

MONITOR

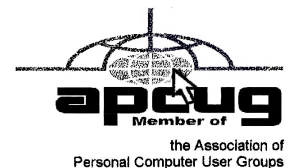
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Next Meeting
Tuesday, September 14
Bill Statt on Digital Photography

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Another "Free TV" Utility

by Ira Wilsker

A few weeks ago I wrote about some web-based utilities that could display over 2000 TV channels that stream live over the internet. I have had a lot of positive response about that column, and was asked by several readers if there was a free standing utility that could stream TV directly to the computer, and possibly even connect to a TV. While doing a search, I found several utilities that claim that they could do precisely those tasks, but my security software blocked access to those sites alleging some type of danger or risk. One site that seems to pass security muster is zinc.tv. This free service, currently in beta (not yet a final release), combines feeds from several resources, including Hulu, ABC, NBC, Fox, ESPN, National Geographic, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, ABC Family, and many other sources. Zinc also offers free music videos from MTV and VH1. The user needs to understand that these so-called "channels" are typically not the live feeds as seen by cable or satellite subscribers, but are past, usually very recent, shows. While most of the content on Zinc TV is totally free, there are links to commercial content which includes such sources as Netflix, and Amazon's streaming content.

The Zinc viewer can be downloaded (free) from zinc.tv, and will run on modern

Windows or Mac computers, as well as a NetTop box, or using a wireless HDMI device. When I downloaded the 20.6mb file, it downloaded and installed without any problems. The Windows version requires Windows 7, Vista, or XP with service pack 2 (or later) installed, and a capable video card. Zinc TV will also run on a Mac with OS X 10.4.11 (Tiger) or later, with an Intel processor, and a compatible video card.

The Zinc player initially opens in full screen mode, and has very sharp and colorful graphics. At the top of the default window (which is customizable), the latest “Featured” shows are displayed. As I type this, the featured shows are Boston Med, Downfall, The Gates, Rookie Blue, and Scoundrels. Generally, the featured shows are the full episodes that recently appeared on TV, along with links to past episodes. This is a very good way to view again any favorite episodes, or episodes that were missed. Below the Featured shows are the categories of shows. Shows are sorted by genre, and include TV shows (29783 episodes), movies (519 full length and trailers), news (2437 shows), sports (1159 events), kids (35 channels), comedy (973 shows), web (21917 items from YouTube, Break.com, Yahoo! video, and more), technology (418 shows), Yahoo! Connected TV (5792 items), and Music (1340 channels and videos). The “Most Popular” TV shows available on Zinc TV are Glee, Dancing With The Stars, House, Lost, and Modern Family.

Below the “Categories” heading is the “Recently Added” which displays any newly added networks. Two of the most notable new networks available on Zinc TV are The WB and Spike. Many of the commercial entertainment sites that offer streaming video are accessible individually by going directly to the websites, or the user can use Zinc TV to access many of these sites from one link. Among the networks accessible and searchable with Zinc TV are CBS, ABC, Fox, Hulu, The WB, MTV, The CW, CNN, MSNBC, ESPN, Fox Sports, Fox News, PBS, Cartoon Network (CN), national geographic Kids, Nickelodeon, ABC News, Spike, Comedy Central, VNET, NASA, The Whitehouse (presidential broadcasts), HBO, NFL, NBA, TV Land, Univision, VH1, and many more.

Clicking on the TV network logo opens up the lineup of available shows. Clicking on CBS, for example, displays a directory of the full length episodes available. CBS currently has 4385 episodes available, including such popular shows as Survivor, 48 Hours Mystery, 60 Minutes, the CSI trilogy, Amazing Race, 90210, Star Trek, and Twin Peaks. The ABC link opens up to display over 400 episodes, including 20/20, All My Children, the Bachelorette, Boston Med, Desperate Housewives, Grey’s Anatomy, Lost, ABC Primetime, One Life to Live, and many more. The other networks listed have similar directories of TV shows that can be viewed on demand.

One of my personal favorite categories is the news category. This category includes the latest evening news from ABC (ABC World News), NBC Nightly News, and CBS Evening News with Katie Couric. CNN has 947 present and past shows available, and MSNBC has 237 shows online. Popular news shows from PBS include the Jim Lehrer Hour (281 episodes), and Bill Moyers Journal with 330 episodes. Individual shows include Fox News’ The O’reilly Factor, Glenn Beck, and Sean Hannity. The White House Channel, and Obama Weekly broadcast presidential speeches and other executive branch presentations.

Children can be well entertained by several Kids channels. Nickelodeon has 12 different popular full length kids’ shows including Avatar, Danny Phantom, The Fairly Odd Parents, iCarly, and the widely popular Sponge Bob Square Pants. The Cartoon Network has full online episodes of 55 of its shows including Batman, and the Transformers. Newly added to Zinc TV is the JAROO kids’ channel, which includes 261 full length children’s movies and classic cartoons.

Sports fans will appreciate the wide assortment of sports channels available, including ESPN, NHL (Hockey), NBA (Basketball), Soccer, NASCAR, NFL Football, MLB (Baseball), a Fitness channel, and a Sports and Recreation channel. In aggregate, 1159 sports shows are available on Zinc TV. This should be enough to provide any sports junkie his fix for quite a while!

Since Zinc TV will run on most computers, as well as on a variety of TV and home entertainment devices, and carries an enormous variety of content, it should satisfy many of the entertainment needs of today's society. While the shows, most notably the news and sports shows, are not live, many are very current, often from the same day. Zinc TV is a worthwhile utility to download and install; just don't blame me if you watch it too much!

WEBSITE:

<http://zinc.tv>

News from the *Smart Computing* Help Desk

Each month, we receive numerous technical support calls and email messages. Some computer problems are fairly common, and we find that many callers struggle to resolve the same issues. In this article, we cover some of the most common or timely tech support questions and provide our solution for each of them.

Q. Whenever I attempt to open a Microsoft Word attachment from an email in Microsoft Outlook, the file opens with the Notepad application. How can I configure Outlook to automatically view Word documents with Microsoft Word?

Using the Open With option, you can choose which application you want specific types of files to open with.

A. If Word documents are opening with Notepad, it is likely because at some point you accidentally changed the Word file association.

To fix this, you must tell Windows which program to use to open a specific type of file (in this case, a Word file). First, locate a .DOC or .DOCX file on your hard drive. Right-click the file, mouse over Open With, and select Choose Program (Choose Default Program in Vista and in Win7). Select Microsoft Office Word from the list of programs. Before clicking OK, checkmark the Always Use The Selected Program To Open This Kind Of File box.

Q. I frequently run multiple applications and have several windows open at the same time but often lose track of the main application I'm using. Is there a way to make one window always appear on top of the other windows that are open?

A. Other than using the Taskbar to select which window to view, Windows doesn't have an option for keeping a specific window in the foreground at all times. But other options exist. A program called DeskPins gives you a simple way to place one window in front of other open windows, making it easy to return to the application you use most.

To download DeskPins, point your browser to tinyurl.com/ykfyxkf, and choose DeskPins from the list. On the next page, click Download DeskPins, found on the right, and save the zipped file to your hard drive. Once the download is complete, locate the file and double-click it to unzip the file. In the WinZip window, choose DeskPins 1.30 setup.exe to begin the installation.

Pinning a window is simple. Click the DeskPins icon on the lower-right side of the Taskbar and then click the window you want to appear on top. Pinned windows or applications will have a colored pin in the upper right of the window. You can change the color of your pins by right-clicking the DeskPins icon, choosing Options, and then selecting a color from the Pin Icon section beneath the Pins tab. You can remove a pin by clicking the X that appears when you mouse over any pin in a window.

Compiled by: Kris Glaser Brambila. Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit www.SmartComputing.com/Groups to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!



DeskPins allows you to keep the windows you use most visible by always placing them on top of other windows.

Upgrade Your E-Mail Activities

by Ron Hirsch

Boca Raton Computer Society, FL

It's probable that 99% of computer users use e-mail in their daily lives. It has been my observation that the majority of users do a less than perfect job of writing and handling their mail. The purpose of this presentation is to (hopefully) give you tips and hints on improving your activities in this area.

We all make typos occasionally, and an occasional typo is no real tragedy. But, sometimes we forget that spelling, punctuation and grammar, and form should be a part of everyday e-mail activities. We should also remember that e-mail can be a mirror of who and what we are, especially to those with whom we have little or no direct personal contact. For these reasons, it behooves us to take more pains in the area of our e-mail. The offenders are not only the newbies. Advanced users are often the worst culprits.

For those of you who think some of the material below makes me a snob, maybe that's so. But like it or not, we are judged by our e-mail, just as we'd be judged by our snail mail. Many, who are very careful when they write a normal letter to be mailed, have utter disregard for the appearance of their e-mail.

There are many different programs that are used for e-mail. Some of the most widely used are probably Outlook Express, AOL, G-Mail (Google), and Hot Mail (Microsoft). They all have their own idiosyncrasies, but there are many common elements that all share which many people just don't bother to learn or use. This is OK, as the capabilities are there when one decides to take advantage of them. But regardless of what program you use, or what features you take advantage of, the suggestions below are still applicable.

I happen to be a fussbudget. In most everything that I do in life, I always seek to make things as perfect as possible. Then when the normal course of events occurs, and perfection is compromised, at least I'm left with a respectable end result. Of course, if I should start off with mediocrity, then the normal course of events will give me a pretty poor final result.

Here's a list of suggestions to make your e-mail better. There is really nothing earthshaking or new here. But from my observations over the years, many people tend to ignore many of these elements completely.

1. Don't run everything together into one long paragraph for the whole e-mail message.
2. Use double spaces between paragraphs.
3. Keep the salutation on a separate opening line, and double space to the start of the message body
4. Use a "pleasant" font. This makes reading your message more pleasant. I personally use a font that is installed by Windows called "Comic Sans MS." Don't use a harsh or overly styled font.
5. Capitalize the start of each sentence. Don't make single sentences extend beyond a reasonable length.
6. And, use proper punctuation. Don't use all CAPS. This is interpreted as "shouting."
7. If your e-mail software has a spell checker, use it, and also *proofread your outgoing message for typos, content, and grammar, before sending it*. Of course, spell checkers can't pick up errors like those below, as the words are correctly spelled, they're just not the right word. Don't get sloppy with your grammar and use of contractions. I continue to see the following very often in mail. I'm sure that most of you know the proper usage, but just get careless.
 - a. Using "your," instead of "you're," and vice versa
 - b. Using "their" instead of "they're," and vice versa.
 - c. "It's" for possessive. "It's" is a contraction for "it is" it is not a possessive form.
 - d. Using a lower case "i" instead of an upper case "I" for the personal pronoun.
 - e. When you want to send someone a copy of something from another piece of e-mail,

I feel the cleanest approach is to copy and paste from the other message. If you don't know how to copy and paste, it's probably time you learned.

8. Copying and pasting is a very basic Windows function, applicable to just about every program in Windows. This was reviewed in my earlier "Basics" articles.
9. Every time something is routinely copied from another email message, it probably carries along with lots of unwanted formatting, and "garbage." If the copy and paste material is short, manually clean out all the extra spaces, carriage returns, and symbols such as "<" and ">." I've seen such messes created when I've been sent material that has been copied/forwarded several times that I just refuse to read it.
10. There are many freeware and shareware programs out there which will clean up situations like this. NoteTab, which is the finest text editor out there, offers a freeware version, and several shareware versions. It has a built-in feature that will clean up most of the weird spaces and carriage returns in such situations. For my own personal use, and for other WordPerfect users, I wrote a macro that does an excellent job of "cleaning up" such situations. It even gets rid of the < and > characters. Anyone using WordPerfect and wanting a copy - e-mail me a request at ronhirsch1439@comcast.net.
11. It seems that the much of the e-mail out there is people; sending jokes to their friends. Depending upon the e-mail system you're using, the incoming message can end up being pages and pages of headers from all the previous transmittals. I once got such a message that had 14 long headers at the beginning, with each header containing dozens of names. And the actual area with the jokes was just about unreadable by the time it reached me. I politely asked the sender to take me off his mailing list.

To do the cleanest possible job, the best way is to cut and paste (and clean up the formatting after pasting) into a new message. You say that's a lot of bother - maybe so. But, the people who receive your mail will be thankful to you and also be impressed with the "quality" of your work in this area.

If the recipients of your mail can handle HTML, and you have HTML available to you in your e-mail program try using colors, and other text formatting. In Outlook Express, this is accessed via the top menu using `FORMAT>RICH TEXT (HTML)`. Using this format allows the user to use colored text, add in photos, and in general, make a message much more attractive.

For example — when someone sends me a message with a number of questions, I like to insert the answers to each question immediately following that question, and color my response text to make it clearly visible. This makes it much easier for the reader to read the answers to the questions.

There are two basic ways to send photos. If your mail can handle HTML, they can usually be inserted or pasted right into the message. Or, they can be sent along as a file attachment, which can then be saved and viewed on another computer using a suitable image viewing program, which virtually all computers have available.

To do a more careful job of generating your e-mail messages, especially when they're long or complicated ones, consider generating them offline in a word processor or text editor. You can then take advantage of the spell and grammar checkers which are available in programs like WordPerfect and Microsoft Word. And, it's usually much easier to write and review things, especially when the messages are long. When completed, you can then copy and paste the message into your e-mail message.

I'm sure that there are those who feel "fixing up" their e-mail is a waste of time. After all, if people can manage to read and understand what you write, what's the big deal anyway? Well, here's an analogy. Would you go to a party in torn clothes, with your hair messed up, and your hands and face dirty? If you answer "yes," then don't bother with anything I've said in this article. However, if you answer "no," then you accept the fact that you will be judged by your appearance. And, your e-mail is definitely an appearance that you will be judged by, like it or not.

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website www.brcs.org. This allows readers to keep the material as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose-leaf notebook for future reference.



Laptops vs Notebooks vs Netbooks

Q. What's the difference between laptop, notebook, and netbook computers? What are the pros and cons of a laptop computer and a desktop model?

A. Years ago, when laptops made their debut, we called them "luggables" because they were like suitcases: large, heavy and cumbersome. That spawned the next generation of much smaller, lighter computers called notebooks, that were literally the size of a notebook. Today, rightly or wrongly, the terms are used interchangeably.

To further confuse matters, a netbook is not a misspelled notebook. Netbooks (sometimes called mini notebooks or ultra portables) are a very popular and growing category of small, inexpensive, somewhat limited-use laptop computers, best suited for accessing Web-based applications. They are often marketed as "companion devices" to full-featured laptop or desktop computers.

As far as the pros and cons of desktops versus laptops, a desktop computer is usually less expensive and it is easier to replace or upgrade its components. On the other hand, a desktop PC is more difficult to move, and you can't take it outside on a sunny day. Not easily, anyway. A laptop/notebook computer is smaller, lighter, and flexible – not unlike Mr. Modem was 25 years ago. If you prefer a full-size keyboard or large monitor, you can easily connect them to a laptop and convert it to a quasi desktop, yet still have the flexibility of unplugging the monitor and keyboard (or docking station) for mobility, when needed.

Q. When a message is sent using Outlook, can I get it back before it is opened at the receiver's end?

A. Maybe. How's that for a definitive answer? If you and the recipient are both using Outlook, you may be able to retrieve a message. Realistically, the odds aren't terrific that that's going to be the case. Further, the message must be in the recipient's Inbox, it must remain unopened, and you must have a garlic clove in your left pocket. Well, okay, no garlic clove, but there are some very specific conditions that must exist for this to work.

In the unlikely event the above conditions do exist, to retrieve a message, open your Sent Items folder, double-click the message in question, select "Recall this Message" from the Tools menu, then select "Delete Unread Copies of this Message."

To replace the retrieved message with a new one, select "Delete Unread Copies and Replace with a New Message" followed by OK, then type a new message.

If you want to know if your desperate attempt to recall your message was successful, select the box labeled "Tell Me if Recall Succeeds or Fails for Each Recipient."

When it comes to retrieving email, I wouldn't get my hopes up. Ideally, you won't ever need to retrieve an email that's been sent, and hopefully never one sent in anger. My best advice is to never, EVER send a message written in anger. It's fine to compose it, pound the keyboard, vent your spleen, but then save your vitriolic message and wait until the next day. Review it 18 or 24 hours later, and 99 times out of 100 you won't want to send it and you'll be very glad you didn't.

Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em) Sites of the Month

About Big Numbers

Enter the world of big numbers and discover just how big and how small our world is.

Examples begin with items measured in thousands, such as average annual income, cost of a car, diameter of the earth, etc. From there you'll travel through millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, quintillions, guacamoleons, all the way up to the almighty Googol. (Yes, Googol, not Google). Pop quiz: How many atoms are there in all the water on the surface of the earth? That's right, there are 142 quattuordecillion, give or take a quatt or two.

<http://pages.prodigy.net/jhonig/bignum>

Contact Help

ContactHelp.com is the creation of a group of people who became tired and frustrated attempting to locate hard-to-find customer service telephone numbers. This free service provides phone numbers, shortcuts to reach live bodies, direct links to corporate customer service departments, options to add user comments, ratings, and even the uploading of recorded calls and video, some of which are very entertaining. For example, select Dell or Verizon Wireless and watch the YouTube videos of customer service calls.

www.contacthelp.com

Sacred Text Archive

Religion, mythology, legends, folklore and the occult, from alchemy to Zoroastrianism (huh?), all intersect in this archive of original texts. World religions, traditions and mysteries can be explored here from such diverse sources as the Hypertext Bible, the predictions of Nostradamus, Gothic texts about vampires, and translations of Shinto texts. Surprisingly, none of the works of acclaimed philosopher and renowned deep-thinker Mr. Modem are included. Probably just an oversight.

www.sacred-texts.com

For plain-English answers to your questions by email, plus great computing tips, subscribe to Mr. Modem's award-winning WEEKLY newsletter. Subscribe using Promo Code 1640 and receive TWO free months (eight weekly issues!) with your 12-month subscription. To view a sample issue or subscribe, visit www.MrModem.com.

From the DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I finally finished my article about creating trade shows and should have it posted on my Web site about the middle of August. Its lengthy, but you may find it interesting.

I'm not a very ambitious person so I often do things the hard way until I finally give in and see about doing, at least something, easier. One example is with my computer's cursor, which I often lose on the page, and have to find it. I always use a large arrowhead cursor, which works fairly well for me, but a printed page makes the cursor harder to follow because it changes into a thin I-beam. After fumbling for the cursor that way for a few years, I was finally prompted by a newsletter article to check in the Control Panel > Mouse, and the pointer options tab where I found a box to check to show the location of the pointer with a series of concentric circles emanating from the cursor when pressing Ctrl. It was so simple to find and how stupid of me not to have looked into that long ago, and it only took me about a minute to do it. I hope you aren't that lazy. I've mentioned it to a couple of other people and they said they were unaware that you could set up something like that. I knew it, but a newsletter article finally pushed me to do it.

Sometimes a confusing experience needs a fix that can't be put off. One night I had a problem with a flash drive that I keep my DealsGuy files on. If I'm working on a DealsGuy column, I normally plug that flash drive in first and it becomes my D drive. Each evening when I'm shutting down my machine, I plug in a larger flash drive for my backup, which becomes my E drive since the DealsGuy flash drive is D. That larger flash drive "has" to be my E drive when I use it because that's where the backup is set to backup my data files.

However, one evening when beginning my session, I plugged in my DealsGuy flash drive and it became my E drive, in spite of the fact that there was no D drive. I wondered why it

did that, but all my tries, including rebooting the computer, failed to give it the drive letter I needed. I rebooted with that flash drive plugged in, and without it, then plugging it in, with no success. I even tried different USB plugs on the computer. I had used it the night before as an E drive simply to retrieve a file, but how would it get stuck on being an E drive? I had no idea, but needed help.

Maybe I needed to juggle my flash drives somehow, but I was stumped. I looked everywhere I could think of for instructions to try changing the setting of the drive's letter, and the computer's help was a lost cause for me. I knew "changing drive letters" was possible because I used it to establish my DVD drive letter when I originally set up this computer.

I called several friends who didn't have the answer, and finally called a friend in another state who I knew would have the answer if he was home. He thought my request was stupid, but finally humored me with the step-by-step procedure, and it was simple: My OS is XP and he had me go to Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Computer Management, and then Disk Management; and there was the procedure to accomplish the drive letter change. It was simple, but not to me until I was shown where to do it. My problem was solved. Thank God for my user group friends! My limited computer knowledge has come from my user group friends, and I have learned very little from "Help" (F1). On the other hand, I've seen the gurus do well with Help.

Good Help To Organize Your Desktop

A while back Hewie Poplock <<http://www.hewie.net>>, who heads the Windows SIG for Central Florida Computer Society, and also writes a monthly column called "Hewie's Favorites," demonstrated something called "Fences" and several in the group liked it. I can't adequately describe this product except to say that it offers a unique way to organize your desktop. With Fences, you can create categories that include only certain icons, making it easier to find whatever you might be looking for. You can also hide certain icons, leaving fewer choices when you are picking the icon you want to work with. The Web site says "simplify your desktop by creating shaded areas which become movable and sizable containers for your icons. Double click blank spaces on your desktop and all your fences will fade out, or come back. You can create an unlimited number of fence areas on your desktop."

Fences can be found at <<http://www.stardock.com/>> and there are videos that describe what it does. "Fences" is free for home use. A Pro version is available for \$9.99 at this writing and the advantages of the Pro version are listed. I didn't pay much attention to Fences at first, but soon even the gurus started using it, so I'm passing it on to my readers. When even the consultants like a product, I think the rest of us should pay attention. There are certainly other ways to accomplish the task, but Fences may do it better. There are other products available there.

Is That Web Site Safe To Visit?

The above-mentioned users group has some interesting gurus who never fail to impress me at a monthly meeting or at a SIG meeting. At a monthly meeting, Mike Ungerman advised me that Reimage, the company I tried for improving the performance of my computer, had only a fair rating on "Web of Trust," but I had no idea what Web of Trust was. He advised me it would be a good idea to always use Web Of Trust when looking at products and services. It seems Web of Trust has a browser add-on you can download for Internet Explorer or Firefox that will give you a rating on the worthiness of many sites and their products when you access the URL.

You can also offer your own comment for a Web site or product on Web of Trust and it will be used in the rating. You might say their ratings are done by a jury of your peers. If you download and install their browser add-on, your browser will show a small circle with a color in it that rates the site you are visiting. The Web site is <<http://www.mywot.com/>>. There are a couple of sites nearly the same that are not good, so be sure you get that right.

I installed it and noticed that when I did a Google search for batteries, all of the URLs

found had the WOT colored circles beside them. When I clicked on a URL with a red one, a window came up telling that the site did not have a very good reputation so I would enter at my own risk. Some URLs had the circle, but with a question mark, telling you it was not rated. I assume the rating depends on feedback about a site, but not necessarily for malicious code. It looks like Web Of Trust rates a site according to people's comments. Take a look and see what you think.

Hewie Poplock <<http://www.hewie.net>>, was answering a few of my questions on the use of Web of Trust and, during our conversation, he mentioned another URL of interest that will simply check the safety of a URL for you. That one is <<http://browsingprotection.f-secure.com/swp/>>, which comes from F-Secure, who most of you are familiar with. To check the quality of a certain URL, type it in to the box where indicated and click for it to rate your requested site.

You are probably familiar with McAfee's free Site Advisor <<http://www.siteadvisor.com/>>, and Link Scanner, free from AVG <<http://linkscanner.explabs.com/linkscanner/avg/>>, which I have previously written about to warn on the safety of a URL. The F-Secure product checks a URL free, but except for the 30-day trial versions of their products, the pricing is on their site. According to their Web site, their Internet Security offers many great features so if you don't mind the price, it may offer you peace of mind.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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 at bellsouth dot net>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.

Another Low Cost Internet Phone Device - NetTalk DUO

by Ira Wilsker

I am always on the lookout for bargains, and ways to save some money. Like many of my readers, I am not using my telephone landline as much as I have in the past, but still receive a sizeable monthly phone bill. I have not used my landline phone for long distance calls in eons, because of the easy long distance access on my cell phone, supplemented by the MagicJack internet phone service that I wrote about in early 2009.

There has been explosive growth in the popularity of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), much to the chagrin of the traditional telephone industry. Millions of customers have forgone the convenience and cost of traditional phone service, in favor of cell phones, and VoIP services. It is nearly impossible to turn on the TV and not see an ad for a cell phone carrier, or internet based phone service. None of my four adult children have a traditional home phone, but use their cell phones and VoIP phones exclusively at home.

For the past 18 months I have been using the widely advertised and inexpensive MagicJack to supplement my cell phone for making long distance phone calls from home, as well as a method of making calls while traveling away from home. At home, I have been using the MagicJack to make long distance calls during the day on weekdays, rather than burn prime cell phone minutes; evenings and weekends, with unlimited cell phone minutes, the cell phone is my chosen device. My landline is only occasionally used to make local calls, and rarely to send or receive a fax; financially, with such little actual use, my landline is becoming an expensive anachronism. When traveling, I have sometimes taken my MagicJack with me to use to make local phone calls from the internet in my hotel room, without expensive hotel phone charges, or consuming prime cell phone minutes.

Mostly, I have been happy with my MagicJack. I have the base unit of a multi-handset cordless phone plugged into it, which allows us to use the MagicJack throughout the house, with cordless handsets in most rooms. My only issues with it have been that it takes a lot of

time to load after I boot my computer, and that the computer must be on in order for it to function, as it must be connected to an active and powered USB port in order to work. Since I turn my computer off when I am not using it, the MagicJack is unavailable, unless I boot my computer. Other than that, the MagicJack works well, offers unlimited local and long distance calling, was extremely easy to install and setup, and does everything that it is advertised to do, for a very low cost (\$39.95 for the device and the first year's service, \$19.95 per year thereafter – that is the advertised \$1.70 per month).

In July, a lesser known competitor, NetTalk (www.nettalk.com), released its second model of a competing device, the NetTalk DUO. Just like the MagicJack, the NetTalk DUO is very small (2.7 inch x 1.5 inch x 0.9 inch), extremely easy to setup, requires a broadband internet source, and has a phone jack which can connect to any standard corded or cordless phone. Similarly, the NetTalk DUO offers unlimited local and long distance calls to the U.S. and Canada, at a low fixed price.

Where the NetTalk DUO primarily differs from the MagicJack, is that it can connect directly to a broadband router, and does not require a connection to a computer. Since a router connected to a broadband service is typically always on, the NetTalk DUO is also always on, providing 24/7 VoIP service, without the need to have a booted computer. As long as there is a functional router, there is actually no need to even have a computer connected to the internet in order to use the NetTalk DUO. For those cases where there is broadband internet service but no router, such as in a hotel room, internet cafe, hotspot, college dorm room, or other such location, the NetTalk DUO also has the ability to connect to the USB port on a computer, just like the MagicJack. Apparently the “DUO” in the NetTalk moniker means it has the ability to connect via two methods; USB or router. The NetTalk DUO comes complete with all necessary cables, and an AC adapter.

This enhanced functionality comes at a price, though not a very high one. The NetTalk DUO sells for \$69.95, and includes the first year of unlimited local and long distance phone service; subsequent phone service is \$29.95 per year, or about \$2.50 per month. Even though the device itself is \$30 more than the MagicJack, and the subsequent second year of service is \$10 more (per year, not per month), there have been some pundits who have claimed that the NetTalk Duo is actually less expensive to operate than a MagicJack, when energy savings are considered. Since the NetTalk DUO does not require that a computer be turned on, the extra 80 cent additional monthly cost of the NetTalk DUO (less than 3 cents additional per day) would be more than made up in energy savings. I have not personally verified this claim, but it does not seem unreasonable.

The NetTalk DUO offers a free U.S. Phone number at activation, but according to some published reviews, local phone numbers are not yet available for all locations. According to a NetTalk support forum response, NetTalk will try to add more local numbers as they are requested. NetTalk also offers call waiting, 3 way calling, caller ID, free 411 (directory assistance), enhanced 911 service, priority call forwarding, and works with most fax machines to send and receive faxes (subject to the limitations of VoIP technology). Free voice mail service is included, as well as the capability to automatically send the voicemail message to the recipient via email. Calling other NetTalk customers anywhere in the world is free, and calls to other international destinations are deeply discounted. The NetTalk DUO can be used in a home or office environment as a replacement for traditional phone service. At present, phone number portability is not yet available, meaning that users of the NetTalk DUO will receive a new phone number, rather than be able to use an existing phone number. This lack of phone number portability may be changing, as most competitive services either already have or will shortly have phone number portability, so I will assume that NetTalk will have to follow suit. About the only con of replacing a traditional landline with NetTalk (or any other VoIP provider), is that NetTalk requires that there be power, and will not work during a power failure, or if the internet connection is otherwise unavailable; most landlines do not require an external power source. NetTalk does not require an annual contract, unlike some of the

other VoIP providers.

For those who travel internationally, the NetTalk DUO can be used anywhere there is a broadband connection, allowing the user to call the U.S. and Canada for free, as well as receive calls from the U.S. and Canada without the caller incurring international long distance charges.

NetTalk uses the trademarked expression “Fire your phone company!” If it works as well as my early experiences show, that may be a viable option.

WEBSITE:

<http://www.nettalk.com>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voip> <http://www.magicjack.com>

Outside the Lines

by Carla S. Cawfield

Houston Area League of Computer Users

SO! You Want a New Computer!

This article is intended as a guideline to how to select a computer, not specifically which computer to buy.

The Problem

After nine years, I decided to buy myself a notebook computer as a full-blown replacement for my desktop machine. For once in my lengthy computing life, there was almost nothing wrong with my old computer. The processor was still fast enough for all my applications; the main obsolescence was the 1.1 version of USB and the lack of a DVD burner. But the main reason was I want the portability of a notebook; I sometimes travel for several weeks at a time, and have tired of using public libraries and Internet cafés. Surfing and email are possible on my handheld device, but I can't manage all of my affairs this way.

The Process(or)

I started researching my purchase looking under “laptop,” and quickly discovered the industry no longer likes that term; the size categories are now “notebooks” or “netbooks” (effective alliteration enhances advertising? maintaining marketing momentum? busily building buzzwords?).

This will be my sixteenth computer. It will be my fourth portable. I have learned you have to do your homework to make the best selection and purchase. After decades of buying computers, the place to start is with your specifications. The machine I want is primarily for writing articles, managing my large photo and video library, financial and accounting maintenance, Internet & email, and watching DVDs & online television. What I don't need is a screamer of a gamester computer or video editing/movie-making platform. This means I don't need the hottest, fastest processor or maximum amount of memory available in portables; my “don't” list saved me about \$1,000.

Herewith, therefore, are the steps I went through, in mostly chronological order:

Step #1--re-familiarize myself with the state of the technology. Educational sources included...

- * Printed advertisements, both Sunday newspaper and magazines
- * Internet surfing for reviews and manufacturer's sites
- * Visiting the HAL-PC Build or Buy SIG on Wednesday afternoons
- * Talking with LPs (Learned Persons) at HAL-PC, another benefit of being a member

I attended a recent HAL-PC meeting wherein AMD gave a presentation comparing their current and upcoming lines of processors to Intel's. The AMD speaker had a great chart, showing the different families of processors side by side. However, when I was researching online, I was very disappointed in the charts and lack thereof at the Intel site. (Intel, work on this; your site is enormous and maze-like. Give us a way to easily compare your products.)

The processor I ended up selecting, Intel's i5-430m dual core, is a high mid-range mobile

processor, released just a few weeks before I bought my computer. It is optimized for speed, power conservation, and heat minimization.

Step #2—develop my specifications. This became a huge spreadsheet, with much minutiae and running eight pages long when printed out. The taped-together pages ran the length of the kitchen door I used as a posting site. My gut told me I would probably have to spend around \$800 to get a reasonable computer, but I was not hard-wired into a fixed budget. (In the end I spent \$799 plus tax, but that was either a happy co-incidence OR, I have a really smart gut.) The purpose of setting an amount was to have a starting point at which to compare machines; stated another way, at \$800 what is a great deal and what is a ripoff? This “wet finger in the air” analysis showed me the following computers were typically available:

- * Processor = Intel Core i5-430M dual core; speed is 2.26GHz
- * Memory = 4GB DDR3, expandable to 8GB
- * Hard drive = 500 GB, 5400 to 7200 rpm
- * Screen size = 15.6" to 17", resolution = 1366 X 768 or 1600 X 900, all LED backlit, except for Toshiba, who still uses LCD technology in their larger notebooks (see note below)
- * USB ports = 3 or 4; on some machines 1 port is also eSATA
- * Optical drive = DVD dual layer burner; some have LightScribe or LabelFlash also. Those units that offered BluRay were about \$100 more, even on sale
- * Battery life = 2.5 to 3 hours with 6 LithiumIons; one unit had 5 to 6 hours with 12 LithiumIons. (Most notebooks can have larger battery packs retrofitted, but at an additional cost of \$130 to \$150.)
- * Media reader = 5 in 1; accept various memory cards
- * Webcam = standard & fairly lousy
- * Keyboard = only full keyboards with separate number keypad will do
- * Operating system = Windows 7 Home Premium, 64 bit version
- * Other Software included = Microsoft Works, trial versions of Norton or other security programs, audio/video entertainment packages, etc. Basically, nothing worth having, so this was not a decision-influencing category. I have my own legal full-blown versions of applications, thank you very much.
- * Miscellaneous goodies on various machines = Harmon Kardon speakers (Toshiba); Altec Lansing speakers (Hewlett Packard); non-integrated video processor (Toshiba); RJ11 jacks (handy for faxes); built-in Bluetooth; PCI Express slots; Touchpad on/off switch; dual headphone jacks.

NOTE: About LCD and LED backlit display technology—my research led me to believe that the newer LED backlit technology is better for 2 reasons—1) LED uses less power, so battery usage is longer, and 2) it is brighter in outdoor-type environments, so the screen does not become as washed out.

TIP: One of my favorite Learned Persons at HAL-PC clued me in to the Windows Experience Index, available in Windows 7. This benchmarks any given machine in these categories—Processor, Memory (RAM), Graphics, Gaming graphics, and Hard Disk (data transfer rate). Each category is given its own score and is graded Olympics-style, with the maximum possible score being a 7.9. No mobile computer I looked at ever scored anything higher than a 6.7 in any category. Most notebooks have puny graphics processors when compared to desktop models, and thusly, notebooks also have puny graphics scores of about 4.6. To use the Windows Experience Index feature, select Start > Control Panel > All Control Panel Items > Performance Information and Tools.

Shoelather vs. Let Your Finger do the Shopping

Step #3—start shopping. I was pretty disappointed in the available online notebook reviews. None really got detailed about the pros and cons of various machines. They did varying degrees of shallow information about such things as the quality of the LCD display, realistic length of battery life, ease-of-use of keyboards, etc. When I went through a similar

drill two years ago before buying a new digital camera, I found much more useful material in the camera review sites. The best site for comparison charts = CompUSA.

So I went to the local stores, several times, with advertisements and legal pad in hand, to gather my own empirical data. Then back to the various manufacturers' websites to fill in my comparison-shopping spreadsheet with yet more data.

A sales/marketing pattern seemed to emerge. It looks like the major computer makers have partnered with the major retailers to "customize" notebooks for exclusive marketing rights. An example—a computer model catches your eye at Office Depot, Fry's, or CompUSA, just to pick on a few random stores. You wish to compare prices. That same computer may not be available anywhere else, only at that one retail chain, even if you websurf the world for online deals. This computer may be almost identical to a unit available at a competitor, but it will have one tiny little detail different, and also a different SKU number. I found this to be true on several machines by different computer makers, so it must be common and customary for the industry. So much for price guarantees, you say. It didn't really make that much difference in the end, because I tracked the sales and rebates for a couple of months, and good deals are available if you are observant and patient.

I am an avid online shopper; but in this case, I did not find any price advantages online, even with free shipping and no sales tax. So I bought at a sticks 'n bricks locale (in the event anything was broken on my new computer, being able to exchange it at a store is SOOO much easier than dealing with online returns).

Because I was not buying a computer on an emergency basis, I took advantage of rock bottom sales and rebates. I ended up actually bringing home 3 different machines during a 2 week time period; at one time I had \$2300 worth of notebooks on my credit card and living room floor, while I weighed the pros and cons of each, waiting for better sales and deals to emerge. Example—Fry's ads come out each Friday, and they have a 15 day return period on notebooks. So if you buy your desired computer on Thursday night at the end of a sale cycle, you then have 2 more weeks of opportunity for Fry's or another retailer to offer an even better deal. I also made sure all returns were made before the cutoff of my credit card billing cycle. As per my plan, I was successfully able to return 2 out of the 3 computers I brought home, and ended up with the unit I wanted at a good deal.

CAUTIONARY NOTE—Do NOT open the computer box unless you really are in love with that unit, as you either cannot return it at all, OR, you can return for about a 15% restocking fee, which is >\$100. Make sure you have the exact details of a given store's return policy BEFORE you make your purchase. WARNING—go back and reread this paragraph.

The Probables

About 12 similar computers seemed to fit my specs and were in stock in local stores. I took my own copy of a DVD movie in and test drove 11 of these units in the stores; the 12th did not have a demo model available, and the store was not willing to open a box for me. I ran the Windows Experience Index on all 11 machines; I was not able to find this info any other way. It is not part of the online data available. Wining down through the dozen yielded the three machines I brought home. These 3 computers all have the specifications as stated up in Step #2, so I will only mention the differences.

Computer #1 = Toshiba A505-S6020, MSRP of \$899, net price of \$699. Reasonable WinExpIndex scores.

Pros =

1. killer Harman Kardon speakers
2. nVidia graphics card, which led to a graphics score of 5.0, the highest in the bunch

Cons =

1. Display = LCD, not LED
2. Only 2.0 to 2.5 hour battery life
3. No built-in Bluetooth
4. Tons of extra software goodies. Note that I list this as a "con", as these are stripped

versions of programs, often with time bombs. Mostly they just crap up your Windows registry and machine.

Computer #2 = Gateway NV5935u; MSRP of \$699, net price of \$649. Reasonable WinExpIndex scores.

Pros =

1. 1600 X 900 LED display
2. Fingerprint resistant keyboard
3. RJ 11 jack
4. 4 hour battery life

Cons =

1. No built-in Bluetooth
2. No PCI Express slot
3. This was the only machine I was not able to play with in the store, no demo unit available.

Computer #3 = Hewlett Packard Pavilion dv6-2170us. MSRP of \$899, net price of \$749. Highest WinExpIndex scores.

Pros =

1. Superbright LED display
2. The 500 GB hard drive has the fastest speed at 7200 rpm
3. Entertainment engineering, including dual headphone jacks (tested—no loss of volume with both jacks in use.)
4. Altec Lansing speakers (although they sound puny to me)
5. Built-in Bluetooth
6. PCI Express slot
7. And lastly, but most importantly, 6 hour battery life!!!! DEAL MAKER!!!!

Cons =

1. No RJ 11 jack, so no built-in fax capability. (This can be remedied with a cheapo USB add-on.)
2. No BluRay.
3. Weight = about 7 lbs. This is due to #7 above, the lovely longer battery life. I am not a road warrior anymore, so I don't really care how much it weighs. I can easily carry 7 lbs. around my house.
4. Interfering HP software that wants to hold my hand all the time with pop-ups and assistance.

Added surprise bonus inside—as mentioned in #3 under Pros, this is an Entertainment unit, so it comes with its own teensy little DVD and music remote control. This is actually important to me—remember part of my original requirements was for a machine to watch DVDs and online television. Mission accomplished!

In the end, I took back the #1 Toshiba unit because of the lack of LED screen. Otherwise, it is a good unit with great speakers. My real choice was between the #2 Gateway and the #3 HP for \$100 more. I opted for the HP because of the enhanced battery life, built-in Bluetooth, and dual headphone jacks.

NOTE: Kudos to Hewlett Packard for using ALL recyclable packing materials—all recycled cardboard inside and out, and not a scrap of Styrofoam to be found.

The Procedures

Now that I had finally made a decision and taken all extra computers back to the store, I was ready to open the box and get going. I have learned that putting a new computer in service is just about as painful and laborious as giving birth, and I am NOT kidding. You have to go slow and methodically.

Step #4. Never, ever hook a virgin computer up to the Internet without verifying that anti-virus software and a firewall are current and completely installed. You may need access to another broken-in computer to download security files. Here is where your membership in

HAL-PC will save you. Go to the Friday morning PC Upgrade and Troubleshooting SIG for assistance in these security matters. I have used this group and other gurus at HAL-PC for many of my sixteen computers over the years. Can't live without them. Best \$50 per year I ever spent.

TIP: As this computer unit is WiFi capable, I also took my router down to the Friday morning SIG. We were able to configure both the computer and the router and get them connected wirelessly. This was a huge help, as my router had previously been "fixed" by the kids who came to visit my house; they had it totally fouled up and unusable.

Step #5—Start loading my software packages. This includes the usuals—Microsoft Office Suite, Quicken, Palm Desktop for my handheld device. Then load the 20 or so icons that I use frequently onto the desktop.

TIP: If you like a lot of icons on your desktop, for your background wallpaper, choose a picture that has a lot of blank space around the edges, sort of like a frame. The photo I use is a family group portrait with an uncluttered background. The icons are arranged along the sides and top.

Step #6—let 'er rip. I began methodically checking out the various ports and devices. This includes such areas as all USB ports, external monitor, WiFi, Bluetooth, DVD burner, webcam & mic, both headphone ports, touchpad on/off switch, etc. My checkout list included testing the battery life; I got up to about 5.5 hours before I plugged back into external electricity. Even with the beautiful screen on this notebook, my old external desktop monitor still delivers a superior resolution, and external speakers are a must.

Step #7—transfer data from old computer to new. This would have been super slow using the USB 1.1 on my old desktop computer. Plus, I wanted to harvest the two perfectly good desktop hard drives and use them as my new backup drives. So I used a handy little peripheral device, an external hard drive box. Specifically, it is a Sabrent SATA/IDE Hard Drive Aluminum Enclosure, High Speed USB 2.0 & eSATA Interface, Plug 'n Play, hot swappable, Item # ECS – STU35K, sku = 88218 00070 5, street price about \$27. The beauty of this device is you can temporarily swap in whatever 3.5" hard drive you desire.

What I actually did was carefully take my D: data drive out of my old desktop computer, load it into the Sabrent, plug it into a USB 2.0 port on my new computer and Voila! All my data directories and files were visible and available for installing. I moved 33 gigabytes of data in a little more than 30 minutes.

TIP: Use your old working hard drives as backup drives using an external device like the Sabrent. Store them away from your computer, and preferably in a water- and fire-proof safe or safe deposit box at a bank. This accomplishes two things—1) in the event your computer is stolen, the thieves won't have taken your only copy of your data; and 2) in the event of a flood or fire, you won't have lost your only copy of your data. (If you think this sounds like overkill, your house just hasn't flooded yet.)

Conclusion

I had two goals in mind when purchasing a new laptop—I want to sit in bed and write stories, and I want to sit in bed and watch movies and online television. Considering that I wrote this lengthy article while sitting in bed, and considering that I got caught up on some recently-missed television shows online I have achieved success! I am very happy with my choice of notebook computer.

TIP: Thanks to the HAL-PC homepage, I learned that on Earth Day the local Toshiba plant was accepting electronics for responsible recycling. I had a lot of old hard drives and non-working computers lying around that I did not want to throw into a landfill. A friend and I filled the bed of a large pickup truck with junk computers, broken VCRs, rusted stereo components, & one flooded boombox and delivered all this trash to Toshiba. I estimate the original purchase value of all this junk was about \$15K. We did get a reusable cloth grocery bag in exchange. Thank you, HAL-PC, for this tip. Keep 'em coming!

Carla Cawfield is a long-term HAL-PC member and volunteer. Since her car was flooded under 7 feet of water

Probably the Best Free Security List in the World (Website)

by Ira Wilsker

In a previous column I wrote about “Gizmo’s Freeware”, a very popular site that compiles lists of free software, categorizes thousands of freeware titles, tests, and rates much of the available freeware. Unlike many of the other freeware websites, according to Gizmo himself, “Gizmo’s Freeware is a non-commercial community website staffed entirely by volunteers. ... The best freeware programs are as good as or better than their commercial counterparts but finding the most appropriate program can be challenging. Sure, there are dozens of freeware download sites on the web, but few of these actually help you select the best program for your needs. That’s what we do here. No downloads, just honest advice and useful guidance. It’s honest because this is a community-based site staffed by volunteers and we have no commercial affiliations.”

One of the most frequently asked questions that I receive requests information and recommendations about free security software. Computer users often seem to be on the lookout for that gem of a free program that will protect their computers from threats. I have reviewed and written about several freeware security programs, some of which I can personally recommend, but I must candidly admit that I have not tried all of the available titles. This is where Gizmo shines, in that a knowledgeable community of users has tried all of the programs listed, and posted their evaluations and recommendations. What is more startling, is that this list is remarkably up to date, in that new releases and upgrades appear on a daily basis. Gizmo’s “Probably the Best Free Security List in the World” is available online at www.techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm. This comprehensive list is indexed into 25 security categories ranging from real-time protection, tools for virus removal, firewalls, browser security, network and system monitoring, system cleaning, system rescue, data recovery, and several other types of security software. One interesting component in the index is “Doing time in jail” where software is listed that is not recommended for specific reasons; while one title “in jail” is a rogue software product, all of the other inmates listed are the very popular IObit series of products. Sometime ago there was a controversy that alleged that IObit had pirated parts of the MalwareBytes malware signature database, and incorporated those signatures into the IObit security software, a dispute that has not been totally resolved. Another noteworthy feature on this Gizmo list is that security software that is compatible with the increasingly more common 64 bit operating systems (Vista 64 and Windows 7-64) is clearly labeled, such that 64 bit users can be sure to get the most compatible software.

In the early days of computing, only antivirus software was considered necessary; later, a firewall and anti-spyware software became essential components of PC security. Today, there are still many free-standing antivirus programs available, both commercial and freeware. Sadly, spyware and other types of malware have eclipsed viruses as the primary threats to computing security, such that a free standing antivirus only product, no matter how good it is at protecting from viruses, does not give adequate protection from contemporary threats. Most programs currently available that are listed as “antivirus” also provide some degree of spyware protection. Gizmo currently lists and rates over a dozen free antivirus programs that offer real-time protection. Popular titles that are reviewed and rated on Gizmo include Avast!, AVG, Microsoft Security Essentials, Panda Cloud, and Avira. Several other less known free antivirus products are also listed.

Since many of the antivirus utilities only provide limited protection from other types of malware, it will likely be necessary to run an anti-malware utility along with an antivirus program. Gizmo lists six free antimalware programs that run alongside antivirus software,

providing an extra level of protection.

A firewall should prevent unauthorized access to the computer from across the internet, and also prevent rogue programs that may have made it onto the computer from sending data to persons unknown. Gizmo lists over a dozen free firewall products that include the free versions (often of limited capability) of commercial firewalls, totally free firewalls, and utilities that can improve the firewalls incorporated in most modern versions of Windows.

In commercial (pay) security products, my personal choices are the comprehensive security suites offered by the major security companies like TrendMicro, Kaspersky, Norton, and McAfee. For the many who prefer free security suites, compound utilities that include integrated antivirus, anti-malware, and firewall software, Gizmo has tested and rated two free security suites, Comodo Internet Security and Forticlient. I have had some experience with the free Comodo Internet Security (www.comodo.com/home/internet-security/free-internet-security.php) and found it a capable and comprehensive security suite; the only factor against the free Comodo suite is that some people question Comodo's privacy policies.

Many of the malware threats in current circulation are intended to penetrate and neutralize the security software that is installed on the computer, and this includes both commercial and free security software. Some published reports have indicated that currently updated antivirus and anti-malware products can only detect about one-half of the latest threats, so it is often necessary to perform a security scan with a third party product to dramatically improve the detection and removal of any malware that may have penetrated the computers' defenses. Gizmo lists over a dozen free antivirus scanners, nine anti-malware (anti-spyware) scanners, eight portable antimalware scanners that can be run from a USB or similar external drive, eight free utilities to create bootable CDs that can detect and kill infections, a dozen rootkit detectors (rootkits are often hidden from traditional virus and malware scans), and a variety of other free detection and removal utilities. The user of free detection software should be aware that while most of the free titles will both detect and remove malware, there are some products that are free while in the detection mode, but then have a fee for the removal component. For those who prefer to use an online scanner rather than a software product, Gizmo lists a dozen free online scanners. Just like the software scanners, while most of the online scanners will both detect and delete malware, a few only detect malware, and require the use of a paid service to remove the malware. My personal favorite free online scanner and killer is TrendMicro's Housecall, at housecall.antivirus.com.

Gizmo lists dozens of other free utilities, including anti-phishing (online identity theft protection), link scanning (protection from dangerous websites), privacy utilities, cookie managers, password managers, keystroke scramblers (protect from key logging spyware), and many other security utilities. While I have not seen all of the other security software list websites, of those that I have viewed, Gizmo's "Probably the Best Free Security List in the World" may have rightly earned its self-described moniker.

WEBSITE:

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm>

<http://www.techsupportalert.com>

<http://www.comodo.com/home/internet-security/free-internet-security.php>

Society News

by Steve Staub

I'd like to thank everyone who attended the picnic. The food was excellent and Al Saia, the cook did a great job. The 25 members and guests made it a huge success. Our auction had everything from a laptop to wine and did very well.

Our September meeting is at the Brighton Library with Bill Statt discussing composition in digital photography. We still need a SIG leader for digital photography.

