

The Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

MONITOR

Next Meeting

Vol. 23, No. 9

September 13 - Brighton Library
Help's Half Hour

September 2005

CONTENTS

Super Printer Irwin Wiener	1
27 Useful Bookmarks Richard Johnson	2
Add a New Dimension to Your Browsing Gabe Goldberg	5
Free Screen Savers May Contain Spyware Kim Komando	6
Maintaining Your Downloads David Garcia	7
From the DealsGuy Bob Click	8
Beware of File Sharing Ira Wilsker	10
Are You Techno-Jinxed? Bob Rankin	11
Yum! More Hash! Karen Kenworthy	12
Sharing Your World Vinny Labash	15
How Spammers Get E-Mail Addresses Dave Gerber	16
Simple Password Practices Keep Data Secure Gabe Goldberg	18
Podcasting: New Web Content Beverly Rosenbasum	20
Review: Adobe Photoshop CS2 Marilyn Wright Gore	21
The Lighter Side	23



Super Printer

by Irwin Wiener

Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

Canon's large format i9900 printer can handle routine color printing and is particularly adept at printing virtually grain-free photos up to 13 x 19.

To quote Microsoft's PhotoShop/Color Management guru Tim Grey: "The advantages of this printer are that it is exceptionally fast and produces prints which are among the highest quality I've ever seen. The dot patterning is exceptional compared to many other photo InkJet printers

and the speed is nothing short of incredible." Grey does express two concerns: the need to use Canon's photo papers and the fact that dye-based prints do not have the longevity of pigment based inks. In answer to his concerns I have read that several other photo papers are compatible with this printer, and according to Canon, based on their tests, prints made on Canon's Photo Paper Pro will last for more than a respectable 35 years under normal display conditions (framed behind glass).

The i9900's incredible print quality can be attributed to a new 8-color Chroma Plus ink system and micro fine 2-picoliter droplets with

4800 x 2400 DPI resolution. Popular Photography's review stated: "Prints made on Canon's photo paper earned an excellent quality image rating. Skin tones were very accurate, shadows and highlight areas showed great details, and highly saturated colors didn't blow out or block up. The prints had a great feel to them and a high gloss surface."



The unbelievable fast speeds such as under three minutes for a borderless 13 x 19 are in part a result of the printers high-speed USB 2.0 port and a print-head with 6,144 nozzles which deliver approximately 11

million droplets per square inch.

The printer works with Mac and PC computers, is extremely quiet and comes with useful programs such as Photostitch and excellent utilities for keeping track of images. You can use the printer directly with cameras that support either Canon's direct printing or Pictbridge Technology by connecting them with their USB cable to the USB port in the front of the printer. This enables you to print pictures directly from a digital camera without using a computer.

The eight ink tanks are individually replaceable resulting in lower printing costs. A low ink detection system warns you when any individual color is about to run out. This is not a small printer. It requires an open space of about 2 x 3 x 2 ft. (W x D x H) when printing. The street price is approximately \$440.

I can best sum up by quoting a prominent reviewer: "Let's see. High resolution, microfine droplets, extended color gamut, speed, great software, affordable, even a nice looking box with high-speed port, plus support for printing directly from some cameras. We thought we were in heaven when we saw our first 13x9 zip out of this printer but we suspect heaven doesn't have gear this good."

27 Useful Bookmarks

by Richard Johnson

The Users Group Network (TUGNET), Los Angeles

The Web is a marvelous resource, and most of us come nowhere near tapping its full potential. I've attempted here to list 29 websites that without any necessary downloading provide exceedingly useful free non-specialized services and tools, that require no particular knowledge except how to navigate the World Wide Web.

1. **Time Cave**

www.timecave.com

2. **Memo to Me**

www.memotome.com

Using these two email reminder services you'll never forget another upcoming activity or event. Time Cave allows you to schedule incoming messages by interval (so many hours, days, weeks, months, or even years away) as well as by date and time. Memo to Me allows editing of content and date. With Time Cave you can choose your own subject line and send reminders to others, but Memo to Me will charge you for those features. On the other hand, Time Cave charges for the ability to repeat messages (monthly, weekly, etc.), standard with Memo to Me.



3. **Way Back Machine**

www.archive.org/web/web.php

Is a website you're seeking no longer around? If it was active as late as 1996, you'll probably find it easily in this huge archive.

4. **Centerwatch Clinical Trials**

www.centerwatch.com

Gives information on more than 41,000 active clinical trials in which you could participate. (Some compensate you handsomely for helping, along with free medical monitoring.) Includes a notification service, for trials in areas of your interest. Also describes the newest drug therapies.

5. **Objectgraph Dictionary**

www.objectgraph.com/dictionary

A combination standard dictionary, technical dictionary, and thesaurus. (There's also a dictionary of chemical elements, of rather limited

interest). A unique feature is the site's ability to "read your mind" if you're not sure of the word you're thinking of — or its spelling — or if you just want to save typing.

6. **Myway email**

www.myway.com

An excellent Web-based email provider with an exceptionally clean interface (no banner ads or pop-ups). Unlike the case with competitors like Yahoo mail, Myway will respond to support inquiries. (It also has a terrific weather page — see link #7 following.)

7. **Myway weather**

www.her.myway.com

The best weather page on the Web. Even though its weather information is from weather.com, you'll see when you use it that the interface is much cleaner (and loading therefore faster) than if you were to bring up either weather.com or one of its competitors. You can personalize the weather according to your home town or zip code; the page you'll want to bookmark is that personalized page

8. **Past Weather**

www.weather.com/activities/other/other/weather/yesterday.html

Use this site to compare today's forecast with yesterday's weather. There's also interesting historical data and a graph showing the weather for the past seven days. The past weather information can easily be compared with the forecast from Myway weather (link #7), which derives its data from the same source.

9. **Furl**

www.furl.net

Bookmarking is useful, but what do you do when you find that a bookmarked page has disappeared (left the Web)? Or maybe it's still there, but — as with many newspaper sites — you can't read it without going to a paid archive. This won't be an issue if you've Furl'd the page. Furl allows you to create a set of special bookmarks that can be easily searched or browsed — or shared with others — but whose contents are permanently stored on your hard drive. (If you feel the need to save parts of a page, try Net Snippets Free at www.netsnippets.com/basic. This does require a download.)

10. **Gold Star Events**

<http://snipurl.com/bl9o>

Gold Star enables admissions to a large variety of live California productions at 50% off or better. After your (free) registration, you'll receive regular email notices of well-described shows in the zip code areas of your preference. There's a small per-ticket service fee, usually between \$3 and \$7.

11. **Password Generator**

<http://mistupid.com/computers/passwordgen.htm>

Random characters compose the safest passwords. This tool will create a password with random characters according to your specifications.

12. **Zap2it**

www.zap2it.com

With Zap2it you can check out both TV and movie schedules. Various options let you permanently personalize each set of listings, to give you just the information you need, in the format you prefer.

13. **Acronym Finder**

www.acronymfinder.com

Don't be baffled by acronyms and abbreviations you encounter on the Web and elsewhere. This site offers definitions for over 398,000 such terms. Optional downloading of any of a number of search tools (for various browsers) will allow you to view a definition almost instantly.

14. **Translation Wizard**

www.faganfinder.com/translate

The Translation Wizard uses other sites' services to ease the process of finding a translation — that otherwise might require visiting ten or more sites to find the language of interest! It also has a neat button to identify a mystery language.

15. **Anybirthday**

<http://anybirthday.com>

A fun site that can divulge your friend's birthday or even tell you where to mail the card.

16. **TrackEngine**

www.trackengine.com

Notifies you via email of changes in Web pages that you select. You can preview the changes or view the whole page via email, with changes highlighted. Choose the Web address of a neighborhood theater, to see what plays are coming up. Or see every new installment of a

favorite newspaper column, without having to buy the paper.

17. **GovBenefits.gov**

<http://govbenefits.gov>

A source of information on over 400 government-funded programs that extend benefits for which you may qualify, including compensated volunteering. Features a confidential questionnaire designed to point you to the most likely matches.

18. **AddALL**

www.addall.com

Use this site to find the very best price for a book you want to buy. Unlike most other comparison sites, it figures in shipping costs for your location. Links will take you to pages for magazine subs, music CDs, and videos.

19. **jux2**

www.jux2.com

Jux2 lets you receive and compare search results from two or three different search engines, or see what you're missing from your regular search results. Still in development, it's currently limited to Google, Yahoo, and Ask Jeeves.

20. **Medem Medical Library**

www.medem.com/medlb/medlib_entry.cfm

Searchable and browsable medical library, organizing contributions from 45 medical societies. Features a complexity indicator for each article, from "introductory" to "professional."

21. **Metacritic**

www.metacritic.com/film

22. **Kids-in-mind**

www.kids-in-mind.com

Metacritic is an excellent source for movie critiques. For each film, it arranges its large variety of reviews from most to least favorable, and then tabulates the opinions, for an overall "metascore." (Additional Meta-critic pages cover videos, music, and games.) For evaluating movies for children, or if you have a concern about violence, sex, or profanity, Kids-in-mind will rate and describe each film's content in those three areas.

23. **CardRatings**

<http://cardratings.com>

This site maintains information on over 700 credit cards, and will suggest the best cards in a variety of categories – low or no credit, no annual fee, low interest, rewards /rebates, etc.

24. **CheckFree**

www.checkfree.com

There are a host of good reasons for paying your bills online. It saves time, saves the cost of stamps, reduces the chance of late payment, extends the time in which you can use your money, cuts down clutter, eliminates the danger of checks lost in the mail, and facilitates tracking. With CheckFree you'll be able to pay many or most of your bills online, and the service is free to the payers.

25. **Bug Me Not**

www.bugmenot.com

This site and the one following save you time and trouble while helping you cut down on spam. Bug Me Not keeps on hand log-in data (passwords with user names) for a huge number of sites that require registration. If you want access to such a site (like latimes.com), but don't want to bother registering, just visit the Bug Me Not site and log in easily.

26. **Spam Bob**

<http://evil-wire.luvfeed.org/cache/1269>

Spam Bob offers a choice of three email addresses that you create, to protect your privacy. Anything@spambob.org is a phantom address, messages to which disappear into the ether. Use anything@spambob.com if you'll want to check on a reply message. (This is handy for registrations that require confirmation.) And you may want to use anything@spambob.net for all your correspondents. Mail from each such "net" address can be forwarded to you, and if it starts generating spam, just cancel the forwarding order!

27. **Google Maps**

<http://maps.google.com>

Head and shoulders above the competition, these maps are much larger and far easier to configure. Zooming in and out is quick as a bunny, and re-centering is instantaneous. You can locate by category businesses in the map area, along with their phone numbers. Note that (at least as of this writing) these maps are not implemented in the regular Google search results, which will still point you only to Yahoo and MapQuest maps.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder /administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (<http://theskillspool.org>). He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer,

Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

Add a New Dimension To Your Browsing

by Gabe Goldberg

*APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computers
and Technology Web site*

It's hard to imagine a different world. A great early science fiction book *Flatland* [www.eldritchpress.org/ea/FL.HTM] describes life in a two-dimensional world, with creatures unable to imagine the third dimension we take for granted. And modern physics' "string theory" [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/] speculates that our world really has eleven dimensions.

While I can't imagine those extra dimensions, we spend time in a two-dimensional world every day — it's how most people browse the Web. But even that has changed, as browsers have evolved from displaying one site per window to more flexible tabbed browsing, displaying many Web pages in a single window.

So now it's interesting and fun to take three-dimensional browsing out for a cruise, surfing the Internet, courtesy of Browse3D. This visual-browsing style lets you see forward and backward, where you've been and where you're going. It's great for browsing that involves a lot of forward-and-backward navigation, or that requires following many Web links.

When first started, Browse3D offers abundant helpful tips for use. These can be scrolled all at once or browsed each time the program runs. And built-in Help provides a comprehensive tutorial highlighting features and capabilities.

This tool wraps around Internet Explorer — the vendor calls it a "reverse plug-in" — to display Web pages on multiple walls, shown three dimensionally on our two-dimensional monitors. The main straight-ahead wall is the home view, a browser window controlled by a tool bar. It can be zoomed to occupy the full screen, momentarily hiding the side walls. The left wall shows your browsing history, pages you've visited. It's much easier navigating to these pages visually vs. the usual cryptic browser back button: simply right click a page to bring it back to the home view.

The right wall is a multi-talented workhorse. It can be automatically filled with pages linked from the current home view, avoiding interrupting current attention while allowing instant jumps to linked pages. A handy use for this is pre-loading top entries in search engine results lists. The right wall can also be used like a corkboard, loaded with pages to be kept handy for quick reference; this is called making it "sticky." And it can be put in "4-live" mode which displays four active browser windows with clickable pages. This allows quick site viewing and comparing, or monitoring multiple auto-up-dating pages simultaneously, such as saving/tracking multiple auction items through the sale process. Right-wall pages can be rearranged, scrolled, flipped between Auto Crawl and sticky. And right-wall and sticky contents are separately cleared.

Pop-up window behavior — normally an annoyance — is customizable: ignore, open in new window, open on right wall, open in current browser, or ask for instructions.

An elegant "rooms" feature extends browser bookmarks/favorites, allowing saving and sharing collections of Web pages as single files. Any selected pages can be grouped; you might gather family, recipe, financial, or technical pages. Rooms can hold static pages (content when pages were collected) or dynamic pages (links to pages as they are when the room is viewed). Opening a room displays pages as they were positioned when the room was saved.

Browse3D is easily purchased online and downloaded/installed/registered; a free version lacking a few features is also available. The software requires a relatively powerful PC; it checks operation when installing. But most relatively current PCs should be adequate. Because of how it uses screen space, Browse3D is most impressive on larger monitors.

Company: Browse3D Corporation

Product: Browse3D

Price: Free or \$29.95

URL: www.browse3d.com

Telephone: (888) 444-3200

This article originated on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, www.aarp.org/computers, and is copyrighted by AARP. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, or transferred, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for

educational purposes, with attribution to AARP. It should be unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail Gabe Goldberg at gabe@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense.

Free Screen Savers May Contain Spyware

by Kim Komando

Q. I downloaded a beautiful screen saver with a waterfall and flowers around a lake. My friend told me that the screen saver contains spyware. Is this possible? And if it contains spyware, what are the risks of using it?

A. Yes, the screen saver you downloaded could contain spyware or even viruses. In fact, any executable file you download can contain malware.

The makers of free or inexpensive software need to make a living, too. So they often accept money from advertisers to include spyware with their programs. If the screen saver is legitimate, the spyware should be disclosed in the user terms. So read them before installing the screen saver.

If the product is not legitimate, the screen saver may simply be a Trojan horse. Many Trojans and viruses are distributed via spam as screen savers. Never open a spam attachment that includes a screen saver. It almost certainly includes a malicious program.

Spyware can collect a lot of information about you. Most spyware records your Internet surfing habits. This information is used to serve you targeted advertising.

Other types of malware are more pernicious. I call it snoopware, but some people group it with spyware. Snoopware can steal passwords, credit card numbers and other sensitive information. No reputable company will distribute programs that contain snoopware.

Regardless of what else it does, spyware can slow your computer to a crawl. So it is frustrating at best.

You should always read the user agreement before installing anything, but especially free programs. Frequently, the user agreement alerts you to the presence of spyware. By accepting the agreement, you are accepting whatever accompanies the screen saver.

Screen savers are plentiful on the Internet. A Google search for “free screen saver” returned more than two million links. I’m sure many of these screen savers are identical.

Why is this important? Some sites have been known to take others’ screen savers. Often they will repackage them with spyware. So two screen savers that look identical could be very different, indeed.

If you have your heart set on a particular screen saver, you might find a similar one without spyware. However, you could compromise your security trying to find it. I don’t recommend downloading free screen savers except from trusted sources.

Fortunately, you do have other options. First, you can create your own screen saver. Windows XP and ME allow you to use your own photos as a screen saver.

Right-click on the desktop and select Properties. On the Screen Saver tab, select My Pictures Slideshow. It will display the photos in My Pictures in succession. Click Settings to specify a different folder or to select other options. Click Apply and then OK. These instructions are for XP, but ME is similar.

IrfanView, a free photo-editing program, also creates screen savers. I like IrfanView because it allows you to save the screen saver. You then can share it with others. This is a great way to share your precious digital memories. Find IrfanView at http://www.irfanview.com/main_download_engl.htm.

In IrfanView, click FileSlideshow. Use the navigation tools to find the photos you want to use. Then click Add. Click “Save as EXE/SCR file.” Select “Create SCR file” and specify any options you want to apply. Then click Create. Your screen saver is ready to go!

Also, you’ll find cool screen savers on fan sites. So check the sites for your favorite movies, television shows, and music artists. And if you’re a car buff, don’t forget automobile manufacturers’ sites. You’ll be amazed at what you’ll find.

Copyright 2005 WestStar TalkRadio Network. Reprinted with permission. No further republication or redistribution is permitted without the written consent of WestStar TalkRadio Network. Visit Kim Komando and sign up for her free e-mail newsletters at: www.komando.com

Maintaining Your Downloads

by David Garcia

President, Little Blue PC Club
Northglenn, CO

Having trouble keeping track of your downloaded files? Here's a couple of easy procedures to help you maintain, identify, and document your downloads.

1. Create a "Downloads" Folder & Sub-folders

When downloading files, (for example, you buy some software online, and download it instead of having it mailed) it is a good idea to place all your downloads into a specific folder so that you can always find them when you need them. If you don't already have a folder called "Downloads," or "My Downloads," then you should create one on your hard drive (normally the "C:" drive).

To create a folder on the "C:" drive right-click the Start button on the desktop, then click "Explore" in the popup menu. This will open the Windows Explorer. Left-click the "Local Disk (C:)" icon to highlight it. Then click "File" on the Menu Bar and point to "New." When the fly-out menu opens, click "Folder." A "New Folder" is created on the C: drive. Rename it to "Downloads" or "My Downloads" as you prefer. To rename it just right-click it and select Rename from the popup menu.

Prior to downloading a given file it would also be good, for identification and documentation purposes, to create a sub-folder within the "Downloads" folder that identifies the origin of the download. Give the sub-folder a short name that identifies its origin. For example, if you download some anti-virus software from Symantec, you might name the sub-folder "Symantec." Then when you download the file place it into the Symantec sub-folder within the "Downloads" folder. Any subsequent downloads from Symantec should also be placed into this folder.

Creating the sub-folder is similar to creating the "Downloads" folder. To create the sub-folder you left-click the Downloads folder, click "File" on the Menu Bar, point to "New," click "Folder," and rename it. You should now have a sub-folder within the Downloads folder. The hierarchy should look like this:

- Local Disc (C:)
- Downloads (or My Downloads)
- Sub-folder (Whatever you name it)

2. Documenting the Download

When a file is downloaded it usually has a cryptic name like "Abc4205.exe" To further document my downloads, I create a text file within the sub-folder that identifies the download. Within the text file I give a description of what the download is, when I downloaded it, and when I installed it. I give the text file the same name as the downloaded file except for the extension. For example, if I downloaded a file called "Abc4205.exe" from Symantec using the procedure #1 above, it would be in the "Downloads" folder in the "Symantec" sub-folder. I would then create a text file called "Abc4205.txt," and also place it in the "Symantec" sub-folder. In this example, I would have two files within my "Symantec" sub-folder: Abc4205.exe which is the downloaded file and Abc4205.txt which is my description of the downloaded file.

To create the text file left-click the sub-folder name (e. g. "Symantec") once. Click "File" on the Menu Bar and then point to "New." When the fly-out menu opens, click "Text File." A "New Text Document.txt" file will be placed into the sub-folder. Rename the file to the download file name (without the "exe" extension). Now double-click the renamed text file to open it with Notepad. Type in your description of the download and save it.

Using the above two procedures gives you an orderly method of maintaining, identifying, and documenting your downloads.

Article rights are reserved. This article may be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, or transferred, for single use by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to David Garcia, Little Blue PC Club, Northglenn CO. It should be unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail David Garcia at littlebluepcclub@comcast.net when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense.



From The DealsGuy

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

More On HD Warranties

In response to my comments about misleading HD warranties, Ira Wilsker, APCUG board member, sent me the following: "The federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Improvement Act,

effective July 1, 1976, **REQUIRES** any seller of an item that has a retail selling price of \$15 or more **AND** has a warranty, to make a copy of that warranty available on request **PRIOR** to purchase! In the future, wherever you buy items covered, **ASK** for the warranty **BEFORE** you buy it. Under the law the seller **MUST** let you see a copy prior to any purchase. Look at the FTC web site: [<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/warranty.htm>]” Thanks Ira. I don’t know if my readers in Canada have any protection like that for consumers?

Interesting Show

My wife and I worked the Microsoft Tech Ed show and each attendee received a nice carrying bag, but 1000 of them got a nice box of goodies that included a compact USB four-port hub, perhaps those who achieved a certification, I never found out for sure. There were 18,000 attendees and the exhibit floor had over 300 booths, although most booths were not elaborate. Food was in abundance throughout the entire show for attendees. I was told that each attendee (or their employer) paid at least \$1,700 to attend. There were many sessions using many different speakers, and covering a diverse variety of topics during its six days. Steve Ballmer gave the keynote speech. It was fun to work this show.

I stopped at the booth for the new MS spyware program that is downloadable as a beta. I mentioned that I was told it would stop working in July and had not heard what would happen then. The lady said it would continue to be free for home users. I hope she knew what she was talking about.

New Computer Project

I finally finished assembling the parts to go with the Intel motherboard I won at the FACUG event and got it up and running. A real surprise for me was when I accessed the Intel Web site for information and found that motherboard was already no longer supported. However, there was a PDF containing a manual for that motherboard and it had the answers I needed. A friend was a lot of help over e-mail since that was the first time I had built one completely from parts. There was a bit of frustration when I tried to install the OS, but with my friend’s suggestions, I eventually found the problem and it is now in service and

working well, so far. Due to the price of the RDRAM that boards takes, I only used two memory slots, and I’m glad my friend told me about choosing the right RDRAM. I was unaware there was more than one type of RDRAM for that MB.

Last Chance For The Biometric

Unlocking Device Deal

This deal was only supposed to be for two months, but Hassan will probably still give you the discount on the fingerprint unlocking system for your locks, if you ask. Unlocking your doors doesn’t get much better. E-mail him and ask for more information so he knows you read about it. To order, e-mail him at [Hassan.Hares@ekeyUSA.com] and check for product description at [<http://www.ekeyusa.com>]. 30% off is a great discount on the product.

Special Rebates For Zio Corp. Products

Chris Allen, Channel Sales Manager, has set up rebates on several Zio Corporation products. This is a special situation and you can download a PDF containing all the rebate forms from my Web site’s Announcement page. This rebate is specifically for the DealsGuy column, although a rebate form is also on their own Web site right now. Use the rebate code “DealsGuy” on the form. This way you can shop wherever you like getting your best price when purchasing the products, then send for your rebate listed below.

CameraMate VideoSafe CM-53000: \$10 MIR

CameraMate Real Time Video CM-50000: \$20 MIR

Dazzle Universal Media Reader/Writer DM-24001: \$20 MIR

Dazzle 990 (Digital Camera/Camera Phone Manager): \$20 MIR

Dazzle 8 in 1 DM-22000: \$15 MIR

MIRs not valid with any other promotion, and one rebate per household.

My Dazzle 990 mini-review is below and the two CameraMate products were written up in the May issue of the DealsGuy column. I have not tried the other products.

I received the Digital 990 (Digital Camera/Camera Phone manager) to try out. It is 4" long by 2½" wide by ½" thick and does some neat things. You connect it to your computer’s USB port and it goes to work. There are five slots to accommodate popular media cards for a digital

camera or phone. It also has two USB slots that act as a hub. They say the Dazzle 990 Hi-Speed Reader/Writer allows you to manage your digital stuff; you can transfer photos, contact lists, ring tones, MP3s, etc. between your mobile phone, digital camera, MP3 player, flash drive, and even any USB flash memory device and your PC. The package lists 17 different types of supported media for your camera phone or digital camera.

Packaged with it are two CDs containing ProPix Sound that enables you to add music or sound to your photos, ProPix on TV that allows creating a slideshow for your TV, and automatic backup on a CD. That CD includes ProPix Address Manager that works with SIM based mobile phones and updates your contact list from your PC. Also included is ProPix Share to share photos with friends easier and faster than using e-mail by using peer-to-peer technology. The other CD contains Paint Shop Photo Album (standard edition). There is more and you can check their Web site at [<http://www.ziocorp.com>], although their Web site needs work since I didn't find as much information as on the package.

I enjoyed adding commentary to the photos taken on our Panama Canal cruise and setting up a slide show. Since I don't have a picture phone, I couldn't try those functions. I did move around some of the image files from the media cards to my USB external HD, USB thumb drive, PC, etc. and it worked well. It handles both USB speeds. You need Windows 2000 or XP for this product. An available free download on their Web site is Orb Networks that allows accessing the photos, video and music on your home PC (broadband connected) from your Internet enabled mobile device. As for using it as a USB hub, it normally handles low powered USB devices, but an optional accessory power supply is available. MSRP for the Dazzle 990 is \$49.95.

Dazzle Universal Media Reader/Writer DM-24001: MSRP \$39.99

Dazzle 8 in 1 DM 22000: A high-speed reader for eight different card media: MSRP \$29.95

CameraMate VideoSafe CM-53000 allows you to capture analog video/audio from any VCR or camcorder and burn it to a CD or DVD and includes some hardware: MSRP \$49.99.

CameraMate Real Time Video CD-50000 is an adapter and software for capturing the video

/audio from any VCR or camcorder for the purpose of burning to a CD or DVD. However, Real Time Video software also offers Autoedit Wizard, Autoedit Storyboard Wizard, Randomize Wizard and a DVD Burn Wizard. Software and drivers are included on a CD. Adapter cables for RCA audio/video/SVHS plugs are not included, but are easy to obtain and many folks have them lying around: MSRP \$69.99.

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>].

Beware of File Sharing

by Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner Beaumont TX; Radio Show Host

Most of us have heard about the popular "Peer to Peer" or "P2P" file sharing networks. Countless millions of computer users around the world routinely download copyrighted music, software, videos, and games on these computer networks, as well as from "alt.binaries" newsgroups where users upload complete commercial computer programs, and other intellectual property. Ethicists have long bemoaned such behavior, and representatives of intellectual property right owners have long tried to shut down such activities with lawsuits and other forms of pressure. Such pirates are alleged to have deprived the rightful owners of billions of dollars of revenue. Legal challenges to such practices have met with some success, but the recent US Supreme Court ruling of MGM vs. Grockster has now opened up another avenue. In a statement by US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, "that those who actively induce or encourage the theft of copyrighted works may be held liable for their actions. Our objective in this operation was to find and dismantle large-scale criminal enterprises that illegally obtain, copy,

distribute, and trade in copyrighted software, music, movies, and video games.”

Recently, Attorney General Gonzales announced “Operation Site Down,” a coordinated international legal and criminal attack on cyber pirates, with law enforcement agencies from the US (the FBI), Canada, France, Belgium, Israel, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Denmark, the Netherlands, Australia, and Germany participating in raids on computer file sharing networks, and arresting individuals allegedly engaging in such intellectual property theft. It is noteworthy that two countries, reportedly the major centers of piracy, Russia and China, were not participating in the crackdown.

Operation Site Down, in its first series of internationally coordinated raids, shutdown or crippled several of the popular file sharing networks, and websites offering pirated materials referred to in cyber circles as “warez” (pronounced “wares”). Among the networks and sites raided were RiSCISO, Myth, TDA, LND, Goodfellaz, Hoodlum, Vengeance, Centropy, Wasted Time, Paranoid, Corrupt, Gamerz, AdmitONE, Hellbound, KGS, BBX, KHG, NOX, NFR, CDZ, TUN, and BHP. Over 70 search warrants were executed in the US, with several arrests reported, while additional raids and arrests were reported in the other cooperating nations. These services were alleged to have been “first providers” who posted the first copies of pirated works, often cracking any copy protection or registration schemes integral with such products. Once these services made material available, it tended to show up on warez sites around the world, where millions could then download the material using P2P networks, websites, FTP sites, and other online resources. It is hoped that by raiding these primary sources of illicit intellectual property, that much of the supply of pirated content will be reduced. Attorney General Gonzales stated, “By dismantling these networks, the Department is striking at the top of the copyright piracy supply chain – a distribution chain that provides the vast majority of the illegal digital content now available online.”

A variety of online resources have stated that the principles of many of the sites raided were directly behind the cracking and distribution of popular and expensive software such as products

from Adobe, AutoCAD, Microsoft and other software publishers, as well as the distribution of recent movies, including “Mr. and Mrs. Smith,” and “Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith.”

“And by penetrating this illegal world of high-technology and intellectual property theft, we have shown that law enforcement can and will find — and we will prosecute — those who try to use the Internet to create piracy networks beyond the reach of law enforcement.” so said Attorney General Gonzales.

There is more to file sharing than just the legal, moral, and ethical considerations; P2P file sharing has also been a major source of computer problems, as they also often install spyware, viruses, and Trojans on unsuspecting computers. KaZaA, Morpheus, and Grockster, three of the major P2P file sharing networks (there are actually thousands of such pirate networks), have frequently been cited as the vector utilized to infect computers, both with their requisite software, and by the content downloaded from third party participants. Warez sites are also notorious for installing spyware that includes pop-ups with pornographic content, key loggers that can steal identities, dialers that connect to outrageously expensive international locations, and other forms of threatening malware. Websites offering such content are often loaded with active-x based, Java enabled, or other content capable of installing unwanted software on the victim computer, hijacking browsers, redirecting searches and purchases, and other nasty processes.

Operation Site Down, and the MGM vs. Grockster case should put all of us on notice that behaviors that may have been common place in the past should now be halted, lest “we” become civilly and criminally liable for our online actions. I know that many computer users rationalize such actions with excuses such as “(big name software publisher) is rich and won’t miss it,” or “(big name software publisher) has been ripping us off for so long that it is time for some payback.” Just because a file is available in a newsgroup or a website to download does not mean that it is a legitimate “shareware” or “freeware” copy. Most downloaders of such software, music, games, and videos are all too aware that the content is pirated, yet they participate in great numbers.

To the pirates reading this column, or to the parents of children illicitly downloading copyrighted music and other intellectual property, you have been warned. The feds may be looking over your shoulder, and may not like what they can see. All internet users leave an electronic trail that is easy to track; please, do not become a target of a federal investigation and prosecution. Website:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2005/063005operationsitedown.htm>



which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

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

Are You Techno-Jinxed?

by Bob Rankin

A recent study by researchers at Princeton University seems to give scientific credence to the notion that some people put out bad vibes that can adversely affect electronic components.

It's no joke . . . The Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) department has studied the subject for over 25 years and they have concluded that some people just seem to have a natural rapport with computers, while others are absolutely jinxed. Some subjects in the PEAR studies seemed capable of changing the output of electronic components merely by thinking about them.

I think there may be something to this. Many times I have been summoned by a friend with a computer problem, only to find that the machine was on its best behavior while in my presence. Here are some links to related news articles and discussion forums:

<http://www.hotnews360.com/jinxed-computer-news.html>

Not For Geeks Only: LowFat Linux

Long-time readers will remember that I wrote a book called *The No BS Guide to Linux* a few

years ago. That book is out of print, but the contents are as fresh and relevant as ever, so I decided to put all that material online, freely available for anyone who wants to learn the basics of using Linux without getting bogged down in too much detail or technobabble.

<http://www.LowFatLinux.com>

This free online tutorial will teach you about the Linux file system useful commands, text editors, data manipulation, shell programming, accessing DOS and Windows Files from Linux and much more. I hope you find it useful.

From *TOURBUS* Volume 11, Number 05 09 August 2005. Subscribe at <http://www.TOURBUS.com>

Yum! More Hash!

by Karen Kenworthy

A warm serving of corned beef hash may not be the most appetizing meal during the heat of the summer. But longtime readers may still remember Karen's Hasher fondly. It's a cool little program that computes something called a "hash value" – a small number representing a bit of text or the data found in a file.

Hash values, or "hashes," are amazing numbers. They serve as digital fingerprints, uniquely identifying the data used to compute them.

If two files have the same hash value, the contents of the two files are almost certainly identical too. But if the contents of two files differ, even by just one bit among billions of billions, their hash values will be dramatically different.

Thanks to this exquisite sensitivity to differences, hashes are often used protect the integrity of evidence. Detectives routinely use programs like my Hasher to compute the hash value of every computer file they uncover, before they examine the file further.

Later, during a trial, they can prove the file's contents haven't changed while in police custody. If the file's current hash value is the same as the one computed the day the file was discovered, no changes have been made.

You and I can use hashes to detect changes too. For example, ask my Hasher to compute the hash value of every file in your \Windows folder, and store the results in a disk file. Later, you can ask the Hasher to those hashes again, and compare the new hashes to the older values. If any hash

Verify and Associate

I mentioned earlier that some folks use hashing programs to detect changes to files on their disk drives. Until recently, this process involved a bit of hand work. But the newest version of my Hasher makes this job easy.

First, ask the program to compute the current hash values of any folders and files whose content you want to protect. Then save those computations to a disk file, by clicking the Hasher's "Save Results to Disk" button.

Later, when you want to test your files, simply click the Hasher's "Verify Saved Hash File" tab then ask the program to open the file where you saved the earlier results. Finally click the program's "Verify Hashes" button.

That's it! The program will automatically compute the current hash value of each file, and compare it to the hash value computed earlier. Any discrepancies are noted on-screen. If none are found, the files are all unchanged.

There's also a way to make hash verifications even easier. If you click the Hasher's "Settings" tab you'll see new checkboxes allowing you to "Associate" the program with any of the common hash filename extensions (.md5, .sha1, .sha224, .sha256, .sha384, and .sha512).

Once you've asked the program to make one of these associations, just double-clicking a saved hash file's icon will automatically run my Hasher, and cause it to load the file ready for verification!

This trick lets you quickly verify hash files you've saved, and also those that sometimes accompany large downloadable files from web sites such as The Gutenberg Project:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/>

If you'd like to put the new Hasher through its paces, download your copy from its home page at: <http://www.karenware.com/powertools/pthasher.asp>

As always, the program is free for personal/home use. If you're a programmer, you can download its complete Visual Basic source code too!

Visit: <http://www.karenware.com>

To subscribe to Karen's newsletter, visit <http://www.karenware.com/subscribe/> or send a message from the email account where you'd like to receive the newsletter to: subscribe@karenware.com.

From the July 26, 2005 issue of Karen's Power Tools Newsletter. Reprinted with permission.

Sharing Your World

by Vinny Labash
Sarasota PC Users Group, FL

If the thought of overcoming technical hurdles has deterred you from creating your own web-based journal, stop fretting. Modern web tools make creating your own blog easier than it's ever been. The term blog is nothing more than a shortened version of weblog. The term "weblog" was created by Jorn Barger in December 1997, and Peter Merholz introduced the short version "blog" in 1999. Blog came to be interpreted also as a verb, to blog, meaning "to edit or post to one's weblog."

Electronic communities existed long before people discovered the internet. The AP wire was similar to a large chat room where there were electronic discussions. Another pre-web electronic community, ham radio, allowed individuals who set up their own broadcast equipment to communicate with others directly. Ham radio also had logs called "glogs" that were personal diaries. The concept is hardly new.

Most individuals who use the internet have been like audiences watching TV, passive consumers of content, not active creators. Those who wanted to become content authors either hired someone to do it for them or went the professional design route, involving applications such as Dreamweaver and FrontPage. Those with little technical background also had to cope with the complexities of File Transfer Protocol. These proved to be formidable barriers. Not only did this remove web publishing from most of the people, it created a high priesthood of webmasters and web designers. Even those with strong technical abilities were faced with content management headaches as their sites grew larger.

The only tool an ordinary person had to communicate with others on the web was email. Since web browsers are totally unsuitable for content creation, alternate tools such as Outlook and Eudora were fashioned. Email was the force that made the web the playground of the common folk. Its very success may be the cause of its undoing

because email is in danger of being strangled by spam.

The world's most gigantic digital conversation was born six years ago when blogger.com was started. At first, hardly anyone noticed. Thousands of web sites come and go all the time, but blogger.com offered something unique. Anyone who wanted one could have a free blog. There was no charge to access the blog creation tools, and the site provided free space to anyone who wanted to host a blog. Once discovered, millions logged on and created their own web logs.

Blogs have changed the way educational institutions do research. Traditional journalists have been blasted out of their comfort zones, being continually challenged to defend their printed statements. They are now being held to the same standards of accountability they have long demanded from others. Families are using blogs to keep in touch in ways that were never before possible. Politicians and political organizations are using blog sites to raise funds.

Corporate entities are using blogs to find out what excites customers, and to track what they really think about the company and why. Wisely used, blogs could become the ultimate marketing tool, free of all the negativity associated with spam.

Starting your own blog is no longer a formidable task. If you are simply curious and want to see what it's like to have your own blog, the only investment you need to make is your time. If you have an irrepressible urge to share your ideas, philosophy, comments or conclusions with everyone else on the planet, you are merely a few short easy steps away.

Pay homage to the original by visiting <http://www.blogger.com> and follow directions. Another direction is to go to Google and search on "starting a blog." Your only difficulty will be deciding when, not how, to start.

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.

Figuring Out How Spammers Get E-Mail Addresses

by Dave Gerber

Dave's Bits & Bytes, *A Periodic Newsletter
for the Members of the Sarasota PC
User Group and the World!*
Director, Sarasota PC Users Group, FL

Spammers employ a variety of methods to acquire e-mail addresses. Some methods take advantage of the e-mail addresses readily available on the Internet, whereas others employ different levels of trickery, from harvesting to outright stealing.

Harvesting from the Internet

Spammers (and their assistants) utilize a technique called harvesting to acquire e-mail addresses. While harvesting requires a lot of bandwidth, it is ingeniously simple: Simply download the right pages from select Web sites and extract the e-mail addresses that are there for the picking. Some of the tools and sources employed in harvesting e-mail addresses from the Web include the following:

Web spiders: Spammers employ Web crawlers and spiders that harvest e-mail addresses from Web sites. It's common for Web sites to include mailto: URLs as well as unlinked user@domain addresses. Put your e-mail address on a Web site, and you're spam bait. These spiders are not unlike the spiders and Web crawlers used by Yahoo, Google, and others that scan the Internet's Web sites in order to keep Web search indexes fresh. Except that e-mail address harvesting spiders are up to no good. And where do these spiders get domain names? With over 90 million .com domains in existence, it's easy enough to just guess domain names in order to come up with quite a few.

Newsgroups: It's a straightforward task to harvest e-mail addresses from Usenet newsgroups: Just pull in a big news feed and extract the e-mail addresses with a simple shell Perl script. Newsgroup volumes are still increasing exponentially — at a rate of at least several gigabytes per day. This means lots of e-mail addresses are there for the taking. Any spammer with enough bandwidth can slurp up all those bits and just sift out the e-mail addresses.

Groups, blogs, and discussion boards: Yahoo! and Google have their groups and mailing lists, many of which make their members' e-mail addresses available. There are thousands of blogs and discussion boards out there, too, that contain easily acquired e-mail addresses.

Test messages: In this method, spammers send test e-mails to recipients whose addresses they simply guess — so-called test e-mail messages sent to addresses like service@, info@, test@, marketing@, security@. Spammers at one time could reliably conclude that, if they receive no “bounce-o-gram” back from the domain, that the e-mail address must be legit. This is because e-mail servers used to routinely send nondelivery receipts (NDRs) back to the sender of a message sent to a nonexistent address. But that ain't necessarily so any more: More servers are opting to stop sending NDRs.

Unsubscribe links: Many spam messages include an opt-out or unsubscribe link so that the recipient can request not to receive more spam. However, often the real purpose of unsubscribe links is to confirm a valid, active e-mail address.

Malware: Spammers sometimes use Trojan horses, viruses, and worms to extract e-mail addresses from individual users' computers. If mass-mailing worms can extract the contents of a user's e-mail address book for the purpose of propagating spam, then it's going to be easy to perform the same extraction and simply send the list back to the hacker's lair. This would probably be easier, in fact, because this activity is far less likely to be detected than a mass-mailing worm.

Unsubscribe requests: A good number of spam messages contain “unsubscribe me” links that a user clicks to opt out. However, many spam operators actually continue to send spam to e-mail addresses submitted to “unsubscribe me” links. When a user submits such a request, the spammer knows that the address being sent is a valid e-mail address. Do you think they'll actually stop sending spam to a known valid address? Not on your life!

Buying and stealing addresses

Among spammers and e-mail address brokers, e-mail addresses are a traded and sold commodity. If you know where to look, you can purchase

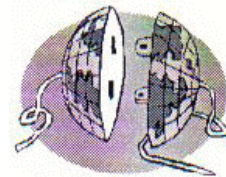
CDs and downloads containing e-mail addresses by the hundreds of thousands or millions.

And of course, everyone has heard the stories of Web sites that collect your e-mail address and promise not to sell it (ha!). But they sell, trade, or give away e-mail addresses anyway, even when their privacy policy says they won't. A few high-profile companies have been prosecuted and/or fined for this practice.

Business and service provider e-mail lists are also stolen and sold to spammers. In mid-2004, a former AOL employee was charged with stealing 90 million screen names and 30 million e-mail addresses from AOL and selling them to a spammer for \$100,000. This is not an isolated case, but it is a noteworthy one because of the size of the heist. So much for privacy, eh?

Listen to Dave's Bits & Bytes radio show archives at www.davebytes.com <http://www.davebytes.com>; subscribe to his newsletter by sending an e-mail to dave_bytes@comcast.net.

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.



Simple Password Practices Keep PC and Online Data Secure

by Gabe Goldberg
APCUG

Password dilemma: We can't live an online life without them, but if they're too numerous to remember, they encourage unsafe practices. What to do?

First, basics. A password is just the key that opens a computer lock. It may gain access to a newspaper's online edition, protect banking records, let you bid on auctions, open a fre-

quent-flyer account, or do anything requiring verified identity.

Some Web sites assign passwords; most allow choosing them. Rules for selecting passwords are easy to find but are often impractical. Don't use easily guessed familiar names or words; use letters and numbers and special characters? OK. Avoid anything related to facts about yourself? Makes sense. Don't share passwords with anyone? Good advice. Change passwords periodically? Oops, it's a memory test [<http://www.evalu8.org/staticpage?page=review&siteid=8906>]. Use unique passwords everywhere? Hm, that takes a "lot" of passwords. Don't write them down or store them in a computer file? Tilt!

Maintaining passwords is a nuisance. So some people use one password for everything — a bad idea, since sharing or compromising one access opens them all. Password hierarchies are common: use one password for financial matters, another for commerce, and one for trivials such as newspaper sites. That avoids revealing your sensitive e-mail/pass-word combination to junk Web sites.

But don't use a common password for all e-commerce sites (amazon.com, buy.com, etc.) since they're occasionally hacked. And treat sites like PayPal as financial rather than e-commerce. And don't just guess which password you used on a site; some sites lock accounts after just a few failed logins.

As passwords proliferate, it's common to store them in a computer file. And having too many site-assigned passwords guarantees the need to record them. But please, don't call the file "passwords.txt" and don't use the word "password" in it. The paranoid and geeky encrypt such files, but that risks losing the file by forgetting the encryption key.

You can print and save registration pages, but that leads to bulky files, cumbersome to search and requiring updating. Some people use an address book or print lists of sites and accounts, then handwrite passwords. But that still needs updating, and can be lost, destroyed, or found by someone untrustworthy.

If you have multiple email addresses, note which you use on a given site, since that's often the key for logging in or receiving password reminders.

Hackers use special software to attack logins, applying dictionary word lists and other guessing techniques. Passwords are described as "strong" (hard to crack) if they have at least eight characters, include upper/lower case and punctuation characters and at least one digit. So even if you use a memory aid for remembering passwords — such as words from a poem — convert them to strong passwords in a way that only you will know.

High-tech devices can add security, but they're usually used only in business settings; they include biometric devices which check fingerprints or eye structure and random logon-key generators.

Software password managers are more practical. These record and secure passwords and then auto-fill online logins. Good ones offer a "don't remember/don't ask" option to avoid recording info about sensitive sites. Encryption is desirable but not mandatory; it should be possible to secure the password manager itself with a master password.

Many managers are free, some are bought, and common software such as Web browsers and e-mail clients often includes it. Google returns many hits related to "password manager" and classy software site Tucows [www.tucows.com] numbers 300 such tools. Before installing one, make sure it supports your software applications, especially if they're non-Microsoft.

Many people don't secure home computers — but consider cleaners, workers, friends wandering through, perhaps even having permission to use the computer. Suddenly security becomes more appealing. If you handle money online, check banking/financial sites occasionally for unauthorized transactions.

Remember that you may occasionally need access to secure sites while away from your computer. You can copy passwords to a thumb-drive or PDA or simply print them, but remember that they're powerful keys and must be protected. Before traveling, check your passwords so you're not surprised on the road. If you leave your computer running, you can access it remotely via tools such as GoToMyPC.

On business-owned PCs, separate personal from work-related material. Determine whether your office has policies for personal computer use and monitoring of computer activity. Some busi-

nesses install keystroke loggers which can capture passwords before they're encrypted. And remember that system administrators can often defeat security measures as part of their job, so you may not want to store sensitive personal material at work.

Work and home PCs both need disaster preparation, so family members or colleagues can access what's needed in an emergency. Work-related passwords and instructions can be stored securely so they're available but can't be secretly used.

For home computers and facilities such as e-mail and finance, remember that many ISPs and companies have privacy policies prohibiting revealing information to family members, even in cases of illness or death. Instructions and important passwords should be stored with essential family records. Note that changing situations may require special care — for example, a divorce might motivate tight security.

This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, [www.aarp.org/computers]. (c) AARP 2004/2005. Permission is granted for reprinting and distribution by non-profit organizations with text reproduced unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail the author, Gabe Goldberg, at [gabe.gabegold.com] when you print or post it.

Podcasting: New Web Content Gains Popularity

by Beverly Rosenbaum

Houston Area League of PC Users

Just two days after the release of iTunes version 4.9, Apple reported more than a million free podcast subscriptions.

What exactly is podcasting? While the true origin of the term "podcast" is unclear, many agree that it's probably the combination of "broadcast" and "iPod." Any MP3 player can play podcast content. Webopedia (www.webopedia.com) says that pod casting is similar in nature to RSS (one source says that acronym stands for Really Simple Syndication), allowing people to subscribe to a set of feeds to view syndicated Web content. With podcasting, however, you have a set of subscriptions that are checked regularly for

updates, so instead of reading the news feeds on your computer screen, you can listen to the new content.

I suppose you could think of this new phenomenon as time-shifted audio, much like DVRs (Digital Video Recorders) allow us to shift the time and place that we watch video content. As retailers sell more iPods and MP3 players, the popularity of this concept is expected to grow. Jupiter Research (www.jupiterresearch.com) estimates that sales of portable audio devices will soar to 18.2 million this year. You'll be able to take the downloaded podcasts with you and listen to them when and wherever you like. But you don't even need an MP3 player to participate, you can listen to audio content on practically any subject on your personal computer if you have a set of speakers or a headset.

How can you try it?

Just download iTunes 4.9 for either PC or Mac from www.apple.com/itunes/download/. Install and launch the iTunes program, and click on the "Music Store" link in the left column to find a list of on-line content in the podcast section of Apple.

Then click on "Podcasts" to view and select a genre that interests you.

You could, for example, subscribe to free Ebert and Roeper movie reviews. Once you select that topic, you can click the "Subscribe" button to download weekly 20-minute podcasts.

You'll see the following dialog box to confirm your subscription.

Then the downloads will appear in the "Podcasts" section of the iTunes library. I also found links to reviews of DVDs, discussions from ABC's Nightline, and more.

Another method of finding podcasts is to visit web sites like www.podcastshuffle.com/, where I browsed the "AudioBook" category and found an entry for quite a few tales of Sherlock Holmes.

Another popular site is www.podcastalley.com/, where you can download software to make your own podcast, find a wide range of available content, or link to RSS feeds to find the rich content available on the Internet. In exactly the same way that various RSS newsfeeds were created to help readers find, subscribe to, and read blogs, similar services are being developed for listeners in the podcasting world. At Odeo, (www

.odeo.com/) listeners can find and manage podcast content with relative ease, as well as www.podcastalley.com. The podcast feature in the latest release of iTunes has 4,500 entries, and the directory at www.podcast.net has more than 7,000 entries. The broad range of diversity is apparent as television networks use podcasts to build interest in their shows between episodes, while individuals are simply publishing their opinions. At podshow.com/, podcasts by Sirius Satellite Talk Radio's Adam Curry are featured. He's considered by many to be the originator of pod-casting.

The simplicity with which podcasts can be shared from one person to another makes its infectious nature appealing. A recent entry at www.realtechnews.com/posts/1573 expressed concern that podcasts could become another automated way hackers can put viruses and spyware onto our computers if we're not careful. However, no such attacks have been reported, and the makers of media players themselves should release the necessary updates to secure any vulnerabilities that may occur in their programs.

Industry analysts say that the next great item of interest will likely be videocasting — the quick, easy dissemination of video content across devices like PCs, cell phones, and personal video players. As wireless networks get faster and more powerful and devices become more multimedia-friendly, sending video content from one device to another will soon become more of a reality.

Beverly Rosenbaum, a HAL-PC member, is a 1999 and 2000 Houston Press Club "Excellence in Journalism" award winner. From the August 2005 issue of HAL-PC Magazine.

Adobe Photoshop CS2

by Marilyn Wright Gore
Houston Area League of PC Users

Photoshop ImageAdobe Photoshop remains the hands-down gold standard in image editing software. With its latest revision, CS2 (v9), Adobe has taken a quantum leap forward in several critical areas, introducing new features that make it well worth the upgrade.

Installation is quick and easy — CS2 installed alongside Photoshop 7.0, leaving both applications available. Product activation is required within 30 days, and you must transfer the activation infor-

mation in order to install the product on a second computer.

It's Your Photoshop

CS2 provides an unprecedented level of customization. Along with a selection of preset workspaces for web design, painting, and image analysis, Photoshop CS2 also enables users to customize menu items, tool presets, keyboard shortcuts, palette layouts and (at long last) font size of the small font text that appears in the options bar, palettes and tool tips.

Bridge Over Troubled Waters

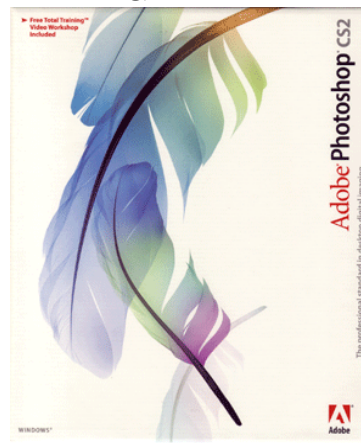
The File Manager introduced in Version 7 has been replaced by Adobe Bridge, a stand-alone visual file browser that integrates tightly with the other applications in Creative Suite CS, especially Illustrator. Bridge previews InDesign and Illustrator files, QuickTime movies and multiple page PDF's, as well as a full range of native Photoshop image formats. Some of the highlights of the Bridge interface include scalable thumbnails, user customizable metadata fields, image ranking, multiple workspace choices, and keyword assignment (especially useful for more efficient searching). You can also browse and purchase stock photography from within Bridge and manage and work with RAW files without launching Photoshop.

Layers Palette

Layer functionality has changed dramatically in CS2. You can now shift-select multiple layers and transform, move or align them without linking them. The Auto Select Layer option of the Move tool now allows you to select objects across multiple layers by drawing a marquee around them. The link function is still available, but the link button has been moved to the bottom of the palette.

Smart Guides

Alignment of items on different layers is now a snap with Smart Guides, guidelines that automatically appear when the boundary of one layer gets near another. (See illustration)



Smart Objects

In CS2, you can place vector objects, such as Illustrator artwork, directly in a designated Smart Object layer and edit nondestructively, with no loss in resolution. The object is not rasterized until (and unless) you choose. You can switch back to Illustrator at any time and modify the original file. Duplicate Smart Objects function as instances of the parent: any changes you make to the parent will be reflected in all instances that appear within a document. You can even create a Smart Objects from raster data.

Smart Sharpen

(Do you sense a theme?) The Smart Sharpen filter gives much greater control over the sharpening process than the old unsharp mask and sharpen filters. You can sharpen tonal ranges of an image and select the kind of blur applied to the non-sharpened areas. Smart Sharpen minimizes halos and noise in the shadows.

One-Click Red Eye Tool

Adobe has at last incorporated a simple, accurate tool for correcting red eye caused by retinal flash reflection, a feature that has long been included in lesser photo-imaging packages. The tool works fairly well for reducing red-eye in people, but less well for the green reflections in animal eyes.

Spot Healing Brush

The Spot Healing brush is a simpler alternative to the healing brush tool. You don't need to alt-click a reference point with the Spot Healing brush — the tool automatically samples the adjacent pixels to 'heal' flaws in the image. This works great for quick and dirty corrections such as scanner artifacts and skin blemishes. The Spot Healing brush also works across multiple layers. For greater control, the healing brush and clone tool are still available.

Camera Raw

For serious digital photographers, CS2 now supports Camera RAW 3.0. RAW is to digital photography what the film negative is to the traditional camera: uncompressed data captured by the camera's image sensor. Today's advanced digital cameras permit the photographer to save images in RAW format and apply various settings with greater control. With CS2, you can edit and process multiple raw images simultaneously while

working in Photoshop, and save the results as Digital Negative images, a new archival format for the raw files generated by digital cameras.

High Dynamic Range (HDR)

Adobe has also introduced support for editing 32-bit HDR images while maintaining their fidelity, range and detail. Those of us with traditional digital cameras can take advantage of the new Merge to HDR feature, which creates a 32-bit HDR image by automatically combining a series of regular photographs taken at different exposures.

Optical Lens Correction

The optical lens correction filter compensates for several common camera lens distortions such as barrel, pincushion and perspective distortion, keystoning and fisheye effect for truer images from edge to edge.

Built-In Noise Reduction

The new and improved noise reduction filter allows removal of grain and color noise from the complete photo, or by individual channel, while preserving edge details. There's even special handling for reducing pesky JPEG artifact, a long-overdue feature.

Image Warping

Text warping has been around for several versions. With CS2 you can now apply non-destructive warping presets or custom effects to images. With image warp, you can wrap a 2D graphic around a 3D object — put your Aunt Hilda's photo on a Coke can!

Vanishing Point

For sheer "How'd they do that!?!?" impact, it's hard to beat Vanishing Point, a filter that permits drawing and cloning in the image's original perspective. Define the perspective planes in your image with simple tools and Photoshop will automatically distort a layer to match the scene. It's now ridiculously easy to map text, textures or images to sides of building or floors. Vanishing Point even features a clone tool that works within the established perspective. Add more stories to the top of a building by cloning windows and walls from the bottom floors, in perfect perspective. It's hard to quit playing with this one.

Video Preview

You can now preview the output of your broadcast graphics with FireWire output to NTSC or PAL.

Native Animation

ImageReady is still bundled with Photoshop CS, but now you can create dynamic GIF animations directly in Photoshop with the new Animation palette and Layer palette animation options.

Font Menus

And last but far from least, CS2 finally provides a WYSIWYG font menu! Preferences allow you to change the size of the preview or to turn it off.

Photoshop CS2 is for the serious user. It has a fairly high learning curve, but it's well worth the learning time. For more info, updates, and forums go to www.adobe.com.

From the August 2005 issue of HAL-PC Magazine.

Society News

The picnic was well attended and enjoyed by all. The flea market resulted in a \$55 profit for the club.

Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub

Balance as of 7/19/05 \$777.93

Income

Picnic \$137.00

Dues 60.00

Total \$197.00

Expenses

Staples \$94.62

Picnic supplies 100.00

Total \$194.62

Balance as of 8/16/05 \$880.31

New members:

Robert Crowell

Charles Wells

The Lighter Side

There was a software engineer who was in the habit of getting home quite late. One night, he came home at 2:30 am with a torn shirt, lipstick on his collar, hair messed up, and generally looking like a wreck. His wife caught him coming in and demanded to know where he'd been.

He replied, "Well, after I left work today, a few friends and I went out to the bar for a few drinks. We met up with some rather good- looking young women and decided to have a few more drinks. Things just got a little out of hand. I sobered up enough to note how late it was, so I rushed home."

She didn't buy it. "Liar! You lost track of time in the lab again, didn't you?"

If automobiles had followed the same development cycle as the computer, a Rolls-Royce would today cost \$100, get a million miles per gallon, and explode once a year, killing everyone inside.

—Robert X. Cringeley