

The Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

# MONITOR

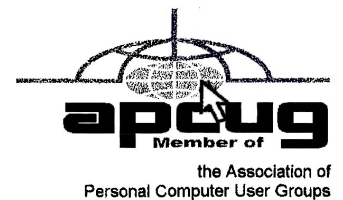
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**Next Meeting**  
July 10 Brighton Library  
Computer on a Flash Drive

July 2007

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## The New, the Best and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman

Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

*(Since the original publication of this article Google has changed it's main Web page. The "more" button is now on the menu bar and the drop-down menu does not list all the features described in this article, although they are still available. The easiest way to find all the Google services is to do a Google search on "google." It yields more than 40 direct references to Google offshoots. –Pim B.)*

## Google - The Rest of the Story

If you only use Google the way I do, using keywords to search the Web, you're like the polar bear walking on top of an iceberg, ignorant of all that's underneath. As scientists are finding out in the Antarctic, there is an awful lot to be learned from drilling down into the ice below, and there is a lot to be learned by drilling down in the Google menus. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), click on *more...* and in the pop-up window click on *even more...* and you'll find a page full of links to Google offshoots. I'll just list some of them here, as space permits, but you may want to go see for yourself.

Google News ([news.google.com](http://news.google.com)) presents a current news update worth being bookmarked for a quick check on what's going on in the world. Google Finance ([finance.google.com](http://finance.google.com)) has all the latest financial news. Google Alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) sends email updates on the topics of your choice. Monitor a developing news story, get the latest on a celebrity or event, or keep tabs on your favorite sports teams. This site is still in beta.

Froogle ([froogle.google.com](http://froogle.google.com)) is the place to go for online shopping. If you like to browse through catalogs, go to Google Catalogs ([catalogs.google.com](http://catalogs.google.com)). Find local businesses as well as directions for getting somewhere with Google Maps ([maps.google.com/maps](http://maps.google.com/maps)). Use Google Checkout ([google.checkout.com](http://google.checkout.com)) to set up a Google account with which you can order from many participating stores and be protected against online fraud.

Search a variety of printed matter with Book Search ([books.google.com](http://books.google.com)), covering the full text of books, although many publishers refuse Google permission to put the content of their books online. Scholarly publications are available in Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com)), but many of the publications at best only provide an abstract to non-subscribers. Sometimes you may be able to get access to the complete articles through the Web site of your local library, such as the Evansville-Vanderburgh Public Library. Over 7 million US Patents can be searched with Google Patent Search ([www.google.com/patents](http://www.google.com/patents))

Google Images ([images.google.com](http://images.google.com)) lets you search for images that include a title, description, or keywords. To come up with descriptions for unlabeled images Google uses an online game, Google Image Labeler ([images.google.com/image\\_labeler](http://images.google.com/image_labeler)). Two separate contestants are shown a picture and asked to come up with descriptive labels. For each label they provide in common they earn points. It is an addictive game with the benefit that the resulting winning labels are accurate descriptions of the image.

For general searches use the Google Directory ([www.google.com/dirhp](http://www.google.com/dirhp)) that organizes the Web by topic into categories. And if you have a problem locating stuff on your own computer drives, Google Desktop ([desktop.google.com](http://desktop.google.com)) will help you find it.

Other Features. Google has been extending its services beyond searching. GMail ([mail.google.com](http://mail.google.com)) offers online email accounts with many features and very large mail storage areas (several gigabytes as of this writing). Docs and Spreadsheets ([docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)) offers an online word processor and spreadsheet program that facilitates project cooperation between groups of persons. Additional cooperative programs are Calendar ([www.google.com/calendar](http://www.google.com/calendar)), to organize your schedule and share events with friends, and Groups ([groups.google.com](http://groups.google.com)) to create mailing lists and discussion groups.

With Talk ([www.google.com/talk](http://www.google.com/talk)) you can IM and call your friends through your computer. You can also use Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)) to create a shared online diary. Picasa ([picasa.google.com](http://picasa.google.com)) lets you edit, organize and share your photos with others, while YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) lets you watch, upload and share videos.

Google Earth ([earth.google.com](http://earth.google.com)) is in a category of its own. It lets you roam all over the earth and zoom in on specific areas of interest.

If you want to know what else Google may come up with visit Google Labs ([labs.google.com](http://labs.google.com)) for a preview.

## Rebates With Manners?

I recently purchased a copy of Adobe Photoshop Elements. It came with a \$20 upgrade rebate offer for which almost any photo editing program, including Picasa2, passed muster. I sent in the box tab with a Xerox copy of my old MS PhotoDraw disc and the invoice. To my surprise I received an email, several days later, acknowledging receipt of my submission. A week later I received a notice that “Your rebate check was mailed on 09-Apr-2007. Please allow at least 30 days for delivery.” So far, so surprisingly good. I received the check on April 25, not bad for, maybe, surface mail from India.

## Super Internet Creation?

Many newspapers carried an Associated Press article by Anick Jesdanun, dated April 14, 2007, about movements afoot to create a new and improved Internet from scratch to replace the current one. As the article states, “...many believe a clean slate approach is the only way to truly address security, mobility and other challenges...” For some time this has been the dream of university researchers trying out new concepts, but now “Industry is playing a bigger role this time, and law enforcement is bound to make its needs for wiretapping known.” Sounds ominous.

The National Science Foundation is sponsoring several projects toward the goal of establishing an experimental network known as the Global Environment for Network Innovations, or GENI. Major universities are involved, as well as the Defense Department. The European Union has its own independent efforts underway.

The current Internet and its World Wide Web superstructure, with all its shortcomings, is a truly wonderful achievement. Twenty years ago no one in his wildest dreams could have foreseen the worldwide scope and the extent to which it has become an integral part of our civilization. It demonstrates how natural evolution can achieve the unthinkable. And that should now be replaced by a politically correct product, created by committees of programmers and approved by international governments and “industry”? Lord help us. Let’s stick with evolution.

*(If you want to read the original article use Google to search for “Jesdanun Associated Press.” Thanks to Linda Gonse, editor of the Orange County PCUG, for bringing the article to my attention).*

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## I am sticking to my guns...Dell is not a friend of Linux

by William A. Statt

*Rochester Computer Society, Inc.*

Starting last Thursday you could go to the Dell website and officially purchase a Linux Ubuntu computer. If you did not know that Dell was offering Linux computers, it would be very hard to find them on their website. First, you have to go to the Dell website. Then you have to click on the Products Tab, and then you have to click on Desktop Computers. You have to scroll all the way down the page, and it doesn’t say anything about Linux, and it doesn’t say anything about Ubuntu, it says, “Opened Source PCs.”

I’ve never heard the term Open Source PC’s before. Then it says something about, “Not sure Open Source is for you? The main thing to note is that when you choose Open Source you do not get a Windows Operating System, and, if you are here by mistake, you are looking for Dell PCs with Windows, please use the following link.” Then it says that if you are a computer expert that you can configure your Linux system. It goes on to say that some of the hardware may not be compatible with the Windows operating system.

Now, let me stop right here. If Dell were really serious about Linux, first of all they had it hidden on the website, then, they have an advertisement for Windows right in the middle of the page. In the introduction they start with a comment that Linux cannot run Windows software. Why start with very negative comments about Linux? Why not start with positive comments about Linux, if that is really what you are trying to sell? Why not mention that Linux has its own software packages with over 15,000 titles to choose from and over 97% of them are free. Then maybe they could have a short list of Linux applications in a table showing comparable software titles to Microsoft titles. That would make more sense if they were really trying to push Linux or make Linux a competitor of Microsoft.

I really can't believe that they are actually using the words, Open Source PC's. It looks like they're afraid to use the word Linux. You cannot find anything on their site that says that the Windows hardware may not be compatible with Linux. I don't think that someone who is new to computers, who would go to this website, and see these statements about Linux, would ever consider choosing Linux. Maybe if they were to say something positive about Linux, about how many people and governments are using it worldwide, how it is the fastest growing operating system, or about the free software applications, maybe that would influence someone to actually try Linux.

If you actually pursued it farther and clicked on the Open Source PCs you would find three models. The first two models are desktop computers. As an example, the first computer is only \$599. But what is not easy to find out is that this is with a \$150 rebate. You know, you pay first and hope to get your rebate later. And, if you go farther to check things out, you'll find the exact same computer with the exact same hardware is sold with Windows Vista and they only charge you \$50 more without the rebate. I wonder how long the rebate is going to last. Then, when you look a little harder, on this computer you find out that it has 1 GB of RAM, a dual core processor, a 250 GB SATA hard drive, and a separate NVIDIA video card.

Linux does not need an operating system with all this power. It can run very happily on 512 MB of RAM, an entry level processor, onboard video, and onboard sound. Dell could have built a Linux computer that would have run as fast as their \$800 Microsoft Vista computer, which would only have cost \$300 or \$350. If they had done this, maybe a computer shopper would really have to do some questioning instead of purchasing Windows for \$800.

Then we come to the operating system itself. They provide Ubuntu 7.04. Sounds good doesn't it? Guess what? Right after that, in bold highlighted graphics, they have a link for Windows Multimedia Operating Edition. Then it says, "Click here to learn more." Guess what, the Ubuntu edition that they ship, will not play MP3's or DVD's out of the box. They do not include the codecs. They don't even include the codecs to play MP3s. The last time I checked, the codecs to play MP3's were free. It was only the codecs to record MP3's that were proprietary.

Then, there is only one choice of video card. They go on to tell you that if you're using a Sound Blaster audio card that there'll be a lot of configuration for you to be able use it. Another thing that makes this bad is that they only offer one choice of video card, and one choice of sound card. I've got seven PC's, with several different types of video cards and both Sound Blaster and Turtle Beach sound cards. I have ATI and NVIDIA video cards. To this date I've used over 123 Linux distributions and upgrades. I've got them all working and I only consider myself an advanced amateur. Are you telling me that with all the engineers that Dell has on hand, they can't offer more choices of video and sound cards? On top of that, they don't offer any flash reader card for your digital camera. Of course, there is no floppy drive either

When it comes to support, if you want 30 days it is \$65. If you want six months of Basic Support, it's \$125. If you want a year's Standard Support, that is \$275 or about half the price of their computer. By the way, Regular Support with Windows is free.

On top of that, they have a link that says, “If you want a Windows Multimedia Edition, click here.” You know why they had that link right there? It’s because this version of Ubuntu Linux cannot play any multimedia files right out of the box. It doesn’t have any kind of card reader or anything. So what they’re saying is that they are offering Linux, but if you want to do what most people want to do you, have to buy a Windows computer. Don’t you think the Dell could license this technology and put it in their Linux computer? Or maybe choose a version of Linux that has the codecs already installed? Don’t you think, that as I started this paper, Dell is really not trying to sell Linux? I think, that they are in bed with Microsoft. That the two of them together have hatched up the scheme to appear to support Linux while offering an overpriced Linux computer that is not preset up for the new user. It is my feeling that this will set the Linux community back years.

I have not had a chance to check this out yet, but I’ll bet that in the Internet Browser will not play video files. I’ll bet that there are none of the plug-ins set up with the browser.

I think that Dell is setting themselves up in the martyr role. They can say that they offered Linux users Linux computers but nobody bought them.

They won’t mention about how they try to hide the link to the Linux computers on their webpage. They won’t say anything about putting all the Microsoft windows ads in between everything about the Linux computer and only printing negative comments about Linux. They won’t say anything about the fact that they are overpricing, by about double, what they could have put a Linux computer out for. They will just say, Oh, poor Dell, we tried Linux, and it is not ready for the mass market.

Americans seem to love to root for the underdog. Look how many people hate the Yankees. Look at what happens in a Super Bowl. We are leery of the corporate giant. In my opinion, Dell’s offering of Linux is very calculated with the help of Microsoft to defame Linux and put the concept of Linux back several years in the marketplace. This is not a real attempt to provide a full basic Linux operating computer. Come on E-Machines, why don’t you bring out a real, full Linux, basic operating computer, for around \$300?

## Honesty Department

*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive\\_easyflow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive_easyflow)*

**O**ld diagram making and flow charting software by HavenTree Software Ltd. existed, allegedly, from the early 1970s till 1998, when it was bought out by SPSS. It’s mostly remembered today because of it’s disclaimer and license. Both are written in plain English, not in legalese, thus emphasizing the problems with modern software licensing.

### Excerpt from software license

This is where the bloodthirsty license agreement is supposed to go, explaining that Interactive Easyflow is a copyrighted package licensed for use by a single person, and sternly warning you not to pirate copies of it and explaining, in detail, the gory consequences if you do.

We know that you are an honest person, and are not going to go around pirating copies of Interactive Easyflow; this is just as well with us since we worked hard to perfect it and selling copies of it is our only method of making anything out of all the hard work.

If, on the other hand, you are one of those few people who do go around pirating copies of software you probably aren’t going to pay much attention to a license agreement, bloodthirsty or not. Just keep your doors locked and look out for the HavenTree attack shark.

### Excerpt from disclaimer

We don’t claim Interactive EasyFlow is good for anything—if you think it is, great, but it’s up to you to decide. If Interactive EasyFlow doesn’t work: tough. If you lose a million because Interactive EasyFlow messes up, it’s you that’s out the million, not us. If you don’t like this

disclaimer: tough. We reserve the right to do the absolute minimum provided by law, up to and including nothing.

This is basically the same disclaimer that comes with all software packages, but ours is in plain English and theirs is in legalese.

We didn't really want to include any disclaimer at all, but our lawyers insisted. We tried to ignore them but they threatened us with the attack shark at which point we relented.

## Get Organized Now!

by Sandy Berger  
*CompuKISS*

With today's complex world and multi-tasking, it is not surprising that we all seem to have too much to remember. The time-honored "to-do list" is still a suitable way to keep all of your tasks remembered and organized. Now the to-do list has gone high tech with Gubb an online list-maker.

Gubb is simple, effective, and free. Just surf over to [www.gubb.net](http://www.gubb.net) and click on the large Start Here button. Enter your email address and the username and password that you want to use. Gubb will present you with pre-formatted lists or you can create your own from scratch. Each list can have a different background color or you can make them all the same.

Gubb made *PC Magazine's* list of the 10 worst application names, but don't let the name throw you. Gubb is a winner despite its name. Gubb's clean and simple interface makes it easy to create lists and to add, edit, or delete items. Important items can have one, two, or three stars. You can sort items by priority, date due, completed items, or alphabetically. Especially useful is the ability to rearrange items in a list by dragging and dropping them. You can also drag and drop the lists themselves to position them on your screen. If your lists get too long, you can collapse them so you see only the title, opening them to full length as you need them.

If crossing items off your list as you complete them gives you a sense of satisfaction, Gubb will let you perform that task quite easily. Just click in the check box next to each item and Gubb puts a line through the item and marks it as completed. Gubb can also move the item to a completed list automatically or you can set it up so that you can archive your completed items at the end of the day, or any time of your choosing. If at anytime you need to see if, or when, you completed a task, you simply click on the name of the list to look at all the completed items and the time and date that you marked them complete.

These features alone make this Web service worthwhile, but there is more. You can share your lists with others. You can email or text message items right into your lists. You can have any of your lists emailed to yourself or to others. If you have an Internet connected cell phone, lists can also be sent to your phone. So if you were in a grocery store and needed your shopping list, with the right equipment, you could access it from Gubb on your cell phone. All this may sound a bit complicated, but Gubb has done an exemplary job of keeping all these tasks easy to do.

My husband and I have each created multiple lists. We also have several lists that we share. Since we work together, this has really helped keep us organized both at home and at work. He can add items to my office or home lists and I can add anything I like to his office or home "honey-do" list. Gubb is helping us keep synchronized as well as organized.

Gubb is not perfect, but it is close. My complaints are pretty minor. I would love the ability to create several categories within each list. I would also like to be able to easily see if my husband added something to my list or vice versa. The program offers 3 shades of each of the following colors: blue, red, yellow, green, orange, pink, and gray. That's 21 colors to choose from so I am really being picky when I say I would like to be able to use purple, turquoise blue, and lime green for my

lists. Okay, I know I am being hard to please, but maybe the Gubb creators will accommodate my wishes.

A recent survey showed that 25% of New Year resolutions are completely forgotten, but now you can use Gubb to resurrect your “I am going to be more organized.” resolution. Sometimes getting organized means buying shelves, bins, baskets, and folders, but if you have an Internet-connected computer, Gubb will help you get organized without any expense. Go ahead. Do it. It will feel great to get all those scraps of paper and to-do notes off your desk and to get all those to do items off your mind. I know, because Gubb has helped me do just that!

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## The Top 25 Web Hoaxes and Pranks

These online spoofs and shams have made the rounds on Web sites and through e-mail. Perhaps you even believed one or two of them yourself.

by Steve Bass

PC World *Columnist and Author*

**T**hough some of these deceptions originated years ago, the originals—and dozens of variants—continue to make the rounds. If you keep a patient vigil over your e-mail, you too may eventually spot a message urging you to **FORWARD THIS TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!!** And if you haven’t had enough when you finish reading this article, take a hoax test at the Museum of Hoaxes, and then hop over to Snopes, the premier myth-dispelling site for coverage of zillions of other falsifications.

### Hoaxes 1 Through 5

From the supposed last photo taken at the top of the World Trade Center to the endlessly revised request for assistance from a Nigerian functionary, here are our top five Web and e-mail hoaxes.

#### 1. The Accidental Tourist (2001)

Quite possibly the most famous hoax picture ever, this gruesome idea of a joke traveled around the Web and made a grand tour of e-mail inboxes everywhere soon after the tragedy of September 11. It depicts a tourist standing on the observation deck of one of the World Trade Center towers, unknowingly posing for a picture as an American Airlines plane approaches in the background.

At first glance it appears to be real, but if you examine certain details, you’ll see that it’s a craftily modified image. For starters, the plane that struck the WTC was a wide-body Boeing 767; the one in the picture is a smaller 757. The approach of the plane in the picture is from the north, yet the building it would have hit—the North tower—didn’t have an outdoor observation deck. Furthermore, the South tower’s outdoor deck didn’t open until 9:30 a.m. on weekdays, more than half an hour after the first plane struck the WTC. The picture is a hoax, through and through—and not a particularly amusing one, under the circumstances.



Image courtesy of Snopes.com.

#### 2. Sick Kid Needs Your Help (1989)

This gem had its roots in reality. It all began in 1989, when nine-year-old cancer patient Craig Shergold thought of a way to achieve his dream of getting into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Craig asked people to send greeting cards, and boy, did they. By 1991, 33 million greeting cards had been sent, far surpassing the prior record. Ironically, however, the Guinness World Records site doesn't contain any mention of Craig Sherwood or a "most greeting cards received" record, presumably because the fine folks at the site don't want to encourage anyone to try to break his mark. (Astonishingly, Guinness doesn't have an entry for world's stoutest person, either, but it does honor the World's Largest Tankard of Beer.)



Image courtesy of Snopes.com.

Fortunately, doctors succeeded in removing the tumor, and Craig is now a healthy adult, but his appeal for cards has turned into the hoax that won't die. Variations on the theme include a sick girl dying of cancer, and a little boy with leukemia whose dying wish is to start an eternal chain letter. A recent iteration tells a tragic tale of a girl who supposedly was horribly burned in a fire at WalMart, and then claims that AOL will pay all of her medical bills if only if you forward this e-mail to EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!! Okay, enough already.

### 3. Bill Gates Money Giveaway (1997)

No, it's true. I thought it was a scam, but it happened to a buddy of mine. It seems that Microsoft is testing some new program for tracing e-mail, and the company needs volunteers to help try the thing out. He forwarded me an e-mail that he received from Microsoft—and get this, from Bill Gates himself! Two weeks later, as a reward for participating, my pal received a check for thousands of dollars! Sure he did. Another version of this hoax claims that AOL's tracking service is offering a cash reward. Tell you what—when you get your check, send me 10 percent as a finder's fee, okay?

### 4. Five-Cent E-Mail Tax (1999)

"Dear Internet Subscriber," the e-mail starts. "The Government of the United States is quietly pushing through legislation that will affect your use of the Internet." It goes on to reveal that "Bill 602P" will authorize the U.S. Postal Service to assess a charge of five cents for every e-mail sent. Not a bad way to cut down on the number of dopey e-mail chain letters and lame jokes people let loose on the world. But credulous curse averters and connoisseurs of boffo laffs can relax: This e-mail alert, which popped up in 1999 and comes back for a visit every year or so, just isn't true. Still, it sounded plausible enough to fool Hillary Clinton during a 2000 debate when she was running for the Senate.

### 5. Nigerian 419 E-Mail Scam (2000)

"DEAR SIR," the e-mail starts. "FIRSTLY I MUST FIRST SOLICIT YOUR CONFIDENCE IN THIS TRANSACTION; LET ME START BY INTRODUCING MYSELF PROPERLY..." I'm sure you've received one of these—a confidential, urgent e-mail message promising you a reward of mucho dinero for helping this person convey money abroad. All you need do in return is entrust your name and bank account number to the government bureaucrat (or his uncle, aunt, or cousin, the ostensible "credit officer with the union bank of Nigeria plc (uba) Benin branch") who needs your help.

It's the Nigerian con, also known as an Advanced Fee Fraud or 419 scam (so called because of the section number of the Nigerian criminal code that applies to it). Ancestors of these scams appeared in the 1980s, when the media of choice were letters or faxes—and they're still wildly successful at snagging people. In fact, Oprah recently featured a victim of the Nigerian scam on her show. And if you think that smart, educated folks couldn't possibly fall for it, you'll be surprised when you read "The Perfect Mark," a *New Yorker* magazine article profiling a Massachusetts psychotherapist who was duped—and lost a fortune.



To see how the hoax works, visit Scamorama, a fascinating site that features a progression of e-mail messages stringing along 419 scammers, sometimes for months at a time. Finally, check out the 3rd Annual Nigerian E-Mail Conference, an absolutely perfect spoof.

## 6. It's Kidney Harvesting Time (1996)

The subject line is laden with exclamation points: "Travelers Beware!!!" If that's not enough to get your attention, the chilling story certainly will. The message warns that an organ-harvesting crime ring is drugging tourists in New Orleans and Las Vegas, snatching their "extra" kidneys, selling the organs to non-Hippocratic hospitals, and leaving the victims to wake up in a bathtub full of ice and find a brief note that explains the situation and conveniently identifies the phone number of the nearest emergency room. Hey, maybe they'll get lucky and the hospital will have a compatible replacement kidney on hand. But travelers, fear not!!! According to the National Kidney Foundation, this scenario has never actually occurred--though it does have the makings of a great horror flick. (Freddy's Last Harvest, anyone?)

## 7. You've Got Virus! (1999 and on)

There's isn't a Teddy Bear virus. Nor is there a sulfnbk.exe or A Virtual Card for You ("the "WORST VIRUS EVER!!!...CNN ANNOUNCED IT. PLEASE SEND THIS TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!!").

The jdbgmgr.exe hoax (also known as Teddy Bear because the jdbgmgr.exe file is represented by a teddy bear icon) warned recipients of the e-mail message that they were at risk of infection from a virus sent via address books or Microsoft Messenger, and that they should delete the file immediately. But in reality there was no virus—and unfortunately, jdbgmgr.exe was a necessary Java file. The sulfnbk.exe hoax nailed even advanced users with its insistence that the file—a legit one that's used for fixing long file names—as a virus. Lots of people removed it.

Similarly, A Virtual Card for You claimed that McAfee had discovered a virus that, when opened, would destroy the hard drive on an infected system and would automatically send itself to everyone on the user's e-mail contacts list. Of course, it didn't do anything except scare people. So before you forward an e-mail virus warning to anyone (especially to me), look it up on Sophos or Vmyths to make sure it isn't a fraud.

## 8. Microsoft Buys Firefox (2006)

Talk about scaring the entire open-source community. In October 2006, a previously unknown Web site popped up, announcing Microsoft's acquisition of Firefox and promoting the company's new Microsoft Firefox 2007 Professional. The site talks glowingly about the browser's new features and provides a video advertisement for the product. It was a great prank, and the image of the Microsoft Firefox 2007 box was so elaborate and professional looking that the blood pressure of real Firefox users went sky-high.



## 9. The Really Big Kitty (2001)

There are big cats and then there are even bigger cats. This one, reportedly tipping the scales at almost 90 pounds, was enormous. The claim seemed plausible and even snookered a lot of e-mail cynics (I'm raising my hand)—until they read the accompanying copy, that is. With nonsense about the owner working at Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and more balderdash about nuclear reactors, the jig was up. Eventually, the cat's owner fessed up to a creative Photoshop session, though he claimed that he never expected anyone to believe the photo was real.

## 10. \$250 Cookie Recipe (1996)

The woman loved the cookie she had just nibbled at a Neiman Marcus café in Houston, so she asked her waiter for the recipe. “Two-fifty,” he said, and she agreed without hesitation, instructing him to add it to her tab. But when the woman’s Visa bill arrived, it read \$250, instead of \$2.50. Bent on revenge, she proceeded to ask you to blast the recipe to—okay, ready?—EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!! Like many hoaxes, this one predated the Internet, only to resurface in the electronic age. It appeared in a cookbook in the late 1940s as the \$25 fudge cake, popped up in the 1960s as the Waldorf-Astoria red-velvet cake recipe, and re-emerged in the 1970s as the Mrs. Fields cookie recipe.

## Hoaxes 11 Through 15

This group of five begins with a phony e-mail message promising money and other prizes from Disney, and ends with the classic deaf-to-reason arguments of the Apollo moon landing deniers.

## 11. Free Vacation Courtesy of Disney (1998)

Dear Goofy... Forward this e-mail chain letter to everybody under the sun and, once 13,000 people have received it, Walt Disney Jr. will send five grand each to 1,300 lucky people on this list. And “the rest will receive a free trip for two to Disney for one week during the summer of 1999.” Is that Disney World, Disneyland—or Walt’s house? The “Jr.” after Disney, in reference to a nonexistent person, ought to have been the first clue that this was a hoax. And the misspelling of “receive” was the clincher (remember, hoaxters, “i” before “e” except after “c”). Yet people forwarded the message around the world using the time-honored e-mail chain letter adage: I’m sending it to you... just in case it’s true.

## 12. Sunset Over Africa (2003)

Now that’s a dazzling photo of Africa and Europe, taken right around sunset from the Space Shuttle Columbia. What makes the image especially amazing is that, while London remains in daylight, night has fallen in Italy (a little to the southeast) and the bright lights of Rome, Naples, and Venice are blazing. Too bad it’s a digitally altered photo, most likely layered from multiple satellite images. To see an accurate, computer-generated illustration, check out the World Sunlight Map.



Image courtesy of Snopes.com.

## 13. Alien Autopsy at Roswell, New Mexico (1995)

Roswell, New Mexico: ground zero of UFO controversy. It’s also where the movie of the Roswell alien autopsy was filmed 60 years ago. The story goes that a UFO crashed at this site, and the U.S. government performed a hush-hush autopsy on the dead alien. In the mid-1990s, unnamed individuals “discovered” the secret film and posted it for the edification of a disinformed public. Looks pretty real, right? Now fast-forward to 2006 and a conspiracy-deflating admission: The movie is a hoax created in 1995 by John Humphreys, the animator famous for Max Headroom, in his apartment in north London....Or was it???

## 14. Real-Time GPS Cell Phone Tracking (2007)

Have you heard about the Web site that can track the location of your cell phone in real time? It uses satellite GPS in combination with Google Maps, and it’s amazingly accurate (not to mention a disturbing invasion of privacy). Go ahead, check it out yourself by going to the SunSat Satellite Solutions site and tracking your own cell phone’s location. Select your country, type



in your cell phone number, click the Start Searching button, and wait for it. (This is one of the year's best pranks. And I won't give away the ending.)

**15. Apollo Moon Landing Hoax (1969)** You're aware that we never landed on the moon, right? It was all just an elaborate hoax designed to score Cold War points for the United States against the Soviet Union in a world of falling dominoes. The whole lunar landing thing? It was a video staged at movie studios and top-secret locations.

Okay, you can stop laughing now, but some sites, such as Apollo Reality and Moon Landing, still insist that the Eagle never landed. Of course, enemies of Flat Earthism will point to the Rocket and Space Technology site, which does an in-depth job of debunking the hoax. But true disbelievers should check out this terrific video spoof, complete with outtakes showing lights and cameras.



### Hoaxes 16 Through 20

The world of weird eBay auction items starts off this page, which concludes with a photo hoax purporting to show a 1950s-era vision of the home computer of tomorrow.

### 16. Sell It on eBay! (1995)

You won't believe what people have sold on eBay—some of the items pranks, some of them for real, and some, well, it's hard to tell. For a sampling of the weird, you need look no further than a haunted tree stump and a pork chop shaped like a grizzly bear. The Internet itself once went on the market at a modest starting bid of a million bucks, as have a dozen spontaneous images of the Virgin Mary (on toast, on windows, and heaven only knows where else). Bidders have also had a shot at someone's soul, a guy's virginity, and a human kidney, with the price of this last item having reached \$5.7 million before eBay pulled the plug. (Hey, guys, don't you know that what you lose in Las Vegas is supposed to stay in Las Vegas?)

But my favorite eBay offering involves a tattooed guy who, as a joke, dressed up in his ex-wife's size 12 wedding gown and put it up for auction. Only, the dress ended up selling for \$3850, and the guy got five marriage proposals. Nice.

### 17. Chinese Newspaper Duped (2002)

Information on the Internet may want to be free—but if it's posted by a for-profit publisher, you'd better take it with a grain of salt. That's the lesson learned by China's *Beijing Evening News*, which was taken in by the Onion's Capitol Dome spoof. Famous for its authentic-sounding but tongue-in-cheek articles steeped in the language of the Associated Press, the Onion reported that Congress had threatened to leave Washington, D.C., and head for Memphis unless the District agreed to erect a new domed Capitol building with a retractable roof and luxury box seating. Having accepted most of the Onion article at face value, the Chinese newspaper at first stood by its source in the face of international derision and refused to back down. When it finally published a retraction, it blamed the Onion for the confusion: "Some small American newspapers frequently fabricate offbeat news to trick people into noticing them with the aim of making money." Right.



## 18. The Muppets Have Not Already Won (2001)

In early October 2001, just prior to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, protesters at an anti-American rally in Bangladesh showed their support for Osama bin Laden by marching, chanting, and waving placards. One of the posters captured on film by Reuters News Agency was a photo-montage of the Al-Qaeda leader, and in one of the shots a yellow felt puppet to his right glowers furiously at the camera. It's...Bert of Sesame Street. Originally a Zelig-inspired creation of San Francisco Webmaster Dino Ignacio, the satirical Web site Bert Is Evil depicted Bert hobnobbing with the worst of the worst in history, tormenting his roommate Ernie, and generally reveling in wickedness. After Ignacio retired from active efforts to expose Bert's career of evil, others filled the Photoshop void, capturing the cone-headed miscreant with all the latest baddies-du-jour.



Image courtesy of Snopes.com.

Evidently, the company responsible for printing the pro-Osama poster found the doctored dual portrait irresistible, although (according to the Urban Legends References Pages) its production manager claims to have produced about 2000 copies of the Osama-and-Bert poster without realizing “what they signified.” Well, if you can't trust pictures you find on the Internet, what can you trust?

## 19. Chevrolet's Not-So-Better Idea (2006)

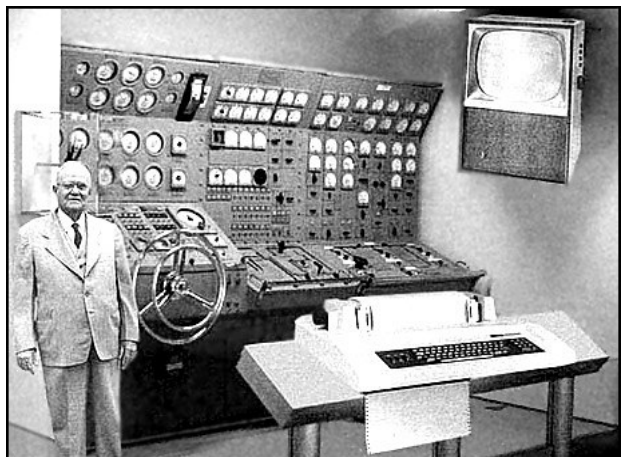
The ad folks at Chevrolet thought they had a winner: Let site visitors create their own 30-second commercial for the company's 2007 Chevy Tahoe SUV. It'll be fun, they probably thought. We'll give them a choice of video clips and soundtracks, and let them add their own text captions. Yep, viral marketing at its best.

Unfortunately for Chevrolet, a few pranksters decided to use the opportunity to express what they thought of the SUV. One commercial said, “Like this snowy wilderness? Better get your fill of it now. Then say hello to global warming.” Another lambasted the SUV as a gas guzzler: “Our planet's oil is almost gone. You don't need G.P.S. to see where this road leads.”

## 20. Rand's 1954 Home Computer (2004)

This intriguing image of a room-size computer made the rounds of the Internet, accompanied by a breathless blurb: “This article is from an issue of 1954 *Popular Mechanics* magazine forecasting the possibility of ‘home computers’ in 50 years.” The steering wheel in the picture is the predecessor to today's mouse, and the keyboard looks like those on teletype machines. It even comes complete with a guy right out of the Eisenhower era.

Cool stuff, and easy to believe—but it's not a 1950s Rand Corporation mockup of what a prototype home computer might look like. It's actually a shot that was taken of a submarine display at the Smithsonian Institution and subsequently modified for inclusion in a Fark.com image-manipulation competition.



## Hoaxes 21 Through 25

Our final five takes you from the ultimate instance of Microsoft hubris to an ill-conceived experiment in Internet democracy (or is that Internet anarchy?).

### 21. Microsoft Buys Catholic Church (1994)

More than a decade ago, an e-mail press release—from Vatican City, no less—landed in my inbox. Microsoft was announcing that it was in the process of acquiring the Roman Catholic Church in exchange for an unspecified number of shares of Microsoft common stock. The story was a prank, but it sure looked real, circulating for months and perhaps worrying residents of the Holy See.

Just think: If the press release had been true, it might have stopped the Vatican from using Linux. And no, I'm not kidding about the Linux part. Watch this video interview with the woman who helped build the Vatican's Web site.

### 22. Hercules, the Enormous Dog (2007)

Wow, that dog's almost as big as the horse. That's what I thought when I first looked at this e-mail. The picture depicts a couple, one walking a horse, the other holding the leash of Hercules, a 282-pound English Mastiff and "The World's Biggest Dog Ever According to Guinness World Records."



Horsepucky. Here's my analysis of the Photoshop modifications. First, take a close look at the grass under the people and the animals. The area has been subtly lightened in order to make all of the shadows match and look authentic. Next, examine the shadows and you'll notice two anomalies: First, the shadows of the dog and the man start at their feet, but the same doesn't hold true for the horse. Second, the woman's shadow is missing altogether; instead, the man's shadow extends in front of her. Oh and by the way, the Guinness World Records site

doesn't have a listing for Hercules or for the world's biggest dog. Okay, okay, so the pictures of the big kitty and the big dog are both fakes—but have you seen the shot of Craig Sherwood riding the world's largest jackelope?

### 23. Lights-Out Gang Member Initiation (1998)

People have a tendency to believe e-mail messages that come from authority figures. In 1998, a message purportedly from a police officer working with the DARE program circulated around the Internet. It warned recipients not to flash their lights to inform oncoming cars that their headlamps were off. According to the message, a recently devised gang initiation ritual involved having new gang members drive at night with their headlights turned off until an oncoming car flashed its lights at them; then, in order to become initiated, they were to shoot everyone in that car. It's just another urban myth—and about as silly as the one claiming that gangs mark off their territory by hanging sneakers from power lines.

### 24. Hurricane Lili Waterspouts (2002)

It's weird, it's disturbing, and it's seemingly plausible—all of the elements necessary for a successful e-mail forward. The image shows three dark waterspouts in the distance. The subject is "here comes lili," and the e-mail began appearing in inboxes at about the same time that



Hurricane Lili started battering the Louisiana coastline. But three waterspouts, all neatly lined up? According to About.com, the National Weather Service labeled the picture a hoax and said that it was a modification of a genuine photo taken in 2001 by a crew member of the Edison Chouest Offshore supply boat.

## 25. Pranks Shut Down Los Angeles Times Wiki (2005)

It seemed like a bright idea. The LA Times' "A Wiki for Your Thoughts" fandango asked readers to chime in on the newspaper's editorials via a Wiki. In their explanation of how it would work, the editors even acknowledged that "It sounds nutty." Yet they went ahead with it—and achieved disastrous results. The Wikitorial (the name was nearly as dumb as the scheme) brought out the best and then the worst in readers. On the first day, an editorial about the war in Iraq prompted civil and thoughtful contributions. On day two, pranksters littered the unmoderated Wiki with rude comments, pornography, and profanity. The Webmaster removed the offending entries, but only after they were available for public viewing. By the next morning, the publisher had dismantled the Wiki.

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## Info, Info Everywhere, and Not a Thought to Think

by Vinny La Bash

*Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, FL*

**M**any people think that the internet is the greatest thing since sliced whatchamacallit or the worst abomination that's ever been inflicted upon the human race. As usual the truth lies somewhere in-between. There is no doubt that the internet is a great source of seemingly limitless information, and the information found there tends to fall into three general categories:

1. Information which is totally useless. Did you know that the average cloud weighs 300,000 pounds? Neither did I, but that's the sort of thing you are most likely to get on the internet unless you are careful. Information which is useful, but not at the moment. I invariably discover a great tax deduction I didn't know about on April 16<sup>th</sup>. It's too late for this year, and I will probably either forget about it next year or misfile the thing where I can't find it.
2. Information which is useful now. This is extraordinarily rare, comparable to finding eyebrows on eggs, but we all get lucky occasionally.

The data you find in the first category is not only safe to ignore, it's essential to your sanity to ignore it. The third category usually takes care of itself. Simply use it for whatever purpose you have in mind and you're done. The second category is the one that requires a good degree of sound management to avoid wasting time, and that is the problem.

World wide productivity could double overnight if the internet would only send us the information we need at the right time. We spend too much time refining our Google searches, investigating blogs, experimenting with RSS feeds, or mucking around our own data bases. One piece of missing information has the potential to make the best presentation look like the product of a misinformed dolt.

Is having the information you need when you need it nothing more than a World Wide Web fantasy? Perhaps not. Did you know that you can set a reminder email for future delivery in Outlook? Here's how to do it:

1. Open Outlook (obviously).

2. Select the email to forward.
3. Click on the **Forward** button.
4. Click on the **Options...** button.
5. Put a check in the **Do not deliver before** box.
6. Select the date of delivery.
7. Click **Close**.

Don't set a delivery date to a point where you are unlikely to have your present computer unless you are in a corporate network where the systems administrator can make the proper adjustments. Even then, be realistic.

Send yourself notes about meetings shortly before you need them. Include information not only about the subject of the meeting, but about the people attending with you. Your colleagues will think you're a certified genius.

All kinds of things can be done with Outlook and its future delivery capabilities. The usual subjects such as birthdays, anniversaries, and recurring meetings suggest themselves. Investors can send themselves reminders that an option they own is about to expire or to watch for that important dividend payment. Almost any kind of regular to-do item lends itself to this task. Get that tax form in the mail by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Do you really need a reminder for that?

What do you do if you don't have Outlook? Neither Yahoo, Hotmail, nor Outlook Express offers this feature, but there is a web site that can help. Go to [www.futureme.org](http://www.futureme.org) and create your email for future delivery. This site is well suited for information you won't need for months if not years. Of course, delivery depends on the web site still being in existence when you need it, and it doesn't handle attachments. If you can live with those limitations, go for it.

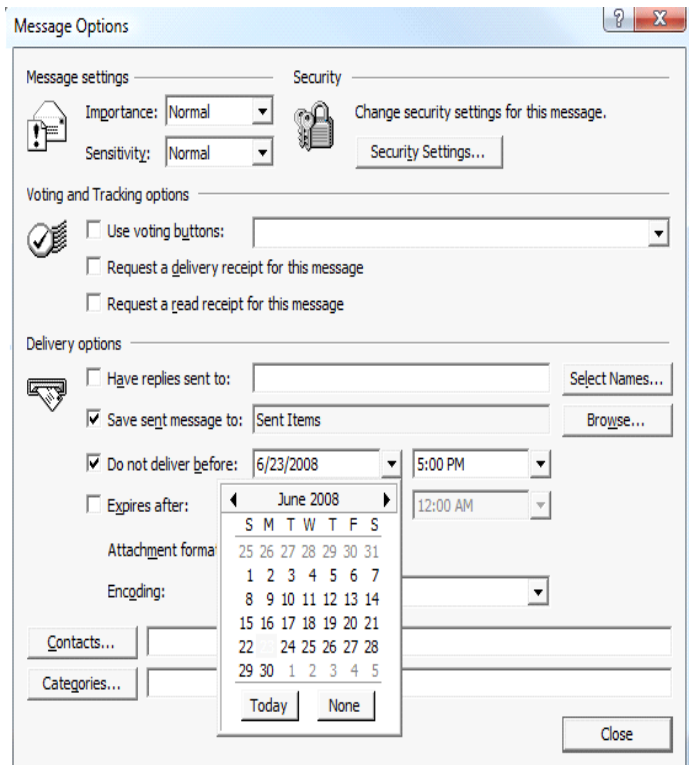
People talk a lot about traffic congestion, but unlike the weather, you can do something about it. If you commute regularly to work take a peek at [www.traffic.com](http://www.traffic.com). The site will send you real-time traffic maps, road condition alerts and jam alerts. This site is great for road warriors or anyone who drives over regular routes.

Do you suffer from springtime allergies? Then take a trip to [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) to have pollen, weather, and other alerts delivered directly to your desktop. Not everything has to be delivered by email.

Cutting down on information overload is the best reason for using these tools. Avoiding data until you need it will free you from the drudgery of sifting through piles of irrelevant information to find the one item you need, and best of all, you won't worry about being unprepared when an unexpected deadline suddenly looms up before you.

Use information efficiently and you will become respected, admired, and the opposite sex will seek you out. When people inevitably accuse you of having a perfect memory, tell them you have a photogenic mind.

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## Lightning Fast Trades

Here's an interesting article for investors. It explains how modern technology has progressed to the point where stock trades are now processed almost at the speed of light. I found it very enlightening <<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=R3M3IYXUGJSZGQSNLDOSKHSCJUNN2JVN?articleID=199200297&queryText=Richard+Martin>>.

## Microsoft Plays Catch-Up

It's hard to think of Microsoft being behind the times in technology, but that is said to be the case in Web interface design. Adobe's Flash has prevailed so far, but Microsoft will introduce a competitor called "silverlight" and some tools called Expression Studio that sound interesting. After I read about this in *InformationWeek*, I saw more in the 5/21/07 "Microsoft At A Glance" newsletter. They made mention of those products and gave the URL to watch a video and download the beta version of Silverlight. It is referred to as a "cross-browser and cross-platform plug-in." They also included the URL for the Expression Studio design products <<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=6824909>> where you can download free trials. There was other information included in that newsletter.

## Another Use For Wi-Fi

On another note, I have always thought of Wi-Fi as a connection for my laptop, or a broadband installation of some kind, but one particularly well traveled rail route in southern California will be getting Wi-Fi for security purposes. Because railroads often traverse very remote areas, this project is a difficult one and includes some solar powered nodes. Vandalism is a problem in the area getting that installation. I have often wondered how good the cell phone service was on some rail routes that are less traveled and have remote routes. Some cruise ships offer limited cell phone service and it is slowly being introduced on airlines, but not without resistance from the airlines and from the public. I know I wouldn't want the person next to me talking on a cell phone for the entire trip.

## Reminder

Again, the announcements below are written by the PR people and I edit to shorten them and try to improve on the wording. I have not tried any of these products so check their Web site carefully and do your home-work if you are interested.

## This Add-On for Microsoft Windows Might Help

Addintools announced the release of Classic Menu for Office 2007 v.2.18, a user interface enhancement add-on for Microsoft Office 2007. The new interface will replace the system of layered menus, toolbars and task panes with a so-called Ribbon. It lets users retrieve and show the main menu bar, standard toolbar, and formatting toolbar that are hidden or moved away from direct view. The program works with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. All new Office 2007 features remain accessible in the classic menu and toolbars.

Classic Menu for Office 2007 also lets users add the menus and toolbars to the Quick Access Toolbar so it becomes possible to minimize the Ribbon and finish all operations without having to open it again. The program has been optimized for complete compatibility with Microsoft Office 2007 and supports all major languages, including English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Arabic, Korean, and Chinese.

Classic Menu for Office 2007 v.2.18 runs under Microsoft Windows XP/2003/Vista and costs \$29.95 (USD) for a single-user license. User group members receive 15% discount on the purchase of Classic Menu for Office 2007 v2.18 by entering coupon code ADDI-CARU into the coupon box on



the order page. Licensed customers are entitled to free updates and technical support for two years after the date of purchase.

Product page link: <<http://www.addintools.com/english/menuoffice>>

Direct download link: <[http://www.addintools.com/english/menuoffice/Setup\\_OfficeMenu.exe](http://www.addintools.com/english/menuoffice/Setup_OfficeMenu.exe)> (2.62 MB)

Company website: <<http://www.addintools.com>>

**File Recovery Product**, might help in some circumstances.

Enplase Research Corporation has announced the immediate availability of MultiStage Recovery 2.8 that will recover any file and back it up to a hard disk drive. MultiStage Recovery lets users recover all recoverable files (20 gigabytes in 20 seconds!) The program supports all Windows files systems and comes with a built-in preview for over 60 file formats. Designed as do-it-yourself data recovery software, MultiStage Recovery will restore all file types including audio, images, and documents. It supports all FAT12/VFAT/16/32 and NTFS/NTFS5 file systems used by Microsoft Windows. It helps users restore precious data if files are lost due to a virus, malicious hacker attack or an operating system crash in which a hard disk drive has not experienced physical damage, and restores files from any brand of hard disk drive and type of storage media, including hard disks, floppy disks, flash drives, and digital camera cards.

MultiStage Recovery 2.8 runs under Microsoft« NT 4.0 (with SP4), 2000, XP, 2003, Vista and costs \$39.95 (US) for a single-user license. User group members get 20% off by using the coupon code 8192 (making it \$31.96) at <<http://enplase.com/pagesBuyProduct/ProductName-MultiStage+Recovery.html>>. For other types of licenses, please refer to Enplase's Software Store at <<http://enplase.com/pages/Purchase.html>>. Additional information on the product, as well as its free evaluation copy is available from <<http://enplase.com/>>. Product page link: <<http://enplase.com/pagesMultiStage+Recovery+description.html>>.

**I Am Not a Fan of Screensavers**, but here is an announcement.

DealsGuy Note: Screensavers have long been known to sometimes cause problems so I don't use them. Also, this company only offers a discount for purchasing more than one, but I am including it because there are certainly fans for screensavers, and I get asked for deals on them quite frequently.

FancyBytes Software announces the release of Dolphin Aqua Life 3D Screensaver 3.0, Shark Water World 3D Screensaver 1.5, and Mountain Lake Waterfall Screensaver 1.0. Unique to these screen-savers is their dual monitor support and sleek 3D graphics. If you have two monitors installed on your system, you likely have already looked for screen-avers that can fit your configuration. With FancyBytes Software you can now enjoy beautiful 3D screensavers with dual monitor support. Of course, the screensavers will look nice on a single screen, but with two monitors, you'll receive a continuous panoramic image, showing the aquatic world in all its beauty. Use these screensavers to make the most of your dual monitor system. The free trial downloads are available at <<http://www.fancybytes.com>>. Below are the screensavers:

**Dolphin Aqua Life 3D Screensaver**

Travel to the sea bottom with the most intelligent inhabitant of the sea, the dolphin. See the amazing play of light on its skin as light creates interesting patterns on the sea floor, which is covered with age-old rocks and shells. This dignified creature and a variety of small fishes leisurely swim back and forth, as you admire the aquatic scenery and take a rejuvenating rest.

**Shark Water World 3D Screensaver**

Find the remnants of ships that once belonged to unlucky Caribbean pirates who now lie in Davy Jones' Locker. Chests containing countless riches peacefully lie on the sea floor, but watch out for the sharks! These hunters guard the treasures from anyone who would dare steal their gold.

**Mountain Lake Waterfall Screensaver**

See the pristine beauty of Mother Nature. Stand in awe of the majestic waterfall tumbling into a clear mountain lake. Unwind to the sounds of murmuring water. Admire the picturesque lake scenery and nearby forest. Just the kind of place you've been wanting for some rest and relaxation?

Dolphin Aqua Life 3D Screensaver costs \$19.95 (USD). Shark Water World 3D Screensaver costs \$19.95 (USD). Mountain Lake Waterfall Screen-saver costs \$14.95 (USD). For a discount on two or more of the registered versions of these products, please visit; <[http://www.fancybytes.com/orders\\_special.html](http://www.fancybytes.com/orders_special.html)>. All prices are for a single-user license. The screensavers run under all versions of Microsoft Windows. Licensed customers are entitled to the fully functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Additional information on the screensavers, as well as free trial copies are available from <<http://www.fancybytes.com>>.

Product page:

<[http://www.fancybytes.com/about\\_dolphin\\_aqua\\_life\\_3d\\_screensaver.html](http://www.fancybytes.com/about_dolphin_aqua_life_3d_screensaver.html)>

<[http://www.fancybytes.com/about\\_shark.html](http://www.fancybytes.com/about_shark.html)>

<[http://www.fancybytes.com/about\\_mountain\\_lake\\_waterfall\\_screensaver.html](http://www.fancybytes.com/about_mountain_lake_waterfall_screensaver.html)>

Direct download link:

<<http://www.fancybytes.com>> Click the Download buttons for the desired file.

*That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (not offering a discount). 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@mind.spring.com](mailto:bobclick@mind.spring.com)>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>*

## Adobe Reader 8

by Roger Radcliffe

*The Users Group NETwork (TUGNET)*

**A**dobe has just released a new version of its program that displays PDF's (Portable Document Files), Adobe Reader, v.8. It has a slick new look and an interface that is much easier to use. Its main improvement is a super quick launch time from a web site click. Significant graphic acceleration now allows fast smooth scrolling, improved 2D graphic display and rotating 3D graphics from within the reader.

Collaboration with other producers is now also possible with version 8 and it supports Internet conferencing features. Documents can now be digitally signed with Adobe Reader. 'Search' and 'Find' features are now faster and more accurate.

You can now annotate the documents you view and save to your own computer without change to the original document on the Web. The IRS uses PDF files for their 'Forms and Publications' and now it lets you fill out their forms on a PDF screen display and then save the file to your hard disk for later revision and printing. The Franchise Tax Board also allows completion on the screen and printing, but not saving-the last things for which I needed a typewriter.

The PDF format allows writers to control the document so that it can be read, but not altered over the Internet without permission. Over 1.5 billion.pdf files are now on the Internet. They include most manuals, user guides, brochures, forms, and other document. Web sites use PDF's when they want to display formatted information, so a PDF reader is a necessity for web users.

Photos placed into the PDF format can be viewed by any Internet user without having to use specific graphic format programs or even a PC. With a large monitor you can read 2 pages side by side and then print 2 pages on a sheet and 2 pages on the back to save paper.

Many software programs (i.e. Word, Paper Port, Word Perfect, PhotoShop) allow you to create your own PDF and now, with Adobe Reader v.8, any program can have its output placed into the PDF format through an Adobe web site, and saved back on your hard disk.

For early upgraders, Adobe Reader v.8 supports Windows Vista and its new visual look as well.

## Society News

### Planning Meeting Notes

June 5, 2007

by John McMillan, Secretary

Sally Springett hosted the June 5<sup>th</sup> planning meeting attended by Bob Avery, Tony Dellelo, John McMillan, Dan Rothfuss, Steve Staub, and Tom Thompson. Steve chaired the meeting in Arpad's absence. It was thought that Bill Statt did a good job of presenting "Dragon, Naturally Speaking." The largest room available at St. John's Meadows was still small for the audience that was there and liked what they heard. Bill worked hard to overcome some distractions caused by unfamiliar equipment. We would welcome him back at any time.

The June meeting will be at the Brighton Library where Dave Thompson will do an introductory talk on the Photography Special Interest Group. Arpad is working on a presentation for the July meeting that will also be held in the Brighton Library. We have a August 14<sup>th</sup> reservation for Buckland Park Picnic Shelter on the south side of Westfall Road, between South Winton and South Clinton. Five dollars per person will cover lodge fees plus red or white hots, cheese-burgers, or Italian sausage, rolls, and beverages. People who have not made reservations by August 1<sup>st</sup>, will pay ten dollars each at the door and those who cancel after that deadline will not receive a refund. Both members and guests are expected to bring a dish to pass.

The guidelines for the flea market are simple. Bring your items and price them. Share 15 percent of your profit with the club (you may, of course, give it all to the club but that is not required). Take home unsold items.

### Help's Half Hour

June 12, 2007

Led by: Arpad Kovacs

Recorded by Jan Rothfuss

Q: What to do about webpage prints that fall off the right side?

A: Hold down the control key while pointing to the page. This will reduce the size of the page so that all of the content will fit on the page. You can also Select, Copy and Paste the content on to a document. Sometimes paste special will give you a better image. Also look for a printer friendly button—this will work if it's available. Check out your request using the print preview option to see if it fits. If you are selecting just part of the webpage, be sure you click on the page part that you want.

NOTE: AdAware 2007 is now available for download.

Q: Are there some issues with the AVG antivirus software?

A: There is a new engine available now but it has to be downloaded—7.5. It is best to uninstall it and then install. FileHippo.com has the best service for downloading.

Q: Would there be a benefit to copying the antivirus routines on a flash drive so that the antivirus programs will follow you wherever you go?

A: Arpad would not recommend that process for a permanent solution. It should check all read-writes, not just those that are on the flash.

Q: One member is having trouble with AOL mail. He is not able to see his Sent folder plus other issues.

A: It may be best to use another of the RoadRunner email options. If you run a web-based version, all of the software is on their website with nothing on your PC. It is best to call their HelpDesk.

Q: One member recently upgraded his power supply and mother board. He now has trouble with WXXI coming through. He hears it on his car radio when he approaches.

A: Perhaps the wireless router is causing an issue. Perhaps he needs to check the mother board. He may need to verify that all of the ground points have been made. Perhaps an RFI filter would help, too. Double check to make sure that your electric outlet is wired correctly. Most likely it is one of your speakers in the house. Unplug the pieces one at a time and then test it out.

Q: Another member cannot open attachments on his FrontierNet DSL service.

A: Perhaps the server is blocking the content. Check your email settings, making sure that you are allowing the attachments to be viewed.

Q: One member had a monitor die—it just went black.

A: It sounds like the LCD needs to be replaced. They usually last from two to five years. Check the warranty date. Also check with the vendor as 14 months may still be covered. A CRT will last forever!

Q: One member is running Firefox but has trouble viewing pictures in an email using Yahoo Webmail.

A: That feature may not be available for free in Yahoo mail. Another member did seem to have some success showing the items. You may have to ask the sender to attach them rather than insert them inside of the text. It is likely checking for viruses.

Q: When plugging in a flash drive, it is asking for a download. He is not able to see anything that is on the drive.

A: It is probably realizing that you need to install a driver. Check the packaging that came with the drive or check the manufacturer's website.

Q: One member is unable to read an SD card when placed into his PC.

A: Be sure to verify that the locking switch is turned off so that the content can be read.

## June Meeting Notes

by John McMillan, Secretary

Our next Society meeting will be at the Brighton Library, July 10th when Arpad Kovacs will discuss a computer on your flash drive. Mike Lavelle would welcome suggestions for future programs.

Chairs need to be stacked and the room should be picked up at the end of the meeting.

Our picnic will be at Brighton's Buckland Park, the same location as last year, on Tuesday August 14<sup>th</sup> from 4 to 9 pm with supper served at 5:30. Five dollars per person, to be paid by August 1st; covers the cost of a choice of red or white hot dogs, cheeseburgers or Italian sausage, all with buns; tea, coffee, or soda; plus the facility rental. Attendees are requested to bring a dish to pass. Munchies if your last name begins with A-I; a salad if J-R; or a desert if S-Z.

Guidelines for the flea market include a 15 percent donation to the society for items sold and unsold items will be returned to their owners.

Dave Thompson, our speaker for the evening, stated that the Digital Photography SIG will not meet in July and August. He then used a flow chart to outline the topics that would be covered beginning in September. The first discussion will be about cameras and scanners, the source for gathering digitized images that will be the basis for the remainder of the series.

Digitized images (files) are most often stored in the computer as JPG files but you need software to aid in tracking file locations. The class concentrates on Adobe Photoshop Elements methods but Picasso and Windows programs are also discussed.

Once stored, images are often edited, a term that covers many aspects of "enhancing" the

original shot before printing, uploading to the web or attaching to e-mails. Other editors such as Picture Publisher, Irfanview and Gimp may be mentioned but Dave uses Photoshop Elements to demonstrate things for the class. Version 3 has all of the tools you are likely to need. This program has a retail price of \$79 but can often be found for about \$50.

Editors generally have four functions:

1. color adjustments that let you lighten or darken a picture; change brightness, contrast and saturation; and reduce noise.
2. lens or geometric correction for leveling a horizon; adjusting parallax error; or straightening curved edges resulting from telephoto lenses;
3. selective enhancements such as red eye removal, cloning, dodging, and local sharpening, that do not change the entire picture.
4. physical changes such as cropping, resizing, and total sharpening.

There is another whole topic Dave called color calibration for the verification that what you see on the monitor is in fact what the file will look like when printed or transmitted. Next, he discussed the use of Raw files containing the data associated with each pixel and their conversion to .jpg. He strongly recommended always retaining the original plus subsequent versions until you are satisfied with the final product.

Even though this was a summary of the anticipated course content, it got very technical at times as he answered questions from the floor throughout the talk. To put it another way, "You really had to be there." Dave did an excellent job of describing what will be covered in the fall and spring sessions of the Digital Photography SIG.

### Treasurer's Report

by Steve Staub, Treasurer

Balance as of 05/11/07	\$690.44
<b>Income</b>	
Dues .....	\$375.00
Ad revenue .....	60.00
Picnic .....	15.00
Donations .....	<u>25.50</u>
Total Income .....	\$475.50
<b>Expenses</b>	
Staples (paper) .....	\$41.93
Postmaster (permit) .....	175.00
St. Stephens .....	60.00
Total Expenses .....	<u>246.93</u>
Balance as of 06/14/07	\$889.01

#### Members renewing:

Charlotte Baker, James Cross, Claud Fedele, Renee Holt, John Kiley, James McBride, Tim McBride, Paul Neumann, Irwin Wiener

#### New Members:

Curt Eckertson, Mas Okita, Guy Parry

### The Lighter Side

