

Your Site Is Alive With the Sound of Music

by Susan Ives

The Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

I do not like sites that automatically play music. Most people don't. They blare with no warning, often in inappropriate situations like the office when the boss is within listening range. They often have no volume control, or worse, reset the user's volume. The quickest way to turn off the music is to exit the site, so it drives people away. Some people will get error messages when they don't have the proper sound configuration, or may get sinister warnings that they are about to download a program that could contain tainted code. When the user moves onto another page the music stops – probably just at the passage he or she likes best. I have been tempted to insert background music but I always come to my senses. The theory is sweet, the implementation goes sour.

But you want to try it anyway, don't you?

This is a code that will work in both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator:

```
<embed src="sample.wav"
autostart="true"
hidden="false"
loop="false">
<noembed> <bgsound src="sample.wav" loop="1">
</noembed></embed>
```

It will work for a WAV or MIDI file, plus the less-common .au and .aiff. I find that MP3 files work as well. There are a few parameters. Where the code says sample .wav, replace this with your own sound file, and remember to upload the sound file to the server. "Hidden =false" displays small sound controls. It's kinder to give the user control over the volume. "true" would hide the sound controls. Both "loop=false" and "loop=1" mean that the file will play (loop) only once. On the Lazy Webmaster Website, I have an example of an embedded sound.

One of the problems with embedded sound is that it stops when you go to another page. My friend Patrick Collier taught me a work-around for this. Design your site using frames, and have a tiny frame that carries over to every page. The code for the frameset page would look something like this:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<title>title</title>
</HEAD>
<FRAMESET COLS="*,1">
<FRAME SRC="maincontent.html"
SCROLLING="AUTO"
NORESIZE MARGINHEIGHT="0" MARGINWIDTH
```

```
=>"
NAME="main">
<FRAME SRC="midi.html" SCROLLING="NO"
NORESIZE MARGINHEIGHT="0" MARGINWIDTH
=>"
NAME="midi">
</FRAMESET>
</HTML>
```

This will give you a big window/frame for your main content that takes up all but one pixel on the screen. At the bottom of the page you will have a 1 pixel-wide (almost invisible) blank space that holds the embedded sound file. Since the midi frame remains stable and only the main content frame changes, the sound file plays across multiple pages. I would not include the sound control panel if I was using this technique.

Leaving room for the control panel can be tricky, as they are different sizes in Explorer and Netscape Navigator. Navigator's default control panel is 144wx60h. Explorer's is 200wx60h. The dimensions are in pixels.

A saner solution for your users is to have a link to sound, giving them the option to play it — or not. Just link the file as a regular link: play music

I often include a little icon — a speaker, a note, an ear — to indicate that there is a sound file to play.

So where do you get sound files to embed? There are many places on the Internet: get a long list by searching on Google for "free midi" or "free wav." Or

- * for Midi
- * for Wav

Midi is your best bet for embedded music. It's synthesized sound that uses the sound card as part of the encoding, so the files are small. The long midi sequence I used in the sample on the Web site is only about 12KB. Midi files can sound cheesy, so be discriminating. Popular songs will have many midi renditions, so listen to a few and select the best.

Wav files are much, much bigger — perhaps as much as 10MB for the same length clip. They can sound just like they are from the CD, but no one is going to wait for a 10MB file to download just to listen to background music. Wav files are more likely to be used for short sound files, like dialogue from films.

If there are problems, make sure that your server is configured with the correct MIME type. I can't imagine a public server not configured for Midi or Wav, but you never know.

There are, of course, other kinds of sound files that you can use. On the San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble site I used MP3 files. Los Nice Guys use shockwave files for their music and actually embed it using the format I've described here. Both of these use exceptionally high quality sound with a small file size.

Another option is RealAudio. This is a streaming media,

which means that it trickles across the wires little by little, so the whole sound file doesn't have to load before it starts playing. There's a trick to linking to RealAudio files. The actual RealAudio sound file has a link of .ra. The link that shows up on your Web site should be to an .ram file that points to the .ra file. You create the .ram file in notepad; all it needs is the complete URL of the .ra file. Call it something like song1.ram.

If you want a Web site that will make your heart sing, by all means include links to music files but even though you now know how, think twice before you push a sound file onto your unwary users.

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Review

Explorer Plus

by Arpad Kovacs

Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

Using Windows 9x for image viewing and manipulation left me frustrated with the Windows Explorer's poor handling of them. In fact, Explorer had me wanting alternatives to almost all of its file handling. When win2k was released, I had hoped that things would have progressed a bit more. Nope. The same Explorer (though running off NT now) and the same poor file management. The several apps that I used to augment Windows explorer short comings worked well for the most part. It was still not convenient to jump to different programs for different functions. In addition, the different programs have a myriad of differing user interfaces with different controls, styles, and organization. ExplorerPlus is the best attempt to change all that, but, alas, has it come too late?

First, let's take a look at the software. ExplorerPlus is, basically, Windows explorer turned six million dollar man. It's a file explorer, network explorer, file viewer, archive viewer, picture viewer and FTP browser all rolled in one, and much more. The install is simple and uses little space, around 40 Mb (nothing by today's standards). Several features are standalone programs in the install package. Once installed, you can set ExplorerPlus to be the default app for managing archives during the install. ExplorerPlus has five preset viewing tabs, standard toolbar and a drive toolbar for quick access to all local and networked volumes. The viewing tabs include standard explorer style, dual pane horizontal, dual pane vertical, File Commander, and picture browser. ExplorerPlus also installs context menu items that work throughout Windows and supports PDF viewing through Acrobat Reader plugins (provided you have it installed on your computer). ExplorerPlus even gives you the option to replace Windows explorer altogether.

This program can be customized to look and act anyway you wish it to. Add ten view panes to the explorer or detach the file viewer detached to display files while you're browsing directories. Use only one pane with thumbnails and the file

viewer for easy file view and manipulation. Use two panes with a detail view in one and thumbnail in the other or both as lists. Create custom toolbars, icons, shortcuts, individual pane default views, tabs, context menus, even choose your color and button style. It's all up to you.

The real benefit is the integration of essential features that were absent from the standard explorer, plus bonus apps that rounds up package. First, and in my opinion most important feature I was lacking in MS explorer was archiving. I spent years using the shareware WinZip (which is an excellent program) and dealing with the 'please register' nags. ExplorerPlus has completely integrated archive handling in to the program; opening, creating, adding and extracting files is done as if with regular folders. Set up two folders to synchronize files automatically using their EasySync feature. You can Edit the ID3 tags on MP3 files and add them to play lists. Encrypt, Decrypt or destroy sensitive data from either ExplorerPlus or through the context menu. You can format, rename, and delete one or all volumes on a rewritable drive. I am sure there are more, but I haven't had time to find them all.

A few features that, I think, would make this program complete are: a comprehensive media player of some sort or integration of windows media player in to ExplorerPlus so that one does not have to leave the program to view or listen to files; ability to read and/or write to non IBM format disks (Mac disks, Linux partitions, etc.); and better image handling and viewing (slideshow). I think that future versions could profit from a plugin engine such as Netscape or Opera, instead of relying on IE plugins that allow third party extensions to be used and increase the overall functionality of the program. Perhaps, an E-mail reader or E-book reader could also be added, either in the program or through plugins. However, even if left with a small few lacking, there are plenty of features that most everyone will find useful.

Aside from all the suggestions, there is one major problem. It seems that this program came to me a bit too late. I have to hand it to Microsoft, when they actually 'improve' something (and not call the well known bugs 'features'), they really improve something. Windows XP has been long overdue. It has many of the features that ExplorerPlus has; in fact, it has more. CD and DVD burning software has been integrated in to the Windows shell so burning to a CD works just like writing to a floppy or hard drive. Image (thumbnail or filmstrip) viewing and slideshow viewing are integrated in to explorer. Compressed file archives is also built in as is simple file encryption. Even FTP functions, off line web page viewing and web services are integrated. Also, with Media Player 9, video and audio playback is integrated in explorer, context menu and in the taskbar. You can now view virtually any type of file, video, audio, Image, Webpage, all from Windows Explorer. While this is not to hold it against ExplorerPlus, it is something to cause me to question the need

of an alternate explorer. This is, of course, only if you are running XP, and I know many people, myself included, who run systems without it.

In conclusion, I give a high rating for ExplorerPlus, though Windows XP users I think would have a hard time justifying the purchase as the functionality is fairly redundant. Still, I find ExplorerPlus to be one of the most robust explorer replacements out there for 9x/2k. A trial version of ExplorerPlus can be found at <<http://www.novatix.com>>.



Now Is the Time

by Bill Wood

Alamo PC Organization

October 4th was a traumatic day for me...I gave away a computer! My daughter teases me that I have to make sure that there are twice as many computers in our house as people. Any less than that and I get irritable. But, I just couldn't watch that computer sit and become obsolete when it could make a big difference to a fine organization.

November is a great time to think about a few tax planning steps. And, since it has cooled down, it may be time to clean out the garage. You still have time to take a few steps to make those technology items ready for donation by removing sensitive information and finding the documentation to support the tax value you claim. Then you will be ready to make contributions to eligible charities and claim a deduction on your 2003 tax return. I recently took advantage of a computer drive sponsored by the Winston School to donate a used computer, two printers and various other computer items that had been setting around taking up space. The school, a college prep school for children with learning disabilities, teamed up with TALR Computers and Discount Computer & Networking for the first of two used computer drives on October 4th. Another one is set for November. (Call 210-615-6544 for details.)

There are other fine religious and charitable groups that would appreciate the donation. Charities that have resale shops like the Salvation Army and Goodwill would also be good choices. I've even heard of advocacy groups that take donations of used cell phones that can be given to battered women's shelters. Even though the service for the phone has been disconnected, they can still be used to summon emergency help through 911 and you may qualify for the tax deduction. Remember, just because an organization may be "non-profit" the IRS may not recognize it for purposes of allowing you to deduct the contribution. Ask questions when you donate and check out the IRS publication on the subject.

It's a good idea to erase your information before you donate. Either reformat hard drives or use one of the disk-wipe programs to ensure that your personal information such as account numbers, credit card information and the like

are thoroughly removed. First I delete the cache files from browsers and delete any temporary files that can be removed. Then I use Sure Delete which is a program that writes over the entire free space on the hard drive three times to ensure that my information stays with me and not wherever the computer ends up.

If you donate a computer and the installed software, remember to write down on the receipt what programs were installed and save that information, along with the written receipt, in your tax file. I'm not a tax specialist but I suspect it will be easier to support the value of the deduction you claim if you show that it also had the operating system installed and that it still had the pre-loaded software that came with the machine when it was new. More information on Charitable deductions can be found in IRS Publication 1771, Charitable Contributions — Substantiation and Disclosure Requirements. It can be downloaded

New Help on the Privacy Front

The Office of Management and Budget has issued rules to implement the privacy protections enacted by Section 208 of the E-Government Act of 2002. That law became effective on April 17th of this year and requires many government agencies to take steps to assess the effect on personal privacy that may result if new data gathering or data processing systems are implemented. The rules were announced through Memorandum M-03-22 and can be reviewed .

Although there are exceptions in law enforcement, defense and homeland security, most federal agencies will be required to prepare a Privacy Impact Assessment that explains the who, what, where, when, why and how private information will be collected and used.

For purposes of the rules and the Act, personal information is defined as data:

1. that directly identifies an individual (e.g., name, address, social security number or other identifying number or code, telephone number, email address, etc.) or
2. by which an agency intends to identify specific individuals in conjunction with other data elements, i.e., indirect identification. (These data elements may include a combination of gender, race, birth date, geographic indicator, and other descriptors.)

Significantly, the memorandum also requires federal agencies to take a fresh look at their Website privacy policies. In addition to requiring additional disclosure of what information is collected, the new directive requires the agencies make their policy available in machine readable form. That can be significant if you use the security settings on your browser to control access to certain websites.

The policy does not set out a specific enforcement mechanism or penalty for agencies that don't comply. However, December 15, 2003 is the first deadline for agencies to submit progress reports to the Office of Management and Budget. Annual reports are required beginning in

2004. OMB will take the agencies' progress, or possible lack of progress, into account in preparing the Administration's budget recommendation to Congress.

From the November 2003 issue of PC Alamode. Bill Wood is an Assistant City Attorney, in the San Antonio City Attorney's Office. He practices real estate and technology law for the city.

From The DealsGuy

by Bob Click

Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Last month I included a warning about people being burned by cell phones causing fires while they were refueling their vehicles. Ira Wilsker, who has a weekly radio show, and is on the APCUG BODA, quickly informed me that it was a hoax, so I sent out a retraction. While it may never have happened, I'm not so sure that it couldn't happen. Its true that mechanical relays and switches have long ago disappeared from such electronic devices, and even when it rings, it is done with electronic pulses, all completely sealed in the circuit.

On the other hand, antennas are often loose and I know a friend who had a battery explode (not near a gas pump). Not only that but how many of you have dropped your cell phones. That could crack a board, or a lead from a component, thereby causing a temporary contact that could possibly cause a spark. All this not to mention static electricity from your body (from your seat or otherwise) when you touched any electronic device, the vehicle, or the pump. Check this URL sent to me by Joseph de Leon, editor for PC Alamode [<http://www.esdjournal.com/index.htm>]. For that reason, I believe you should not have any active electronic devices in your possession when refueling your vehicle. They have even talked about the possibility of grounding straps when refueling on the news recently. The above simply illustrates that however wild the scenario, an explosion is possible and you can't be too careful. Maybe the new hydrogen powered cars will be safer.

Fight Fire With Fire

I was surprised at the amount of feedback I received from my item about stopping the receipt of credit card solicitations. A lot of people already fight back in a variety of ways. Many just use the application and the envelope with return postage to write a nasty or informative message to the sender, such as please stop these &*& mailings, or "party deceased so don't send 'me' any more." Some get a bit sadistic such as wrapping a stone or brick and taping the postage paid envelope to it to send them. I liked those people's idea. However, I'll settle for simply calling 888-567-8688 to try stopping it since that is supposed to stop all the companies from sending them. You would have enjoyed the messages I received.

They're The Losers

Two vendors who promised deals have not delivered yet

so I have put together a few things that I have in reserve. You'd think those vendors would love the chance to get this much exposure (about 60,000 readers) at NO expense, but that's the way it often turns out, and one vendor had little response from their last offer.

A Browser That Works Good

I've been meaning to write about Mozilla for a while, but never got around to it. However, it is becoming more popular and I see more and more written about Mozilla, in fact I even have a review for it on my Web page. It is not quite as full featured as the IE and Netscape, but it does some things those do not. Best of all, its free so what do you have to lose. It's also said to be faster since the code is lean and mean. It is skinable and it kills all those popups.

A few Web pages may not view as good, but I'm told there is a lot to like about Mozilla. Get it at [<http://www.cnet.com/software/0-3227884-8-20005816-2.html?tag=st.sw.3227884-8-20005816-1.arrow3227884-8-20005816-2>] where there is also a review.

Wow --- Calls All Over For FREE

I read that you can make telephone calls all over the world via this Web site. [<http://www.pulver.com/fwd/>] Take a look and see if it will fit in with what you might be looking for. My thanks to Hewie Poplock of Central Florida Computer Society for writing about this one in "Hewie's favorites." I don't know anybody who has tried this one so you are on your own. I was also advised that you should read the offer thoroughly since it is not for everybody.

Affordable Legal Help

Last winter I wrote about the free tax help for AARP members at tax time and its almost tax time again. I was since reminded that AARP members have other benefits as well. An important one is in the form of legal help. For example, should you decide to move to another state, it is good advice to have a new "last will and testament" drafted that conforms to the new state's laws. That might normally cost you anywhere from \$200 to \$400, but getting an attorney through the AARP Legal Services Network (LSN) can save you money. I have no idea what all the services are that they cover, but check it out at [<http://www.aarp.org/lbn>] or call 1-800-424-3410. Remember this is for AARP members only.

What's In Your House?

Let's face it, if you had a serious fire and disastrous loss of personal items, can you sit down and list everything in your house for the insurance adjuster? I doubt you can. Many of us talk about making up a personal inventory, but just never get around to it, but in case you do take the time to do it, here is a great software called "My Stuff 1.5" for doing the job. It is available at [<http://www.contactplus.com/products/freestuff/mystuff.htm>] and it's a freebie. The download is 4 MB. You can even see "page previews" there

so you can get a good look at it. Even so, at no cost, just go ahead and download it and give it a try. No loss except your time if you don't like it. My thanks to Jerry Wonderly of Dayton Microcomputer Assoc. for finding this for their members. My brother-in-law had a disastrous fire in his home many years ago and was thinking of items for months afterwards, but it was too late because he had already settled. Do yourself a favor and get this done, but don't store the record in your own house. Guess why!

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 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@mindspring.com>]. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com/> for past columns and many interesting articles I have taken from various users group newsletters.

Fighting the Font Wars

How to Stay Sane with Your Sans

by Rick Altman

Alamo PC Organization

Fonts is one topic that is always met with fear and trepidation. It's no wonder why this is so. Let's leave out the entire subject (and arguably the most important one) of choosing the best-looking and most effective typeface for a given job. Let's also set aside the lively controversy over which is better between the PostScript Type 1 and TrueType formats. With those two monsters out of the picture, the dream is still a nightmare, as few users have a good handle on how fonts get installed and uninstalled, where they are located, and (all too often) where they come from.

You wouldn't allow your word processor or CorelDRAW to dictate to you where files can and cannot be saved; you want to save them in folders that you have created. Yet you allow your fonts to be stored in arbitrary locations over which you seem to have no say.

So please walk to the nearest window, open it up as wide as you can, stick your head out and yell, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore!" Then put your head back inside, go to your computer, and get to work taking back the control you have lost over your typefaces.

This article is a revision of one that I wrote two years ago, and chances are excellent that I will continue to update it every other year or so. Having just completed our season of CorelWORLD Traveling Seminars, in which I visited about 200 people in five cities, I saw — once again — just how troubled users can be with the whole notion of font management. We dedicated an hour during Day Two to this topic, and I carefully staged a presentation in which I took a typical PC configuration, with fonts stuffed into their little hiding place, and restored order. The problem was, in order to

restore order, I had to create chaos, and this had to be done on the same computer that needed to be running perfectly five minutes prior and then perfectly again five minutes afterward. Not an easy assignment, and at our first stop in Vancouver, I messed things up so badly that my poor notebook would only boot in standard VGA mode. I had to take a 10-minute break to resuscitate the thing. Then in Dallas, all of my screen fonts disappeared, turning most screen images into hideously-pixelated blobs of digitalia. I'm afraid that these mishaps gave our patrons the impression that font management is even scarier and more treacherous. All the more reason to revisit this topic.

The Fonts Folder:

Magic Potion or Voodoo?

Microsoft engineers tried to make it easy on users when they created the Fonts folder that resides under Windows. They succeeded: to install a TrueType font, you need only copy the .ttf file into the Fonts folder, visible from the Control Panel or from any Explorer window. Windows then automatically adds the required instructions to the Windows Registry.

Unfortunately, Microsoft engineers also made it possible for any application to dump fonts in there without telling you, and they made it easy for you to ignore the process of font installation and font management. The likely result: Before you know it, several hundred fonts are installed in your system, bogging down performance, gumming up the works, and worst of all, inviting you to use them. . . all in the same project.

This strategy of idiot-proofing typeface installation might be fine for normal, PC-fearing computer users who rarely leave the confines of their office software or their Internet browsers. That's not enough for Corel users and other graphic specialists, who place a much higher priority on the typefaces they choose and the knowledge of where they come from and who makes them. As a CorelDRAW user, you have a higher responsibility to control your typefaces and understand how they are managed. Furthermore, there is enough crap in the Windows sub-folders already, without dropping untold numbers of .ttf files in there.

Step 1: Create a Personal Fonts Directory

Using Explorer, My Computer, some other shell program, or your neighborhood DOS prompt, pick a spot in your system that makes sense to you and create a Fonts directory or folder. If you use both Type 1 and TrueType fonts, then create subfolders for each below Fonts (like TTF and T1).

From this point forward, this is where all font files should go. If you purchase or acquire new ones, you will know to copy them to this directory (or the subdirectories below). Applications that think they are doing you a favor by giving you a boatload of fonts won't know to do this; you'll have to clean up after them.

Step 2: Copy all TrueType fonts to your Fonts folder

Now that you have created your personal fonts folder, I want you to move all .ttf files there, half of the process you'll do now. This is not nearly as easy as it should be because of the favor that Microsoft thought it was doing for you. The Windows \ Fonts folder does not behave like a normal folder, and you cannot simply open it in Windows Explorer and move files to another location. First off, you cannot sort the window to easily select only the .ttf files there, but if you inadvertently move the screen font (the .fon) files, then Windows could behave erratically. Even selecting those files and copying them could confound Windows. It is clear that Microsoft did not intend for you to manage typefaces beyond an idiot's level—Reason No. 346 to relocate your typefaces.

We have found that the most reliable and safe way to copy font files from the forbidding Windows \ Fonts folder is to use the Windows Find command. From Start | Find, enter *.ttf as the filter for finding files (i.e. "find every file that ends in TTF and show them to me"). Any other time that you seek to view font files (like from the Control Panel, from an Explorer window, or from My Computer), Windows thinks it's doing you a favor by displaying them in a specially-crippled Explorer window, where you cannot sort the list, cannot separate the TTFs from the FONs. . .cannot really do anything except install or remove typefaces. . .just like the idiot that Microsoft seems to think you are.

But using the Find window, you can view only TTF files and you can copy them to your personal fonts folder with nothing more than a click and drag:

1. Open an Explorer window adjacent to the Find window and point it to your personal fonts folder.
2. Select all of the fonts in the Find window, hold Ctrl, and drag them to your fonts folder. It is important that you copy the files and not try to move the files — hence the direction to hold Ctrl in Step No. 2. This must remain a two-step operation.

Step 3: Remove all Fonts from Windows \ Fonts

Now use the front door: Go to Start | Settings | Control Panel | Fonts. From there, select every file that has the little TT icon next to it. Take care to avoid selecting the screen fonts, the ones with an A icon. Feel free to curse at Microsoft for not letting you sort this window so that all screen font files are placed together in the back — you will need to work this list yourself and the easiest way is to select all contiguous TTF files, delete them, and then select the next batch of contiguous files. Keep in mind two things:

* If you have fonts installed from other locations, the Fonts window will show these to you as shortcut icons. You have already copied every TTF file found on your computer into your personal fonts folder, so go ahead and select and delete these also.

* You probably won't be able to move every TTF file. Certain fonts, such as Marlett and maybe Arial, must remain

in this folder. That's okay — let them be.

When you're done deleting these files, the only ones left in this folder should be the screen font files (with the A icon) and a few fonts that Windows insists remain there. At this point, your interface and your applications might look funny, as they cannot find the fonts that were there just a moment ago. Don't go postal — as soon as you reinstall them, all will be well.

Step 4: Copy all of Corel's fonts to Fonts

It will cost you about 60MB to follow Step No. 3 and it's worth it. Point an Explorer windows to the Corel CD and keep the other one pointing to your Fonts folder. Find the folder that has all of the TTF files and copy them across. At your discretion, copy over the PostScript fonts also, and any symbol fonts you might want. Various versions of DRAW keep fonts in differently-named subfolders, and that is really of no consequence to you: As long as the fonts make their way to your personal fonts folder, even if they are in subfolders below that, you're okay.

Step 5: Get Font Navigator

Bitstream's Font Navigator is bundled with all versions of DRAW north of 6, but not many users know that because it is not part of the typical install (except for DRAW 10). It is dedicated to the easy installation, removal, and management of your typefaces, and in the eyes of many, it is smarter and easier to use than ATM 4.0 Deluxe. If you didn't install it initially, waste not a moment in doing so now. You can either run the installer again, choosing Custom, or simply find the Fontnav folder on the CD and copy it to your hard drive. This program requires no DLLs or Registry entries. Other readers can download a 30-day trial copy from Bitstream and/or order it for \$39.95.

You'll love Font Navigator — it has four clear and obvious windows, one each for: a catalog of all fonts found on your system, all fonts actually installed, any groupings of fonts that you create, for whatever purposes you have, and a font preview window. To install fonts, you drag and drop.

Because all of your fonts are now in your personal Fonts folder, you can easily build a catalog using Font Navigator's Find Fonts command: You simply tell the program to look in that one directory. That will bring every font you own — all of Corel's fonts, any Type 1 fonts, Windows fonts, other purchased fonts, every single font you have copied into your Fonts folder — into Font Navigator's Catalog window.

Step 6: Reinstall

This is my favorite part. I do it after hours, maybe from the notebook computer in our living room. I pour myself a cup of cocoa and I put my feet up. As I browse each font, its appearance instantly shows up in the Preview window, and if I want to install it, I drag it to the Installed Fonts window (or just press Insert). I am careful to not go font-happy here — I know that installing too many fonts is bad for my health, and I also know how easy it is to install fonts later.

Step 7: Maintenance

Every month or so, you should check the Windows / Fonts folder to make sure that no rogue fonts have made their way in there, thanks to some application you installed that thought it was doing you a favor. You decide which fonts to install, not your software. Move those fonts into your personal Fonts folder, and if you want to consider installing them, you reissue the Find Fonts command in Font Navigator so they will show up in the Catalog window.

A Word about PostScript

Font Navigator is capable of handling your Type 1 fonts, also, but you might have to do a bit of searching to find them on your system. They are probably in a PSFonts folder; when you find them, move them into Fonts. A Type 1 font has two files associated with it, a .pfb file and a .pfm file, and you'll want to make sure to copy both.

Finally, while I am of the opinion that Font Navigator is better than ATM, PostScript printer owners might still need ATM, depending upon their operating system. The part of ATM that provides support for PostScript printers is indispensable to them. Without it, PostScript fonts would not display on screen or print to non-PostScript printers. You probably own the so-called ATM Lite many times over, as it comes bundled with many applications. Don't shell out for the Deluxe version, however — use Font Navigator instead.

Now you are armed and dangerous. You know exactly where your fonts live, you know how to browse them, and you know how to install them. This strategy of copying all of Corel's fonts to your FONTS folder brings an important benefit to DRAW 8, 9, and 10 users: Upon opening a drawing, if DRAW cannot find a font that is used, it checks the Font Navigator catalog. If it finds it there, the Panose substitution box offers you the choice of installing the font right then and there. You won't be getting a substitute, you'll be getting the actual font. What's more, you can choose to have the font installed permanently, or just for the period of time in which you have that drawing open. In other words, you can open any .cdr file that uses Corel fonts and know that you will be able to view it with the correct font information. This is way cool. . .

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Media Notes

by Bill Petitt

Southeast Virginia Computer Group

I am back at the old computer desk after a great trip to Illinois for the birth of our 8th grandchild. She is Danielle Naomi Johnson and is a real beauty. That evens up the squad with 4 boys and 4 girls. All are doing well and looking forward to Christmas like all kids.

Comdex starts tomorrow (as I write this) and I'll be watching to see what is new and wonderful in our digital world and bring the news to you next month.

Did you ever wonder what's inside your computer?

I often use the free Belarc tool. If you have not seen this program, it's great. Belarc will tell you exactly what is inside a computer. After you download and run it, you get a report that includes the computer's components (CPU, motherboard, RAM, adapters, cards, etc.), make and model, along with serial numbers and all the software installed on the system complete with license numbers. You can get it here: http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html

McAfee's Huge Temporary Files

Do you use McAfee's anti-virus software. Each time it runs, it creates a huge temporary file. If you scan your system every day, the temporary files could mount up quickly, filling up your hard drive. One of my customers called the other day and said that these files were consuming vast chunks of his hard drive.

McAfee's customer support was contacted via instant messaging. I was told that the anti-virus software did create the files, and that he was responsible for removing them. Not believing that to be true, I contacted them again a little later. This time they said it had never heard of such a problem. The temporary files were supposed to be deleted automatically when the virus scan was complete. McAfee said the problem had not appeared during beta testing. But, not too much later, others had reported that they had the same problem.

McAfee confirmed that it had found and resolved the problem. A software patch has been developed and is being sent to McAfee customers through the company's push technology. Using that, McAfee ships the fix directly to customers' computers. A notice pops up on the customer's screen that a patch is ready to be installed. If you are using McAfee's software, watch for the pop-up notice. Simply follow the instructions to patch your software. McAfee said that about 2 million customers were affected by the problem. Another question I get every now and then:

Q. I use Windows XP and do a lot of music editing for our band. Is there a way that I can add an option to the right-click menu? I would like the option to print a listing of a folder's contents.

A. There's always a hard way and an easy way to get things done. First, here's the hard way, which really is not all that difficult.

What you need to do first is create a batch file. This is simply a series of steps that you want Windows to do. Here's how to create a Printdir.bat file:

1. Go to Start and Run. In the Open box, type notepad, and click OK.

2. Copy the following text and paste it into Notepad:

```
@echo off
dir %1 /-p /o:gn > "%temp%\Listing"
start /w notepad /p "%temp%\Listing"
del "%temp%\Listing" exit
```

3. On the File menu, click Exit, and then click Yes to save the

changes.

4. In the Save As dialog box, type the following:
%windir%\Printdir.bat

Afterwards, click Save. Make sure that you save it in the Windows folder.

Now, you need to add the ability to print a folder's contents to the right-click menu.

1. Go to Start, and open the Control Panel (or, in Windows 98 and ME, point to Settings, and then click Control Panel), and then click Folder Options.

2. On the File Types tab, click File Folder.

3. Click Advanced, and then New. In the Action box, type Print Directory Listing.

4. In the Application used to perform action box, type printdir.bat, and click OK.

Click OK, OK, and then Close.

But there is an easier way. There are free programs that let you print a folder's contents. Here are a few:

MaxLister: <http://www.acc.umu.se/~max/maxlister/index.html>

PrintFolder: <http://no-nonsense-software.com/freeware/index.html>

DirectoryPrint: <http://www.spadixbd.com/freetools/JDirPrint.htm>

Phone Numbers Go Portable -- FCC orders wired-to-wireless number portability.

Telecommunications customers in the U.S. will be able to take their phone numbers with them when they swap their wireline phones for wireless, if an order issued November 10th by the Federal Communications Commission has its intended effect.

The FCC order is intended to provide guidance to wireline and mobile carriers on "intermodal" porting of phone numbers. In most cases, wireline carriers operating in the 100 largest metropolitan areas have to support inter modal number porting by November 24, the FCC said.

The only exception will be if the carriers can demonstrate that it is not technically feasible to comply with the requirements. Those operating outside the largest metropolitan areas will not have to comply until May 24, 2004.

Staying in Contact

Currently, when a consumer or enterprise switches wireless carriers or unplugs their wireline phones in favor of cellular services, they face the prospect of losing their current phone number and potentially losing touch with a contacts built up over years. Number portability is intended in part to solve that problem.

The Monday order said wireline carriers will be required to port phone numbers to wireless operators where the cell operator's coverage area overlaps the geographic location in which the wireline number is provisioned, the agency said in a statement Monday. Also in the order, the FCC sought comments on some aspects of implementing number porting.

The agency did not set a mandatory length of time it should take to port a number from a wireline to a wireless phone. It is seeking comment on the issue, according to the statement.

An earlier order, issued October 7, addressed similar issues in relation to wireless-to-wireless number porting, according to the FCC.

Gap in Windows lets in pop-ups, says FTC

People with Microsoft Windows on their PCs should turn off a little-used feature that could allow unscrupulous marketers to bombard them with unwanted "pop-up" ads, U.S. regulators said Thursday.

Windows users should disable a backdoor communications channel called Windows Messenger Service to prevent unscrupulous marketers from filling their screens with unwanted ads, the Federal Trade Commission said.

The FTC said it had temporarily shut down one marketer, D Squared Solutions. The San Diego-based company had been selling pop-up blocking software through pop-up ads that could appear even when users were online but not browsing the Web.

"I'll beat you, and I'll stop beating you, if you pay." We call that extortion, and it's no different in the high-tech world," said Howard Beales, the head of the FTC's consumer protection division.

Beales added that the agency would seek to force D Squared to return the money it had collected from consumers.

D Squared could not be immediately reached for comment.

Beales said consumers should install firewall software or disable Windows Messenger, which allows computer network administrators to communicate with others on their networks but is unnecessary for home users. It is unrelated to popular instant-messaging software such as AOL Instant Messenger.

The FTC advice was another black eye for the world's largest software maker, which has struggled to improve software security as a wave of computer viruses have spread through holes in Windows and other Microsoft products.

Microsoft advised consumers to disable Messenger last month because it could potentially serve as a conduit for Internet worms. Separately, consumer complaints prompted Time Warner's America Online to disable the feature on customer computers.

A Microsoft spokesman said future versions of Windows would ship with Messenger turned off but said the company should not be faulted for enabling Windows Messenger.

"At the time we released Windows XP, it wasn't an issue that was being abused," Microsoft spokesman Sean Sundwall said.

The unwanted ads -- which the FTC said could pop up every 10 minutes for months on end--may be an annoyance, but they do not rise to the level of a security risk, Sundwall said.

Beales said D Squared, not Microsoft, should be blamed for the ads.

Another company called Scintillant is sending similar pop-up ads, the FTC said in court documents, seeking an injunction against D Squared. Beales declined to say whether the consumer protection agency was planning to sue Scintillant.

Consumers can find out how to disable Windows Messenger at the FTC's Web site. (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/popalrt.htm>)

Find a Place to Use Your Wi-fi Equipment

Wireless Internet access (referred as "Wi-Fi" by just about everyone) is a great way to network computers and access the Internet at home. But what do you do when you're out and about?

There are many wireless hotspots. Once you find the hotspot and if you have the right gear, you're surfing the Internet. All you have to do is find one. There are a number of Web sites that list hotspots. Some hotspots are free; for others, you must pay. Here are four sites to find hotspots near you:

<http://wififreespot.com/>

<http://freehotspots.com/>

<http://intel.jiwire.com/>

<http://www.ezgoal.com/hotspots/wireless/>

Is this the Best-trained Dog Ever, or What?

You've heard of dancing with wolves? How about dancing with Golden Retrievers? The video speaks for itself. My dog could never do that. See the video at: <http://www.henry.martinez.net/videos/14thplace.htm>

Q. Can I remove the \$NTUNINSTALL files from my computer?

They take up so much hard drive space!

A. \$NTUNINSTALL files reside in your Windows folder. (If you have Windows 2000, they are in your WINNT folder.) I have 45 on my computer, and they are monsters. I found one that was 237 MB!

These are the uninstallation files for Microsoft's updates and service packs. This would seem to say that there have been a lot of updates. But consider this: Not all updates can be uninstalled. So I presumably have had many more updates than 45.

You can remove the files if you want. Just delete them. But keep in mind that updates sometimes cause problems. If you have these files, you can remove troublesome updates through Add or Remove Programs in Control Panel.

However, if the updates aren't causing you problems now, they probably won't in the future. So you're likely safe if you get rid of these space hogs.

How to Know What to Change in Msconfig

MSConfig is a Windows utility. It tells Windows what programs to start along with Windows. There may be stuff in there from Microsoft that needs to start. But lots of other programs stick their noses into MSConfig, too. America Online and the RealPlayer are common offenders.

You access MSConfig by clicking Start>Run. Type "msconfig" (without the quotation marks) in the box. Click OK. Select the Startup tab.

You'll probably find several files there. Some you'll recognize; others, not. You can uncheck those that you recognize and are not interested in starting automatically. Some may be from Windows, which might need them to start properly. You can find a list of entries and explanations at: <http://www.lafn.org/webconnect/mentor/startup/PENINDEX.HTM>

This tool is not available in Windows 95, 2000 or NT. For the same functionality, download the Startup Control Panel. It's free, but the author accepts donations. You'll find it here:

<http://www.mlin.net/StartupCPL.shtml>

How to Get Rid of Old Entries in Msconfig

Unchecking the boxes in MsConfig brings up another problem. Windows doesn't let you delete these files. They just sit there, cluttering up MSConfig. Furthermore, they result in the message telling you that you made changes! You can check a box that causes the warning to disappear. But there's a better way to solve this problem: a program called CodeStuff Starter. You'll find it at: <http://codestuff.net/firms.com/download.shtml> aka Starter.

How Do You Know Who to Trust?

Take a look at PC World's latest report card on manufacturers.

More than 32,000 readers sound off about their PCs, cameras, printers, gateways, and PDAs. <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,112915,tk,dnWknd,pg,1,00.asp> Want to experiment with a different operating system? This could be an answer.

Software giant Microsoft and start-up VMware are bringing closer to mainstream use a technology for running multiple instances of an operating system on a single Intel-based computer. The technology, called virtualization, is a layer of software that isolates programs from the hardware on which they run.

Microsoft, which has finished development of a new version of Virtual PC for Windows, hopes to use the idea to support customers that have newer computers which must run older programs. VMware has also released a software development kit, which enables companies such as IBM or HP to more easily integrate the VMware software into their

utility computing technology.

If you have a highspeed Internet connection, you might want to try this:

[Http://wires.news.com.au/special/mm/030811-hubble.htm](http://wires.news.com.au/special/mm/030811-hubble.htm)

This is awesome. It's just over two minutes long and comes with sound. Maximize your screen..... If you think it goes too quickly, you can hit the pause button (in the lower RH corner) with each new picture in order to read the text and to study the detail.

Rare Books

On my bookshelf, I have some pretty old books. Some of these books belonged to my grandparents or parents. Others are mine from when I was growing up. You can use the Internet to determine the value of old books. Here are two places you can try to see if there may be some hidden treasures on your shelves.

<http://www.strandbooks.com/rare/>

<http://abaa.org/pages/collectors/index.html>

That's it for this month. I'll return to these pages after the new year arrives. Have a wonderful holiday season and I hope you get everything that you really want.

From the December issue of The Umbrella Online.

Do You "Google"?

by Beverly Rosenbaum

Houston Area League of PC Users

This Internet search engine is so popular that its name has become a noun, a verb and an adjective in our common language.

Google derived its name from "googol," the mathematical term for 1 followed by 100 zeros, a number larger than anything in the universe. When American mathematician Edward Kasner (1875-1955) wanted a word to illustrate the difference between an unimaginably large number and infinity, he asked the advice of his 9-year-old nephew Milton Sirota, who suggested the word "googol." It was introduced in print in 1940 by Kasner and James R. Newman in their book, *Mathematics and the Imagination*. According to the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia, "Google's use of the term reflects the company's mission to organize the immense amount of information available on the Web."

The Internet's most popular search service was founded in September of 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, two Stanford Ph.D. candidates who developed a technologically advanced method for finding information on the Internet. When Google was a Stanford research project, it was nicknamed "BackRub" because the technology checked backlinks to determine the importance of a site. The company has grown from 4 employees to more than a thousand, includes billions of pages in its index, and the site (www.google.com) handles more than 200 million queries a day (more than 80% of all Internet searches). The Google interface is available in 88 languages, and not only stores

information about web pages, but also snapshots of the pages themselves by caching them. A farm of more than 10,000 GNU/Linux computers is used to answer search requests and index the web.

The indexing is performed by a program called a "googlebot" that periodically requests new copies of the web pages it already knows about. Links in these pages are examined to discover new pages to be added to its database, which is several terabytes in size. Google takes a snapshot of each page examined as it crawls the web and caches these as a back-up in case the original page is unavailable. Clicking on the "Cached" link shows the web page as it looked when it was indexed. When a cached page is displayed, it will have a header at the top, serving as a reminder that this is not necessarily the most recent version of the page. The "Cached" link is missing for sites that have not been indexed, or those sites whose owners have requested that their content not be cached.

Google Tools

To access Google's search technology, Google Browser Buttons (www.google.com/options/buttons.html) can be added to your IE browser's personal toolbar, or the new Google Toolbar can be downloaded from toolbar.google.com. Another browser trick is to make Google your default search engine.

The new Google Toolbar, available in 37 languages, allows you to search the web with Google from any site, restrict your search to pages located in a specific country, search just within the pages of a site, and customize the layout of your toolbar. But the very best feature is the ability to allow or eliminate pop-up ads, something you can set for each individual site. It may be necessary to allow pop-ups on some sites that use them for forms. (So far, the pop-up blocker is available only in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.) The Toolbar requires Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or later (IE 5.5 or later for the pop-up blocker) and runs on Microsoft Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000, or XP. Additional help is available at toolbar.google.com/help.html.

The Google Translate Tool (www.google.com/language_tools) can translate text or entire web pages. To use Google's built-in calculator function, simply enter any calculation into the search box and hit the "Enter" key or click on the Google Search button. The calculator can solve math problems involving basic arithmetic, more complicated math, units of measure and conversions, and physical constants. You can also enter a query into the search box to use Google to find dictionary definitions. Relevant definitions are linked from a quality dictionary provider. If it's not already included, send your favorite dictionary source to suggestions@google.com.

Google has expanded the number of non-HTML file types searched to 12 file formats. In addition to PDF docu-

ments, Google now searches Microsoft Office, PostScript, Corel WordPerfect, Lotus 1-2-3, and others. The new file types appear in Google search results whenever they are relevant to the user query. Google also offers the ability to "View as HTML" to allow users to examine the contents of file formats even if they don't have a corresponding application installed. This option can also avoid viruses that could sometimes be carried in certain file formats.

Google has also added US street address and phone number lookup. To find listings for a US business, type the business name into the Google search box, along with the city and state, or type the business name and zip code. Entering the phone number with area code will also return a complete business listing. To find listings for a US residence, type any combination of first name or initial, last name, city or state, area code or zip code, and phone number into the Google search box. To have your own residential or business phone and address information removed from the Google Phone-Book, go to www.google.com/help/pbremoval.html.

You can restrict your search to a specific site by entering the word "site" followed by a colon. Google's spell checking software automatically looks at your query and checks to see if you are using the most common version of a word's spelling. If it calculates that you're likely to generate more relevant search results with an alternative spelling, it will ask "Did you mean: (more common spelling)?" Clicking on the suggested spelling will launch a Google search for that term. Because Google's spell check is based on occurrences of all words on the Internet, it's able to suggest common spellings for proper nouns (names and places) that might not appear in a standard spell check program or dictionary.

To use Google to get stock and mutual fund information, just enter one or more NYSE, NASDAQ, AMEX, or mutual fund ticker symbols, or the name of a corporation traded on one of the stock indices. If Google recognizes your query as a stock or mutual fund, it will return a link that leads directly to stock and mutual fund information from high quality financial information providers.

You can find street maps by entering a U.S. street address, including zip code or city/state, in the Google search box. Often, the street address and city name will be enough. When Google recognizes your query as a map request, it will return links from high quality map providers that will lead you directly to the relevant map. Using machine translation technology, Google gives English speakers access to a variety of non-English web pages. This feature is currently available for pages published in Italian, French, Spanish, German, and Portuguese. For more help and How-to-Search basics and advanced tips, go to www.google.com/help/index.html.

Visit labs.google.com to check out Google's technology playground, showcasing a few ideas that aren't quite ready for prime time. You're encouraged to play with these prototypes and send your comments directly to the Googlers who

developed them. There are items like Search by Location (to restrict your search to a particular geographic area); Google News Alerts (you can specify a topic and receive email updates when news breaks); Google Viewer (view search results as scrolling web page images); Google Webquotes; or Google Glossary (find definitions for words, phrases and acronyms).

Other Google Services

Froogle (froogle.google.com) is a new beta service that makes it easy to find information about products for sale online. Froogle applies the power of Google's search technology to a very specific task: locating stores that sell the item you want to find and pointing you directly to the place where you can make a purchase. To use Froogle, type in the name of the item you want to find and click on "Froogle Search." Almost instantly, you'll see photos of relevant products and links to the stores that sell them. Or you may choose to browse through the merchandise categories listed on Froogle's home page until you find exactly the item you want to buy.

Froogle provides a lightning quick way to search the largest collection of stores and products on the web, but does not sell products and there is no shopping cart. Froogle only finds the product you want and points you to the store that sells it. The name Froogle is a play on the word "frugal" (meaning thrifty) and the name "Google," which has come to stand for excellence in search technology. Suggestions for improvement at froogle-support@google.com.

Google Catalogs can search and browse mail-order catalogs online to find anything from industrial adhesives to clothing and home furnishings. To use it, select the "Catalog Search" link on the advanced search page or visit catalogs.google.com.

At groups.google.com you can post and read comments in Usenet discussion forums. Google has fully integrated the past 20 years of Usenet archives into Google Groups, which now offers access to more than 800 million messages dating back to 1981. Including the former Dejanews, this is the most complete collection of Usenet articles ever assembled and a fascinating first-hand historical account. Tips to learn how to use it are posted at groups.google.com/googlegroups/basics.html.

Google Image Search (images.google.com) is the most comprehensive image search on the web with 425 million images. Google News (news.google.com) allows you to search and browse 4,500 continuously updated news sources. Google University Search (www.google.com/options/universities.html) narrows your search to a specific school website to find admissions information, course schedules, or alumni news.

Google Wireless (www.google.com/options/wireless.html) tells you how to access Google's search technology when you're on the move from any number of handheld

devices, such as mobile phones, OmniSky, Palm VII, or Handspring handhelds. While the Google search engine may not yet have a “googol” of searchable pages in its index, it has grown very quickly from its small beginning in a Menlo Park, California garage to become a very valuable tool.

From the December 2003 issue of HAL-PC Magazine.

Reading and Writing

by Charles Olsen

Houston Area League of PC Users

Reading

Even though my tablet PC can display ebooks, I still read ebooks only on my Palm. I love being able to carry a dozen books in my pocket, so that I always have something to read. The ebooks I read are mostly simple text, which works quite well on a Palm display.

Certain magazines are available to be read on a Palm, but this can be less satisfying than reading ebooks. Magazines are more likely to include graphics that don't display well on a Palm screen, or sidebars that are harder to follow on a Palm. I do prefer to read magazines on my tablet. Zinio is a great service for reading magazines.

With Zinio, you download an electronic copy of the magazine that is identical to the paper copy. And I do mean identical, ads and all. It even includes some of the blow-in cards.

Once you've downloaded and opened a magazine, you can turn the pages forward or backward by tapping the right or left edge of the page. A button at the top of the screen will take you to the table of contents, and you can go directly to an article by tapping the title in the contents. If the article includes web URLs, you can launch the web site by tapping the link.

You can zoom in and out on the page as desired. You can also make notes by using the pen to write directly on the page, or to highlight parts of the page. There's also an eraser tool allowing you to remove notes and highlights. To find all of your notes in a particular issue, just click the Show Annotation List command. There's also a search command, which can find all instances of the text you enter.

Like the ebooks on my Palm, Zinio makes it possible to carry a stack of magazines around with me. The magazines that I subscribe to (PC Magazine and Popular Science) are about 18MB per issue.

Some of the other magazines offered by Zinio are: *Business Week, Harvard Business Review, Computer Gaming World, Seventeen, eWEEK, IT Week, Network Computing, Golfweek, Motor Trend, Sporting News, BusinessWeek Jane's Defence Weekly, and Rotor & Wing.*)

My only complaint about Zinio is the relatively small number of magazines that are currently available in that format. I hope that they will continue to add new magazines to the service.

Writing

12

A tablet PC can do a great job of emulating a pad of paper, allowing you to take unlimited notes and then search or print those notes. Additional functionality such as data backup and sound recording give you capabilities far beyond a pad of paper, while still retaining the simplicity of paper.

I've written articles on my tablet using handwriting recognition. This approach is serviceable, and allowed me to do some writing while away from my desk, but it still would have been much easier to do with a keyboard. But once you add a keyboard you defeat the purpose of a small, light tablet.

Motion Computing has come up with a great alternative. The Motion Hardtop Keyboard is a hard plastic cover that snaps onto the front of a Motion tablet PC when the tablet is not in use, protecting the display. When you need to use the tablet, you can remove the cover and snap it onto the back of the tablet.

Inside the plastic cover is a full keyboard, about the same size as a laptop keyboard. The keyboard includes a stand for the tablet, and you can adjust the viewing angle of the stand. Connect the USB cable, place the tablet into the stand, and you're ready to type. The keyboard includes a pointing stick and mouse buttons, so you don't need the pen while using the keyboard.

With its USB connectors, a tablet PC can use any USB keyboard. But the Motion Hardtop Keyboard is ideal, since it includes several components in one: protective cover, keyboard, mouse and desk stand. Plus it clips securely to the back of the tablet when you don't need it, keeping it handy while getting it out of the way.

This one simple device has added considerable value to my tablet PC. I've been using the tablet PC much more since I bought the Hardtop Keyboard, and my tablet is now my primary writing computer. If you have a Motion Computing tablet, this is a great keyboard.

Zinio Reader

Zinio

www.zinio.com

Motion Hardtop Keyboard

Motion Computing

www.motioncomputing.com

\$129.99

From the December 2003 issue of HAL-PC Magazine.

Society News

Help's Half Hour

Led by Ron Matteson

Arpad is looking for software that will encode video. Example: convert from DVD to another file type. No one had an idea for him tonight.

Q: My disk defrag program stops and restarts after running only a few minutes.

A: Something is running in the background like Antivirus. Suggestion that it be run in 'Safe' mode. (usually F8 at startup)

Q: How can I get back my system files - my computer crashed. She has an XP program disk.

A: Will need to remove your original hard drive, use startup disk, and then add on a second hard drive, moving the files. Suggestion to move off original hard drive and then use it as a second slave.

Q: How is Blue Frog as a provider?

A: Great! Also have an offer to speed up the page loading at seven times the speed, using a compression routine. It is still dialup. Cost is about double the price. Page loads will be the fastest - downloads may not be more than 2 times.

Q: How much difference is there between an internal hard drive and a USB 2 external drive?

A: Transfer to USB 2 thumb drive was pretty fast. Usually at 100 mb/second

Q: Used 19 inch monitor inherited. When added to new PC, screen simply flashes and then stays off

A: Try safe mode. Will need a new driver. Put old monitor back and select the lowest 'generic' monitor. Then put on the new one, allowing you to then update to the best driver.

Q: Can the download speed be monitored?

A: Right click over the task in the system tray will show the rate.

Q: Win98 - screen asks to install WinZip all the time. Can I get rid of this?

A; Start-Run-Win.ini look for load= statement 4-5 lines from the time. If there, remove the WinZip.exe. Start-Run - MSCONFIG. Go to Startup Tab and uncheck WinZip.exe program along with any programs that you do not need.

Planning Meeting Minutes

by Arpad Kovacs

Present: Bob Avery, Arpad Kovacs, Tony Dellelo, Bill Statt, Steve Staub, Sally Springett

Start 7:17

Presentation was well received with lots of member feedback. They'd like more info on video cameras

Jan. - Mar. Brighton Library

Jan. Bill Statt - Paint Shop Pro 8 (need the user group presentation package)

Feb. Ron Matteson - PDF

Mar. TBA

Meetings: food at program meetings (with donation cup to help cover the cost of supplies). The group will provide coffee (regular and decaf), tea, soda, stirrers, cream, sugar, sweet & low, cups, plates, napkins, and a trash bag. Members are asked to donate food (cookies, brownies, etc.). A sign-up sheet for food will be at the meeting.

Deadline for ads is the date of the program meeting each month.

Newsletter printing on Sat. begin 9:30 AM

New advertising flyer for market pro

New store wants ad

New flyers for Market Pro



*Listen at 12:20 every Saturday on 1180 AM.
Call 222-1180 to ask a question.*

Suggestions for flyer: next need revising. Put both new users and digital photo on one page or double side.

Suggestion for new users or digital photo SIG to be promoted at local pc retailers.

Annual Audit in April.

Membership is holding steady.

Future presentation: install linux on PC. Give finished PC as door prize. April meeting?

Ended 8:11

New User's SIG

John McMillan: Coordinator

Bill Statt: Reporter

December 2, 2003

The December meeting of the Rochester Computer Club's "New User's SIG" met at the Finger Lakes DDSO, Monroe Developmental Center at 6:30 on 12/2/03.

We started off with a question about downloading the new AOL 9.0. The person found out that it was going to take over 4 hours on his phone connection. He watched it for about ½ hour and then walked away. When he came back, it said that the connection had been interrupted. So he canceled out. His question was whether any of the download was on his computer? He was worried that part of AOL 9.0 would have installed. We explained that what he was downloading was the executable file or the .exe. He would have to install AOL 9.0 from that file by clicking on it after he had the full download. We explained that he probably did have some of the download in whatever folder he downloaded it to. He didn't know where it was downloaded. We suggested that he check his download folder and maybe his temp folder. He wanted to install from a 9.0 disc and was worried that the

download would interfere with the install. We explained that it wouldn't and he would be safe to install from the disc. If he was still worried, he could run disc cleanup from Start>Programs>Accessories>System Tools>Disc cleanup. That would clean his temp files, temporary Internet files and Internet cookies. Then he could go to his Download file and check that. But there shouldn't be any problem with installing 9.0 from a disc. If he still could not find where it was downloaded, he could go to Start>Find and put in AOL 9.0 and see where the file was. He did not want to have extra information on his computer because he had a small Hard Drive. He wanted to know how to delete the file when he found it. He would just Right Click and from the pop up menu, choose Delete. That would put the file in the Recycle Bin. He was also wondering if there might be any other problems with installing 9.0 over his older AOL program. There are not supposed to be any problems, but as with any update, if there is important information or files you need, back them up before updating. In this case, he might want to back up his E-mail addresses and any E-mails that he needs. We had another user who told of a horror story. He updated his Microsoft Me to XP. He said he read every little message that came up when he updated. After he updated, he found out that Microsoft XP had erased his Netscape Mail and he had lost 240 E-mail addresses. XP did not change his Microsoft Outlook. He still had that account and those E-mail addresses, but Netscape was gone. This was upsetting because he kept the entire Club business, and addresses, on Netscape. Also, if he uses a Buddy list, he might want to back that up. Finally, he might want to save any of his bookmarks in separate folders. Also, there had been a problem in our area that AOL changed everybody's dial in phone number and many people were using long distance calling. He should check to make sure that the dial in number was still a local number after installing.

There was a problem from a previous month. One user had a problem printing pictures. They all came out blue. We suggested that he do a cleaning cycle and align the print heads on his printer. These programs can usually be found by going to Start> Settings>Printer. Then under one of the menu choices in the printer Que, should be maintenance settings. He said that he had tried these and they didn't work. He was sure that his ink cartridge was good because he had just purchased it. It turned out the new cartridge was bad. He didn't pay enough attention to the print align when he ran it. It was missing the yellow. He went out and bought a new cartridge and installed it. He had full color. Then he looked at the test sheet from the new cartridge and the old and discovered that the yellow was missing from the old cartridge. He took it back to Wal-Mart, expecting a problem, but he said that they took it back without any questions. Another user said he also had a problem when he installed a new ink cartridge. But his problem was that he did not get all of the

cellophane off the bottom of the cartridge and he was not getting on of the colors of his ink, but for a different problem.

Another user had a problem when he left his computer on and left it for a while. When he came back, he found that there was an error message and the only thing he could do was a hard shut down, i.e. pull the plug or hold the button in for more than 5 seconds. What we found out was that he had power management on. He was using Windows 98. Power management should have reduced the spin of the hard drive after a certain period of inactivity. Unfortunately, this has never worked well for desktop computers. The advice we have heard is to cancel all the power management on desktop machines. There are two places where you have to do this. One is in the power management in the Control Panel and the other is in Windows itself. Most of the user groups suggest that you leave your hard drive running and just manually shut off the monitor. The monitor is what is using the most power. But this is a perennial problem. Half the people shut everything down and half just shut off the monitor and leave the computer running. You can still use screen savers, but don't let the computer go into sleep mode. We came to a consensus that if you use your computer every day, then it probably is better to leave it on. If you are only using your computer once or twice a week, then turn it off after you use it.

Then we had a continuing problem with how to use Anti-Virus software. We had one user who had problems with his computer. He had to take it in to a shop. They found that he had a virus. This virus loaded itself in the boot area and he could not get the computer to start. Commercial Anti-Virus software is good for only a set period of time. If it came with your new computer, odds are that you have a 90-day free trial program. After that, you have to subscribe to the service. This means paying a fee. Usually this can be done on the Internet. Otherwise, most commercial Anti-Virus software is only good for a year. After that year, you have to renew your subscription. Since most of these programs run in the background, you may not know when they need renewal. Usually, the commercial company will send you an E-mail telling you that you need to renew. Many times, users will ignore this message or won't get it. They think that since they have Anti-Virus software, it is always working. What you need to do is to go to your DAT files for the program you are running and see what the date in on them. Anti-Virus programs are updated every Wednesday morning. Of course, that means that the new Viruses come out each Wednesday afternoon. Make sure your Anti-Virus program is downloading the current DAT files. If not, you are not protected. If you download your updates manually and have not done this in a few weeks, you are not protected. You need to update each week, otherwise you are not protected. Some Viruses disable your Anti-Virus programs. You can go to Soundbytes.org. Scroll down the page and go to, "Websites we have heard on your show." Then scroll down to "Stinger."

This is a constantly updated Anti-Virus program from McAfee that catches most of the most difficult and persistent Viruses. That may free you machine if you have a difficult virus. You may have to run your computer in Safe Mode to run your Anti-Virus program if you get a Virus because you have not updated. The point being that you need to make sure you Virus DAT files are current, or you do not Virus protection.

Then we had a problem about computer maintenance in general. One member said that every week he ran Scan Disc and Defrag. The information on Defrag is that it is hard on your hard drive. When you bring up Defrag, it should tell you how much your hard drive is defragmented. If it is not more than 10%, you probably don't need to do it. But he also said that when he ran it, he kept getting dialogue boxes that said the program had been stopped ten times and would he like to continue. Our local computer show, Soundbytes, says to run Scan Disc and Defrag in Safe Mode. I have tried that but found that the programs still get stopped. The only way to really have it run without stopping is to do it from a Dos prompt. It has also been said by Soundbytes that you should use Control/Alt/Delete to stop programs running in the background. You have to leave Systray and Explorer. I have tried that and that did not work either. The only thing that has worked is to run the programs in Dos.

Two other New Users mentioned that Windows 98 did not shut down and when it started, it ran Scan Disc. Both of these individuals recently had Windows 98 reloaded on their computers. There is a known shut down problem with Windows 98. It is called their Fast Shutdown procedure. We advised them to do a Google search on Win 98 Fast Shutdown. That should provide a link to the patch on Microsoft to fix the Fast Shutdown problem. Remember, that anytime you completely reload an operating system, you have to get all the patches for the operating system and all of your software.

Another New User asked about adding more memory to his Windows 98 machine. He has a friend who has extra memory and wants to sell it to him. He hears that adding more memory to your computer is one of the best things you can do for it. He already has 256 megs of Ram. Unfortunately, Windows 98 will not use more than 256 Megs of Ram. So it is senseless to put in more memory. Then he wanted to know if he should upgrade to Windows XP. We had to remind him that he might loose software that was written before Windows XP. Also, the compatibility mode for XP does not always work.

Another member said that whenever he opened his Web Browser, it always went a web page with advertising on it that he did not want. When he tried to change it back, the next time he opened his browser, it went back to that page. Again, going to the Soundbytes Web Page and scrolling down to, "Heard a Web Page on your show." He should download

Ad-Aware and Spybot. These two programs search for Adware and Spyware that are added to your computer when you visit seemingly innocent Web Pages. Use both of these programs to get rid of any Spyware and Adware. But, make a copy of the Spyware and Adware before you delete it. These programs will let you copy the programs. Sometimes when you download free computer software, the software puts Adware and Spyware on your computer. If you disable these, the program stops working. KaZaa is notorious for this. It puts 19 different Adware and Spyware programs on your computer. If you disable them, KaZaa stops working. The solution to this is to use Shareaza. It does not have Spyware or Adware. We also advised the new user to empty his Internet cache and his temporary Internet folder. When he does this, he should be able to put in the home page of his choice.

Another recurring problem is with Internet Pop-up Ads. I recommend to use Mozilla. It has the option to block Pop-up ads. But for Internet Explorer, there are free software programs that will block Pop-up Ads. Go to Download.com. Use the "Advanced Search" link. On that page, put in a description, tab to your operating system, and then under license, tab to free. Then do the search. When you find a program, click on the program name. This will give you a short description of the program and it will also tell if the program will put on Adware or Spyware. Then read the opinions. At the bottom of the first opinion page you can choose to read only negative opinions. I like to go there to read what people don't like about a program. But I have heard that competing programs will spam this with negative comments.

Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Balance 9/16/03	\$409.45
Income	
Dues	\$195.95
Donations	<u>7.05</u>
Total	\$203.00
Expenses	
St. Stephen's	\$75.00
Postmaster	50.00
Cover paper	<u>7.49</u>
Total	\$140.99
Balance 10/21/03	\$571.46