

Another Annoyance: Windows Licensing

by Ed Bott

author of *Windows XP Inside Out*

I recently received an e-mail with a gnarly question. “I’m buying an OEM copy of Windows for a new PC I’m building. I’m thinking of buying it along with my DVD drive. What’s the licensing model for an OEM version of Windows? Specifically, if I buy it, will MS try to assert that the license is bound to my DVD drive? Or to the PC which I am building? I’m also worried that I won’t be able to freely transfer the license to some other PC that I might build in the future.”

I spent lots of time researching the issue and you’re going to be surprised at the complex answer.

OEM copies must be sold either as part of a new computer or with a “non-peripheral computer hardware component,” for the license to be valid. Qualifying products include memory, internal drives, mice, keyboards, and power supplies/cords. This type of OEM license includes a CD, a Certificate of Authenticity, and a product key. And it requires activation.

As an end-user, your license would be locked to a particular system *only* if the OEM copy of Windows had been pre-installed on that system. By purchasing the OEM copy individually with a qualifying piece of hardware, you retain the right to install it on any computer. You will have to activate Windows within 30 days after you first install it.

If you later use the same product key to install Windows on another computer, or if you upgrade the first computer so extensively that it is essentially a new computer, you will have to go through the activation process again.

Unfortunately, you may be unable to complete activation over the Internet in this scenario, because it would appear that you’re trying to install a second, unlicensed copy using the same key. To complete activation on the new PC, you may have to make a phone call.

You’ll find some useful links in “Everything you always wanted to know about Windows Product Activation,” an article available on my blog located at <http://snipurl.com/bottblog>.

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Link to Digital Movies with Movielink

by Sherry Zorzi

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Baton Rouge, LA

While Blockbuster and Netflix ([www .netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)) battle it out for your entertainment dollar, a new online player just may sneak around them. Movielink (www.movielink.com) allows you to order and download recent movies on a pay-for-view basis.

The movies are downloaded to your PC for viewing there, or on a TV connected to the PC, or on your laptop. The cost is about \$5 for a recent release, but some offerings are as cheap as 99 cents. You have 30 days after download to watch the movie. You are renting the movie, though, for a 24-hour period which means that once you click “Play”, you have only the next 24 hours to watch (and re-watch, if you like) the movie. You can buy additional viewing time at a reduced rate.

While visiting the Demonstration Digital Home at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas in January, I got a coupon for a free download from Movielink. I visited Movielink’s website as soon as I got home and decided to give it a try. The selection of movies is pretty good and includes most of Blockbuster’s Top Ten Rentals.

Before downloading a movie, you must register with Movielink. They are not overly intrusive, asking only for name, email address, sex, and age during the registration process. You will, of course, probably want to deselect the opportunity to receive a free email newsletter from Movielink.

Movielink installs Movielink Manager software onto your computer, which controls the download and playback of the movies you order. You should read the End User License Agreement carefully, since it does give Movielink and its partners (RealNetworks and Microsoft) the right to push upgrades and updates to you without asking permission. That might be a deal-breaker for some – indeed, it almost sent me running for the hills. But for the sake of you, the reader, I bit the bullet and signed on the virtual dotted line.

The download took about 25 minutes on my Cox cable internet connection and proceeded smoothly. It was several weeks before I had a chance to view my movie. When I clicked “Play”, though, the media player would not load the movie so I went to their website for help. The live chat feature of Movielink’s website worked beautifully. I was very quickly connected with a technician who reset my account and had me re-install the Movielink Manager software. Within minutes everything was working fine.

The video quality of the movie was excellent. Watching a movie on the typical PC, though, is much different from watching one on the typical TV. My computer screen is a 17 inch LCD flat screen. The image was beautiful but much smaller than my TV. I don’t have a top of the line sound card nor great speakers on that

particular computer either, so the audio was acceptable to me while not outstanding. Next time I'll probably download my movie to a different computer in my home – one that has a top-notch video card, a top-notch sound card, and an awesome Surround sound speaker set that includes a huge subwoofer.

I'll probably rent from Movielink again. I'm intrigued by the possibilities of instant access to the movie of my choice without leaving home or waiting for it to be mailed to me. The service would be even more attractive to me if it offered a monthly subscription deal and if it allowed me to transfer my rental to the device of my choice, including my Pocket PC and other computers on my home network

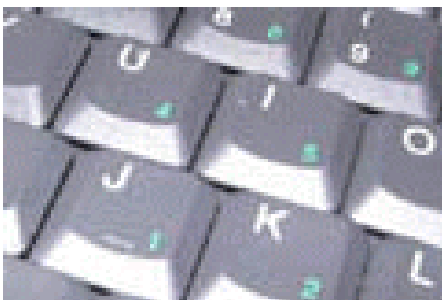
Movielink and other services like it may not overtake brick-and-mortar rental stores like Blockbuster or online CD rental services like Netflix overnight. But it's a worthy opponent and will become more and more of a threat as more homes connect their TVs to home entertainment PCs. Give it a try.

Learn the Lost Art of Touch Typing

by Dick James

Computers have replaced typewriters, but two-finger, hunt-and-peck typing can never replace the touch typing of a trained professional.

A recent report by Robert Johnson in the *Boston Globe* highlights the decline of typing skills. Human resource managers are finding it surprisingly difficult to recruit candidates with the most basic of all office skills. According to Johnson, "the rapid-fire 100-word-per-minute applicant has virtually disappeared. Today, a mere 40 words per minute is enough to gain many administrative jobs."



Paradoxically, as computers are being used by more and more people, it has become apparent that typing is not just a skill required by typist anymore. Strong typing skills are

vital when conducting a thorough web search, entering data into a spreadsheet or using any other computer program. Ubiquitous email means that merely doubling your typing speed could save hours each week! Yet many of us persist with the two-finger, hunt-and-peck typing method.

How did we end up in such a mess? When people first begin to use computers, many do not take the time to learn how to type correctly. Using keyboard may seem to be simple, when compared with learning complex business software. People do not realize that by learning how to type properly, their use of software will be more

effective and their time spent on a computer will be more productive.

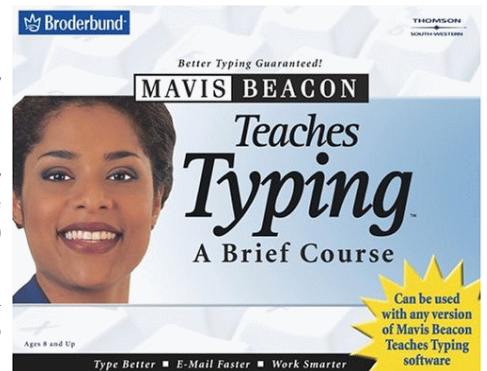
Attitudes in school teaching have also had an impact. Typing skills were once taught in most secondary schools. Johnson notes that these low-tech classes consisted of little more than a teacher with a wind-up clock and rows of typewriters. The textbook showed the keyboard and specified which fingers should strike various letters and numbers in order to quickly copy business documents such as invoices and memos. But most schools phased-out the typing class as the demand for broader computer instruction increased.



Of course, many people manage to get by with the two-finger, seek-and-tap method. But getting by is all it is. By learning to touch-type, you step into a new realm of computer experience. No longer do you need to fret over the physical process of keying in information, whether it is a quick response to an instant message or a 30-page report. Instead, as a touch-typist you are free to concentrate on what you are writing, while your fingers do the "thinking" about which keys to hit.

How to Learn the Lost Art

If you are unable to open e-mail account without mistyping your password at least once or you're stuck at 20 words per minute, there are a several ways to improve. First, check out your current performance by taking a typing test. You will find a free typing test on the UK Training News website. If you can manage 90-100 words per minute then relax; otherwise read on.



Typing tutor software is a low-cost approach that can easily transform you from a hunt-and-pecker to a 100-word-a-minute touch-typist. There are dozens of typing programs available, including freeware and shareware programs. You need to look for a program which won't bore you to death with tedious drills, won't frustrate you with poor design or US spelling and which provides enough scope to let you achieve your target typing speed.

"Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing" is the leading typing instruction program, and has been one of the top ten best-selling software titles for over 10 years. A far cry from the first version that came out on floppy disks and had just four colours to display, the latest version has a virtual classroom with the simple to understand icons.

Mavis adjusts to the individual problem areas on the keyboard with unbelievable insight and watches for the typist's frustration factor. It will suggest a different words per minute goal, throw in a typing game for a break, or even advise "calling it a day."

While self-instructional software on typing has proliferated, some say they're no replacement for supervised classes. Besides, for many programs other than "Mavis Beacon", the entertainment value seems to outweigh their educational quality. Consider Sega's "Typing of the Dead" tutorial, for which an ad suggests, "Trade in your video game controller for a keyboard and start typing for your life." The format is to "type" zombies to death by completing words and phrases that appear over their bodies. Some employers say that typing training must be taken more seriously.

Several training companies offer short classroom based typing training in the UK. Examples are "GO Training" in Glasgow and "Training Circle" in Northampton, where you will find instructor-led courses for around £200. For longer courses leading to a professional qualification, many local colleges offer excellent value. Learndirect is a great place to look for courses, as well as the UK Training News website.

By increasing your typing speed, you really could get more done each day. Remember the mantra that training is an investment, not a cost. So put yourself on the path to blazing, machine gun-like typing by buying "Mavis" or enrolling on a touch-typing course.

Dick James is the editor of UK Training News, a free website providing articles, resources and discussion for the UK business and industrial training community. Article copyright UK Training News, 2004. May be reproduced on any website, provided that all links, the author by-line and this copyright notice remain unedited. Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/>



From The DealsGuy

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

My wife and I attended the FACUG spring conference and it was again a total success. There were 173 attendees from 41 user groups. They have done a great job of keeping vendor support and someone really excelled at obtaining door prizes. Our raffle tickets were not drawn until almost the end of the first round (doorprize drawing); typical for me, but we still drew pretty good prizes. We had to go to work that day and I was ready to leave, but my wife reminded me that Dave Whittle would be doing the raffle for an Intel motherboard and P4 chip so I decided to stay for that. Good thing because the first paper Dave pulled had my name on it. I was astounded and excitedly stepped up to receive my great prize. What really surprised me were all the congratulations from people that I know would have loved winning it. Now all I have to do is get the new machine built.

Some of the roundtables were very popular tech session. It gave attendees a chance to see some other products in action. It was a great conference and I congratulate all the planners for a job well done. APCUG was well represented by some of its' officers who mingled with the attendees, and Peggy Ireland chaired a round table on the benefits of APCUG. A few derogatory remarks by attendees during the vendor panel bothered me. You will find my article in APCUG reports, and Dave Whittle also wrote one. One person said the vendor support was poor and "unacceptable." Another complained about their bad experience with a "free" service offered by a vendor who does it just to be helpful, and those were only two of the complaints. I feel the vendor support we still have is very good and we are lucky to have it. However, I still do not agree with asking vendors to provide meals for the event. Officers of both APCUG and FACUG always tell me that people won't attend if they have to buy their own meals. Are we that greedy and cheap? I hope not because the camaraderie and learning experience at these events is always great.

Surprise Fella, You're Out Of Luck!

I read an article by Lynn Kauer, editor of the Blue Chip News, newsletter of the Saginaw Valley Computer Association, that might interest you about hard drive warranties. When purchasing an Iomega drive he was urged by the clerk to purchase a store warranty because hard drive warranties begin on the day of manufacture. At home, he checked the Iomega Web site, entered the serial number of his unit just purchased, and found that the warranty had indeed already expired. He still had 14 days from his date of purchase to buy a store warranty.

When attending the Comp USA show, I talked to the guys from Western Digital about that and they confirmed it was standard policy. They said the problem is how long a drive sits on shelves at distributors and stores, and that almost nobody keeps their purchase receipt. But if a purchaser still has their store receipt should the drive fail within the stated warranty, they will honor the warranty from the date of your receipt. I can't speak for all vendors, but keep your store receipts just in case that is their policy also.

I Did Something About The Weather

I'm still bragging about my new weather station. Both my wife and I really enjoy ours, especially the Big Weather Picture accessory that lets you easily see all of the day's stats at a glance. I've seen other brands at shows, but none I've seen had anything like the Big Weather Picture. Peet Bros. displayed at the Home & Garden Show recently and said they'd still honor my deal of including an inside temperature sensor and a serial cable at no extra charge. [<http://www.peetbros.com>] Even our visitors are always fascinated and ask about ours. To get the special, send your order to [peetbros@peetbros.com]. We especially watch the peak wind speed information and the rain gauge. We sometimes wonder when we are at work if it rained at home,

but a glance at the Big Weather Picture will tell us all that when we get home, and how much.

A Deal Renewed

Right at my deadline, I had to withdraw a deal that they said was not ready yet from Zio Corporation for a small and convenient product that handles all of the memory cards for digital cameras and cell phones, and also serves as a USB hub. Hopefully, it should be ready for the DealsGuy column next month. In place of it I am reminding you about “CameraMate VideoSafe” and “CameraMate Real Time Video” by Zio Corp from last month’s column that had rebates expiring May 31, 2005. I am happy to say they have extended those rebates. I will include text from a message they sent me:

“Purchase select Zio Corp. products from any retailer from Feb. 05, 2005 through Sept. 30, 2005. Submit a completed rebate offer form; the original UPC code from select Zio products packaging; a copy of the dated ‘Any Retailer’ receipt for the select Zio products purchase with the retail price circled. Consumer also needs to include the rebate sticker (outside the box) along with the UPC code.” For information on those products see [<http://www.easiestvideoever.com>]. My friend is having a great time playing with those Zio products that I asked him to test out for me last month.

Announcement For ActiveStartup Deluxe

Below is an edited announcement:

“I’m pleased to inform you that HexileSoft releases ActiveStartup Deluxe! We offer a 30% discount on ActiveStartup Deluxe to user group members.

“Smart StartUp Manager For NT-based Windows OS With Anti-Malware Options. Startup manager is a popular software category with dozens of different titles. ActiveStartup Deluxe has been specifically designed for network-based Windows versions, like Windows NT, 2000 and XP. The program gives its users a brain-dead simple way to backup and restore startup settings, add/delete/disable programs on the startup list, and control services.

“Unfortunately, the Internet is packed with malicious software like an overstuffed sandwich. Viruses, worms, trojans, spyware and other malware can easily sneak into PCs and wreak havoc. Oftentimes, the only way to catch the intruders is at the startup point. This is why ActiveStartup Deluxe offers users to perform virus check at startup and makes it possible to run, stop, enable or disable any service that may be used by malicious software. ActiveStartup Deluxe is capable of opening system utilities like RegEdit or SysEdit, checking for “dead” files on the startup list or launching any application. The program does not require any in-depth computer knowledge - ActiveStartup comes with a simple clean interface, support for clipboard and dragging & dropping, hotkey activation and other beginner-friendly options.

“ActiveStartup Deluxe is very easy to operate. This tiny application (only 691 KiloBytes) has been awarded over a dozen prestigious awards including a four-cow

rating from TuCows. There is also another version of the program with fewer features called Active Startup. The differences between these two versions are available at [<http://www.hexilesoft.com/windows%20startup%20managers.html>]. A 30-day trial version is available at www.hexilesoft.com for evaluation purposes. ActiveStartup De-luxe 1.07 is priced at \$29.95 US Dollars per copy.”

Any inquiry, please contact Oleksandr Svider at info@hexilesoft.com

Company website

[<http://www.hexilesoft.com>]

Product page

[<http://www.hexilesoft.com/activestartupdx.html>]

Download [<http://www.hexilesoft.com/files/activestartupdx.zip>]

Buy link [<http://www.hexilesoft.com/purchase.html>]

Last Minute Problem

Just before time to send out the DealsGuy column to the editors, I could not send messages, but could receive them. Earthlink tech support says my Eudora Email software cannot be configured to work with their new servers. I may have to find another ISP so be aware that my email address may change.

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>].

Digital Photography: The Killer App of this Generation

by Rick Altman

It’s rare in our culture that we are able to identify a phenomenon as it is taking place, instead of just in retrospect. Mobile phones were mostly a curiosity until they, almost overnight, became commonplace. Same with the iPod. Same with most fashion statements. Same with most everything.

Digital photography is different. Its rise has not been meteoric, but rather sure and steady. And month by month, season by season, holiday by holiday, more and more households have bought into it. Today, most of us view a digital camera as novel but necessary, and only a matter of time before we buy our first one or our next one. It is happening as we watch.

And this could not be a better time to watch, with models becoming better and cheaper on a monthly basis, and print services almost as accessible as service stations for your autos.

Unless you have been living under a rock since 1996, you are familiar with the persistent virtues of going digital with your photos:

It's Way Cheaper:

Even though the initial buy-in is a bit higher, your cost for consumables drops through the floor. You will never buy film again, storing photos on media that you can buy online from \$25. Equal to the point, you will never pay for a print of a bad photo.

You Take Better Photos:

When it costs you nothing to push the shutter, you do it more often. You know the story about a thousand monkeys pounding on a thousand typewriters and the work of Shakespeare being the result? Dumb luck also prevails over digital photography, as any of us hacks and amateurs can take a decent photo of a scene when we give ourselves a dozen chances.

You Become A Better Photographer:

As a decent commercial-grade photographer, I have been taking photos for over two decades. But I never really developed a feel for composition or a solid understanding of the science of photography until five years ago. No matter how many notes I took, I just could not connect what I did five days ago with what I was looking at when the film came back from the lab.

But the immediacy of digital is the best photography teacher you could ever hope for. You see in five seconds, not five days, what happens if you move your subject off-center, how it looks to shift the light source to another angle, how depth of field changes when you change the lens aperture, how shutter speed affects the entire energy flow of a scene that involves motion.

Your Subjects Become Better Models:

An unexpected benefit of the digital age is a result of the attention span of the people you photograph. It used to be easy to sit for a photo-smile broadly through one or two shots and they would be done. Now, it is commonplace for a photo to be more like a photo session, with multiple photos taken from several angles. Most people can't paste a smile for that long and some will even begin to ignore the photographer. And that is when the really good photos are taken. After the requisite pasted-on-smile shots, when they tire of having their photo taken, expect the best results.

Photos Anywhere

Perhaps the most important development in digital photography is the explosion of outlets that will print your images. We stopped counting at 250 the number of online services available (our favorite is the Kodak Picture Center), and today you can take your little compact flash card or jump drive to Rite-Aid, Longs, Walgreens, Wal-mart, Costco and dozens of others.

This is significant because the real price savings occur not from your printing photos yourself, but from your sending them out. It is wonderful to be able to make your own prints, no doubt, and you can pick up a good photo printer for next to nothing (or literally nothing if you watch for the incentives offered by Dell, Best Buy,

and the other big retailers). But you'll get eaten alive by the cost of the ink and paper if you use your own printer exclusively. You cannot beat the estimated 35 cents you'll pay for a single 4x6 print (and as low as 15 cents for quantity or promotional offers).

Skeptics look at the ritual of sending digital images out and awaiting the arrival of prints as being nothing different than the tedium they were hoping to escape with film processing. But there is one huge difference: With digital, you only order prints of the good images, not all of them. You already know if you've taken a winner, and chances are good that you have already emailed it to friends and loved ones, uploaded it to a website, and organized it in your online photo album.

The Cameras are Incredible

The biggest risk with digital photography is that you will go overboard and buy more camera than you need and more cameras than you need.

What a fantastic problem to have!

Today's buy-in for a good all-purpose digital camera is barely \$250. The top-of-the-line model that cost \$800 two years ago can be found for about \$350 today, and digital versions of professional-style single lens reflex models (SLRs, "real" cameras with detachable lenses) are showing up with regularity under \$1,000. We are watching closely the emergence of the "super-zoom" category-cameras that boast 10x and 12x optical zoom ranges. This is the equivalent of a 35 to 400mm zoom lens, all in a standard camera chassis.

These cameras feature the good kind of zoom (optical zoom, not worthless "digital zoom" that is a marketeer's dream and consumer's nightmare) along with special image stabilization technology to help against camera shake. As those prices dip into the mid-\$400s, we expect them to be gobbled up by vacationers who want to be able to shoot close-ups and landscapes without having to add or swap lenses.

Fix Your Boo-Boos

And then there is the holy grail of digital photography for those adept with image-editing software: the ability to fix, modify, and enhance a photo. We wish that everyone started practicing with an image editor, if for no other reason than to eliminate for good the obnoxious anti-red-eye flash options that turn cameras into migraine-creation machines.

Beyond that, of course, is a treasure trove of opportunity to alter reality for the better, and few have it better than users of Corel software. For one low buy-in, you get graphic-drawing and image-editing applications with CorelDraw, or an in-credibly-priced image editor in Paint Shop Pro.

Similarly, creative PowerPoint users will love being able to effortlessly incorporate their own photos into presentations, be it for business or for pleasure-refine a sales pitch that was formerly a collection of boring bullet slides or creating a family keepsake of images, set to music.

The One Blight on the Horizon

We look upon the emergence of mobile phones with built-in cameras with fear, loathing, and blatant snobbery. First off, the cameras are pathetic little toys, capable of producing images no better than first-generation cameras from 1996. Those who form their first impression of digital photography from what they see on their phones are doomed to harbor misconceptions for years.

Worse is the specter of what might happen to the mobile phone industry if camera phones become more common. There are numerous institutions and destinations at which photography is prohibited (court houses, military bases, many airports, museums) and other places where it is morally reprehensible, such as restrooms and locker rooms. If authorities cannot tell the difference between a mobile phone and a camera, they may have no choice but to prohibit them all. Madison Avenue might want to think twice about creating commercials that show someone taking a photo and immediately sending it out via email, all with the same device. They might be killing their golden goose.

All in all, this is a grand time to be a photographer and a digital designer, with technology ready to explode onto the scene, competition among manufacturers driving prices down, and entries forming at so many different price points.

Watch for 2005 to be a banner year for the revolution that we are watching unfold right now.

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Current Hoaxes and Urban Legends

by Ira Wilsker
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The Examiner, Beaumont TX

Some of us find them cute, entertaining, exciting, and fun, while others of us find them embarrassing, irritating, and a waste of time. Many forward them believing that they are doing good, or warning of harm, or forward them because they came from an allegedly reliable source. A few are so convinced of their truth that I am explicitly requested to put them in this column, or announce them on my radio and TV show. What I am referring to are the hoaxes and urban legends currently circulating on the internet that many of us seem to love to forward to everyone in our email address books. Many of these hoaxes and urban legends have a grain of truth or logic in them, while many others are totally lacking

any basis in fact, yet many of us still enjoy forwarding them without a second thought.

In order to avoid embarrassment I strongly recommend that everyone tempted to forward such emails should check out their validity prior to another mass send to all we know. There are several excellent websites that compile information on these emails, and a quick check can save us from the embarrassment of sending out a hoax, and preserve our personal credibility. If we find that the interesting email is indeed true, we should still consider not forwarding them to everyone, as many of our intended recipients may not find our interests to their likings, and may even be offended that we consumed their valuable bandwidth and time. Typically, when I receive one of these from an acquaintance, if I am not already familiar with it, I check it out; if it is true (a minority of the time), I may choose to selectively forward it only to those that I think may be interested in the topic, but I never send it to everyone in my address book. If it is false, I usually reply back to the sender that it is indeed false, and include a link documenting the falsehood. Some emailers are so humiliated that I caught them in an inaccuracy that they reply in anger back to me, despite the incontrovertible fact that it was they who had sent the bogus email.

To verify the authenticity or falsehoods of these oft forwarded emails, I use two primary, and several secondary resources. Primarily I use the excellent and comprehensive urban legends resource of Snopes, at www.snopes.com. Well organized in an easy to navigate menu format, along with a competent search engine makes Snopes an excellent choice to check out the validity of questionable emails.

My other primary resource for checking the legitimacy of potential hoax emails is urbanlegends.about.com. This site is frequently updated with the latest hoaxes in circulation, and can reliably document their validity.

A common topic of these questionable emails is virus warnings. For this reason, most of the major antivirus software publishers also compile lists of hoaxes, mostly virus related, on their websites. I utilize these sites as secondary resources. It is also notable that old hoaxes and virus warnings never seem to die out, and periodically reappear. One that has been documented to be in circulation for over six years, but is again currently making the rounds in mass emailings is the "It takes guts to say Jesus" virus hoax. This email, in several iterations, warns that according to CNN, AOL, McAfee, and other reputable resources, that there is an email circulating with a virus that can not be detected by contemporary antivirus software and that if you open the email, your computer will be effectively destroyed. Every one of the hoax and antivirus websites list this as a hoax, yet countless copies are being forwarded by well intentioned people trying to warn their acquaintances. Some of the variations even go on to state that while it may be false, it is so important that it is being forwarded anyway. Another similar email warning that does have some

validity is the one that says "I've Got Your E-mail on My Account". It goes on to warn that someone is using "your" email account to spread a virus, and I have received 10 copies of it, all with your email address and ISP in the header. The email then says, "I have copied all the mail text in the windows text-editor for you & zipped then. Make sure, that this mails (sic) don't come in my mailbox again." Attached to this dire warning is a file, commonly named "your_text.zip." If opened, the file will infest your computer with the Sober.N worm. If it infects your computer, Sober.N will terminate the antivirus and firewall software on your computer, rendering it vulnerable to further attack, and then forwarding itself to everyone in your address book! This Sober.N warning is the exception to the rule that most warnings of this type are bogus.

Another dire warning, which I am receiving multiple copies of, is the warning that a directory of cell phone numbers is being compiled to enable telemarketers to call us on our cell phones, consuming our valuable supply of limited minutes. This hoax, which is now circulating for the second time, is listed by several sites as one of the top hoaxes in circulation. The grain of truth in this is that most cell phone carriers are instituting a "411" directory service of cell phone numbers, this list will emphatically not be for sale to telemarketers.

To see the latest hoaxes in circulation, as well as the ones in widest distribution, check out the hoax and urban legend websites, or the website of your favorite antivirus software. You may find some of the hoaxes actually quite entertaining, and wonder how intelligent people could fall for such silly emails.

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. iwilsker@apcug.net

WEBSITES:

<http://www.snopes.com>

<http://urbanlegends.about.com>

Would You Like An Internet Can Opener?

by Gabe Goldberg
*APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP
Computers and Technology Website*

Wouldn't it be nice to access the Internet with devices as easy to use as toasters or pencil sharpeners? I'd even settle for a microwave oven's complexity. But we're far from that simplicity, since it's *hard* to make things easy to use.

Internet appliances have come and gone. Searching Google for

"internet appliance" simple

turns up thousands of references, mostly to products that never gained many customers. Well-known manufacturers like Gateway and Compaq appear, as do obscure devices like "Audrey". People who used such devices have complained when they were abandoned, orphaning them. While mainstream consumer products such as automobiles sometimes suffer similar market volatility, mutation and extinction are more common with electronics and especially PC hardware/software.

But evolution eventually settles down: products are emerging which may be useful. Longevity and market success are aided by sophistication (BlackBerry for mobile e-mail, initially for corporate users but now available to consumers), technology simplification and market leader support (MSN TV 2 and AOL Optimized PC), and competitive pricing.

While there's no real definition of "Internet appliance", it usually means something simple designed for specific functions. Microsoft's MSN TV 2 is indeed much more like a toaster than a PC, providing ultra-simple connectivity and avoiding normal PC nuisance issues of hardware, operating system, and software. It includes a small system unit, wireless keyboard and remote control, and good phone connectivity. Cables and jacks are color coded; documentation nicely illustrates the device, connections, and indicator lights. It works easily via dial access and wired/wireless broadband, and the friendly cordless keyboard needn't be precisely aimed. Supported printers connect via USB port. But there's no hard drive for storage or installing applications.

It's worth reading supplied manuals; on-screen tutorials and click-invitations introduce capabilities. Real beginners may wish for more details, though exploration is easy and safe and often the best way to learn. In addition to Web browsing, MSN TV 2 provides Internet e-mail, instant messaging (Microsoft's, not AOL's AIM), chat, video, and radio. Topics like news, money, and weather can be customized to individual interests and preferences. Not surprisingly, you'll need broadband access for effective video and radio, though even without it the device can serve as a media hub, delivering pictures, video, and audio from in-home networked PCs. But even on broadband I grew tired of the "Please wait..." message before each screen refresh.

It supports Windows Media Player but not popular RealPlayer or QuickTime. Encarta Premium for TV accesses encyclopedic reference though loses screen space to advertising. Some Web sites were hard to read and PDF documents were sometimes illegible; I found searching chat room topics tedious and many chat rooms occupied by teenage banter. Overall, it provides a "starter" Internet for people wanting access without using a PC. But its limitations – perhaps comfortable at first – will hinder real Internet exploration and exploitation.

The AOL Optimized PC takes a different approach, smoothing and hiding many normal PC chores and irritations. The "out of box" experience (unpacking,

assembling, initializing, configuring, connecting) is excellent, aided by a giant easy-to-follow instruction sheet. That's supplemented by a short video, worth watching before setup.

(Documentation and the PC support English and Spanish speakers.) The multiple instruction sheets supplied, though, are a little confusing. The AOL Desktop is well designed, as is the process of setting AOL and Windows XP Home Edition options. Alternate Desktops are AOL Black Voices and AOL Latino; kids can use Safe & Secure, Kid's Destination, and "RED (This is not your old AOL)."

The PC's hardware also shows good decisions: it includes USB and audio ports front and back, a floppy disk drive, an internal modem (though I miss external modem indicator lights) and network interface card, a wheel mouse, a printer and nice keyboard, 17" monitor, etc. I was pleased and surprised that it included Windows XP Service Pack 2 and Adobe Acrobat Reader 7.0, only recently released. It's accompanied by multiple CDs for installing additional software and refreshing the initial installation; none are needed for initial use.

It's not glitch free. I encountered PC-characteristic errors when printing a test page and when installing McAfee virus protection via free download. And support is quirky: a robot service number voice said that all operators were busy and that I should call back later, and then disconnected. Later, built-in Live Chat hadn't heard of software a manual mentioned and suggested I call the PC's manufacturer. While screen display speed was tolerable even on dial access, it suffers AOL's usual habits of updating software when signing off, popping up ads, and blurring ad/content. And it pushes billable features like AOL Privacy Wall and AOL Passkey.

Standard Microsoft Office application formats are supported by AOL Office Powered by Sun (Sun's Open Office by another name), allowing exchanging files with PCs running the real applications. AOL content and features are available, including Radio@AOL, You've Got Pictures, People Connection, etc. E-mail is friendly; multiple attachments in a note easily unzipped and opened.

It balances creating a friendly AOL-only environment for novice users against allowing them to customize the PC to act more like Windows XP. As you become comfortable, you can access more Windows capabilities, set options to your liking, and install software to meet individual needs. A nice touch is a suggested preventive maintenance checklist. I'd call it a "PC with training wheels", but that sounds negative: it's simply a PC with many irritations removed or hidden, a good entry- to mid-range system with built-in AOL.

Company: Microsoft

Product: MSN TV 2

Price: \$200 + tax (\$50 rebate possible); one year service required (broadband \$10/month, \$100/year; dial \$22/month, \$200/year)

URL: www.msntv.com

Telephone: (800) 706-4403

Company: AOL

Product: Optimized PC

Price: \$300 + tax; one year service required (\$24/month)

URL: www.aoptimizedpc.com

Telephone: (888) 444-3200

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The Latest on DVDs

by Bob Elgines

Colorado River Computer Club Editor, Lake Havasu, AZ

The DVD world is going crazy. The price range is from \$59 to \$130 well within most of our budgets. DVD blanks are down to 50 cents a piece, almost as cheap as CDs. The top four recorder manufacturers are Plextor, Toshiba, Pacific Digital, and Memorex.

Speed is up to 16X, which is max on the outer part of the disk, but only 8X blanks are readily available.

Dual layer (8.5 GB of data space) is labeled as the latest big deal, but is it really? These disks are hard to manufacture and are very expensive. The most important thing is, what will they play in? Well not much of anything. Most DVD players will not recognize the format and neither will your older recorders. So I don't look for this to do anyone much good even in the future.

What is in the future (next year)? The digital world has still been undecided on DVD-R and DVD+R formats, so most of your recorders will do both. Now we come to the future of introducing two new formats named "HD-DVD" and "Blu-ray." These new formats have been developed to use the new blue-laser, where has, they have been using the red-laser in our present recorders. Red laser single level DVDs have 4.7 GB of capacity where the Blue-laser single layer DVDs will have a capacity of 15 (HD-DVD format) to 25 GB (Blu-ray format) at present.

A HD (High Definition) two hour movie uses about 17.4 GB with out max compression. The compression schemes (MPEG-2, MPEG4, etc.) will be the same for both, so there will be no big difference in playback quality. Here we go again, new DVD players will be needed and this reminds us of the old video tape war on formats "Beta" and "VHS". Remember VHS won out due to more recording time and lower costs. Will this be true of the two blue-laser formats? Only time will tell.

These Blue-laser recorders and players will be coming out near the end of this year or the start of next year, but I think we are going to have to wait and see if they can decide on a format for the blue-laser.

The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.
www.swipcug.org

RISC, CISC, EPIC and The Cell

Almost from the inception of the microprocessor, a philosophical debate has been raging as to what design is better. A dumb processor capable of only a few simple procedures, referred to as a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) processor, could do simple operations very fast. A smart processor, capable of performing more complicated procedures, called a CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computer), would be slower with simple tasks but faster with complicated operations. For instance, a RISC processor capable only of addition and subtraction of whole numbers could be faster in performing sorting tasks, but would require extensive software instructions to perform a floating point multiplication that a CISC processor could perform immediately with its built-in hardware. RISC had the additional disadvantage that its programs had to be larger than similar programs for CISC processors, a big disadvantage in the days that computer memory came at a premium. On the other hand, the greater complexity of CISC processors made them more expensive to make.

In the mid-90s Apple decided to use RISC processors (e.g. the Motorola 68000) in their computers, while IBM-PC clone makers settled on the CISC architecture, even though IBM was pushing RISC processors. For reasons that have little to do with chip architecture, the Wintel community ended up outselling Apple about 20:1, making the CISC chips the clear winners.

In recent years processor chip designs have begun to merge, where RISC chips have more complex instructions and CISC chips are more efficient. Intel referred to the Pentium II as a CRISC design. Intel's major competitor, AMD, started out with a RISC design but still manages to produce chips that are compatible and competitive with Intel's Pentiums.

The next major advance in computer architecture is the use of multiple processors working together, dubbed EPIC (Explicitly Parallel Instruction Computing). This calls for rewriting computer programs if they are to make use of the new architecture. Many computer applications can be divided into separate operations that can be run simultaneously. Mathematical simulations such as those involved in weather forecasting are one example. Playing World-Master class chess is another one, and large sorting programs and spreadsheet-type manipulations are easily run in parallel fashion. Intel and AMD have both announced that upcoming powerful desktop computers will have multiple processors.

And now history repeats itself. Sony, Toshiba and IBM (STI) have announced a new microprocessor called The Cell. Cells are designed, RISC-like, to do just a few things very fast but also to work together to achieve

optimum results. It might be called an EPIC RISC. Few details about The Cell have been published, other than the basic patent issued in 2002. According to IBM on its Web site: "IBM expects Cell to define an entirely new way of operating. Cell's underlying architecture will enable it to manifest itself into many forms for many purposes, helping to open up a whole new set of applications. Incorporating this architecture, chips will be developed for everything from handheld devices to mainframe computers."

Four of the Cells will power Sony's next-generation games console, the PlayStation 3. However, it is expected that The Cell will also be capable of powering super-fast desktop computers. An excellent article about The Cell can be found in *The Economist* (February 12, 2005, thanks to Louis Ritz). There is also a summary in *PC Magazine* (April 12, 2005).

In Brief

Several months ago Google announced a new, free desktop search program. It is still under development and does not (yet) index Acrobat .pdf files. Other search programs immediately came up with competing versions. According to *PC Magazine* (3/22/05) the best of the free desktop search programs at present is Yahoo's desktop search (desktop .yahoo .com), a lite version of the outstanding \$75 X1 that they rate best of show.

Those miserable spyware intruders continue to get more sophisticated and the anti-spyware producers are in a constant battle to provide the best protection and, if necessary, removal tools. Yesterday's champions, Ad-Aware and Spybot Search & Destroy have been overtaken by newcomers Spy Sweeper 3.5 (\$30, www.webroot.com) according to *PC Magazine* (2/22/05) or CounterSpy 1.0 (\$20, www.sunbeltsoftware.com) according to *PC World* (April 2005) which rated the earlier version 3.2 of Spy Sweeper as a close second best. Take your pick.

Do you depend on Quicken to download your financial data from banks and brokers? Well, Quicken is ending online services and tech support for Quicken 2001 and 2002 so you'll need to upgrade to Quicken 2005. And that version will no longer support importing data via the .qif format and will only support the .ofx format in its WebConnect and DirectConnect features. Microsoft Money 2005 will also support online services for just two years. *PC World* (April 2005).

Linspire (nee Lindows) has released its long-awaited version 5 of its user-friendly Linux distribution. They report that it took 3½ years to develop and cost \$20 million. Subscribers to its Click 'N Run library of self-installing Linux-based programs can download the new distribution for free and burn it to a self-booting CD-ROM. As a long-time user and promoter of the Linspire programs I eagerly obtained the new version to evaluate its new features. Sorry to say, Linspire 5.0 confirms the maxim that odd-numbered versions of major programs are often buggy and are best avoided. Fortunately, the distribution comes on a "live" CD that can be used to boot

the computer and run the program without making any changes to the computer's hard drive or settings.

I tried to boot the Linspire CD on my old Inspiron 3800 laptop, the one I have used daily for more than a year with Linspire 4.5 – laptop edition. The screen assumed all sorts of weird color effects and the program hung, presumably. Shutting the computer off fortunately left it unharmed by the experience and still capable of running the older Linspire version. On my newer Inspiron 5150 laptop the CD seemed to boot OK, but the mouse was stuck at the edge of the screen and the programs did not respond to keyboard inputs. Again, no joy, but no harm was done.

Finally I actually installed Linspire 5.0 on my desktop computer in partitions on a second hard drive that I have used previously to evaluate Linspire as well as other Linux distributions. This time the install was successful, but the Grub boot manager did not recognize the presence of Windows ME on the other hard drive, making Windows essentially inaccessible – not an acceptable result. I had the same problem with the Mepis Linux distribution, which also uses the Grub boot manager. So for now I am sticking with the old and proven Linspire 4.5 distribution until they work the bugs out of 5.0.

Does Microsoft Listen?

by Bud Bondietti

Editor, PC Post, Modesto PC Users Group, CA

After a long frustrating ride with my desktop computer and its numerous error problems, the day came when I knew the only thing to do was to do a factory reinstall. I lived with the errors and frustration for a long time, since I knew I didn't have all of my data backed up although I did keep up with all the updates and precautions one normally takes when dealing with the "Internet World." On making a backup, my start off point would be to backup all the data that I wanted to hang onto, including my vast music collection and tidbits of information that I have picked up over the years. One of the wonderful points of owning a computer today is that the cost and feasibility of backing up your data is so much easier than 10 years ago. Back then, one had to utilize recording media (floppies, tape and such) that couldn't always be depended upon to keep the data safe. In addition, you had to allot a large block of time for completing the backup. Today, with the availability of large capacity DVD disks or external hard drives, backing up is easier and faster. Case in point, I backed up my 250 gigabyte hard drive in a little over an hour to my external 300 gigabyte hard drive, while tidying up my computer area. So on with the story.

After performing everything I could think of to prepare for the big event, I got out my restore CDs and settled in for the battle. After putting CD number one in the drive, I received a message that the reinstall could not be performed from the desktop and that I needed to shut the computer down and reboot from the CD-Rom drive. So I exit windows and reboot with the CD in the

CD-Rom drive, and the program starts to do its thing. I'm thinking I could be done with this by mid-afternoon and then things start going wrong. An error message stating that the hard drive partition is not big enough to handle the operating system is found so that process will be halted. Well, so much for a simple chore.

I try once more with the same results and then realize that I'm going to have to find a solution to the problem so I take the restore CD out of the drive then boot up the computer and head to the Sony website to see if they have an answer to my problem. After searching the online database for over an hour with no results, I realize I'm going to have to pay for human tech support, so the next chore is to find a phone number that I can call for tech support. After a little searching, I finally locate the number and get ready for another wait to talk to someone who can help me out. After a short period of time (15 minutes or so) and a credit card charge of \$19.95 (my computer is out of warranty), I finally get to talk to Todd. I explain the problem to Todd and he says the first thing we need to do is to get to the bios menu, so we go into reboot mode and before the screen changes I start tapping the F2 key and the system goes to the bios menu. Todd then instructs me to go to the exit section and arrow down to the "restore system defaults" line and select that. I do so and then "save changes and exit." The system boots up and Windows starts its usual routine. Todd then says to put my system restore CD back in the drive and reboot. While following Todd's able instructions, I watch as the factory restore program starts up and allows me to complete my original objective. Thanks Todd, \$20 well spent. So, with the system restored, I head on to reinstalling all of the programs that I need to do the things I like to do.

After getting the factory restore project completed, I next wanted to upgrade to Windows XP professional as I need the extra power that program gives with networking. This part went very smoothly and now it was time to start reinstalling all of the additional programs that I use on a daily basis. My first step was to re-install Microsoft Office 2003 and it actually went smoother this time than the first time I installed it. After installation, I always make it a habit to reboot the computer even if the system doesn't ask me to. After the reboot, I started checking out the Office applications, and to my satisfaction everything worked smashingly. Once again, I rebooted and, to my dismay, I got a closing error message that I was all too familiar with from my previous installation. Starting to get that sinking feeling, I rebooted again and again to see if the error was a fluke or what. To my disappointment, it wasn't a fluke and so I was faced with trying to fix the problem. After a moment or two's thought, I realized that the problem occurred after installing Office 2003 so I set off to the Microsoft website to see if anyone else may have had the same problem and to see how they fixed it. Just my luck, no one else in the world had the problem so I began thinking about contacting tech support and paying them to help me solve the problem. After a long

drawn out search, I finally found the number for tech support and, of course, all of the times were busy; the wait time was over an hour and they suggested that I try emailing my problem to tech support. I thought that this last suggestion was probably the least expensive and prepared in my mind what I needed to say.

After sending my email to tech support, I prepared for a long weekend wait to hear back from Microsoft. The next morning, Saturday, I received a phone call from Microsoft, not an unusual occurrence since I became a Microsoft Partner but I was surprised when the gentlemen on the other end started asking me questions concerning the error message I had questioned. After I described the error message in a little more detail, the gentlemen asked if I was going to be home in an hour. I said I was and he assured me that a real live tech support person would call back and try to help me solve the error. I was shocked that someone would take that much interest in my problem, and warily waited for the phone to ring. Within 45 minutes the phone rang and a gentlemen named Amit Singh helped me walk my way through the problem. It turned out to be a conflict between a Sony Viao program and Microsoft. After about two hours of trial and error, my computer was back to being the error-free system that I enjoyed using. My conclusion is that the big guys do listen – you just have to learn where to yell.

Double Threat Online Travel Scam

by Ira Wilsker
*APCUG Director and Columnist
The Examiner, Beaumont TX*

Most of us like to travel, and would especially enjoy a travel bargain. We may have checked with reliable travel resources such as our local travel agents, airlines, cruise lines and hotels but were unable to find the deal that we wanted. We check the major travel sites such as Expedia, Orbitz, and Travelocity, but still can not find a deal that makes us happy. Since we are experienced Internet users, we go to the major search engines such as Yahoo, Google or Alltheweb, and search for bargain travel sites. We notice some websites that appear at the top of the listings, sometimes in the premium paid listings on the search engines, that allege airline tickets, hotel rooms, and cruises at far below the prices charged by the reputable sources that we are familiar with, so we click on the links. One link may be for CheapClouds.com, claiming deep discounts off published airfares; another link may be for Busysky.net that offers comprehensive travel services with fares far below those offered by travel agents or other online travel websites. Two other websites offering unbelievable travel bargains that appear in the paid or premium listings on the search engines are Crazytickets.net and Submitprice.net.

Tasting a good deal, we click on one of these sites and see a travel site similar to the better-known and reputable sites with which we are already familiar.

We search for airfares and find tickets for about half of what we would pay elsewhere; we find hotels and cruises similarly priced. Unable to resist such bargains, we select our trips and we are asked to enter our credit card information. A familiar window appears that asks us for our credit card number, security code (the three or four digit code on the credit card), expiration date, and name on the card. With a sense of excitement, we eagerly await the confirmation, which we are told may take a few minutes, but are instead presented with an official looking window that says that our credit card information could not be processed. We are then presented with an option to pay with another credit card, or pay by an alternative means. Thinking that it is just a simple glitch, and not wanting to lose the opportunity for a glorious vacation at a bargain price, we enter the required information for another credit card. We are again greeted with the same screen that it could not be processed, and are then told to contact customer service by email, utilizing the link and transaction number provided on the screen.

A short time later, we will receive an email from the travel company apologizing for the inconvenience, and claiming that their bank is having trouble processing credit cards. Since the price quoted is only valid for a very short time, the traveler is asked to use alternative methods of payment – wire the proceeds via Western Union. Readers of this column may feel a hint of skepticism at this point, remembering that sometime ago I wrote that while a legitimate method of sending money, wiring money via Western Union to pay for Internet purchases should raise a red flag of suspicion. Still, eager not to let the bargain of a lifetime get away; we follow the instructions on the email from customer service. The address to wire the money to may raise more suspicions, as the destination is not in the United States, but instead in Bulgaria, Romania, or Thailand. An inquiry email back to customer service may bring a prompt canned reply that the reason why the deal is so good is that these prices are only available for tickets purchased outside of the U.S., along with an assurance that they will be honored by the airlines, cruise lines, and the hotels. Still not wanting to lose out on this dream vacation, we send the money via Western Union, exactly as requested. We will then receive an email stating that it will take several days to receive our tickets, and are provided with a web link and tracking number to show our tickets are on the way.

After not receiving the tickets in the time specified we click on the tracking number, and are given another canned response that they are being processed, and should be delivered in the next few days; following up clicks several days later display the identical statement. An email reply from customer service reiterates the

message. By the date of the dream vacation, no tickets have arrived, dashing any dreams of a good time.

We have become the victims of another very nasty scam circulating on the Internet. What is especially insidious about this scam is that it is a “double whammy,” in that we are not only out of the money for the trip, since the money sent via Western Union is virtually unrecoverable, but we have also given unscrupulous unknown parties our credit card information!

This is not some fictitious scenario by a mystery writer but a documented scam. The scam has become so pervasive that even some of the antivirus companies have posted warnings about it on their websites. There is anecdotal evidence that, in several of the cases, the victims’ credit cards had been illicitly charged for a variety of goods and services in the days immediately following the fraudulent transaction, possibly committed by the same travel thieves.

The websites mentioned above were real, and are well documented, but are currently offline (as I type this). Based on their success at defrauding countless victims, it is likely that they will reappear under different names.

In order to be safe when shopping for travel bargains, be sure to use a reputable resource, such as a local travel agent, airline or hotel website, or trusted third party website. If you pay with a credit card, there is some degree of protection from fraud from the credit card company. Never wire money, especially overseas, to pay for a travel bargain. We work too hard for our money to have miscreants steal it from us under the false pretenses of a travel bargain.

Society News

Help's Half Hour

May 10, 2005

by Jim Murdock, Secretary

President Arpad Kovacs conducted Help's Half Hour answering questions on a wide range of topics.

In answer to a question regarding spy ware Arpad recommended SpyBot. He noted that it is now at version 1.4. He suggested that you should always check for the latest version. Some even suggest that you download the latest version as a clean install each time you scan for spy ware. Regarding spy ware, Arpad said that Microsoft just released, in beta, a new spy ware program that runs in the background and that he highly recommends.

Arpad noted, in a question regarding Open Office, that it is free and open source and a highly recommended program that was recently upgraded with added features.

To a question about how best to pay online, Arpad suggested that PayPal is a good method. MasterCard and Visa can also be used but it may be advisable to call MasterCard or Visa before you make a purchase online and ask for a one-use only credit card number – tied to your “real” number – that you can use to make your online purchase. After your purchase the number be-

Digital Photo Show

Camera Rochester will have a show of their work at Barnes & Noble Book-sellers, 3349 Monroe Avenue, Pittsford, in the Community Room from June 1st through June 30th. You are invited to meet the artists at a reception on Sunday, June 5th from 2 pm to 4 pm. The show is free, and there will be information for those wishing to find out more about Camera Rochester.

Many of the people in the Digital Camera and Scanning SIG will have work in this show, and I would like to encourage Rochester Computer Society members to attend and see what they and others are doing.

Bev Cronkite (585-9094)

comes unusable to any thief.

Arpad warned that Windows XP is vulnerable to spy ware being written right in the registry. If you keep your Windows XP always up-to-date you lessen the impact of this vulnerability.

Tom Thompson said that a problem with Windows XP with SP2 has surfaced in certain Delorme software. Delorme, at their website, has a correction patch for this problem.

Arpad was asked which E-mail package he prefers. He said there are several he likes but that Thunderbird by itself or with Firefox works very well.

There was a question regarding an error message while working in AOL “AB sync error 203”. Several suggested that AOL should make themselves available to correct this problem since, as Arpad agreed, the problem was with AOL.

A question was asked about how to print out an E-mail address list by alphabetical by last name. It was noted that using preferences such a list could be displayed but not printed. No answer to this circumstance was readily available. Arpad said he would research the problem and post the answer on the RCSi website forum.

Business Meeting

May 10, 2005

by Jim Murdock, Secretary

Arpad, with Steve, conducted the business meeting. Both asked all members to keep their dues up to date. The cash flow from dues is needed to keep a healthy RCSi balance sheet.

Arpad discussed the progress of the new Monitor production process. He noted that the May monitor was not produced using the new printing process due to difficulties with the resident printer fonts. They were incompatible with the fonts normally used to print the Monitor. This problem was successfully addressed and Arpad is confident the June issue will be printed using the laser printers.

Ron announced that Arpad would give a presentation at the June meeting on the latest version of Open Office.

Steve reminded everyone that a nominating committee is needed for a new slate of officers for next year. He also asked that people be thinking of new SIGs or special events that would be worthwhile for RCSi to encourage and develop.

Dave Thompson will conduct the Digital Photography and Scanners SIG at 1830 until 2030 on June 9th at the Fairport Library.

Steve reminded members that a nominating committee must soon be chosen to select a slate of officers for next year.

The business portion of the meeting concluded at 1900.

Program

May 10, 2005

by Jim Murdock, Secretary

Why go wireless? That question was the basis of Ron Matteson's presentation. Ron, who holds a doctorate in engineering as well as patents in the imaging field, is certainly well qualified to discuss this interesting and timely topic.

At the outset, with a show of hands, several members indicated they had set up a network in their home or office, both wired and wireless. There are certainly reasons for both configurations but it's the wireless networks that are gaining most in popularity. Coffee shops, libraries, bookstores, hotels, college campuses and even whole cities have established publicly accessible wireless networks, some "free" and some fee-based. So take your laptop with you. You never know when you'll encounter an access point and be able to get on line.

A network is a simply two or more computer connected, either by wire or radio waves, i.e. wireless. In fact, most home and small office networks are a combination of wired and wireless. The first computer is hard wired to the Internet source. A router is then connected to that computer. A router with wireless access points (WAP) makes it possible to add other computers to your network. Most laptops now come with wireless access built in but if yours doesn't you can add a wireless card to your laptop and your laptop is ready to access the Internet wirelessly.

Routers, such as the LinkSys WRT54G, have several capabilities. They serve to switch signals among wireless signals, wired connections, and the Internet. They act as bridges between wired connections. They provide access points for wireless devices and they have firewall capability. Using the CD that comes with the router it is quite straightforward to get the router set up and operating.

Once you've established your basic network, you can expand it to included printers and other devices. It is quite convenient and economical, for example, to share one printer among several computers. Files can also be so shared.

Wireless technology and wireless file sharing have benefits but not without risk. Caution is always advised.

Ron went into considerable detail describing security steps you should take to operate your network safely. For example, change your SSID or Service Set Identifier from the default setting your router came with. Also disable SSID broadcast and change the default password. Enable MAC (media access control) address filtering as well. It is advisable to also use encryption such as WEP or, preferably, WPA.

Don't forget the usual precautions, even more important in a wireless environment. Use a firewall such as Microsoft's or Zone Alarm. A good anti-virus software is a must. Always keep it up to date. Internet security software is needed as well.

Picnic Announced

The RCSi picnic will be on August 9 at the Perinton Town Park from 1600 until 2000 with a charge of \$5.00 per person.

There will also be a flea market of computer stuff with proceeds to be donated to RCSi. Arpad asks that anyone intending to contribute to the flea market let him know in advance so that sufficient display tables can be obtained.

Ron presented a brief power point program furnished by Intel about Centrino architecture that makes it possible for manufacturers to build in wireless capability. No adapter card is needed. Other benefits of Centrino are better performance and longer battery life.

In closing, by way of summary, Ron gave us several websites that are good references for networks and wireless. They are:

<<http://www.hp.com/go/wireless>>
<<http://www.Wireless.com>>
<<http://www.Wireless.pcmag.com>>
<<http://Pcworld.com>>
<<http://www.Wi-fi.org>>
<<http://www.Intel.jiwire.com>>
<<http://www.Cooltown.com>>

At the end of his presentation Ron gave each attendee a useful gift courtesy of Intel. Intel also provided a very nice backpack, which was awarded by a drawing among all the RCSi members in attendance.

Planning Meeting Notes

May 17, 2005

by Jim Murdock, Secretary

Sally Springett hosted the planning meeting that began at 1900. Arpad Kovacs, Bob Avery, Ron Matteson, Dan Rothfuss, Sally Springett, Steve Staub, Tom Thompson, and Jim Murdock attended.

Arpad began the meeting with a request for comments on the May general meeting when Ron gave a presentation on Wireless Networks and Intel Centrino architecture. Ron's presentation was well received. Many members are interested in setting up their own wireless network. In fact some already have and not always

without difficulty. Ron's presentation helped both those contemplating a wireless network and those still working out the kinks of their new networks. Intel provided Centrino materials that Ron used in conjunction with his presentation. Both Ron and the members felt the Intel material was helpful. Intel also provided door prizes that were appreciated and added to the interest.

Arpad said that a few members are still behind in their dues.

Ron noted that the June presentation will be given by Arpad on the Microsoft Media Center, Edition 2005, a version of Windows XP that allows home computing and entertainment to be combined. The meeting will be held at the Brighton Library.

"Smart Computing" magazine will provide the July presentation. This meeting will be at the Webster library.

Discussion followed about the September and October meeting programs. Open Office, Linux as well as other topics were options discussed.

The Board chose Sally Springett to fill the one vacant member-at-large position, thereby recognizing the effort and knowledge she devotes to RCSi as editor of the Monitor. This appointment as board member gives Sally a vote in RCSi matters that is both appropriate and deserved.

Ron suggested that the board consider holding a "Wireless" workshop if there is sufficient interest. Such a workshop would possibly be held on a Saturday.

Although the new Monitor printing process was postponed from last month, Steve and Arpad believe the issues regarding font incompatibilities are resolved and that the June Monitor will be printed with the new Laser process.

Steve announced that he was exploring a new RCSi permanent meeting location at the new Medley Center in Irondequoit. He will report his finding at the next board meeting.

Steve said that the slate of new RCSi board members is not complete. A secretary needs to be elected and, while not a board position, a Program Chairperson needs to be appointed. The board chose to caucus RCSi membership for volunteers.

Steve discussed the August 9 RCSi picnic to be held at Perinton Park from 1600 to 2000. A grill and coolers are needed to complete the preparations.

Steve reported that the RCSi treasury stands at \$1102.79

The meeting adjourned at 2015.

Treasurers Report

by Steve Staub, Treasurer

Balance as of 4/19/05	\$996.54
Income	
Donations	\$26.25
Dues	<u>240.00</u>
Total	\$266.25

Expenses

Postmaster	\$50.00
St. Stephens	60.00
Staples (paper)	<u>50.90</u>
Total	\$160.90
Balance as of 5/17/05	\$1,102.79

Thank You

RCSi sends a special thank you to the staff and management of EDI Tech for their donation of a desk top computer. We will be using it as a print server for the newsletter.

A thank you to Rev. Ken Bordner of St. Stephens for his donation of computer equipment to the club flea market.

Thanks to Intel for door prizes.

New Member:

Charlotte Baker

Renewals:

Dennis MacMahon

Marlys Whitcomb

Irwin Wiener

Richard Cronkite

Ronald Gouger

Ron Matteson

The Lighter Side

On his resume, a job seeker listed his experience with different operating systems. The Word spelling/grammar checker found "Windows ME and Linux" and was quick to suggest that "Windows, Linux, and I" would be more appropriate.

Customer: "My computer crashed!"

Tech Support: "It crashed?"

Customer: "Yeah, it won't let me play my game."

Tech Support: "All right, hit Control-Alt-Delete to re-boot."

Customer: "No, it didn't crash - it crashed."

Tech Support: "Huh?"

Customer: "I crashed my game. That's what I said before. Now it doesn't work."

Turned out, the user was playing Lunar Lander and crashed his spaceship.

Tech Support: "Click on 'File,' then 'New Game.'"

Customer: [pause] "Wow! How'd you learn how to do that?"

Customer: "I can build computers. I just can't make them work."

Customer: "Where is the lower case?"

Customer: "Winsock is performing illegal acts."

Tech Support: "Type 'fix' with an 'f.'"

Customer: "Is that 'f' as in 'fix'?"