacking adequate video power and capabilities. It will run on Windows XP (SP 2 or SP3), and on Vista. Mac users can use Photosynth if running Boot Camp. Images are displayed on a browser, and Internet Explorer 7 as well as Firefox 2 and 3 are supported. 256mb of memory is the absolute minimum to run Photosynth, and 1gb is recommended. In order to function, Photosynth installs two programs to the computer. One is a web browser plug-in (both IE and Firefox compatible), and an application aptly named "Photosynth" which is used to create panoramic images. Install of both programs is fast and easy, and is accomplished with a single download. Since the actual processing is done by Microsoft, the images (or parts of them) are uploaded to Microsoft by the Photosynth software, which requires a broadband connection. Microsoft has posted a warning, "All synths are public. Your photos will be visible to everyone on the Internet. In order to create images, it is necessary to sign up online; users who have a Windows Live ID can use it for Photosynth access.

Photosynth performs two material functions; it reconstructs the scene or object from several two-dimensional digital photographs, and then examines the images for similarities, and mathematically use that information to estimate the real shape of the object, and the vantage point the photos were taken from. Using the digital data, the three dimensional space is created, and the merged photos can be easily navigated as if they were a single photograph. Microsoft's new "Seadragon" technology delivers only the required pixels to the browser, making the loading of images that may have included hundreds of individual photos a fast and pleasing experience.

On the main page for Photosynth ([photosynth.net](http://photosynth.net)) are dozens of samples of the output than can be created. Some of the examples are the Sphinx, composed of 239 photos taken by National Geographic;

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a walk around Eton College, 427 photos; The Taj Mahal, 179 National Geographic photos; the Space Shuttle, 246 photos; and many others. It is important to note that this computing power and service is available for free to all of us who are willing to make our images public. The "Recently Synthed" link shows the most recently created scenes (many dated today, as I type this), which include street scenes, still life, sunsets, Hawaiian scenery, Nathan's Hotdog Eating Championship – 2008, backyards, portraits, kittens (cute), athletic events, and other topics. It is a lot of fun just browsing these synths and seeing what others are doing and what the system can do for digital images.

The potential applications for Photosynth are almost endless. It could be used by real estate agents to easily create an interactive three di-


mensional view of a house or an apartment; industries could use it for training purposes; products can be promoted via 3D images that allow the viewer to explore the details of a product; likewise car dealers and manufacturers could easily create interactive views of any cars in inventory. Criminalists (as in CSI) could easily create 3D crime scene images; the potential uses are unimaginable.

If you are willing to release your image to the public (in the current iteration), and would like to create interactive 3D panoramic photos from your digital photos, then Photosynth would be a great place to experiment. At present the service is free, only requiring a Windows Live ID registration. If you have any interesting photos of the same subject, try synthing them.

### Synth1

**What is Photosynth?**

Imagine being able to share the places and things you love using the cinematic quality of a movie, the control of a video game, and the mind-blowing detail of the real world. With nothing more than a bunch of photos, Photosynth creates an amazing new experience.



Whether it's a quiet creek in the woods of Pennsylvania, or the grandeur of the interior of St Paul's cathedral, Photosynth puts you there like nothing else can.

It can capture the sweeping scale of a mile of the Grand Canal in Venice, and focus in on the exquisite rot at the waterline of a beautifully decaying palazzo doorway.

### Synth2

**Photosynth**

Grand Canal by Vaporetto  
243 photos, 82% synthy



Go

of 179 Photos - 100% Synthy

Create your Synth  
Synth and upload your own photos

Explore Synths  
See what other people are synthing

About Photosynth  
Learn about Photosynth and our team

### Synth3

**Ready to Make Your Own Synth?**



This first version of Photosynth has some limitations that you need to be aware of:

1. All synths are uploaded. They're big, so you need to use a broadband Internet connection.
2. **All synths are public.** Your photos will be visible to everyone on the Internet.
3. Like the viewing experience, the "synther" only runs on PCs (XP and Vista).
4. You'll need to **Sign Up** for a Photosynth account. It uses Windows Live ID.

For tips on how to get the best results when making your own synth, check out our guide or just watch the How to Synth video.

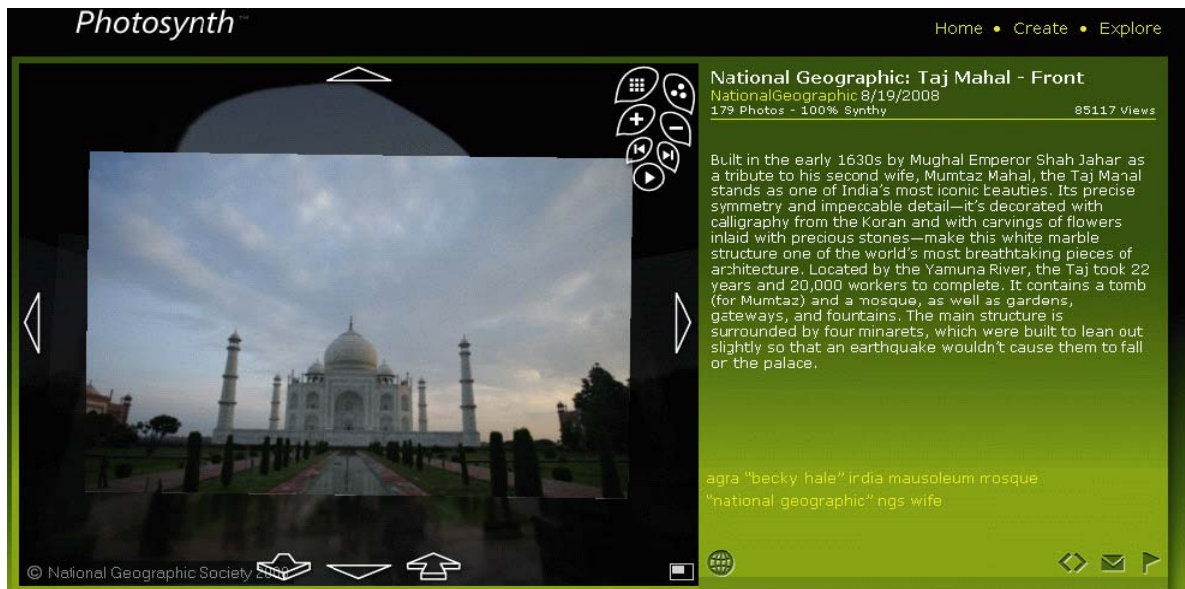
[Create a synth](#)

### Synth4

**Photosynth™**

Home • Create • Explore

**National Geographic: Taj Mahal - Front**  
National Geographic 8/19/2008  
179 Photos - 100% Synthy 85117 Views



Built in the early 1630s by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a tribute to his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, the Taj Mahal stands as one of India's most iconic beauties. Its precise symmetry and impeccable detail—it's decorated with calligraphy from the Koran and with carvings of flowers inlaid with precious stones—make this white marble structure one of the world's most breathtaking pieces of architecture. Located by the Yamuna River, the Taj took 22 years and 20,000 workers to complete. It contains a tomb (for Mumtaz) and a mosque, as well as gardens, gateways, and fountains. The main structure is surrounded by four minarets, which were built to lean out slightly so that an earthquake wouldn't cause them to fall or the palace.

agra "becky hale" irdia mausoleum mosque  
"national geographic" ngs wife

© National Geographic Society

## Mac versus PC

By Sandy Berger, [Compukiss.com](http://Compukiss.com)

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We have all seen the popular Apple television commercials encouraging computer users to switch from Windows to Mac. Not only are the commercials convincing, but Apple has made some moves that make the Mac a viable option for computer users. In years past, the biggest drawback to purchasing a Mac was that Windows software was incompatible with a Mac. You couldn't use Windows software that was not available in a Mac version so switching from a PC to a Mac meant repurchasing all your software applications.

Then Apple made the move from Motorola processors to Intel processors. This made the Apple hardware compatible with Windows software. Any Mac that you purchase today is able to run both the Windows and the Mac operating system. You can do this by using a free Apple program called Boot Camp that is available to all Mac users. Using Boot Camp, you have to reboot the computer every time you want to switch between the two operating systems. Another option makes using Windows on a Mac even easier. If you purchase a simple virtualization product like Parallels, you can switch on the fly.

Being able to run Windows on a Mac has been a boon to Apple. In 2004 their market share in the operating system segment was a little over 3%. Today it is close to 8% and growing.

There are fewer worries when using a Mac. For the most part, Macs are almost completely virus and spyware free. It's not that Macs are actually more secure, it's just that with the viruses and programs that infiltrate computers to steal information and to send out spam are operating system-specific. In other words, the hackers have to create their programs to run on either Windows or Mac. Since the Windows operating system is currently running on over 90% of computers, that operating system is the most likely target for the bad guys. So right now, Macs are ignored by most hackers.

It can also be said that Macs run their software better than PCs. The reason that this is true is that because Apple produces all of the hardware they can have strict control over every hardware component. So the software producers know exactly what hardware their software will run on. In the PC world, slight differences in the hardware can cause software headaches. As you know, with HP, Dell, Acer, Sony, Gateway, and many others producing the hardware, there is compatibility, but not necessarily full hardware/software compliance.

So why doesn't everyone switch to the Mac? Well, it can be summed up quite easily in one word, "Price". Macs always have been, and are still are, more expensive than PCs. Often Macs can cost several hundreds of dollars more than comparable Windows machines. This week Apple announced their first sub-\$1,000 laptop computer. The MacBook will now be selling at \$999. Their higher-end MacBook Pro will start at \$1,999. In contrast, you can buy many Windows laptops for under \$1,000, and some are now even under \$500.

Another thing that makes the Mac more costly is that when you purchase an Apple computer it comes with the Mac OS X operating system. If you want to run Windows on your Mac as well, you will have to purchase a full version of Windows. As I write this, Amazon is selling the full version of Windows XP Home Edition for \$179. A full version of Windows Vista Home Premium is currently selling at Amazon for \$222. If you want to add the ability to easily switch be-

tween the two operating systems, you will have to dish out about \$80 more for Parallels or another good virtualization program. In some cases those added costs can almost double the cost of a cheap PC.

The other reason that some people won't switch to a Mac is that they don't want to have to learn to use a new operating system. But if you are currently using Windows XP and you purchase a new computer now, you will have at least a slight learning curve to make the transition to Windows Vista.

If Apple would lower their prices and create a free program that would let you run Windows without rebooting, I wouldn't mind purchasing the additional Windows software necessary to be able to run both operating systems on a Mac. In fact, I think that those two changes would have people flocking in droves to the Mac. But then, if the Apple operating system gains a bigger market share, hackers will start targeting it as well as Windows. Oh well, I guess life in the computer world really does mirror life in the real world. It seems that nothing will ever be perfect in either world.

Parallels Desktop for Mac is the first solution for Intel-Macs that give you the flexibility of running Windows on a Mac OS X simultaneously without rebooting. C

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*the end of the story*

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## Ubuntu & Linux Software

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

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I suppose some of you might be wondering why I have been writing about the Ubuntu Linux operating system and Linux software. As I noted in last month's article my laptop is now my sole computer. Although it has a Pentium 4 processor it only has 512 MB of RAM. Naturally, that means it is incapable of running Windows Vista. But it does easily run Ubuntu with more than enough memory to do multi-tasking with no reduction in speed. I also know that there are a number of the members of the SPCUG that use computers that are running Windows 98 or Windows XP. The point is, that it is not necessary to try to upgrade these computers to run Vista or to buy a new computer. Instead you have the free alternative of installing Ubuntu or another version of Linux. This article will discuss some of the range of free Linux software and how easy it is to install it.

The original installation CD of Ubuntu included the OpenOffice software. OpenOffice includes a word processor, spreadsheet and presentation applications. These are fully compatible with the components of Microsoft Office. I frequently receive documents prepared in MS Word and they open directly into OpenOffice Writer. I can edit, comment and save a copy in the OpenOffice format. Then I can return the modified document to the originator in MS Word format with all the edits and comments intact. The same is true for spreadsheets. The OpenOffice presentation application (Impress) reads, writes and modifies PowerPoint files as easily as Writer works with documents. OpenOffice also includes a Drawing application. Drawing is an application that I haven't used.

Other included software with Ubuntu are Ekiga (internet phone software), Pidgin (internet messenger), Evolution (e-mail), and a re-

*(Continued on page 12)*



*(Continued from page 11)*

mote desktop viewer. Graphics software includes the F-Spot photo manager, GIMP Image Editor and Xsane scanner software. Also, there is a CD burner, movie player for DVDs and two music players.

I grant you that the included software doesn't always meet all the needs for many users. So Ubuntu has several ways of installing additional software. I mentioned last month about installing the drivers for my printer, scanner and the wireless modem. This month I will continue with other applications that are the equivalent of those that I used under Windows. The installation of these applications was much easier than installing drivers for the accessory hardware.

The first step in installing any application is to go to the Applications – Add/Remove menu. When this application runs it provides you with a list of all the software available through Ubuntu and its third-party providers. On the left side of the window are listed various categories that you can highlight and the appropriate applications are then listed on the right side. When you highlight a specific application, a description appears in the lower portion of the window. There is also a search box that you can use to find a specific program or a group of programs.

Since I maintain my financial records on my computer I wanted a financial program that ran under Ubuntu. Not knowing the specific name, I just searched on the term "finances". This brought up a list of financial software. One of the interesting aspects of the Add/Remove application is that programs are rated based on feedback from users using 1 to 5 stars. There was a 5 star application listed, GNUcash, which can import files in the Quicken format. So I put a check mark in the box by the application name and then clicked on the "Apply Changes" button. This brought up another window for verification of the changes to be made. After clicking on "OK", the application was downloaded from the Internet and installed on the hard drive without any further action on my part. A shortcut icon was also added to the Office portion of the applications menu. There was no reboot required to complete this process. After the installation, the "Add/Remove" application reported the successful installation and remained open in case I wanted to use it further.

My Windows financial software was Microsoft Money. Supposedly it will export its data files in the Quicken format. I did that and then copied the files from the Windows partition to the Ubuntu partition. However, the import into GNUcash was not really successful. I'm not sure why but I suspect there was information missing which resulted in misidentification of some of the accounts. Anyway, I selected an arbitrary date and entered opening balances for that date. So now, it is working perfectly and is in agreement with my bank balances. Using it is even somewhat easier than working with either Money or Quicken. Plus, the price is right.

Another application that I needed for Ubuntu was a genealogy program. Here again I was able to find a five star program, GRAMPS. (Very appropriate name I thought.) It was also available through the "Add/Remove" application so installation was completed quickly. GRAMPS imports GED files as do many genealogy programs. So I exported my files from my Windows software in the GED format then copied the GED file to the Ubuntu partition. The import into GRAMPS was essentially a two-click operation. Everything, including notes and references, were now available in an Ubuntu application. GRAMPS also has more report formats than my Windows software included. So I consider it a very successful replacement.

For quite some time I have used a PDA, specifically a Sony Clie which runs Palm Pilot software. The Sony CD loaded the Windows version to the hard drive and also included software to synchronize

with the PDA. Since I have considerable contact information in the Clie along with many memoranda, I really wanted to be able to run this under Ubuntu. In the System-Preferences menu there is a selection for PalmOS devices. Now that sounded like it would be quite simple to install the applications necessary to run the Clie. Clicking on the selection runs the Gnome-Pilot application which helps the user to determine the settings for synchronizing with the Clie. Unfortunately, it could not find the Clie PDA. So I had to go back online to the Ubuntu forums to see if I could find the secret. It turns out that getting a PDA recognized and synced with Ubuntu is not always simple. After spending considerable time reading various solutions I came across a command line entry that showed the entries where my Clie was being recognized by Ubuntu. The PDA was properly identified by vendor and product ID's. Now all the information I had gathered indicated that the PDA should be listed as using a USB connection and usually ttyUSB0 and ttyUSB1. Much to my surprise my printout showed the Clie as using ttyUSB9 and ttyUSB10. The Gnome-Pilot software refused to accept either of these as valid locations. However, another application, J-Pilot, accepted ttyUSB10 and synced with the Clie when the sync button was clicked. The synchronization transferred all of my information directly into the J-Pilot software. This software works on the desktop in a very similar manner to the Clie and Pilot software I had used under Windows. Successive synchronizations have also been successful. So that was one less application that would need to run under Windows.

There has been one big disappointment in the hardware setup. I have a multi-function media card reader built into the laptop. It reads SD cards as well as xD, MMC, and memory sticks. This reader works great under Windows as a way to transfer photos from my camera to the computer. However, there is apparently no driver available for this to work under Ubuntu. The card reader is manufactured by O2 Micro and they apparently don't believe Linux is here to stay so they have no plans to create Linux drivers for any of their products. At least that's the quotation from a response to a query from a Ubuntu user. So when I have photos to transfer to my computer I can either reboot into Windows, or I can connect the camera with a USB cable. The USB cable works fine as Ubuntu recognizes the camera right away. It also opens the F-Spot Photo Manager which allows me to choose the pictures and the location where I want them saved.

One of the applications included with Ubuntu is Brasero, a CD/DVD burner. When I first tried to use it, it refused to recognize my DVD+R discs. It would read and write DVD-R/RW with no difficulty. Since I had a supply of the +R discs I decided to look for other DVD burning software. In the ADD/Remove application there were several CD/DVD burners listed. One of them was five star application called K3B. It was written primarily to work with the KDE desktop that is an alternative to the GNOME desktop. The KDE desktop comes with Kubuntu and has an interface that is closer to the one found in Windows. Anyway, K3B will work with GNOME, so let ADD/Remove install it. Any software that you add through Add/Remove can be removed simply by locating it in the list and removing the checkmark that indicates it has been installed. So now I have both Brasero and K3B installed. I also found, the next time I wanted to burn a DVD, that Brasero would now work with my external burner and the +R discs. I do like the interface for K3B better than Brasero, but they both work.

As you can see one of the nice attributes of using open license software is the ability to install it and use it at no cost. If you don't like it, you simply remove it. It's certainly not that simple in Windows. So, if you want to try a Linux OS on your computer download a "Live CD" and try it out. Also check out the online help forums. I think you'll find them easier to understand than much of the material

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Moving on to Vista – Part 11

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian,

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One of Vista's disk management systems, that is new to me, is a dynamic disk and the ability to extend a volume. Suppose you have a volume or folder on your hard drive called Pictures for your photographs. If you run out of space on your hard drive, but you have space available on another hard drive installed on your PC, you can extend your Picture volume onto that drive to make it bigger. There are two limitations to this process. First, you cannot reverse the process. Second, once created you cannot remove the space you've used on the second disk to reduce the size of the volume. The only way you can do this is to create a new volume on one of your drives, copy all of the contents of the spanned volume to it and then delete the spanned volume. The other limitation is you cannot extend the Windows System volume.

I'm not really sure how I would use this feature. My inclination is to create new volumes and not try to span a volume across two hard drives. Perhaps when working with video files, which can consume enormous amounts of space, this might be a useful feature.

How often do you start an operation on your computer which opens a dialog box on the desktop that requires you to click on "OK"? So you move your mouse to put the pointer on the "OK" box and click on it. You probably do this many times in a day. Did you know that there is a setting to automatically move your mouse pointer to the OK button so that all you have to do is click on it? Here's how you can configure Windows Vista to do this.

First click on the "Start" button and then the "Control Panel". Under the "Hardware and Sound" entry in the "Control Panel" box, click on "Mouse". The "Mouse Properties" box will open. Click on "Pointer Options". Locate "Snap To" and click to create a check mark to activate "Automatically move pointer to the default button in a dialog box".

While you're looking at the "Pointer Options" box, consider the next option line, "Display pointer trails". If you occasionally have trouble locating the mouse pointer on the desktop, consider this option. Experiment with the length of the pointer trail setting. If you don't like it, turn it off.

On a slightly different topic, let's talk about shortcuts. Many application programs create a shortcut on your desktop when you install the program. They're a convenient way to start a program without have to go to the Start menu. There are other ways to use short-cuts too. Suppose you have a spreadsheet or genealogy file that you frequently update. Locate the file with Windows Explorer, right-click on the file name, scroll down the pop-up menu to where it says "Create Shortcut" and click on it. Now, before you close the Windows Explorer window, locate the new shortcut and drag it to your desktop. Because Windows (XP as well as Vista) associates application programs with certain type of files (i.e. Windows Excel with spreadsheets), when you click on the file shortcut the application will start and open the file.

But suppose you can't see your desktop icons and short-cuts because they're hidden by something else? Maybe your Internet browser or e-

mail program is running and completely cover your desktop. Let's go back and look at the shortcut on your desktop. Right-click on it. In the windows that opens, notice the four tabs at the top. Click on the tab marked "Shortcut". In the middle of the Shortcut menu you'll find something marked "Shortcut key?". You'll probably see "None" entered in the box next to it. Click on the box and press and hold down your Ctrl key. In the box you'll now see "Ctrl + Alt + ". While still holding down the Ctrl key, press the the key you want to use to access the shortcut. Now click on the Apply button and then the OK button. Your shortcut key is now set. Just press the three key combination to instantly access your spreadsheet or genealogy file.

Before we leave the topic of Shortcuts I'll just mention that when you open a Shortcut's properties window, the first tab is marked "General". If you click on "General", one of the first entries is "Type of File" and "Open with". If you click on the adjacent "Change" button, you'll see a list of possible application programs to access the file. You can select from this list or click on "Browse" to locate another program.

I'm hearing more rumors about Windows 7 but, at this point, they are still rumors. One thing seems certain, Windows 7 will have more in common with Windows Vista than Windows XP. Whatever you learn about Windows Vista should help you when you upgrade to the next version of Windows.

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*the end of the story*

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## Cloud Computing

by Sister Dorothy Robinson, Editor, OMUG News, The Olympia  
Microcomputer User Group, WA

[www.oly mug.org](http://www.oly mug.org)

Newsletter (at) [oly mug.org](http://oly mug.org)

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When did you first hear or see the term "cloud computing"? I'm usually the last to know anything, it seems, so I've only recently started noticing this term on the Internet. I did some research, and some say it's the greatest thing since sliced bread—but others think it isn't such a hot idea. In very simple terms, cloud computing is this: rather than having programs and files on your computer, you would store files online and also access applications (programs) online (think Google Docs or MS Office Live; think Flickr or Buzzword). Your computer really wouldn't need to have much on it, and you'd have to have an Internet connection in order to run applications or access your files. Not only individuals, but also companies would be doing this (and in fact, are doing it now). One of the major benefits is that a company (or an individual, for that matter) has the use of combined server resources they might not otherwise be able to afford "in house."

The ever-vigilant Richard Stallman warns against the use of cloud computing: "Somebody is saying this is inevitable—and whenever you hear somebody saying that, it's very likely to be a set of businesses campaigning to make it true... One reason you should not use web applications to do your computing is that you lose control," he said. "It's just as bad as using a proprietary program. Do your own computing on your own computer with your copy of a freedom-respecting program. If you use a proprietary program or somebody else's web server, you're defenseless. You're putty in the hands of whoever developed that software." Food for thought.

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*the end of the story*

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## Windows 7 is coming soon

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS  
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If you ask 100 people their impressions of the Microsoft Vista operating system, 95 of them will tell you that Vista is no good, even if they have never seen or used it.

It is obvious that public opinion of Vista is in the mud. Microsoft made some major blunders when they introduced Vista. There were not enough drivers ready, so many printers, scanners, and other peripherals were incompatible. There was no noticeable speed increase over Windows XP. Vista requires much additional memory and more hardware, so it was often impossible to upgrade current Windows XP computers. Also, Microsoft did not woo the press as they did when they introduced Windows XP, so Vista got a lot of awful publicity. Vista is not a bad operating system, but Vista has gotten a bad name. Microsoft has lost the battle and they know it. So they are working on a new Windows operating system.

Microsoft hopes to make a clean break with previous Windows operating systems with this new version of Windows. They are especially distancing the new operating system from the "wicked" Vista operating system. This is obvious in the name they have chosen for the new OS. They are not using year names like Windows 2000. They are not using what they refer to as inspirational names, like XP or Vista. Instead, they will go back to their original numerical naming convention. There was a Windows 1, Windows 2, and Windows 3. Now there is to be a new operating system called "Windows 7".

If you have been following the versions of Windows as they have been introduced, you will find it difficult to comprehend that this next version is actually the seventh version of Windows, but Microsoft says that it is, so that is that. It's Windows 7.

More important than the name, however, is the fact that Microsoft cannot afford another misstep. They must make this operating system faster and better than Vista. Microsoft has already showed off Windows 7 at some developer's conferences and has made some announcements and promises.

Windows 7 will be built on the Vista base, so peripherals that work with Vista, which now includes most printers, scanners, and other devices, will also work with Windows 7.

Windows 7 will have a smaller storage footprint and will use less memory. This will allow it to run on the new small Netbooks that are now running Windows XP or Unix because Windows Vista cannot run on their small solid state drives.

Windows 7 will boot up and shut down faster. It will have improved battery life on laptops. It is also promised to have an easier-to-use interface and to be easier to network in a home environment. Although Microsoft is officially targeting January 2010 for the launch of Windows 7, logic indicates that they will have Windows 7 ready for next year's holiday selling season.

This holiday season you'll find some great prices on computers running Microsoft Vista. If all goes well, when the holiday season rolls around in 2009, the stores will be filled with computers running the next version of Windows, Windows 7. Microsoft has made mistakes

before, but I think they will do everything they possibly can to make Windows 7 a winner. So if you are looking to buy a new PC, this year will be a good time to buy, but, if you can wait, next year may be even better.

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the end of the story

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*(Continued from page 5)*

are almost completely virus and spyware free. It's not that Macs are actually more secure, it's just that with the viruses and programs that infiltrate computers to steal information and to send out spam are operating system-specific. In other words, the hackers have to create their programs to run on either Windows or Mac. Since the Windows operating system is currently running on over 90% of computers, that operating system is the most likely target for the bad guys. So right now, Macs are ignored by most hackers.

It can also be said that Macs run their software better than PCs. The reason that this is true is that because Apple produces all of the hardware they can have strict control over every hardware component. So the software producers know exactly what hardware their software will run on. In the PC world, slight differences in the hardware can cause software headaches. As you know, with HP, Dell, Acer, Sony, Gateway, and many others producing the hardware, there is compatibility, but not necessarily full hardware/software compliance.

So why doesn't everyone switch to the Mac? Well, it can be summed up quite easily in one word, "Price". Macs always have been, and are still are, more expensive than PCs. Often Macs can cost several hundreds of dollars more than comparable Windows machines. This week Apple announced their first sub-\$1,000 laptop computer. The MacBook will now be selling at \$999. Their higher-end MacBook Pro will start at \$1,999. In contrast, you can buy many Windows laptops for under \$1,000, and some are now even under \$500.

Another thing that makes the Mac more costly is that when you purchase an Apple computer it comes with the Mac OS X operating system. If you want to run Windows on your Mac as well, you will have to purchase a full version of Windows. As I write this, Amazon is selling the full version of Windows XP Home Edition for \$179. A full version of Windows Vista Home Premium is currently selling at Amazon for \$222. If you want to add the ability to easily switch between the two operating systems, you will have to dish out about \$80 more for Parallels or another good virtualization program. In some cases those added costs can almost double the cost of a cheap PC.

The other reason that some people won't switch to a Mac is that they don't want to have to learn to use a new operating system. But if you are currently using Windows XP and you purchase a new computer now, you will have at least a slight learning curve to make the transition to Windows Vista.

If Apple would lower their prices and create a free program that would let you run Windows without rebooting, I wouldn't mind purchasing the additional Windows software necessary to be able to run both operating systems on a Mac. In fact, I think that those two changes would have people flocking in droves to the Mac. But then, if the Apple operating system gains a bigger market share, hackers will start targeting it as well as Windows. Oh well, I guess life in the computer world really does mirror life in the real world. It seems that nothing will ever be perfect in either world.

Parallels Desktop for Mac is the first solution for Intel-Macs that give you the flexibility of running Windows on a Mac OS X simultaneously without rebooting. C

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the end of the story

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**From The Dealsguy  
by Bob (The Cheap skate) Click  
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group  
January 2009**

My wife drives a 2003 GMC Sonoma pickup and while I could write a book about its shortcomings, she loves it. We bought an extended warranty on it, but for only five years or 50,000 miles because we didn't think we would own it more than five years. We noticed oil leaks on the garage floor and took it to the dealer for diagnosis. The five-year warranty recently ended, but the truck only has 60,000 easy miles on it. The service advisor told us it had three leaks and explained that one was an oil pan leak, another is oil leaking from the timing chain cover and the other was the rear transmission seal leaking.

I was surprised about so many leaks, but asked the price of repairs. He said that the oil pan could not be removed because of the front end cross member being too close so they must pull the engine for those repairs. The total bill for all the leaks would be a bit over \$1,700. I was astounded because I felt that 60,000 miles was premature for so many oil leaks.

I called GMC Customer Service, who has not been much help in the past with another ongoing problem, and explained the situation and disappointment with the reliability of the vehicle. The customer rep said he would take it up with the Zone Manager and get back with me. The dealership advisor said not to expect much these days. A few days later, the zone manager said they would be happy to help me and said they would pay for the gaskets and give me a 10% discount on the repair cost. I was stunned and told them where they could shove that help and that they had insulted my intelligence. After all, the gaskets would probably cost \$20 and most dealerships give senior citizens a 10% discount, so there was no help there and they said OK, sorry, goodbye. I would have been happy with 50% or something like that. No wonder GM is going bankrupt with that kind of product reliability and customer relations attitude.

My son used my GM discount to purchase a GMC Sierra pickup and has had his share of warranty problems with it. First was a problem with the brake rotors, which the dealer would not replace when they became warped at 2,500 miles. They resurfaced them and the problem came back. Later, when the vehicle was just out of warranty, the diesel engine's injector pump went out. Customer Service said they would repair it at no cost, but it took two weeks to get the parts and they would not pay for the rental vehicle (interestingly, a Toyota pickup) which had always been customary. There were other problems. The first GMC pickup before he purchased his present one had transmission problems that they couldn't seem to repair and he had an attorney force GM to refund his money under the Lemon Law. This will be his last GMC, just like us, or probably even a GM product, for that matter, and that's where my pension comes from.

#### **New Product From Diskeeper**

Ms. Teal Thompson, Director of Public Relations, sent me the specifications and pricing (below) for Diskeeper 2009 (just released). Diskeeper has always been a superb product.

#### **New Features List:**

##### **Improved Trialware:**

Trialware will now take an analysis of the volume(s) "before" and "after" initial installation. A comparison report is then generated, demonstrating improve conditions.

##### **Improved InvisiTasking:**

The new, more assertive InvisiTasking can now operate in competitive environments, in conjunction with other always-on/idle-time tasks that run at lowest priority while still guaranteeing completely invisible, zero-overhead, operations.

##### **IPv6 (Internet Protocol version 6):**

Diskeeper 2009 now fully supports communication, such as remote management on native IPv6 networks.

##### **Improved Free Space Consolidation:**

About 90% of the available free space will now be grouped into less than a dozen free space segments. This will increase file write performance.

##### **About InvisiTasking**

"Instead of the operating system scheduler allocating the entire computer system to each process, one at a time, InvisiTasking empowers the system to allocate resources (CPU, memory, disk, and network) allowing overlapping usage of separate resources, not just reducing system overhead, but eliminating it altogether.

"InvisiTasking is what makes Diskeeper defrag in real time with zero overhead. Systems simply run fast, operate at peak and are reliable, constantly. The drives are always optimally maintained.

"Diskeeper 2009 includes the new InvisiTasking 2.0! New functionality in InvisiTasking will allow it to be more assertive, while still guaranteeing completely invisible, zero-overhead, operations." (Check their Web site for further information.)

##### **Diskeeper 2009 with HyperFast™ SSD optimization:**

"The new Diskeeper 2009 is now available as a bundle with the new HyperFast SSD optimization product.

##### **HyperFast™:**

Solid State drives (SSDs) promise users a faster and better experience than conventional hard disk drives (HDD). However, Microsoft® Windows® is not optimized for NAND Flash as a principal storage device, such as with SSDs. The result is that, over time, customers of systems with SSDs will experience a very noticeable and dramatic deterioration (up to 80%), to the degree that their computers operate much slower than they would with a hard disk. The new HyperFast feature bundled with Diskeeper 2009 is specifically designed to eliminate performance degradation, and restore performance to like-new conditions."

Special pricing only applies on multiple purchases.

##### **Diskeeper 2009 Home:**

ESD \$29.95  
2-pack \$44.95  
3-pack \$54.95  
5-pack \$89.95

##### **Diskeeper 2009 Professional:**

ESD \$59.95  
2-pack \$89.95  
3-pack \$149.95  
5-pack \$269.75

Order through their online store at <<http://www.diskeeper.com/purchase/purchase.aspx>>.

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### Want A DVD Creator?

DealsGuy Note: I have not actually tried this product.

ZC Software has released ZC DVD Creator Platinum V. 6.2.2, a new version of ZC DVD creator software that converts almost any video source to burn on a DVD directly without having to store it on a hard drive. ZC DVD Creator Platinum lets users customize their menu templates to match the user's style, giving the movie a polished look. The software will edit, author and burn all DVD formats ever known. With ZC DVD Creator Platinum, it is possible to easily create personal DVDs.

ZC DVD Creator Platinum supports all known video source formats, such as AVI, DIVX, XVID, RM, RMVB, MPEG, MPG, VCD, SVCD, WMV, ASF, ASX, SWF, MOV/DAT, FLV (Flash Video), 3GP (3gpp, 3gp, 3gp2), MP4 (mp4, mpeg4), Nullsoft Video (NSV), AVS, Decrypted DVD File (VOB), MKV, DV video, mts, and m2ts. Also, the user has new menu template themes that can easily customize the new Hollywood-style DVD menus. It's possible to trim and split-cut the videos, specify the DVD background Music and Images, edit the DVD Menu short description and playback preview the video file.

The video encoder guarantees the best DVD picture quality within one hour. If Nero is installed, the software automatically selects Nero as the default burning engine. ZC DVD Creator Platinum supports wide screens (16:9) as well as the usual TV screens (4:3). It also supports both NTSC and PAL TV systems. The advanced Dolby Digital audio will strengthen the movie with theater quality sound. The software includes automatic matching of a broad range of DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW burners. The user can burn a DVD Movie image file placed on a hard disc to a DVD Disk directly without storing them on a hard disc.

ZC DVD Creator Platinum has a friendly and easy to use interface that allows the user to create a DVD movie just by one click. The new version of ZC DVD Creator Platinum has an upgraded video clip edit feature.

### Pricing and Availability

ZC DVD Creator Platinum is compatible with all versions of Windows. Ordering the software on a CD-ROM is \$15 USD extra for shipping.

### Special offers are:

- ZC DVD Creator Platinum and ZC Video Converter at \$60 USD;
- ZC DVD Creator Platinum and QR Photo DVD Slideshow at \$60 USD;
- ZC DVD Ripper and ZC Video Converter at \$65 USD;

By purchasing ZC DVD Creator Platinum the user gets lifetime FREE Technical Support and FREE upgrades. For firsthand appraisal, a free trial version is available. The user has a 30-day money back guarantee.

Product page: <<http://www.videoxdvd.com/product.htm>>  
Download link: <<http://www.videoxdvd.com/download.htm>>  
Company web-site: <<http://www.videoxdvd.com>>

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



## From the Presidents desk



### Hi PACCsters!

Here comes a time when another year of our lives bites the dust. So while we observe the event and see it fade away, lets do this in good company of your PACC peers and apply some potluck cure to make this happen. Another way to put it: Lets have a friendly, end of the year PACC meeting with the customary annual benefits. Bring what you like to eat to share! PACC will supply the drinks and coffee, some pastry. Yes we will have cold cuts and cheese, and the condiments. There you have it! POTLUCK! Come to see you friends!

I suppose you noticed the size of the December 2008 PACC TALK has almost doubled. There is a lot of good reading in these articles. A lot of good advice. Please, kindly read it all! See if you can find the perhaps unintended puns. Download some of the programs on the second page. Give it a try!

See you all on Sunday December 21, 2008, at the PACC POTLUCK meeting at the usual time! Come on over!

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*

(Continued from page 12)

Microsoft makes available. Whatever you decide, enjoy your computing!

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

*the end of the story*

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](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>.  
Visit my Web site at  
<<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.



*the end of the story*

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

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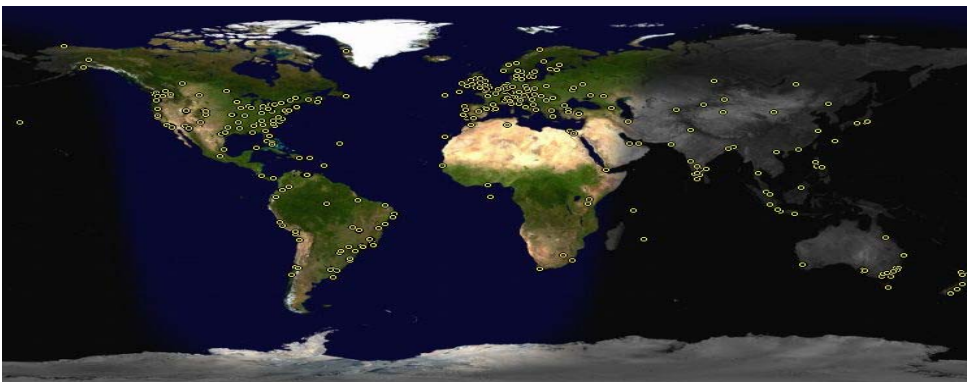
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***PACC HELP LINE***

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](mailto:pacccomm@aol.com)



**FOR SALE**

Date: 7/13/2008  
**4 GIG USB flash drive - \$15,**  
**Hard drives @ 20 cents per GIG. 160G,**  
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 Contact Vishnu: [vka@zoominternet.net](mailto:vka@zoominternet.net)

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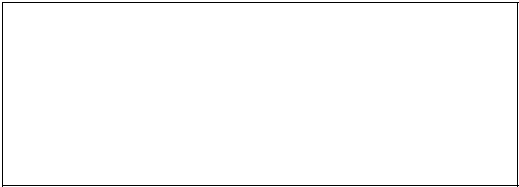
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**NEXT PACC MEETING  
 IS ON DECEMBER 21, 2008**

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



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***NEXT MEETING: December 21, 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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