

The Perfect Backup Approach

by Gene Barlow

Backing up your hard drive is the most important thing you should do to protect your computer system. Yet, I am constantly surprised to find that as few as 10% of my smart user group audiences have a good backup procedure in place. Hard drive crashes are quite common and it is very painful to rebuild a computer system after a hard drive crash. Anti-virus software may offer some protection, but fast moving viruses can get through this protection and crash your hard drive. It may take you days or weeks to recover from a hard drive failure and your important data files are gone forever. So, protect your computer by backing up your hard drive on a regular basis and avoid the pain of a hard drive failure.

For the past few years I have recommended a sophisticated backup process that would adequately backup all aspects of your computer system. Using a file backup utility, I suggested you backup your important data files at the end of each day. Then, to protect your full system, I suggested you should backup your entire hard drive using a full system backup utility each month. I also suggested that you separate out your data files into a different partition on your hard drive to further protect these important files. This approach is outlined in an article that I wrote titled, "Backing Up your Hard Drive". You can read it on my web site at www.ugr.com/nl0102.html.

While many of you followed my suggestions on backing up your hard drive, many of you are still not doing anything to protect your hard drive from failure. Perhaps my backup approach was too complex to understand or too difficult to follow. Fortunately for you, technology has made some dramatic advances in the past couple of years and now there is a better and easier way of doing your backups. This article will show you the best way to backing up your hard drive and tell you what hardware and software products to use to follow this approach. It is so easy that everybody should start to backup their hard drive. All you have to know is the secret of how to do it, and your computer can be safe and secure.

Backup Hardware:

The first step to having a successful backup procedure is choosing the right backup hardware to use to save your backups to. For years, users have been burning CDs for their backups. This approach was full of frustrations and problems. No wonder folks hated to do backups. First, it seems that creating a backup and then burning it to many CDs could overtax many computer systems. If anything went wrong, the entire backup process could cancel, leaving you with several burnt CDs, but not the complete backup you needed. Worst than that, the backup might appear to be complete, but the CDs were corrupt and would not restore properly. Thank goodness, CDs have been replaced with a much more reliable backup media.

A couple of years ago, external hard drives entered the computer marketplace in large numbers. Today, an external hard drive is the ideal backup media to use. Instead of sitting by your computer for hours to feed it another blank CD, all you need to do is to attach your external hard drive and forget about it. Your backup will be taken automatically without your being involved. No more drudgery of making backups to CDs.

Why are external hard drives the ideal backup media? First, they are large enough to backup your main hard drive on one device. You do not need to backup to multiple CDs, so the whole process can be done without your involvement. Second, backing up to an external hard drive is many times faster than burning CDs. An external hard drive is almost as fast as the internal hard drives on your computer. Third, external hard drives are much more reliable at saving your important files. CDs can easily become scratched or flawed and not protect your important backups. Finally, external hard drives are relatively inexpensive to buy and use. You may actually save money over the cost of burning a lot of CDs.

What should you look for when buying an external hard drive for backup purposes? External hard drives come in two basic flavors - USB2 and Firewire. One is just as fast as the other and both will do an excellent job of backing up your main hard drive. You will need to attach the external hard drive to your computer using either a USB2 port or a Firewire port on your computer. Most computer today come with a USB port on them, so these are the more popular type of external hard drives. Just be sure your computer doesn't have one of the older USB1 ports on it instead of the faster USB2 ports. If you have an older USB1 port, you can still attach and run your USB2 external hard drive, but it will run at the slower USB1 speed. In this situation, you can add a USB2 port to your computer for a small additional price.

The external hard drives come in a couple of sizes - miniature and standard drives. The miniature external hard drives have a 2.5 inch laptop computer hard drive inside a small case. These drives are small enough to fit in your pocket and are very light to carry. They do have a couple of disadvantages to them that you should be aware of. First, they only hold 20GB, 40GB, or 80GB of backup files. This may not be big enough to backup your 300GB main hard drive. Second, you will pay quite a bit for the small size of these miniature drives. The 20GB drives cost about \$160, the 40GB drives are about \$200 and the 80GB drives are over \$300. So, you end up paying a lot for the small size.

If you don't mind having a slightly larger external hard drive, you can get one with much more capacity and for less money. These larger external hard drives contain standard 3.5 inch hard drives inside the case and are available in capacities starting at about 80GB and go up to 300GB and larger. An 80GB or 120GB external hard drive is an excellent size for most backup needs. If you watch for sales on these drives, you may find an 80GB hard drive for under \$100. I have seen them as low as

\$69. The 120GB external hard drives will be more expensive, but can be found for as low as \$99. So, check the ads in your local paper and you may find a great deal on external USB2 hard drives.

Backup Software:

The second part of having the perfect backup approach is using the right backup software product. There are two basic types of backup software available – file backup utilities and full system image backup utilities. Older file backup utilities would backup individual files. These utilities were slow since they had to use the operating system to find and retrieve each file separately. We have hundreds of thousands of files on our hard drive and so working on individual files, one at a time, is very slow. A better backup utility will backup your entire hard drive (a partition at a time) and does this at the hard drive sector level. These types of backup utilities create backup images of your hard drive that you can save to your external hard drive. To conserve space, these images are compressed to about half their normal size which permits you to keep many backup images on your external hard drive. So, the first think to look for in your backup software is the ability to create compressed images of your entire hard drive.

While an image backup utility is a major step in the right direction, it is not the ultimate solution. With full backup images, you still end up backing up your entire hard drive each time, even if only a small portion of the drive has changed since the last backup. So, the images contain a lot of unchanged files that do not need to be backed up again. So, the secret is to find an image backup utility that can do incremental backup images. With the incremental backup image approach, only the changed sectors on a hard drive are backed up and not those parts of the hard drive that have not changed since the last backup. Incremental backup images are much smaller in size and complete much quicker than a full backup image.

A little calculation at this point may help you understand another reason why the incremental backup image feature is so important. Let's say you have a 120GB main hard drive that is a third full. That means it has about 40GB of files on it. A full condensed image of this hard drive would be about 20GB in size (with a compression of about 50%). That means that you could store four separate full backup images on an 80GB external hard drive. Using the incremental backup image approach, you may be able to store 30 or 40 separate backups on the same 80GB external hard drive. Because you can keep more incremental images on your external hard drive, you can make your backups more frequently than if you were limited to only four full backups. Hence, your backups would be more current with the incremental image approach versus the full backup approach. This means less lost files since the last backup. This is of major importance when considering a backup approach.

So, the secret to choosing the best backup software is to look for a full system backup utility that can do

incremental backup images. There have been a couple of expensive enterprise software products that offer the incremental backup image feature (for example, Symantec's V2i Protector Desktop Edition v2), but there is only one consumer backup utility that I am aware of that offers the incremental backup image feature and that is the Acronis True Image 8.0 product. This excellent backup utility was awarded *PC Magazine's* Editors Choice award as the best backup imaging utility on the market. *PC World* calls True Image the leader in the field of incremental backup images. Using this excellent backup utility with an external hard drive will provide you with the most perfect backup approach available today.

How to Backup your Hard Drive:

To complete this article, let me suggest how you would do your backups using an external hard drive and an incremental backup image utility. I would suggest that you set up a regular schedule to make your backup images. For the average user, I would make a full backup of your hard drive at the beginning of the month and then an incremental backup image at the end of each week that follows. So, you would have one full backup image and 3-4 much smaller incremental backup images each month. At the beginning of the next month, make another full backup image and follow this again with weekly incremental images. Save all of these images on your external hard drive and don't delete any of the older images until you start to run out of space on the drive. If you have a very active computer system, you could make a full backup at the beginning of the week and incremental backup images at the end of each day. Most users will not need to do the backups this frequently, but some may want the extra protection of more frequent backups. Either way, the approach is the same, just the frequency is changed. With True Image 8.0 you can set up the software to make these backups automatically. So, set it up and forget it. Your backups will occur as scheduled.

If at any time, you need to restore one or a few of your files, you can simply copy these files out of your compressed image files using a facility in True Image. If you need to restore your full hard drive, you can do this also, even if the main hard drive is empty and not bootable. True Image will boot from a special CD to permit you to quickly restore the entire hard drive from the image files. So, you can quickly restore a few files or your entire hard drive using Acronis True Image 8.0.

Finally, you may be wondering why I recommend keeping all of your full and incremental backup images on your external hard drive and not deleting them after you make a new image. You need to understand that the full image you make at the beginning of the month and the incremental images that follow it each week go together in a set. True Image needs all of them to restore your hard drive to the way it was when you made the last incremental image. During the restore, it will combine the beginning full image with each of the incremental images to recreate the hard drive. It does

this very quickly whether you are retrieving a few individual files from the image set or recreating the entire hard drive. Now, let's suppose that a stealth virus got on your hard drive and was captured in the last incremental image you made. You certainly do not want to restore your hard drive with this virus on it. So, instead, you indicate to True Image to restore your hard drive from the incremental image you made just before the image containing the stealth virus. That restores your system to a point in the past when it was still clean of the virus.

Over time, you will build up a collection of backup images on your external hard drive that will let you see what files were on the drive at any point of time in the past few months. If you deleted a file some months ago and now want to get it back, you can indicate to True Image to look in a backup image before you deleted the file and you can copy it back to your hard drive from the image files. Having a history of all of the files that have been on your hard drive is a very powerful and useful function. Only with an incremental backup image software product could you afford to keep all of this history on a modest external hard drive. Acronis True Image 8.0 with an external hard drive is the perfect way to backup your main hard drive.

How to Order Acronis True Image 8.0: Acronis is offering this excellent product to user group members and their friends at a special discount price of just \$34. To take advantage of this special price, you need to go to <http://www.usergroupstore.com> and click on any of the yellow "Buy Now" buttons. This will take you to the secure web order form where you can order your copy of Acronis True Image 8.0 at the user group discount. Complete the form including the special order code of UGNL0804 and submit the form. Your product will be processed in a few hours and will be delivered in 2-3 days.

If you have any questions about this article or how to backup your hard drive, please contact me at barlow@ugr.com. I will get back to you shortly with the answers to your questions. I would like to see everyone's computer protected with a good backup approach. The method outlined in this article should do exactly that for your computer. Don't be sorry. Backup your computer today.

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Time to buy a DVD burner?

by Kim Komando

Q: I have held off purchase of a DVD burner. But now that dual-layer and dual-format burners are available, I suggest that an update by you would be useful.

A: Thank you for the suggestion. It has been awhile since I've written about DVD burners (so-named because they "burn" data to a disc with a laser and heat). You'll be thrilled to hear that the DVD situation is as muddled as ever!

DVDs were introduced in 1997. For some time, there were two standards: DVD-RAM and DVD-R/RW. The first was primarily for data, such as backups. DVD-R/RW could be used for anything ® means recordable, so it can be used once; RW discs are re-writable, so they can be recorded hundreds or thousands of times).

In 2001, Hewlett-Packard brought out DVD+R/RW.

In addition, there are single-layer and dual-layer discs. The former hold 4.7 gigabytes of data; dual-layer discs can handle 8.7 GBs.

Disc drive manufacturers have solved this problem by producing drives that read more than one format. Drives that burn and read both - and + discs are common. There are also many drives that handle both RAM and -RW or -R.

So, how will you use your discs? Are you burning home movies and planning to show them on your TV? In that case, you'll need a DVD player to show the movies. The burner must be capable of producing discs that the player can handle. That shouldn't be too bad; most new players will run most discs. Older players are most comfortable with -R or +R.

If you're backing up your hard drive, and will be reading the discs with the same burner that makes them, there is no issue. If different drives are making and reading the discs, match them up. Again, -R and +R are likely to be the most compatible.

RAM is available in some video cameras. These cameras generally record directly to disc. They can record in -R, too. Again, you'll have to match up burners and players, especially if you'll be editing the movies in the computer, then burning them to a new disc.

OK, take a couple aspirin and have a seat. There's more.

We haven't even touched on Blu-ray drives. They're not out yet in the United States, but they're coming.

Blu-ray refers to a blue-violet laser. That has a shorter wavelength than today's red laser. So the data takes much less space. Blu-ray discs will hold 23.3 to 54 gigabytes of data, depending on the standard. (CD, DVD and Blu-ray discs are all the same physical size.)

What will they do with the extra capacity? One use certainly will be to record high-definition programming. The more data available, the clearer the picture. Two hours of high-definition programming will fit on a 25 GB disc.

Unfortunately, there are at least four standards for Blu-ray. Most companies have lined up behind the original Blu-ray. Another standard, HD-DVD, is emerging. It is backed by NEC, Toshiba and Sanyo. There are a couple other standards, but these two look like the ones we'll have to worry about.

Some Blu-ray consumer equipment is on the market in Japan. I expect to see it here before long.

Should you wait? I wouldn't. No matter what, something better is always on the horizon. I advise you to buy a burner that suits your needs. Your needs may change in a few years. If they do, buy a new DVD burner

then. You can play the waiting game right into your grave.

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From the DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
Greater Orlando
Computer Users Group

Central Florida experienced Hurricane Charlie, as you may know. Charlie was originally predicted to cross just north of us and we would only get the edge. Don't we wish; the worst of it ended up passing directly over us because it unexpectedly turned ashore further south than originally predicted. Our wind gust expectations would change to in excess of 80 mph instead of 50 mph. Actual wind gusts of 105 mph were recorded at the airport. Since we have no interior rooms, we sat in the living room waiting it out. Many times our patio doors would start rattling and we saw the glass actually warp in and out, along with the same action for our front windows and their sliders, but surprisingly, no breakage. Then the whole house would shudder and I hoped the place would hold together. If the roof had come off and we got sucked out, we would have no choice but to wish each other a good trip and I forgot to keep my camera handy so I could take pictures as I left.

In the end though, our house suffered little damage. There's only one large tree near our house while many other houses had more. One house on our block had two large trees fall on it, but the damage wasn't bad. Charlie blew some soffit from under the eaves on one side of the house and blew one screen out of our back porch. While most homes on our block suffered the loss of many, if not all, of their shingles, we only had one broken shingle. Only one house on our block was unhurt, but others had considerable roof and tree damages. We had no power for five days, but many areas went without power for much longer. At this writing some are still without power.

When we were trying to find a restaurant (very scarce here for several days), it was an experience because with the power out in much of the eastern Orlando area, most traffic lights were inoperative and few people were courteous at intersections. Gas was scarce, but we had filled up before the storm. A station with gas and power to pump it usually had very, very long lines. It was impossible to find ice in stores, although a few places were set up, not near us, where volunteers passed out free ice, drinking water and Deet insect repellent. Grocery stores open for business were scarce, and if you found one, it was without milk and other necessities. Also, no lamp oil, wicks, batteries or plain telephones. I needed a new wick.

Our street had many downed tree branches, but many streets were even impassible for a few days until people and crews cleared them out. Some areas had no water, and where sewer lift stations had no power, there were problems with sewer backups, although not in our area. Our subdivision has underground utilities, but our well-being depends on the feeder lines coming in on poles. I saw pictures of streets where an entire line of wires and poles were broken off laying on the street. Progress Energy said that much of the grid had to be rebuilt.

There were several sad stories about people who died more or less as a result of the storm. I was unaware that a storm could affect people's pacemakers, which was the problem for one as well as his lack of oxygen. Trimming trees is also a dangerous job, which resulted in a couple of deaths. It was an experience I hope not to have again for a while. However, many neighborhoods certainly helped each other out with food when somebody had power and others didn't. Some also shared generators. The paper and TV were full of stories both sad and good for days. I'm glad we didn't live on the gulf side of the state where the storm came ashore with much more power and devastation.

Costly Celebration!

My wife and I worked the 25th anniversary of the Home Depot stores [<http://www.homedepot.com>]. It was held at five different elegant hotels and the Orange County Convention Center. We worked at the Gaylord Palms [<http://www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylordpalms/>]. The name of the game was party and that is what nearly 6,000 attendees did. A large well-decorated hall with pool tables, other games and a bar was set up, and Universal Studios Park was rented for one day. Attendees were flown in from all over, even from China, and all at Home Depot's expense. I'm told the cost for this celebration was over 25 million. One manager told me they would make that back in a short time. Perhaps, but I wonder if the shareholders would approve of that expense!

We also worked two days at the same hotel for the Sybase [<http://www.sybase.com>] (TechWave 2004) show that took place only a couple days after hurricane Charlie. In spite of Charlie, the attendance was about 1,300, including 300 employees, which surprised management under the circumstances. They promoted PowerBuilder 10 as well as their other products, and put on a great production.

While working that show, we certainly noticed that many Progress Energy workers, along with many utility workers that came in from out of state, were headquartered at the Gaylord Palms Resort. Their parking lot had many utility trucks and there was an inventory of poles, power transformers, wire and other important parts. The hotel prepared some great meals for those hard working folks, however I'm not sure who paid for that and the rooms. Power line damage was very severe in that area.

Correction

Last month one of my items was PopFile, a product to filter spam. I misunderstood Paul Witheridge's comments and said it was also an antivirus, which was incorrect. What he had meant was that with training, it could filter out spam with a virus in it, which means it might substitute for an antivirus. Sorry for that misconception on my part.

Fundraiser

This vendor might help raise funds for your treasury. They call themselves "The \$2.95 Guys" and can offer you T-shirts at good prices. They can package or compress them in all sorts of unique shapes. Quantity for that \$2.95 price is rather high and I'm not sure how competitive their prices are with the lower quantities. However, it won't hurt to take a look if you are looking for shirts. For the compressed shirt packaging, the price is more. The sample they sent me was a Hanes, which I consider a quality name. They are at [<http://www.295guys.com>], or call them at 1-800-536-5959. The person I originally talked to was Tom Hardy, but to my surprise, he has not returned my calls for a confirmation after three days of trying, so good luck if you order. I can't change this item because the column has already been sent to my "early editors." No special deal for the column, but I thought of it as a possible fund-raiser.

Another Fundraiser

This might be something a bit unique, but when I heard about it I thought it would help make money for an individual, or a group. The name is CafePress and their URL is [<http://www.cafepress.com>]. You can make money with absolutely no investment. All you have to do is come up with your own individual design of some sort, or a logo that you like. They offer a number of products to carry your design or logo, which can even be a statement or question. I counted at least 70 products offered on their Web site to carry your creation. A friend designed a shirt with "Ask me where I bought this!" that he is selling.

After making your choice, set your price, which should be over their base price in order to make money for you. They handle all the ordering, sales and shipping, then send you a check when you have accumulated enough. Hopefully, their accounting is accurate. Not a bad deal considering you have nothing invested except your time and creation. Be careful you don't infringe on something copyrighted, especially phrases and sayings.

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 interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product

announcements that I received over a period of time in 2003. More will be forthcoming when I get the ambition.

Gadgets for Geeks

by Sherry Zorzi

Cajun Clickers Computer Club, Louisiana.

They say the only difference between men and boys is the cost of their toys, but the toys for gadget-geeks of any age or gender just keep getting better and, surprisingly, cheaper.

USB Flash Drive:

These tiny solid-state devices are quickly replacing diskettes as the cheap and easy method for transporting or backing up data. A 256 megabyte flash drive will hold the equivalent of about 175 diskettes. That's about 3 hours of music or 1000 photographs, or thousands of common business documents – all in a \$40 device the size of a Bic lighter.

Flash Watch:

These watches include a built-in flash drive device. Just connect the watch to your USB drive via a built-in cable. Cost: under \$100. Cool-factor: priceless.

Camera Phone:

The trend these days is to go totally cellular. My new Motorola flip-phone (about \$80 after rebate) has a camera, calculator, appointment book, voice recorder, alarm clock, text messaging, wireless web, games, and email. The sleek profile fits in any pocket or bag easily. Cellular coverage is getting better every year and service is becoming increasingly affordable.

Handheld Computer:

Pocket PCs and Palms have been around for a long time, but the newest generation of both devices are slicker than ever. More than just a personal information manager, these tiny computers now include word processing and spreadsheet capabilities, play MP3 music files, handle multimedia and Internet connections, in some cases even play full-length movies. You'll pay about \$200 at the low end and over \$1,000 at the high end for a computer more powerful than the desktop of a few years ago that fits in your pocket.

Digital Camera:

The novelty has worn off digital photography now. These cameras have improved so dramatically in quality and have become so affordable that they barely qualify as gadgets. The average digital camera today has 3-4 megapixel quality with 3X-5X optical zoom and will cost under \$300. Mine goes everywhere with me. Within a minute of snapping a shot I can email it to a friend or upload it to my favorite photo-sharing website.

Satellite Radio:

There are two flavors – XM Radio and Sirius. I've only tried XM, but all I can say is, "Wow!" Commercial-free music of any genre you desire – any time you want it. A scrolling digital display tell the title and artist of each tune, so no more sleepless nights trying to remember who sang that song that's been rattling around in

your head all day. You can install XM Radio in your car and have an optional cradle in the house, making one subscription portable from home to road. Hardware is around \$100.

MP3 Player:

These music machines, of which the Apple iPod (\$200-300) is the most recognizable brand, allow you to store many hours of music in a tiny portable device.

GPS:

Portable global positioning systems use satellites to pinpoint your location to within one meter. Handheld devices are available or you can buy GPS add-ons to handheld computers. These are popular with hikers and sailors, but are also fun when traveling by car or to use in hobbies such as geocaching. A decent recreational GPS device can be purchased for \$100-200.

Wireless Laptop:

Intel's new *Centrino* technology combines integrated wireless LAN capability, improved battery life, and thinner, lighter design to make laptop computing what I always dreamed it would be. Imagine a laptop computer less than an inch thick and weighing less than 3 pounds. Add to that the ability to connect wirelessly to the Internet from thousands of "hotspots" around the country, including airports, coffee shops, even downtown Baton Rouge. That's a laptop to love, priced between \$1,000 and \$3,000.

No matter your age, gender, interests, or budget, there's a gadget somewhere for you to drool over. It's never too early to start making your Christmas wish list. *Sherry Zorzi is Secretary of Cajun Clickers Computer Club and host of "The Cajun Clickers Computer Show" heard every Saturday morning at 9 am on WJBO Radio. There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.*

GPS Units

by Joe Schmitt

Tampa Bay Computer Society

GPS utilizes a set of 24 or more orbiting satellites broadcasting a coded signal that is used by a ground receiver to pinpoint location, speed, and distance while moving. I would like to delve into the numerous receivers available on the market to the civilian user. Essentially there are four types of receivers available.

The first is the military model. This operates on entirely different frequency than their civilian counterparts. The very accurate military units are on what is known as the P-code and Y-code and should be accurate within a foot or so. They include mapping features similar to consumer models.

The second type is surveying/Geographic Information System (GIS) models. Quite a bit larger than consumer models, they can easily be the size of a small briefcase. They are accurate to within one centimeter. This accuracy is obtained after being in the field through post-processing. The data gathered is stored and analyzed in a lab to compensate for atmospheric errors from the satellites.

The third type, for commercial transportation, is used to navigate ships at sea and aircraft. Often these units are tied into an autopilot system used to maneuver the vehicle. The units are quite large and permanently installed in the control panels of the vehicle.

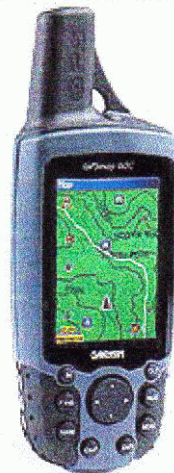
The fourth type, consumer models, will be the focus of this discussion. The consumer model GPS unit can be permanently installed in a car or be handheld. There are units designed for joggers and bikers, those specifically for boating, and hiking models as well.

There are literally hundreds of different models available for you to choose from. The very basic models start at approximately \$100 and go up from there. Some characteristics are common to almost all GPS receivers. They are able to store a waypoint, which is a location defined by its latitude and longitude marked in the unit's memory. All have a display screen that may contain a digital map and a back light. They also are able to tell you the time, location in coordinates, speed, and distance from waypoints. Some are able to connect to a computer to transfer data, and some display altitude.

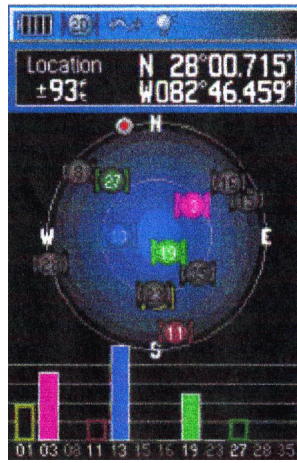
Beyond these basic functions is where choosing a receiver can be a mind-boggling mess. The activity you want a GPS for will determine which features to look for. There are three major manufacturers of GPS receivers: Garmin <<http://www.garmin.com>>, Magellan <<http://www.magellangps.com>> and Lowrance <<http://www.lowrance.com>>. All three of these companies make good products. Garmin has the largest market share with Magellan in second place. Often the brand loyalty of the owners is akin to the IBM and Macintosh debate. But regardless of the differences, all the units operate in much the same manner and it comes down to personal preference more than anything else. The manufacturers have similar products to each other and are reliable and rugged. Most of these models that are designed for outdoor use are, as a result of their intended use, built very well. Most handheld models are waterproof and shock proof.

My receiver is made by Garmin. The model is GPSMAP 60c <<http://www.garmin.com/products/gpsmap60c/>> It is a bit larger than a cell phone and has a color display.

This model runs on 2 AA batteries – you'll find that most handheld models run on 2 or 4 AA batteries. With



normal usage, I can get about 30 hours of use with my rechargeable batteries. The unit has an external power cord that can be plugged into a cigarette lighter socket to save on those batteries. This model is a mapping unit, so I can upload maps to it and display my location on that map. Additionally, this unit supports auto-routing, which is a feature that allows the unit to give you turn-by-turn directions on the road.



With most units there are some basic features that you should be aware of. First the display screen has several different modes for display. The most common is a satellite page. This displays the satellites in graphical format. As you can see, the satellites are numbered and the ones brightly colored are those the unit is currently receiving a signal from. The bars below show signal strength and status. The higher the bar is the better the signal. The bars that are solidly colored indicate that the unit has locked onto the satellite. The outlined bars indicate the unit is receiving the signal but has not locked onto it yet. This screen in particular displays the latitude and longitude coordinates. Just to left of those coordinates, the accuracy of the unit is displayed. The gray sphere with a red center shows the direction the unit is currently moving.



The next screen shown is also in most models. It is the waypoint management screen. Waypoints are a location in the real world stored in the unit as latitude and longitude, thus allowing you to locate a place to go or show distance from. This image shows the names of some waypoints I have stored in my unit. They can be listed either alphabetically or by proximity. As you can see by the highlighted point, the unit also displays its direction and distance to the selected point.



After selecting the name and hitting enter, the details of the waypoint are displayed.

It shows its coordinates and elevation. The highlighted "CAR" point is located in Grand Canyon National park just as I was beginning a hike. Click on [this link](http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?lat=36,12463&lon=111.94781) <<http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?lat=36,12463&lon=111.94781>



the distance is displayed. The new item we see here is the speed. If I was moving when this picture was taken, you would also see the time it would take to reach the waypoint.

Across the top are several icons. These items are from left to right, the battery strength, 3D navigation status, USB connection status, and backlight status. The 3D navigation is particular to this model. It indicates that the receiver is getting a strong enough signal to find altitude as well as latitude and longitude. The arrow and compass move as the unit moves. As it is now, you would have to change your direction to the left a bit to head directly to the CAR waypoint. If you were to be moving away from the waypoint, the arrow would point down and the 12 would be at the top showing your heading as 120°.

The next screen displayed is the map screen.



&datum=NAD83&u=5> to see a map. This screen displays the symbol I have selected as well as the direction and distance from the current location. I have options to delete the point, display it on the map, and navigate to it.

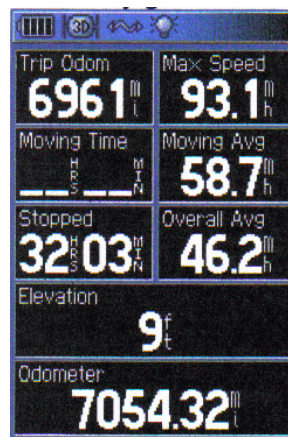
If I were to navigate to it, I would get this screen.

The giant arrow points to the destination and of course the distance is displayed. The

new item we see here is the

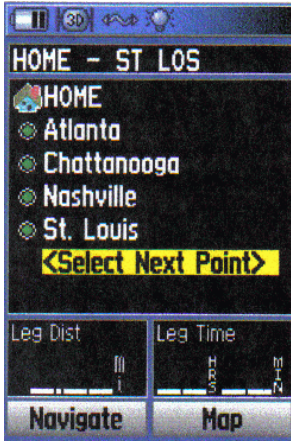
speed. If I was moving when this picture was taken, you would also see the time it would take to reach the waypoint.

This is showing the current location of the unit with a white arrow. The pink line going in the NW direction is the direction to the waypoint, and the line to the waypoint is a little to the left of where the arrow is pointing. The red line is a track or trail. The track displays where the unit has moved. In this case it came down the street to my home. As you can see, it looks like I was driving in my neighbors' yards. The black lines are the streets and in this case the black blotches are ponds.



The accuracy of unit displayed me off the street when in actuality I never left the road until I pulled in my driveway. In the lower left is the scale of the map. Above the map is data that was shown on the previous screen. The data above the map can be hidden as to provide a bigger map area on the display.

The GPS is also able to keep a travel log. As you look at the next screen, you can really get an idea of what kind of data the unit gathers.



It has a trip meter and odometer. Also it keeps track of moving data. The max speed the unit has read is displayed. The moving time is blank as this data was gathered on a long trip and eventually it surpassed the field's ability to display. The moving average and overall average speed are great features. Before I had the GPS I would often occupy my mind while driving trying to figure out these very same averages. I doubt I ever got this precise.

Elevation is also displayed.

Another useful feature of most GPS receivers is routing. Routing is the ability to string together waypoints to form a path. For example look at the next screen shot.

In this route are several points within a preplanned trip. From here in Tampa Bay we are going to St. Louis, Missouri. Each point defines a leg of the trip. When you navigate this route, the first point that the GPS directs you to is Atlanta. When you get to Atlanta, it changes the destination to Chattanooga. This continues until you have arrived at your destination. This is a great feature for driving as it allows you to keep updating the GPS with the correct directions but frees you from having to manipulate the GPS while driving. Most receivers show you destinations in a straight line, "as the crow flies." A few of the more expensive units, such as this one, can auto-route. Auto-routing is a feature that navigates along roads loaded into the map as opposed to an as-the-crow-flies path. It displays turn-by-turn directions to your destination so that all you have to do is input the final destination. The unit then tells you which highways to get on and where to get off.

So how do you know what unit to buy? There are literally hundreds of different models to choose from. The unit that is right for you depends entirely on what you're going to use it for. If you primarily want it to navigate a boat, airplane, or car there are large screen models that run off the vehicle's electrical system and permanently mount to the console. If you want it to go hiking there are handheld models that can load topographic maps. The models range from very simple receivers that just stream data to large display models that can talk and direct you to the next exit verbally. Additionally there are other features like removable memory cards that map information can be loaded on. For a good place to find models available take a look to Joe Mehaffey, Jack Yeazel, and Dale Depriest's site. <http://www.gpsinformation.com>

If you would like to try a GPS without purchasing a unit, go to Lowrance's site for a GPS simulator. <http://www.lowrance.com/software/pcsoftware/dmos.asp> They are listed by model and will install software on your machine. Although this will not actually lock onto satellites, it offers a great way to get a feel for their features and how they work.

So now you're interested, right? But what would need one these things for? Just to give you an idea of the many uses:

- Find your exact location on a map
- Find where you left the car
- Use to find your way back after getting lost in the woods
- Tie it to the dog and see where he goes at night
- Mark that great fishing spot
- Find out where the cruise ship or airplane you're on is
- Calibrate your speedometer
- Tell exactly how long until you get there
- Use it a trip meter
- Use it as a compass (when moving)
- It's fun to use

As you see there are tons of ways to amuse yourself. One of my favorite pastimes with the GPS is Geocaching (<http://www.geocaching.com>). This is a scavenger hunt with a GPS. A box is hidden in an interesting location like a city park. Inside a weather-proof box is a logbook and some trinkets. The coordinates of the "cache" are posted on the website providing details on the type of box, terrain, and notes from prior hunters. Because the GPS is only accurate within 10 feet or so, the cache can be quite difficult to locate.

Once found, you sign the logbook and exchange an item inside for one that you brought. The item is often of little monetary value. I often bring matchbox cars or maybe spare batteries for the GPS. Click on the link for the site and enter you're zip code and check out how many are near you!

In addition to the using the receivers as stand-alone units almost all of them can tie into your computer to expand its capabilities. Next month I will show you all the programs that are available to you and some great resources on the web for maps and waypoints.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Keep Your Cool - Your PC Cool That Is...

by Ira Wilsker
APCUG BoD

Heat is one of the primary causes of premature computer and component failure. Today's microprocessors, video cards, hard drives, CD and DVD burners, memory, and other components produce much more heat than their earlier brethren. One simple indication of the amount of heat generated in today's newer computers is the power supply; older computers could run well with a 150 watt power supply, while many newer models utilize a 400 watt or larger power supply. While it is uncommon for computers to use all of the power capacity of the power supply, the immutable laws of physics state that much of the power used will be turned into heat, and heat can kill computer components.

Many newer motherboards and computers now come with some form of thermal monitor to inform the user of potentially damaging or dangerous overheating, and a device may even shutdown a computer unexpectedly if temperatures inside the computer get too high. If there is too much heat buildup, and the internal temperatures get too high, parts degrade or fail at a rapid rate. Expensive CPU chips, hard drives, memory, and video cards that fail are often the result of overheating. Sudden lockups and computer errors may be due to an overheated CPU chip. Our critical data may be lost forever if our hard drives overheat and fail. If our computers can be protected from overheating, not just will they last longer, but they may perform better.

Intel provides a free temperature monitoring utility for its motherboards and chipsets that support this feature. According to Intel, desktop Pentium IV chips work best when below 130 degrees F, may have problems at 150 degrees F, and may start to degrade or fail at that temperature or higher. AMD chips, such as the Athlon may suffer a similar fate from overheating. For this reason almost all modern CPU chips have an attached heat sink and fan. In order to improve thermal conductivity between the surface of the chip and the heat sink, a thermal grease substance is used between them. The purpose of a heat sink is to provide a greater surface area to enable the dissipation of heat into the surrounding air. Most CPU chip heat sinks are topped with a small fan to blow air through and around the heat sink to better cool the chip. While simple in concept, and inexpensive to produce, this is also a common cause of overheating that is easy to rectify. The same dust and debris that can clog our household furnace filters can accumulate and clog the passages in the heat sink, and obstruct the blades of the chip fan. It is good practice to periodically unplug the computer, practice safe electrical safety, and remove the "dust bunnies" from the fan and heat sink with a small vacuum, canned air, or a cotton swab. You may also want to read the label on the chip fan to see if it is a "sleeve" or "ball" bearing. Sleeve

bearings tend to have a shorter life before they fail, and can lead to premature chip failure due to overheating. Ball bearing fans are slightly more expensive, but tend to last much longer, providing for more reliable chip cooling.

The power supply also has a fan, which for many computers, is the primary cooling component that exhausts the hot air from inside the computer. If this fan fails, or becomes obstructed with dust and other debris, the computer will overheat. This fan must also be frequently inspected, and cleaned as necessary with a small vacuum, or canned air. If the fan starts to squeal, or otherwise appears to fail, it is imperative that either the fan or the entire power supply be promptly replaced.

Many computer cases have a space and mounting for an additional fan; if available, the additional fan should be installed. They are readily available, and inexpensive.

Supplemental cooling is also available, and can be easily self installed. One of the simplest to install is an exhaust fan that sits in a vacant PCI slot, which almost all desktop computers have. These fans which typically exhaust air from the computer can either be powered by the PCI slot, or by a power cord connected to a plug inside the case. These are especially effective at cooling video cards which generate a lot of heat; Intel recommends that the video cards be kept below 105 degrees F. Again, the slightly more expensive ball bearing fans are considered superior to the less expensive sleeve bearing fans. I installed one of these in my computer, and internal temperatures are consistently about 20 degrees F cooler than before.

Other formats of supplemental cooling are available, such as fans that can be mounted in the front of the computer in a vacant drive bay, also common on most computers. These can be simple propeller fans, or powerful turbine fans, and can either push cool outside air into the box, or exhaust hot air from the box. Other fans can be mounted on a hard or CD/DVD drive to cool those hot running devices. Some powerful computers, such as the popular gaming machines may now utilize a water cooled device, similar to an automobile radiator, complete with antifreeze. Notebook computers, which are often especially subject to overheating may be cooled by mounting them such that air can circulate all around the case (some people sit their notebooks on a cake rack), or on a notebook cooling pad that contains its own fans. One pundit has been recommending those black painted aluminum sheets from a dollar store that are advertised to quick defrost frozen foods, as they are an excellent heat sink.

Whatever you do, keep your cool - your computer cool, that is.

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A Surprisingly Easy Way to Become an Einstein

The Theory of Relativity is about a hundred years old yet most folks still can't get their heads around it. This cute site explains it simply and light heartedly with animated panels and even a few games. If you ever wanted to understand relativity, here's your big chance. All the material is freeware and can be downloaded for offline use. <http://www.aliceinphysics.com/>

The Pleasure of *Not* Having to Update

by Fred Langa

Hi Fred. It's always been my experience with large service packs from Microsoft, that they're best applied immediately following a fresh install of the software to be updated. Even better, they may be "slipstreamed" or "integrated" into the software first. SP2 for XP is no exception, and after slipstreaming it and creating a new XP install CD from the original, I've done a fresh install and experienced no problems.... Best of all, I no longer have 100MB of updates waiting for me after a fresh install of XP SP1! All my favorite apps and games are running normally. –Randolph Way

Indeed, Randolph, making your own "prepatched" setup CD is surprisingly easy – a point and click exercise with only a few geeky parts. Your hybrid install CD will work exactly as the original one did, even to the point of using the same 25-character Product Key, but it will be completely up to date with all patches and updates, up to and including SP2. Any system you set up with the hybrid CD will be pre-patched to current levels, in one step. You'll be totally up to date from the start, rather than facing maybe an hour or more of additional downloads to bring the new installation or reinstallation to SP2 levels.

You only need three things to get started:

1) Your original, legitimate XP setup CD. (Almost any variation of an original setup CD will work: Pro or Home; retail or OEM; full install CD or upgrade CD; etc.).

2) A CD burner, blank CD, and software capable of creating a bootable CD (eg. Nero, Roxio, etc.)

3) About a gigabyte of free space on your hard drive for temporary file storage. (This space can be recovered after you've made your new CD.)

I've posted a fully-illustrated step-by-step guide to producing your own up-to-date installation CD at <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=47212312>.

Every critical step is accompanied by a screen shot so you'll know exactly what to expect. I've included live links to the (free) downloads you'll need to create the CD, and

also included links to other sites that discuss the same process, so if my method doesn't work for you, for any reason, you can find another that will.

I've already used my own updated installation CD here, and it was very cool to set up a new XP PC and see the process end, in one step, with a complete, up-to-date SP2 setup, with no additional downloads or patches needed.

Check it out – all the information you need to make your own, full pre-patched XP installation CD is at <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=47212312>

From The LangaList Standard Edition 2004-09-23, a free email newsletter from Fred Langa that helps you get more from your hardware, software, and time online. Subscribe at: http://langa.com/join_langalist.htm#new

Media Notes

by Bill Pettit

Southeast Virginia Computer Group

Kinko's debuts Web-based print options

FedEx Kinko's unveiled, in mid-August, Web-based software that helps print documents at remote locations. The tool, dubbed "File, Print FedEx Kinko's," lets customers control the printing process. Consumers can select options such as single- or double-sided printing and have the results printed at one of the chain's 1,100 centers across the United States, or shipped via FedEx.

The Web-based software, which uses Microsoft.NET Framework 1.1 and is compatible with Windows 2000 and Windows XP platforms, is aimed at mobile professionals and small businesses.

Symantec Upgrades Norton Security Products

Revamped Norton Antivirus, Personal Firewall, and AntiSpam tools fight pests and dangers online

Symantec has unveiled new versions of its Norton security products – beefing up some of the real-time and automated features – and will release them in the next few weeks. Being updated are Norton Antivirus, Personal Firewall, and AntiSpam, all of which will be bundled in the upcoming Norton Internet Security 2005. Norton Antivirus will ship separately in September, with the remaining applications and the suite to follow in mid-September. Norton Antivirus 2005 will be priced at \$49.95. Norton Personal Firewall 2005 will be available with Norton AntiSpam 2005 for \$49.95. The entire Norton Internet Security 2005 suite will cost \$69.95.

Product Specs

Norton Antivirus 2005 now includes a 30-second QuickScan, which runs during AntiVirus's LiveUpdate automatic software update and checks for active viruses in system memory and other critical areas. More significantly, perhaps, Norton Antivirus 2005

supplements traditional e-mail virus protection with new Internet Worm Protection to combat threats that automatically scan IP addresses for open ports.

“It’s a very targeted solution to stop the Blasters and Code Reds,” says Kelly Martin, senior product manager of the Norton Antivirus product line, of the port-locking technology that Norton Antivirus adopts from Symantec’s major security suite, Norton Personal Firewall.

The new version of Norton Personal Firewall includes new privacy controls that let users seamlessly send personal data to trusted sites while interrupting data transmissions to nontrusted ones. This combats the more sophisticated types of online phishing – hoaxes designed to lure users into divulging sensitive information to sites that mimic legitimate sites such as eBay, AOL, and financial services sites.

Antispam Weapons

The third security suite application, Norton AntiSpam 2005, aims to protect users against fraudulent or “spoofed” e-mail messages, which do not reflect the return address of the actual sender. It can also filter messages by foreign language.

The full Norton Internet Security 2005 suite includes the Antivirus, Personal Firewall, and AntiSpam products plus parental Web controls and a new Outbreak Alert window. The Outbreak Alert utility runs in the background to alert users if they have inadvertently turned off virus protection (during software installation, for example). The window also displays the number of critical-level active viruses.

From September 2004 issue of The Umbrella Online, the monthly newsletter of the Hampton Roads Virginia Computing Community.

Society News

Program Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2004

by Jim Murdock

Arpad conducted the business portion of the meeting. He reminded us that several members owed membership dues and emphasized that it is very important for the fiscal health of the club that all members pay their dues on time.

Also members were reminded that the newsletter assembly would be on Saturday at 9:30 at St. Stephen’s, and that the next Market Pro computer show would be in October.

The next meeting will be at the Chili Library. Members are asked to bring a friend to the meeting. Maps were distributed and will also be in the October Monitor.

Steve talked about the picnic. Attendance was good and it was considered the best so far. However Steve mentioned though that some fine-tuning of the pre-picnic ordering process is required. He will give more details when next years picnic rolls around.

Arpad and Steve discussed a proposal to modify the way the Monitor is printed. They are looking into the possibility of using a series of laser printers. This would speed the process and enhance quality as well. Anyone wishing to donate a laser printer for this purpose is encouraged to do so.

Ron discussed the programs for the upcoming months. Tentative plans call for a program on wireless computer operation – scheduled originally for the September meeting – and for a discussion of genealogy.

On very short notice, Bill Statt presented a fine program on PowerPoint. The originally scheduled presentation on wireless computing had to be postponed.

Bill presented an in-depth review of how to use PowerPoint. This program followed an earlier presentation, which highlighted the capabilities of PowerPoint. Members wishing a copy of Bill’s presentation are asked to e-mail Bill with their request.

Helps Half Hour

Led by: Bill Statt

Recorded by Jan Rothfuss

Bill shared an audio taken from a recent Sound Bytes session. On it Nick explained that the newest virus to invade our computers. It infects your computer through the Internet Explorer program without requiring any action on your part. Others included email infection where you had to open the attachment. You only have to be running Windows XP/2000 or Mac OS and the virus takes over! It does not effect Linux machines. There is no fix for it yet. The only suggestion is to use another browser.

Please be sure to keep your virus software up to date, checking even more than once a week. The folks at Homeland Security recommend that you use another browser for a more secure Internet connection. CERT: Computer Emergency Response Team has issued a warning against IE.

Bill used “Total Recorder” (cost \$11.00) to record off the incoming stream. An add-on is needed in order to convert to MP3.

Bill recommended Mozilla or Firefox browser. Also Opera is a free browser. Also use Zone Alarm to prevent access. Those using Juno were reminded that IE is used with that service, too.

Q: Hard drive interface with desktop uses IDE interface. Are the hard drives for laptops different?

A: PC hard drives are interchangeable. Those for laptops are limited by space and not easily transferable between machines. 9.5 millimeters is now the standard but older units were up to 17 mm. The connections running between the drive and the laptop will convert the interface to match the laptop need. Another option may be to add an external USB drive.

Q: Member is using Spybot software and then tried to update it with the newest version. Load of newest version, when installed, gets the black screen. After

shutdown and restart the system will not start. Windows XP OS. Removed CD but still not starting up.

A: If Skybot ran, it may have found a problem, attempted to delete a file that it needs. Sometimes, the download files are not as advertised - can sometimes be a virus itself. May be able to try the Spybot Forms discussion area. Other folks may be able to help or have some ideas. Try to boot with the Norton AV software in the drive. It may detect a virus in the boot sector. May also need to get updates to XP – including SP2.

Q: Question about a Dell computer with XP Professional. Uninstalled MacAfee and installed Norton Zone Alarm. Restart now causes error message about corrupted file.

A: Suggested to reinstall the missing files. May be able to boot from Norton boot disk. Suggested taking the repair option under XP.

Q: Any success with using the synchronize function between laptop and PC files in XP Professional? Gets partially through the set but then the files are not there.

A: No one had any experience. Suggested that the briefcase file be used as a transfer location source.

RCS Planning Meeting

September 21, 2004

by Jim Murdock

Sally Springett hosted the September Planning Meeting. Arpad Kovacs, Dan Rothfuss, Steve Staub, Bob Avery, Tony Dellelo, Bill Statt, Ron Matteson, Tom Thompson and Jim Murdock attended.

Arpad began with a discussion of membership dues. He pointed out that a number of dues are late. The Board reviewed the situation including how many dues are late, how long they have been overdue and possible remedies. Fluctuations in membership numbers were also reviewed.

Tom Thompson, speaking for all board members, as it turned out, praised Steve Staub and others who planned and produced the picnic this year. He said it was the best so far and the best attended. Steve, who arranged for all of the food, said he appreciated the praise and noted that praise should also go to Dick and Bev Cronkite who arranged for the cabin where the picnic was held.

Several members commented favorably on the PowerPoint presentation Bill Statt gave at the September RCS monthly meeting. They noted, with appreciation, that Bill took on the assignment on very short notice when a previously planned presentation had to be rescheduled. This need for a sudden program change led to a general discussion of possible presentations and the upcoming schedule. Steve suggested that several “canned” programs should be obtained by RCS for use when an abrupt schedule change is required in the future. Members agreed.

Future programs discussed included one on using the computer to study and research genealogy, wireless computer operations, and Quicken. Also being considered is a program on new technology – perhaps aimed at gift-sized items for the holiday season! Tom Thompson talked

about voice recognition technology and agreed to look into a possible presentation in that field.

There then followed a wide-ranging discussion, lead chiefly by Arpad and Steve, of the Monitor and how it is produced each month. Together they have looked at several different laser printers. Steve said that price, (Current production and mailing cost of one Monitor is \$.49.); throughput speed, and print quality are all considerations that must be addressed. Ron showed several newsletters from other similarly sized clubs and explored the possibility of changing the format and page size of the monitor, page size being crucial to both printer and format selection. Tony discussed different configuration options using two or more printers. The possibility of using color was also discussed.

Tom Thompson recommended that Arpad and Steve continue looking further into the details of Monitor printing options, asking that they consider printers, printing methods, required printer features such as duplex and color, and report at the next Planning meeting the results of their efforts. Arpad, Steve and the Board agreed.

Steve discussed the budget. The treasury is \$777.06
The meeting adjourned at 2030.

New Users Notes

by John McMillan

The September meeting started when a long time Blue Frog user mentioned getting a Laptop as a 2nd computer and trying to use the same Blue Frog account on both machines. Since that happened there have been many problems with using Blue Frog on the Laptop but not with the original computer so he wondered if Blue Frog checked the computer identities even though they come from the same phone number. Bill suggested contacting Blue Frog’s technical support group to see if there was anything special required to use the account number on multiple machines. He also recommended that when surfing the web, Blue Frog be minimized and a different browser used to avoid using Internet Explorer. A Juno user pointed out that he uses a single account for three machines sharing one phone line.

The topic of Music Processing came up when Bill was asked if he had a software package called Audacity on his lap top. There had been some discussion of Audacity when Nick Francesco mentioned it in the August, 2003 Computer Link. The user was looking for a way to convert .MID files to .Wav format and posed the question to the Soundbytes Forum. Numerous unsuccessful attempts had been made to use Audacity, Silent Bob and Total Recorder following suggestions received. One helpful responder spent almost an hour trying to talk the user through using Audacity before determining that the down loaded version was different from the one being used in the comparison. Media Player, Music Match Jukebox, RealPlayer and RtlRack were also tried without success, so this project is on hold temporarily.

A user described a number of problems that he found with his machine so Bill described the trials and tribulations of a trouble shooter. His father had an HP combination scanner printer but the printer no longer worked and they could not get a new print head. Another printer was installed and Bill was trying to get the scanner to work again. The computer only had two USB ports but there were 3 accessories to be plugged in. Bill found an HP USB Hub at Big Lots for half the price asked at Best Buy and Comp USA. USB cables were available at even bigger savings. He assembled everything, which seemed to work fine. Later, his father called and said the computer would not recognize the printer. Bill tried to use the phone to talk him through printing a test document but was not successful.

When Bill went to the house, he found a message, "Printer off line. Needs user intervention." Thinking that the drivers had been corrupted, Bill asked for the HP disk; went to Add and Remove Programs and uninstalled the HP printer; then went to the Registry and removed the references to HP software. When he tried to reinstall the software, the CD would not read. Thinking that Autorun might not be hooked up, he double clicked the CD drive but nothing happened. Clicking the CD drive in Windows Explorer did not accomplish anything either. More than two hours later, still with no answers, Bill went home to check HP web sites where he found he could click the CD Rom drive letter:\Setup. He tried that Saturday morning at his fathers house but nothing happened. He checked the disk physically and found it to be labeled MacIntosh.

A search of the storage box, where software disks were filed for safe keeping, did not produce the HP disk. Later, Bill found the disk in a folder for product help; loaded it in the computer where it ran for about 30 seconds and stopped. Checking the disks table of contents, he found an uninstall HP software program which he ran. While Bill was trying to install the scanner, his father mentioned that Juno was not working properly. When Bill opened Juno he found that the font size was down to 9 pts rather than the customary 12.

While he was resetting the size, his father mentioned another problem prompting Bill to ask if there had been a power surge. His father replied, "The lights only went out for a second but came right back on". He had an inexpensive surge protector, the kind that is only useful once, but does not indicate that is no longer working properly. The moral of the story is when you buy a surge protector, get one that has an indicator light to show it is working, one that can be reset with a switch, and has enough protection for the equipment hooked up to it. It is a good practice to unplug the machine when there are threats of thunderstorms in the area or when you are going to be away for some time.

Another user had received a disk that was labeled MP3.JPG. These are both file types so it was recommended that he open Windows Explorer and check the table of contents of the disk to see if the label meant a

combination of .MP3 and .JPG files. These could then be opened in different software programs.

A Star Office user wondered how he could write macros so that pressing a single key would insert the computers date and or time in Word Documents before comments were typed. Bill opened the program on his laptop and checked macros in the help index. He was not sure that the computer date/time could be captured but suggested exploring Autotext in the Edit menu. Further exploration showed that when a document is open, clicking Insert in the Menu Bar, then Fields, will provide a list of choices that includes Date and Time (taken from the computer clock). The selected field is inserted in the document where the cursor is. If both are desired the procedure is repeated with the 2nd choice.

A user was being frustrated by many of the abbreviations that show up in error messages or as file names and suffixes such as CTOR.DLL. Typing the questioned term into Google.com and doing a search will often yield clues that may help.

Our next meeting will be at 6:30 PM, October 5th in the Monroe Developmental Center, 620 Westfall Road. If you don't have a question you might learn something or have an answer to someone else's questions.

Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Balance as of 8/17/04	\$914.06
Income	
Dues and donations	\$122.00
Expenses	
Food for assembly team	\$16.00
Web page (annual fee)	120.00
Paper	47.98
St. Stephen's	<u>75.00</u>
	\$258.98
Balance as of 9/21/04	\$777.06

The club welcomes David Wilson back into our ranks. Dave was a member when PC³ and Frog merged.

Renewing this month were Bob Avery and Charles Grover. Please check your newsletter labels. If your expiration date is earlier than November 2004 your dues are due now.

The Lighter Side

Dispatches from a Public Librarian

by Scott Douglas

Tales of the Internet

Tale #3: In Which a Patron Has a Little Too Much Fun

There are different types of Internet users who visit the library. There's the casual user, who uses the library's Internet service perhaps once a month; the regular user, who uses it every day; the college user, who comes to the library only when their school's lab is

full; and many other types, which I'll leave out for no real reason.

This final tale involves what I would describe as a regular user. I rarely saw him doing anything on the computer except sending and reading e-mail. He was quiet and never asked for help on the Internet. Then one day, as I was helping a younger patron find a book for his state-report assignment, the man came to me seeking help with printing.

When I got to his computer, I saw a picture of an overweight, fully nude Caucasian woman holding a jar of peanut butter. I told the man that this kind of material went against the library's Internet usage policy. I have had to explain this policy to several patrons who have used the Internet terminals to view pornographic images, and every time, the patron does one of three things: they act embarrassed and apologize for their actions, they nod and quickly leave, or they try to defend their actions by saying that they are a taxpayer and can look at whatever they want to on the computer.

This man, however, explained quite seriously that, "I didn't know you weren't allowed to look at pornography on the Internet." I nodded and pointed at the large sign above the computers, which stated clearly the library's stance on this issue.

The man nodded and asked if he could still print the picture. I said no and added that, because he'd abused the library's policy (a major no-no), he would now be banned from using the Internet. He nodded; then, to my surprise, flipped over a computer printout of a nude woman; and left with no further comment.

I did not bother asking how he was able to print the other picture without help.

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/>

Lonely Users

Eleanor Rigby
Sits at the keyboard
And waits for a line on the screen
Lives in a dream
Waits for a signal
Finding some code
That will make the machine do some more.
What is it for?

All the lonely users, where do they all come from?
All the lonely users, why does it take so long?

Guru MacKenzie
Typing the lines of a program that no one will run;
Isn't it fun?
Look at him working,
Munching some chips as he waits for the code to compile;
Where is the style?

All the lonely users, where do they all come from?
All the lonely users, why does it take so long?

Eleanor Rigby
Crashes the system and loses 6 hours of work;
What is it worth?
Guru MacKenzie
Wiping the blood off his hands as he walks from the
grave;
Nothing was saved.

All the lonely users, where do they all come from?
All the lonely users, why does it take so long?
—Author Unknown

CD-ROM Woes

Customer: "I'd like to return this CD-ROM drive."
Salesman: "Ok, what was wrong with it?"
Customer: "It read the first side, but when I turned the
CD over, it just said, 'Drive not ready.'"

Recently, my CD drive stopped working. I concluded that somehow a driver had been lost or corrupted. I e-mailed the company requesting a new driver. A few days later the driver was mailed to me – on CD.

One night I asked a customer which drive was his CD-ROM drive. He told me it was the one on top.

Customer: "How do I get the other side of the CD to play?"

Customer: (rather irate) "Your install CD-ROM doesn't work!"

Tech Support: "What error message are you receiving?"

Customer: "It says, 'File not found.'"

I verified that he is typing the correct command to run the install program. He is.

Tech Support: "Double click on the 'My Computer' icon."

Customer: "Ok, got it."

Tech Support: "Now double click on your CD-ROM drive icon."

Customer: "Ok. It says, 'File not found or device not ready'. Maybe I should just cancel my service since it's not working and go with another company!"

Tech Support: "Sir...did you put the CD-ROM in the CD-ROM drive?"

Customer: "Um, no. Do I have to do that?"