

## Make Your Own PDF Files

by Paul Witheridge

*Sarnia Computer Users' Group*

One of today's biggest computing irritations is competing standards! While there are standards out there for such things as e-mail, file transfer and Internet protocols, and HTML coding for Web display, someone is always "pushing the envelope" (to be polite) or "ignoring them" (to be blunt). Document sharing is an example. Many think that Microsoft Word is the standard for documents but it is only one in a field of word processors. At one time, they simply pretended each other didn't exist and if you created a document using one word processor, you couldn't share it with others who were using a competitive product. Now, at least the major brands provide the ability to convert between formats but often at the expense of some of your painstaking efforts to create that Beautiful Format. Enter Adobe and the Portable Document Format (PDF). If you can create (or "export to") a PDF file with your word processor, you can produce a "stand-alone" document that anyone can see or print exactly as it was created fonts, pictures, whatever but without the program that created it! Catch? Of course there's a catch! First of all, you need the Acrobat Adobe Reader to see/print these. YS, it's free; but it is a few megabytes in size and usually has to be downloaded and installed. But how to create the PDF in the first place? Are we still somewhat at the mercy of the Adobes, Microsofts and Corels? Read on!

There are two freeware (free for non-commercial, home use) programs that can enable you to create (and read) standard PDF files (as well as postscript files): MakePDF, (<http://www.lexacorp.com.pg>

soJvrnakepdJ2.zip) a freeware utility for converting the postscript translations from GhostScript to a Portable Document Format file and GhostScript, <ftp://rmirror.cs.wisc.edu/pub/mirror/Vgleost/AFPL/gS703/gS703w32,ae>, a free postscript interpreter which translates postscript documents. **Note:** If the version numbers change, these links will become outdated.

If you visit the Lexacorp site first, there is a link there to GhostScript as well as to MakePDF. Stuart also offers several other MAKEPDF tips and tricks at <http://www.lexacorp.com.pg> After downloading both of these, install GhostScript by double-clicking the GS703W32.EXE file. Then simply unzip MAKEPDF21.ZIP into the folder of your choice (no installation needed). I must assume that the reader can do this using their favorite compressed file un-packer.

Then, you need to define a printer that can produce postscript output such as the HP Laserjet III PostScript+ in your selection of printers. You do not need to have this printer connected, you merely need to add/install it as if it were installed and configure it to send output to a .PRN file. Here's how to do it:

In Windows, click Start/Settings/Printers and then double-click "Add Printer". Choose "Local Printer" and click "Next". Now select the printer you'd like, making sure that it can produce postscript. The HP Laserjet III PostScript+ is an obvious choice but other manufacturers are available on the list you'll see. After selecting one, you'll be asked where to output your data and this is where you will choose "FILE" and then click "Next". Most likely you will not want this to be your default printer, but this option is always available later if your needs should change. Click "Next" and then "Finish" and

you will most likely be prompted to insert your Windows installation CD in order to retrieve the necessary driver files. After the printer driver files have been copied, you will be prompted for a PRN filename (in case you wanted to print a test page). You can click "Cancel" to skip this step. Did you know that you could also rename this printer installation to something more helpful like PostScript Creation? Right click it and rename!

Once the process is complete to this point, you will have an additional printer option whenever you wish to "print" a document from any application you are using. When choosing this new option you have just installed, you will be asked for a filename and destination folder since the output will not be a "hard copy" on paper, but a .PRN file on your computer.

We now need to create a way to easily send these PRN files created by your newly installed postscript-capable (phantom) printer driver to MAKEPDF which will use GhostScript to finally create the PDF file.

One way to provide this "connection" is to add a shortcut in your SendTo links that will appear when you right-click a file in Windows Explorer (or other file manager) and select "Send To". Open your \Windows SendTo folder and right-click a blank spot. Click New!Shortcut and insert a command line similar to the following, but insert the proper path for your installation of MAKEPDF in place of the bracketed portion. [C:\Utils]\MAKEPDF.EXE]

Click "Next" and then name it MakePDF or whatever you like. Click "Finish" and you're done. Now you can right-click any PRN file created by your phantom printer and then choose SendToIMakePDF to create your PDF file. You could also create a short-

cut on your desktop in the same way and just drag and drop PRN files onto the icon.

There are a few other clever tricks the more advanced user can perform either by defining a new filetype (see end of this article) or using macros in your word processor or creating a custom printer port or having your PDF sent directly to your e-mail client but you can read about those. in Stuart McLachlan's (author of MAKEPDF) Readme text file that comes with MAKEPDF. Most of us will be quite happy with a shortcut in the SendTo folder!

### Using MAKEPDF

The first time you send a PRN file to MakePDF, you will be asked if you want to locate the GhostScript program. Click "Yes" and browse your way to the GSWIN32.EXE file which, if you used the default location will be in the C:\GS\G57.03\BIN folder. (Note that there are two similarly named executable files at this location. The one with the "C" is for command-line operation.) Single-click the GSWIN32.EXE file and click "Open" and this path will be saved in a MAKEPDF.INI file for future reference and you won't have to repeat this step.

MakePDF will now open and you will see the path and filename of your (input) PRN file and the same path but different file extension for the output PDF file. Unless you want the PDF file to be put somewhere else or have a different name, you can accept the default offering.

There are options offered, most of which I usually ignore; but here is a brief explanation of them as I understand them:

*Delete Input File:* deletes the PRN file after it has been translated to save collecting large numbers of these files.

*Lower Case Output:* produces a PDF filename with all lower case letters for feeding

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to other applications which may require that.

*Sticky Output Directory:* use this if you want the folder you set in "Output Filename/Directory" always to be the destination of your PDF files.

*View Output File:* check this if you want Acrobat Reader to open your new PDF as soon as it's created.

*Auto-Exit:* on success check this to save having to click the "Quit" button.

*No Messages:* all message boxes are suppressed. I wouldn't recommend this for the beginner.

Choose the version of PDF file you wish to create and after a few seconds, you will see a confirmation dialogue box that the process has been successful. NOTE: In case your intended recipient has an older version of Acrobat Reader, it may be best to create an older version PDF. The resulting PDF file you have now created can be double-clicked to be opened in Acrobat Reader and it will appear exactly as you created it in your original application and anyone with Acrobat Reader can do the same. And print it! But the Reader does not allow editing, just reading and printing. This can be a very good thing when you don't want your document altered by others!

*For the Advanced User*

For the more adventurous, (once you are comfortable that you have everything working) you could even establish a new filetype (change PRN to something completely new that is not already registered on your computer) so that a simple double-click on files of that type will start MAKEPDF and open them. This involves first avoiding any of the extensions already listed in Start~Settings~Folder options~File Types

and then in there creating a "New Type" and specifying a command line similar to the following to open those files:

[C:\Utils]\MAKEPDF.EXE" %1 /D /V1.2 /OC:\My Documents\PDFfile.PDF again, inserting the proper path for your installation in place of the bracketed portion.

NOTE: If you have difficulty with Acrobat Reader opening PDFs with a double-click, I've found that a reinstall of Acrobat Reader usually solves this.

*Paul Witheridge (ssuccess@ebtech.net) is Shareware Librarian of the Sarnia Computer Users' Group and a Past President He has been a member of SCUG for 13 years, and is a semi-retired computer consultant. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.*

### Dealing With Browsing's Little Annoyances

by Sandra Medlock

*Alamo PC Users Organization, Inc.*

A few years ago, one of the most annoying features on Internet websites was blinking text. Then came dancing animals. And frames which left you confused as to what you were looking at or what you were bookmarking.

Today, savvy web page designers have raised the annoyance bar and can leave you trapped in their website. This is a particular favorite of some adult and pornography designers.

You'll get an innocuous, generic e-mail message with a link to the website, and when you click the link and find yourself on the home page of a pornographic site, you find you're unable to leave the pages. The

first time this happens, it's scary, for it seems like the pornographer has reached across the Internet and seized control of your computer.

What's actually happened is that the page contains a script that directs the browser to continue opening pages when you try to close the window. If you have a slow dial-up connection, you can try to close the windows. On some occasions, I've been able to escape a trap by using the Go/Goto or history option in my browser. Otherwise you may have to shut your browser down to kill the action. Using the File/Exit command usually does the trick (or try the keyboard shortcut, Alt+F4). If it doesn't, use the Ctrl-Alt-Del key combination to bring up your Windows task dialog box. Select the Netscape task and click the End Task button.

Another annoyance is rather simple to handle. Many sites use pop-up Netscape windows to advertise products, newsletter subscriptions, or services. This can be managed by simply closing the pop-up window. However, there may be a sequence of pop-up windows that open. If I find a site too annoying with its pop-up windows, I just avoid the site and look for another that meets my need. Sometimes depending on pop-ups to spread your message can be risky. Several months ago, a long-awaited shopping site was panned by Internet critics because of its numerous pop-up windows.

Some web designers like to control the visitor's connection to outside sources, so they use two tricks: opening a new, controlled browser window or viewing the outside material within frames.

If you click a link which opens a new browser window, closing that new window will return you to previously active window.

Many times, however, a user won't realize a new window has opened until he or she tries to use the back button and sees that it is grayed-out. Use the taskbar in Windows 95 or 98 operating systems to keep track of open windows and close the ones that aren't necessary. The open new window is useful when you want to keep a static window (like results or an auction closing) but continue to surf the net.

I like the technique used by Barbara Mikkelson in her San Fernando Valley Urban Legends pages. In her older legends pages, she coded the link to an outside source which opened a new browser window that contained no menu or toolbar. When you finished reading the message, you clicked the X button in the upper right hand corner to close the window and then returned the window with Mikkelson's web pages.

But what if you want to reference a link and return to it later? Well, you could look at the page source code and try to find the link reference in the HTML code. An easier way is to right-click the mouse when you are in the abbreviated window and choose Add Bookmark or View Info from the Netscape shortcut menu. View Info will list the page and image URLs. In Internet Explorer, use Properties from the shortcut menu.

What if you're viewing a page that uses frames? You can Use the shortcut (right-click) menu again to bookmark or view info on the frame.

Note: If you are trying to print or bookmark information that is viewed in a frame, make sure you have clicked on the frame before selecting the option. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to print a frame and ending up with the table of contents frame or bookmark

When I'm fighting a web designer's control of the framed material, I will often use "Open frame in new window" from the shortcut menu. Another feature I find useful when determining if a page has frames (in Netscape sorry, I don't use Internet Explorer enough to find this feature in their browser) is to click the file menu and see if the menu options include Save. . . Send. . . or Print this Frame.

Here's a little trick for viewing images in Netscape. Have you ever wanted a closer look at an image? You can use View Image from the shortcut menu to open the image in a new browser window. I find this technique helpful when I'm looking at pages with broken picture links. This seems to be a common problem on auction sites. But even though the link is broken on the main auction page, I can usually right-click the link, select View image, and see the image in a new window.

What happens if an HTML or Javascript trap forces you to close your browser, but you want to reopen and try to resume where you left off? Open the browser and use the history file to resume your surfing (avoid the last or first entry in the history that's usually the one that caused your browser to crash or forced you to close).

And speaking of history files, they're a good source for finding files you forgot to bookmark. You can set your browser options to save history files for a certain period, or you can also open the history file and delete all the entries. I dunno, if someone in my household spent a few hours on the computer and I noticed the history file was empty, I might be a little suspicious. On the other hand, if I don't want my husband to notice that I've spent a lot of time on Ebay

looking at auctions for Beanie Babies, I may be tempted to clear the history cache myself. *Hint:* If you are trying to cover your tracks, you can selectively delete entries from the history file. But don't forget to erase or clear the file and location bar caches.

The location bar, or URL field, records your keystrokes when typing in web addresses. It then quickly fills in the address the next time you begin typing the URL. I use this technique when checking pages on the company website as a quick way to get a page without having a voluminous bookmark file.

One final annoyance is one encountered with the Netscape Messenger window. I understand the need to promote items through its e-mail Preview Pane (on start-up), but their promotions are a real pain in a controlled corporate environment. Too many times I've had users think the directive to upgrade Netscape Communicator Now! or try the newest version of RealAudio is coming from the IT department. If the start-up page referenced in the preview pane annoys you too, you can change your preferences script to reflect a different or blank webpage. You can find the steps to edit this file in Netscape's knowledge base or e-mail me at [[sandra@cains.com](mailto:sandra@cains.com)] for the instructions. There are some tricks to this, so the exercise is not for the novice user.

So, now you've learned how to deal with HTML annoyances. Go take on the Net!

*Reprinted from PC Alamode, the newsletter of the Alamo PC Organization, Inc. Sandra Medlock is the software trainer and webmaster for Lancer Corporation, leader of the Core1DRAW SIGs for Alamo PC, and an online auction enthusiast*



## Preventive Maintenance

### Clearing Computer Clutter

by Russell James

*The Alamo PC Organization, Inc.*

**W**ith the amount of time that we spend on our computer these days, it is amazing that we all don't have hard drives that are filled to capacity. Programs take up an enormous amount of space compared to just a few years ago. Temporary Internet files can take up more space than we used to have on our drives. We install and uninstall programs thinking that the writers will be sure to get rid of the files that were put into your system by the installation program. Some of the programs that get installed will add themselves to the startup of your computer. Some of these same programs will not be used but will continue to run in the startup taking precious system resources from other programs that you do use. We need to take the time to clean up the software on our system. Let's take a look at what you can do to help alleviate the clutter.

Let's start with an area that is always at the top of my list. I hate to have items that start every time that I turn on my computer. I believe that if I want a program to start I can click on the icon that the installation program wrote and start it. I don't need a program to run in the taskbar that will allow me to start another program. Put an end to the wasted resources. Those of you with Windows 98, ME or XP can use a program called msconfig to look at the items that are starting every time that your computer comes on. For XP the only areas that you want to change are within the Startup tab. For you Win9x people, you will also have Autoexec.bat and Config.sys. These two

should not have much in them. You should know what every item on these tabs is. If there is a program that you don't recognize, search your hard drive for the program and look at the properties. What company made the program and what is it supposed to do. Search the Internet for the name of the program. Does anyone know what the program scam32.exe is used for and why it would be in your Startup folder? Know what you are running on your system and find out if you don't know.

If you have programs that you have installed that you do not use anymore such as trial software that you have downloaded, use the uninstall program in Control Panel to remove them. It is always a good idea to go into Windows Explorer and look for the folder that the program was installed into to be sure that the folder was removed. A lot of the programs will not delete the folder because there will be files that have changed since the program was installed. These files will be left on your hard drive to take up space that some of you can not afford to lose. While we are on the subject of downloaded software, try to use one folder to download programs into. This way you will know that everything in the download folder could be deleted if the space was needed.

The next item we need to look at is the Windows temporary files. When Windows is running, it creates files to swap data between the hard drive and memory. This is called the swap file and should be cleaned out every time your computer is restarted. In a perfect world this sounds like a good plan but it is not the way that it works in the real world. There are times that Windows does not shut down correctly and these temporary files will be left on the system. These temp files along with files that are left

over from previous installations will be left in the Windows Temp folder on your system. For those of you that are using 2000, XP or Windows 9x with user profiles will have to look a little harder for your temp files. The easiest way to get to them is to right click on the Start button and then click on Explore. This will take you to the folder that has the files that are specific to the user that is logged onto the system. Under current user there will be a hidden folder called Local Settings that will have your Temp folder. Most of the files that are in this folder can be deleted without causing any problems. The only ones that you will not be able to delete are the ones that Windows is currently using.

The next item that we can look at is the Internet Cache. If you are using Internet Explorer you can use the Control Panel icon to delete the Temporary Internet files. You also have the option of setting the amount of space that your system will allocate to the temporary files by clicking on the settings tab. I have found that the more space that you allocate for Temporary Internet files, the faster Web pages will load. If you are low on hard drive space, this is an area that you could save space by lowering the amount that Windows will reserve. This will be a setting that you will need to change based on your individual needs.

Another area I have found that will eat up an enormous amount of space is the Recycle Bin. By default, every item that you delete from your computer will actually be sent to a holding folder called the Recycle Bin. You have the option to not use the Recycle Bin if you choose not to but I would not recommend turning this option off. I like the fact that I can delete something and then wait a couple of days to be sure that I

haven't deleted something that I needed to keep. If after a couple of days there are no problems, I will then clean out the Recycle Bin and then the items will be gone for good. You also have the option of changing the amount of space that Windows allocates for this folder. In Windows Explorer, right click on the Recycled folder and then click on properties. Windows will use up to ten percent of your hard drive space by default. On a ten gigabyte drive, which is small by today's standards, this could use up to one gigabyte of space on your hard drive. I don't like to have that many deleted files on my system, so I have set my Recycle Bin to use one percent so that only about 100 megabytes of space can be used. This way if I don't empty the Bin manually, and I fill it up, the oldest items will be cleared out instead of taking up so much space on my system.

The last item we need to cover is your mail program. Every e-mail that you receive takes up a small amount of space on your hard drive. If the e-mail has an attachment, the e-mail will take up as much space as the e-mail plus the attachment. If you forward the e-mail with the attachment you will have the original e-mail with attachment and a copy of the same that will be stored in your Sent Items folder within your e-mail program. If you are hurting for space this would be a good place to look. Most of the e-mail programs have an option to view the folders. You can then look at the individual e-mail to delete ones that you do not want or need to keep. If there is an attachment that you want to keep, you will probably have saved a copy of the file to your hard drive. This is another copy of the file so the original e-mail can be deleted to save space and clean up.

There is a program called Disk Cleanup that will allow you to automate the cleanup process. You can set this program to run on a regular basis with the Maintenance Wizard. If you choose to use this program you will lose the control that you have by doing the items manually. If you would rather have the cleanup taken care of for you then I would suggest using this program. The main idea is that if you are not going to clean up manually, then you should set the Disk Cleanup program to do the job for you. With a regular program of cleaning up your system and then running Scandisk and Defrag you will have a system that will run better and keep you happier.

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## The DealsGuy

by Bob Click  
Greater Orlando Computer  
Users Group

### Technology At Work

My wife and I worked as security for a trade show somewhat different than we have ever worked. The National Business Aviation and Aeronautics show. It was split between the Orange County Convention Center (trade show displays) and the Orlando Executive Airport, a smaller regional airport in Orlando, where about 150 business jets, some state of the art, some used, and other jets refurbished for business use, were on display. It's fun to see all the corporate type jets, but something that really caught my eye had nothing to do with the jets. It was a giant projection screen outside mounted up on 30-foot towers. It was 4 PM and I could see the movie on the

screen as plain as day, even though the sun was shining on it.

I asked the technicians where the projection was coming from and it turns out it is an LED type screen made up of 10" x 10" modules and the entire screen was 10' x 16'. It's easily repaired if there is a problem just by replacing the faulty module. I was impressed by this technology made by Saco that could be plainly seen in spite of the sun shining on it. It is valued at a million bucks if you are interested, or you can rent it from Saco like these AV people did. Nice for the home movies, wouldn't you say!

### SRUG Fun Weekend

My wife and I traveled to Atlanta for the Southeastern Regional Users Group (SRUG) conference and had a great time. The organizers, Michael Rogers, Steven Morgan and Rose Lynn put in a great deal of time, along with the many other volunteers, and it paid off with a successful event. Here are some interesting numbers. They had 68 attendees representing 24 user groups. Eleven user groups were Mac, thirteen were Win/DOS and one was Linux. 24 registrants were Macintosh people and 44 were Win/DOS. Two also represented the Linux group. Pictures at [<http://www.gcmac.org/srugc>].

Atlanta PC UG and Gold Coast Macintosh UG (from south FL) each had nine registrants. The camaraderie was great and even a short refreshment break was planned between the roundtables for a bit of chitchat. Lots of raffle prizes. It's already in the planning stages for next year and I recommend it. It was not part of the event, but the Interop/Comdex show ran during the preceding week and a few attended that show. All the meal events (starting Friday evening) had vendor sponsors, and even the refreshment breaks between the RTs had a sponsor.

Michael said they were proud to note they came out in the black, and with some seed money for next year. Way to go Mike! The Sunday luncheon, venter fair and prize drawings were kind of rushed though, because many attendees were from Florida and wanted to start the long drive home.

Many people who made it a point to come over and talk to me, thanking me for all my work. Talk about getting the big head, I hope I stayed humble. It was sure encouragement to keep the column going.

### Still Good

All investors should know that the High Growth Stock investing solutions deal is still good for this month. If you go for the FREE 60-day trial, it is fully functional software along with the data download and the market analysis newsletters, and it's good for a full 60 days from the time it is registered. This is only for the serious investor, but that doesn't mean a novice can't learn, so try it.

If you are in the mood to check it out, go to [<http://www.highgrowthstock.com/Order/Trial.asp?from=Click>] to order your free 60-day trial. If you choose to continue the subscription after the free 60 days, your one-year subscription will be extended to 14 months for the one-year price. Wow, 16 months total service for the price of only 12, what a deal. I'm just getting started with mine, but I'm excited.

The Centuriansoft package (SoftClan e-cryptor & Steganos 3 Security Suite bundled together for just \$39.96 including S&H) is still good and all the information is still posted on my Web site (<http://www.dealsguy.com>). I thought they would put together another package, but perhaps next month. [<http://www.centuriansoft.com>].

### How About Some Animated Gifs, If You Do Them Yourself!

Do you find yourself wanting to create an animated gif for some purpose? Take a look at Barbarosa Gif Animator 3.2. Taken from their Web site: "Babarosa Gif Animator provides the fast and easy way to create compact gif animations for the web. Animations can be quickly assembled from imported images (13 formats). You can also design animation directly in the program using vector graphics, image, and text edit tools. Palette optimization, data compression and colors reduction give you a possibility to obtain small size GIFs."

There is more about it on their Web site as well as some ratings, and until the end of the year you can get it for just \$29.95, regularly \$39.95, at [<http://www.liatro.com/download/download.php>]. My thanks to Clarke Birde of Alamo PC Organization for bringing this one to my attention.

### How About a Freebie From Executive Software!

I imagine all user groups received this announcement from Colleen Toumayan about the release of Diskeeper Lite, their manual defragmentation companion to its highly popular automatic defragmenter, Diskeeper 7.0. The following is part of their description:

"The new version of Diskeeper Lite can be run on all Windows(r) operating systems from Windows 98 on up. The new version of Diskeeper Lite was built with the same advanced defragmentation technology as Diskeeper 7.0. As a result, it's far faster than any manual 'built-in' defragmenter. However, it has no networking capabilities or scheduling features.

"John Kimmich, Diskeeper Product Manager, said: 'while the old Diskeeper Lite

educated people about fragmentation, the re-release educates people about the limitations of manual defragmenters. It's a good introduction to the power of full-version Diskeeper, because, truthfully, automatic defrag is the only way to go, especially for enterprise users.'

"Diskeeper Lite freeware is available for immediate download at [www.execsoft.com](http://www.execsoft.com). Phone numbers are (800) 829-6468 and (818) 771-1600. A variety of system management tools, trialware and free utilities are available also."

#### *A Free Office Suite For Cheapies*

Look what you get for all your hard-earned money <G>. It offers a word processor, a spreadsheet, a presentation tool, an HTML editor, a drawing tool and a mathematics equation editor. This one is called OpenOffice and they don't even care how many PCs you put it on. I doubt it's quite as full featured as the other popular office suites that you pay good money for, but at least using OpenOffice will not have anybody looking inside your PC to see if it shouldn't be running there.

You can download this freebie at [[http://www.openoffice.org/dev\\_docs/source/download.html](http://www.openoffice.org/dev_docs/source/download.html)]. I have not looked at this suite, but what do you have to lose, and you won't have to ask for your money back! OpenOffice will run on Windows, Linux and Solaris, and I just noticed there is also a alpha/developer version for the Mac OS X. There is information there on the development of OpenOffice, which is an outgrowth of Star Office.

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not

be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheap-skate) Click [Bobclick@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.

## Media Notes

by Bill Pettit

**O**ne big caveat for the following news bit: This update only applies to those pre-loaded PC's that you might have purchased recently at Walmart. Version 3, the public release, will come out later this year.

### *Lindows takes wraps off new version*

Lindows, the software start-up offering a consumer-friendly version of the Linux operating system, announced a new version of its software Wednesday.

Version 2.0 of Lindows includes enhanced networking features for connecting with Windows-based PCs, support for more than 800 printer models and a streamlined interface similar to the Windows desktop. The new version also has enhanced support for laptop PCs, including power management features and tools for configuring wireless networking cards. Lindows was started two years ago by Michael Robertson, former head of digital music pioneer MP3.com. The company, which quickly ran into legal trouble with Microsoft, initially promised to offer a version of Linux that would run some of the most popular Windows applications.

Lindows has since backed off on that pledge and now says the operating system will only work with Windows "bridge programs," specifically key elements of Micro-

soft Office. Instead, Lindows is being touted as a low-cost alternative to Windows, with support for dozens of Linux applications that mirror Windows alternatives. Early supporters include retailer Wal-Mart, which early this year began selling a line of budget PCs running Lindows, priced as low as \$199.

Linux, a variation of the Unix operating system based on open-source programming principles that promote free sharing of software code, has made significant inroads in certain segments of the server market. But the software has yet to make much of a dent on desktop PCs, despite efforts by several companies to create versions simple enough for average consumers to negotiate.

### *Patch Plugs Win XP Hole Without SP1*

Third-party program rescues Win XP users having trouble installing Microsoft's update to fix serious flaw.

Windows XP users unable to successfully install the operating system's first service pack face a bad choice: an unstable system or a vulnerable one with an extremely serious hole that the newly released SP1 corrects. Now, a software developer has released a freeware tool to block exploits of the previously undisclosed flaw--even without SP1.

The flaw, described on a handful of security message boards and revealed last month relates to the operation of Windows XP's Help and Support Center's "self healing" function. It could let a malicious cracker delete files by remote access. The exploit could be easily distributed as a URL in an e-mail or on a Web site.

### *Needed: Fast Fix*

Microsoft has fixed myriad such potential hacks through security patches. However, the company chose not to issue a separate patch, and instead fixed this one only in

SP1, released on Sept. 9th.

"We concluded that the best way to deliver the fix was via [SP1]. This is in keeping with our long-held conviction that service packs--not patches--are the delivery vehicle of choice for security fixes," says a Microsoft statement posted this week. A Microsoft spokesperson verified the company will not release a separate security patch for that specific bug. This bug is unique, however, because security researchers consider it to be "trivially easy" to exploit.

"It is such a huge threat--because it is so trivially performed and so devastating to the unwitting user," says Steve Gibson, a security expert and software developer who was one of the first to speak out about the problem. Gibson has published Xpdite, a free downloadable tool that patches Windows XP without requiring use of SP1. "It handily removes the vulnerability from any Pre-SP1 XP system by replacing the dangerous script file [in XP] with the safe replacement contained within Service Pack 1," Gibson says.

### *Users Tell of Upgrade Pains*

That is good news for many users who have had problems installing SP1. One user found that after installing SP1 he could no longer switch user identities.

"I found that I could make the problem go away by uninstalling Win XP SP1, but now wonder how I can access the fixes in SP1 that do work," says John Avant of Fort Davis, Texas. He adds, only partly tongue in cheek, "I am praying for Linux."

He is not alone. While most users apparently installed SP-1 successfully, shortly after its posting Internet support forums erupted with user complaints of problems after installing the service pack.

Besides the identity-switching problem, some users say they cannot start their sys-

tems without crashing repeatedly. Some couldn't even install SP1, while others describe disappearing screen icons and loss of DSL connectivity. "Will there be a service pack out for the service pack?" quipped one wag on a message board. Microsoft representatives did not comment on user complaints about installation problems. The company reiterates that upgrading to SP1 is essential to obtain numerous necessary patches and for continued use of Windows XP.


#### **Slow Adopters**

Installation problems are keeping some users off SP1, but others are backing off for other reasons. Some businesses do not install service packs immediately upon release, preferring instead to test them to make sure that they won't cause problems.

"I've been hearing from many corporate types who no way will blindly install SP1 after being bitten in the past," Gibson says. "So they are desperate to close this gaping vulnerability immediately and independently of SP1." Also, many users who still have dial-up Internet access say they don't have the patience to download the file, which can be 137MB at maximum. The "express" installation involves 30MB of code, which takes about 90 minutes to download with a 56-kbps modem connection. In some cases, an ISP will automatically drop lines after an extended download.

Microsoft offers Windows XP SP1 as a free download, and will also send a CD containing the update for \$10 plus shipping fees.

Eventually, Windows XP users may have no choice but to battle the gremlins in their own systems if they ever want an operating system upgrade. Microsoft has said all future updates to Windows XP will require that SP1 be installed.



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has a weekly listener call-in computer talk show featuring news, product reviews, helpful tips, and special guests. It's broad-cast live on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 with a taped replay on Saturday mornings from 8 to 9. It's simulcast live on the web at <http://www.wysl1040.com>

#### **Win XP Update Crashes Some PCs**

Users who forgo recently released SP1 risk a major vulnerability, as well as missing numerous small fixes.

Some Windows XP users are having trouble installing the operating system's first service pack, bulging with bug fixes and updated drivers—and are judging the cure worse than the disease.

Although SP1 plugs a major hole in the OS, the fix has been painful for a tiny but vocal few of the estimated 1 million users who have downloaded the update, which Microsoft posted on September 9. For the vast majority, the download and installation has gone well, according to a Microsoft spokesperson, who calls the process "smoother than a lot of previous releases."

But Internet support forums and e-mail to PC World from disgruntled users show that many people continue to have serious problems with the update. The chief complaint: PCs that run like molasses after installing SP1. Running a close second are reports that PCs refuse to restart after

installation or become highly unstable. Some systems continuously reboot. Other users complain that applications won't start or now crash repeatedly, including Microsoft's own programs.

"My 1.9-GHz Dell 8200 computer runs slower than my 800-Mhz laptop. Outlook won't start, and all programs either take forever to start, or just won't start," says Christopher O'Connor, a doctor in Chicago.

A San Diegoan echoes the problem: "After [installing SP1] several programs began crashing unexpectedly, or locking up, including any Office XP application—basically everything but the OS started to freeze or experience fatal errors," says Philip Treinen, project manager at Genesis Associates, an architectural design firm.

#### **Some Just Say No**

Other reported troubles—including problems in switching user identities, failure to install, disappearing screen icons, and loss of both broadband and dial-up connectivity—are causing some users to shun the service pack, at least for now.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" says one post on an Internet discussion board. "Stay away from SP1!" reads another. Indeed, Treinen fixed his problem by unfixing Win XP, and is now running the OS without SP1, as are many others. "Since removing the service pack, everything works fine—seems like it created more problems than solutions," he adds. That is not a long-term fix, however. Microsoft officials say future Win XP updates will require that SP1 be installed. "That's going to leave a lot of people in a lurch," Treinen notes.

And users shunning SP1 are vulnerable to the major flaw that Microsoft addresses in the service pack. A recently discovered glitch in Windows XP's Help and Support Center

functions could enable a malicious cracker to delete files off a user's hard disk remotely.

But even the update holdouts have an alternative, although it's not sanctioned by Microsoft. Last week, security expert and software developer Steve Gibson released a freeware program to patch that specific bug for users who either cannot or do not want to install SP1.

Still, Microsoft representatives say the company has not seen an undue number of users reporting problems. And, in fact, for the vast majority of users, Win XP SP1 fixes many more bugs than it creates. The update addresses hundreds of fixes, including all of the company's previous security patches for both the system itself and for Internet Explorer 6.

"Windows XP Service Pack 1 is a well-tested release that corrects hundreds of bugs, including security-related ones. We encourage customers to install it at the earliest opportunity to ensure that their systems are fully secure," reads a Microsoft statement on the corporate Web site.

#### **Seeking Alternatives**

Some users are trying to work out their problems using free help boards or Microsoft's paid technical support. "I'm in the process of communicating by e-mail support with Microsoft, an enormously inefficient and time-consuming process that has yet to yield a solution, despite promises to the contrary," O'Connor, the Chicago doctor, says. And posts are proliferating on Microsoft's Windows XP Community Newsgroup from people experiencing the same or similar problems.

Treinen declined to pay for tech support to solve his problems. "It's a typical Microsoft thing: 'We'll just ignore it and it will go away,'" he said. "We're really happy with XP

but when you get things like this, I'd love to see Microsoft step up to the plate and say, 'Yeah, we'll fix it.'

Despite Microsoft's ongoing endorsement, some users say they will wait to see if Microsoft comes out with a second release of SP1. On Internet support boards, the most common suggestion about installing SP1 is to first save a "restore point," a Win XP function that essentially takes a snapshot of the PC's drive and specifications. Then, users are advised, they should reformat the hard disk, reinstall Windows XP, and then install SP-1—and, of course, install applications and restore data files.

That advice infuriates some users who say a service pack should not require that users completely reinstall their systems. Or as one wag quipped on one Internet site: "MS = Mighty Shakey."

## Digital Cameras

by Bill Pettit

Some of the items you might not have thought about when you bought your new digital camera would be photo viewing, flash photography, zoom lenses, and even on-the-fly editing. A digital photo can be edited, printed, emailed, and posted on a web site. As a result, manufacturers are busy developing a variety of hardware and software add-ons to satisfy the growing needs of newly digitized photographers. Probably the first concern is how to store all of these new treasures and the camera makers have made that chore pretty simple.

Memory cards act as a sort of digital film. The greater the capacity, the more photos you can save. The type of storage medium you use depends on which camera you own. The most common format is the Compact Flash (CF) card, which is available in various capacities up to 1 GB. It comes in two



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types: Type I measures 1.7x1.4x0.13 inches; Type II, at 1.7x1.4x0.19 inches, is a bit thicker and capable of more storage. IBM's Microdrive card, actually a miniature hard drive that fits into a CompactFlash Type II slot, can also handle up to 1GB.

Another form of portable memory media is the SmartMedia card, which is smaller and thinner than CF cards and offers up to 128MB of storage. Sony's Memory Sticks, meanwhile, are used exclusively by Sony products, and are available in capacities ranging from 8MB to 128MB. Other types of media include the MultiMediaCard (MMC), Secure Digital (SD) cards, and miniature 3 inch CD-R and CD-RW optical discs (used by some Sony CD Mavica digital cameras).

Memory cards not only provide more digital "film" for your photographs; they also make it easier to transfer those photos from your camera to other equipment especially your PC. Most cameras connect to your computer via a USB or serial port, but this

can be inconvenient and, unless you have an AC adapter for your camera, a serious drain on your batteries. And while some cameras have companion docking stations, like Kodak's EasyShare system, that make it simple to upload images to your computer, a memory card reader, which typically attaches to your PC's USB port, is the way to go for most of us. Hewlett Packard's USB CompactFlash Card Reader (\$40.99, www.hp.com) is compatible with both Type I and Type II CF cards. The Viking IntelliFlash USB Flash Memory Reader (\$50, Viking Components, Inc.) can read PC Cards, CF cards, and SmartMedia cards for PCs and Macs at rates up to 1.5MB per second. Another device that supports several card formats is the Kodak Multi-Card Reader (\$39.95, Kodak Launches Kodak Multi-Card Reader), which lets you transfer images from CF, MMC, SD, SmartMedia, and Microdrive media.

If you want old-fashioned hard copy photos, you can print your own using a standard color inkjet printer (or one optimized to print good color photos), a dedicated photo printer, or an industrial class professional printer. Most support a range of photo sizes and provide a UV or lamination process that protects your snapshots. Canon's Card Photo Printer CP-100 (\$249, usa.canon.com) measures 6.8x7x2.4 inches and weighs a little more than 2 pounds. It produces four different size photos, from miniature labels up to 4x6 inch snapshots, at 300x300dpi resolution using a dye sublimation color process, and ships with a compact power adapter for easier traveling. The catch: It only works with Canon's PowerShot cameras.

For those serious about digital photography, a photo printer is probably the best

choice. Olympus America's P-400 dye sublimation printer (\$799, www.olympus-america.com) uses a 314dpi engine with 24-bit color processing. Although the 26.5 pound P-400 is not portable like the Canon printer, it packs a wide range of features, including support for direct printing from most removable media formats and the ability to print on a variety of papers from A4 stock to postcards. It even has an onboard function that lets you tweak color images into sepia tone or black and white. The Epson Stylus Photo 890 (\$299, www.epson.com), meanwhile, works with both Windows and Macintosh based PCs, and uses six-color (CMYK) inkjet technology to produce borderless, photo quality prints. It also supports a wide variety of paper formats, including roll types.

Traditional photographs can only be viewed. Digital photographs can be deleted, copied, edited, emailed, and posted on Web pages. In fact, you can do almost anything you want with them, as long as you have the right tools.

Many personal editing products are available, including Microsoft Picture It Publishing Platinum 2002 (\$54.95, www.microsoft.com), ArcSoft Photo Impression (\$49.99, www.arcsoft.com), JASC Paint Shop Pro 7 (\$109, www.jasc.com), JASC (\$49, www.jasc.com), Ulead PhotoImpact 7 (\$89.95, www.ulead.com), and Roxio Photo Suite 4.0 Platinum Edition (\$49.95, www.roxio.com; Roxio also offers a \$24.95 Mobile Edition of PhotoSuite for Palm OS handhelds), and Adobe's Photoshop Elements 2 (\$99, www.adobe.com). (A US\$30 Mail-In Coupon is included in the box for registered owners of Adobe Photoshop Elements 1.0, ArcSoft PhotoStudio, Jasc Paint



Shop Pro, Microsoft PictureIt, and Ulead PhotoImpact.)

All these programs offer a wide range of photo-editing tools that let you correct red-eye, alter brightness, sharpness, contrast, and color balance, or edit out obnoxious relatives. In fact, these products have become so good at what they do, only the most serious digital photo enthusiasts should need Adobe Photoshop 7.0 (\$609, www.adobe.com), widely considered the top image-editing software on the market.

Once you've tweaked your digital photographs, they can be displayed in a variety of formats. All the editing products mentioned above can keep your collection organized using thumbnail galleries, and incorporate your images in greeting cards, flyers, business cards, and stationery. They also offer varying degrees of help in sharing your pictures with family and friends, by emailing pics or putting them on your own Web site or an image sharing service. If all you want to do is organize your photo collection, a number of packages will let you do just that. E-Book Systems' FlipAlbum 5 (\$49.95, www.FlipAlbum.com) lets you display your images in an onscreen photo album that mimics a traditional album with virtual page turning. Olympus offers its own album/photo software, called Camedia Master 4 (\$39.95), which has some useful editing tools, uploadable HTML photo albums, and a panorama feature.

Most cameras priced under \$3,000 don't use interchangeable lenses. The majority of consumers can do nicely with the built-in zoom lenses and program modes that come standard on their digital cameras. But if you want more sophisticated photographs than these less expensive cameras can produce, you can still buy the type of equipment that

professionals have depended on for more than a century. Add-on lenses, add to the wide angle and telephoto capabilities of your little jewel. Check here for quite a few possibilities. (www.steves-digicams.com).

Whether you're just looking for a way to send baby pictures to your friends, or trying to get a professional quality shot of a hummingbird, you have a variety of ways to accomplish those tasks, and a variety of products out there to help you do it.

#### Windows Tips & Tricks

### Troubleshooting Windows

by Bill Beverly

*Alamo PC Organization, Inc.*

**T**he only thing constant is change. The same statement applies to computers. The only constant with them are numerous glitches and problems! Crashes, error messages, and freezes with your computer often occur because of overstressing it. Computer activities such as the following stress your system: large file download, large printing job, burning data to CD-R (CD-recordable), graphics editing, video recording and editing, audio recording and editing, digital scanning, and video playback. Many of the tips in this article will help you preclude, identify and/or repair many computer problems.

#### Diagnostic Tools

#### Help:

Whenever encountering problems, first make sure power cords, cables and connectors are all firmly connected to your computer/peripherals. Now attempt to identify your specific problem. Initially seek assistance from the "Help" feature of your computer, and then technical support from the manufacturer, friends, and/or manuals or other technical resources available to you.

#### Technical Support:

#### Web:

Before making a call for technical support that may cost you money, check out the following Computer Help resources on the Web. Protonic.com is a free support site staffed with experts. To register and ask a question, just click Ask A Question once on the site. Star Support also uses volunteers but there is no registration process. To ask a question, click Free Technical Support and fill out the submission form. HelpOnTheNet is a site designed to lend a helping hand by letting you post questions to a forum. It has a registration process that can be initiated by clicking *Welcome! New Users Please Click Here*. The next two Web sources offer online computer support and information through an extensive database of reference material covering hardware/software. They are: Computer Hope and Microsoft's Knowledge Base.

#### Online:

As long as you have a functional modem and an Internet account, you can use online utilities that scan your system, evaluate your computer's problem and make recommended solutions. These utilities can perform remote virus scanning, performance diagnostics, and hardware/software troubleshooting and even repair with some problems. Online system scanners operate by downloading and installing a small application on your computer when you sign up for this service, so choose a utility with a very good reputation! Some of the better utilities include: PC Pitstop runs a free basic service with an extensive array of diagnostics from which you receive a graphical report of your system's performance and security. PC Support.com and Triage both focus mainly on the corporate market and might be useful

to small companies that don't hire support staff. PC Pinpoint is by far the most exhaustive online diagnostic site and guarantees your problem will be fixed by them, however there is a weekly and/or yearly fee. First Aid Online is a performance diagnostic tool that will help you tune up your machine. McAfee also runs VirusScan Online if all you want is virus scanning services.

#### Power-On Self Test:

When a computer boots up, it runs a test of hardware components called "Power-On Self Test". Watch your monitor for system warnings and error messages. Press Pause to freeze the screen if the messages disappear before you can read them. Look for warnings, too, and note the last initialized device to appear before the computer locks up if that's the problem. Also, listen to unusual sounds with your power supply fan and the hard disk. Don't forget to use your sense of smell to detect smoke or overheated gear. To determine if you have a corrupt file(s), click Start, Run and type in sfc and then click OK.

#### ScanDisk (Check Disk)/Defragmentation:

Some problems can be resolved easily by just running your ScanDisk (Check Disk) and Defragmentation. As a rule of thumb you should perform these preventative maintenance functions at least once a month or more frequently depending upon computer use.

#### Device Manager:

If Windows, for example, won't launch properly or you're having problems with moving icons, screen lock-ups, page fault errors, occasional mouse pointer freeze-ups or audio difficulties start your computer in "Safe Mode." Hold down the F8 key just before Windows boots and select Safe Mode from the resulting menu. Now you can access

Device Manager and other troubleshooting tools. You can use the "Device Manager" to check the status of all the hardware installed on your computer. In WinXP you can access the Device Manager by going to Performance and Maintenance, right-clicking System or the Control Panel with other versions of Windows. Once in Device Manager look for old devices and discard references to those that are no longer in your computer.

**Start-up Disk or Emergency/Boot Disk:**

Another tool available to you at this point is your "Start-up Disk" and/or "Emergency or Boot Disk" if your computer requires its use to recover from a crash in order to resolve a particular problem. If you haven't already made one, do so as soon as possible.

**System Configuration Utility:**

The "System Configuration Utility" lets you enable/disable software and configuration files for trial-and-error troubleshooting, so click Start, Run and type msconfig or click Start, Search to find and start it from the Results window. System Configuration is a good tool for isolating and testing parts of Windows configuration files.

**System Monitor:**

Win98, Me, XP are preinstalled on fast computers, but many still wonder if they are getting the bang for the buck. The fastest part of your process is memory and the slowest is reading disks. Using Windows tools such as the System Monitor will help to isolate the bottleneck. You probably don't need a new CPU, but more memory and better disk cache management. To open the System Monitor, choose Start, Control Panel, and Performance and Maintenance. Click Administrative Tools and double-click Performance to open the System Monitor in the console root.

**System Restore:**

Win98/Me/2000/XP all have Windows' System Restore capabilities. Win98 has a Registry backup utility called ScanReg that saves five days' worth of backups. Win2000/Me let you restore the "Last Known Good Configuration" from the Advanced Options Menu. WinWP/Me have the System Restore utility.

**Remote Assistance:**

WinXP also has a "Remote Assistance" feature. It allows you to have a knowledgeable friend or technician using the Internet to take control of your system and directly fix problems with it.

**Recovery Disk:**

As a last resort, if you haven't already done so and still can, save and backup your files and then use your "Recovery Disk" to get your computer back online. Before using a recovery disk, though, check it out. To my surprise a newly purchased Compaq computer only came with a "partial" recovery disk. When the hard drive had to be replaced on this machine, I had to order for a small fee a "full" recovery disk from Compaq to restore all of the original software on the computer. A computer magazine recently reported that Hewlett Packard may no longer provide recovery disks with its new computers.

**Drivers**

A driver is a small software application that controls many of the devices on your computer. They are often troublesome and you may need to update or replace faulty ones. There are several driver Web sites that can help you obtain drivers for your computer's peripheral devices. DriverGuide is a free site with more than 60,000 drivers. Driverzone and DriversHQ are also free sites with many drivers. Conventional wisdom says that if a patch is available to apply it. That is true for

your operating system. However, if your application software is working properly, leave it alone. The same is true with your hardware. Sometimes drivers can cause rather than resolve problems especially with applications/hardware.

**Lockup Recover**

From time to time your computer may lockup for some seemingly unknown reason. Whenever this situation happens to your "frozen" computer, press Ctrl-Alt-Delete (It makes a difference in the order to press these keys. Press Ctrl or Alt first and then Delete. Delete must be the last key.) to open the Close Program dialog box. Select the task that caused the problem. It should say "not responding" in parentheses and then click the End Task button. After a few seconds, an End Task dialog box will appear explaining that the program is not responding. Now click End Task again and Windows should close just that program. The other alternative, should this procedure not

work for you, is to reboot your computer. In Win2000 Server, you could have similar problems and may not be able to resume using your computer by moving the mouse or pressing a key. If your computer doesn't respond properly after it turns off the hard drive, restart your computer, access the Power Options window, and in the Power Schemes tab, select the Never option from the Turn Off Hard Disks drop-down list. These steps ensure that your hard drive never turns off and produces fewer system lockups.

**Program Installation**

To prevent potential problems, before installing new programs on your computer, close all open programs to include your anti-virus software. You should also close or disable those programs running, noted by

icons, on the System Tray next to the clock on the bottom, right hand side of your screen. Stop any active programs in the System Tray by right-clicking its icons and choosing an exit option. Now you are set to install your new software using Window's built-in Add/Remove Programs tool. After running the new program's setup, simply restart Windows to bring back all of the icons. Next you need to make sure your system is in an optimum state. Again, close all open programs to include those on the System Tray. Then press Ctrl+Alt+Delete to launch Windows Task Manager and halt all tasks listed with the exception of Explorer and Systray (the System Tray). Run Windows' maintenance programs ScanDisk (Check Disk) and Disk Defragmenter or third-party utilities. Finally restart Windows to flush the active or volatile memory.

**Registry Checker**

Occasionally, something happens to cause damage to your Win95/98 registry. As bad as this can be, there is some help. If your computer is completely dead, and it appears that the registry may be the culprit, shut down, or turn off your computer. Turn on your PC, and while booting, hold down the F8 button until the startup menu appears. Select the "Command Prompt" option. When the DOS appears, type SCANREG/RESTORE at the prompt. Press Enter at the MRC (Microsoft Registry Checker) screen to restore the most recent of the five backups that Windows creates. Now, reboot. If this also fails, you may have had a serious virus attack. As a word of caution, this tip should only be used by experienced computer users.

Microsoft Windows ages as it is used every day. As you use it to install, uninstall, patch, save, load, and all the other functions, Windows actually goes through a decaying

process. After a point, Windows becomes unstable and unusable. Therefore, knowing that a computer will ultimately have some type of problem, the wise user will always backup his/her files to one or more of several options, such as floppy disks, CD-Rs, tape drives, zip drives, duplicate hard drives, etc. This step is the first and most important preventative maintenance task that will lessen the impact of any major computer problem. Thereafter, you will have to format your hard drive and reinstall Windows and your applications and data.

*Reprinted from the September 2002 issue of PC Alamode, newsletter of Alamo PC Organization, Inc. of San Antonio. Bill Beverley is a retired U.S. Army Colonel and intermediate computer enthusiast.*

## Society News

### President's Column by Ron Matteson

**O**ur next Program Meeting at B&S will be on November 12. Our main speaker at this meeting will be the president of Microworx Serviceland, Jeff Leist. He will give us an update on current and future trends in microprocessors. In addition to Mr. Leist, we will bring more goodies for you to look over. Several boxes of software has been donated to the RCSi. This software may be somewhat dated, but if the members can find it useful, we are offering it for a small donation. In addition, we may have a couple of mother boards to offer in a raffle.

Don't forget to check the RCSi web site periodically, for the latest news, information presented at our meetings, etc. Go to <http://www.rcsi.org>. Bob Avery is doing a great job as webmaster. Let him know your suggestions and ideas for the site.

Future programs we are trying to arrange include one on ISP offerings, including wide-band, and new versions of wide-band, such as

lower-cost, slower versions. Another program in the works is a follow-up on some of the Linux programs we have had in the past; especially one showing us how we can do our normal computer work using Linux: word processing, spread sheet, photo processing, banking, etc.

Our VP, Arpad Kovacs, is trying to get a Gaming SIG going. He will try to have a first meeting to get organized, in the near future. Let him know if you know of anyone who might be interested, and he can put them on an e-mail list. I have a grandson who would be a good candidate, but I think he'll have to wait just a couple more years.

Keep your anti-virus software up to date every week. Viruses are enough to worry about, but every now and then someone comes up with a virus hoax. Two of them come in the form of e-mails, indicating they have inadvertently sent you a virus, and you should delete a certain file from your computer. Don't do it! The virus does not exist, and the files are usually Windows system files, that are really required for your computer to work well. Two such files that I have been asked to delete, are "sulfnbk.exe" and "jdbgmgr.exe". The latter is known as the Teddy Bear "virus" because of its icon. Again, do not delete these files! If you are interested, you can go to <http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org> and look up various virus hoaxes.

### Program Meeting

October 8, 2002

by Larilyn Bauer, Secretary

**H**elp's Half Hour was loaded with many questions and great feedback from many in the audience. Ron Matteson did an excellent job on the program "Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0 (New Capabilities)."



### Planning Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2002

by Larilyn E. Bauer, Secretary

**T**he Board of the Rochester Computer Society, Inc. met Tuesday, October 15, 2002 at Sally Springett's home, 335 Wil-mot Road, at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were Ron Matteson (President), Bob Avery (Webmaster), Jim McGrath (Software Chair), Sally Springett (Monitor Editor), Warren Ganter (Member at Large), and Larilyn Bauer (Secretary).

Following the President's agenda, we began with old business, evaluation of last program meeting. We had a full house of members. Help's Half Hour rendered many questions and answers in a wide gamut of areas. Ron Matteson gave a very thorough presentation of Adobe PhotoShop Elements 2.0. Ron is going to check at Bryant and Stratton for possibility of a larger meeting area with projection capabilities.

Because Board members were absent, we decided to put on hold the discussion of whether to increase the number of pages in the Monitor, since we have decreased the number of copies printed, in order to cut costs.

Bob Avery is looking at Antivirus, layout, content and backgrounds for the RCSi Web Page.

Suggestions for some places to check for hoaxes/viruses validity is "Hoaxbusters" or "Snopes". This is the type of information we thought might be of interest to members who browse the Web.

November speaker will be Jeff Leist of Microworx/Serviceland. He will be presenting information on microprocessor trends.

RCSI will be at MarketPro, attended by Steve Staub and Arpad Kovacs on Sunday, October 20. The Monitor newsletter will be printed on Friday, October 25 and assembled on Saturday, October 26 at St. Stephen's Church, 350 Chili Avenue.

Two SIG's are going strong now: New Users SIG and Digital Cameras/Scanners SIG. RCSi will not renew the lease at Mailboxes, Etc. and Sally will notify the U.S. Post Office of the address change to 350 Chili Avenue, Rochester, NY 14611.

We received an invitation from Bryant and Stratton to attend a "Reception and Recognition Ceremony of a New Chapter Commission on Higher Education of Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, giving Regional Accreditation." Discussion for a future program covering "Assembly of a PC." We are trying to arrange using a digital camcorder that we can attach to our projector so that everyone can see the work.

### New Users SIG

October 1, 2002

by Bill Statt

**T**he New User's SIG of the Rochester Computer Club met on 1 October, 2002 at the Finger Lakes DDSO from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM. The first question was actually some information about a program that one of the user's had just purchased. It was called, Screen Shot 5.0 from Broderbund .com. John asked if we had ever tried to print a Web page, only to end up with missing images, scrambled fonts, and text that runs off the paper? Have we ever struggled to copy animation from one document to another? He said this program put an end to these and hundreds of other cut-and-paste hassles. He said the software makes capturing what's on your screen as easy as point-and-click. Simply highlight the area of your screen that you want to capture, and with the touch of a button, it's yours. Then access a collection of digital editing tools to change your capture any way you like: customize images, edit text, add your own comments, and more!

Treat your Screen Shot Deluxe 5.0 capture like any other image; copy it into another document, email it to a friend, or print it; it's all quick and easy. You could capture onscreen

video and animation making it ideal for creating Video presentations. You could capture images from your scanner or digital camera. What he really liked was that you could capture entire Web pages (even if they don't fit on your screen!) with the advanced Scroll Capture function. I looked on the Web and the program is \$29.99 if anyone is interested.

Then we had a question about Temp files. The questioner thought they were created when you stopped your computer in an inappropriate way. Greg told us that they were created anytime you open any Microsoft Office document and unexpectedly closed or shut down the computer. The work in progress might be saved in a temp file. If you had a power outage, you might be able to recreate the document by opening the Temp file with the application it was made with.

We again talked about peer-to-peer networking. The common programs available on the web all seem to have hidden "features." KaZaa will put Gator on your computer. This is a particularly invasive Spyware and Adware program. Also, there is a note in the EULA (end user license agreement) warning you that they are going to open a network and sell unused processor time on your computer while you are on the Web. Audio-Galaxy has also aligned itself with Gator. inMx now has Spyware and Adware with it.

But there is a new program called Shareaza at Shareaza.com. It uses the Gnutella network and you can download Audio or Video with it. Of course, only use it for non-copywritten programs. They say right up front that there is not Spyware or Adware associated with this. I ran Ad-Aware after installing this program and they were true to their word. They simply say that this is the way they think P-2-P file sharing should be. Sounds like Linux folks. Another utility we had liked was Catch-up from C-Net.com. This utility would scan your computer for software and then provide links

for all the updates. It also included an Ad removal tool and a security tool. Unfortunately, C-Net has chosen to discontinue support for this utility. That is too bad, it was a great utility.

The next meeting of the New User's SIG will be 5 November at the Finger Lakes DDSO, 620 Westfall Road.

### Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Balance as of 09/25/2002	\$855.70
<b>Income</b>	
Dues .....	\$110.00
Computer & book sales .....	<u>91.00</u>
Total Income	\$201.00
<b>Expenses</b>	
Lease .....	\$86.72
St. Stephens .....	75.00
Paper .....	<u>47.28</u>
Total Expense	\$209.00
Balance as of 10/22/2002	\$847.70

### The Lighter Side

*Microsoft Announces*

*Beta Release of Windows TP*

REDMOND WA– Business Wire

Microsoft Corp announced Thursday that a beta release of Windows TP, the telepathic operating system, was released to 1,500 test sites worldwide. Developed using the soon-to-be released Microsoft C for Neurons, Windows TP bypasses awkward user interfaces by interacting directly with the user's brain. See: <http://www.annoyances.org/exec/show/article09-121>.



*Technical Support That's Second To None*

The Microtek Corporation has posted on its website in the Microtek film scanner support section, "In an effort to provide prompt and efficient technical support to our customers, Microtek technical advisors cannot respond to messages or fax requests for technical support assistance." –New Scientist