

The Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

# MONITOR

Vol. 29, No. 2

February 2011

Next Meeting  
Tuesday, February 8

Jeopardy

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## Technology-2010 Year in Review

by Ira Wilsker

**A**s usual, the state of computing technology has been very dynamic, and what was state of the art in much of 2010 will be archaic by this time in 2011. This week I am going to do a quick review of what I wrote about in 2010, and what has changed since my original column.

In my column dated January 1, 2010 I wrote about "What You Need for that New Christmas Computer." While most of the recommendations made in that column hold true,

today I would revise a few of those recommendations. While some things did not dramatically change, such as the need for a good surge suppressor with a UL1449 rating (not just a simple power strip), or a good protective case for that new laptop or notebook computer, some things did change, such as the necessity for comprehensive security software.

In that January 2010 column I wrote about some free antivirus software from AVG, AVAST, Panda's then new CloudAntivirus, and the free version of Zone Alarm firewall. I also suggested that users consider Microsoft's free "Security Essentials" as a combination antivirus and antispyware product. Since that column a year ago, all five of these popular products have come out with new versions of their software, generally increasing speed, performance, and protection. While all of those products are still available as free versions, all but the Microsoft Security Essentials are also available as paid commercial versions with additional benefits and enhancements.

If I were to write that same column today, I would make a different security recommendation, as the threat landscape has changed dramatically over the past year. Computer viruses, while still present and posing serious threats, are not the primary security threat as they had been in the past; now the most common threats are Trojans, spyware, keyloggers, hijackers, and other such non-virus threats. At this time last year, there were about 10 million known malware threats, but as I type this, one of the leading cyber security services now lists almost 19 million malware threats, about double the number this time last year. An analysis of those threats indicates that while thousands of new viruses and variants have appeared in 2010, millions of other new threats have evolved, mostly in the realm of spyware, keyloggers, and hijackers. Much of the newer malware in circulation is intended to steal the user's identity such as user names, passwords, banking information, credit card numbers, and other sensitive personal information that has significant financial value to a criminal. To a lesser extent, but still very common today, is malware that hijacks and turns your computer into a zombie, sending out countless spam emails, or even engaging in cyber terrorism where your computer, along with thousands of other computers, simultaneously attack a specific server on remote command, crippling it or shutting it down. Also in the past year, another type of security threat has become endemic, and that is extortion ware, a type of rogue software that hijacks your computer and by way of a popup, (falsely) informs you that your computer is infected with hundreds of viruses and other types of malware, and that you must pay the scammer to register your rogue software to remove the malware. If you consent, you are sending your credit card information to a cyber criminal, probably in Russia. Since the security threat has changed, so has the need for more comprehensive security software than the simple antivirus software that had been adequate in the past.

Since the simple antivirus software by itself is no longer adequate to provide comprehensive security protection, it is now more appropriate to install a complete security suite rather than just one of the popular antivirus programs. In my December 17, 2010 column I wrote about Agnitum's new free security suite, Outpost Security Suite Free (free .agnitum.com). This integrated free security suite (paid commercial version also available) has everything that the typical user would need to protect his computer. Outpost Security Suite Free has excellent antivirus protection, antispyware protection, a world class firewall, and other protection modules that can provide reasonable security, and protect the user from most

forms of malware. On October 8, 2010, I wrote about Trend Micro's new comprehensive commercial security suite, TrendMicro Titanium Maximum Security. This suite contains extremely comprehensive modes of protection, but is unusual in that it does not significantly degrade performance, and what is most unusual is that there is no "update" button, in that it is continuously updated using the new cloud computing technology. Simply, TrendMicro Titanium Maximum Security is always up to date in terms of malware protection, and there are no signature updates to schedule or manually download, because the protection is transparently and silently kept up to date. If I had a new Christmas computer, and I wanted to use a security suite, I would choose either Outpost Security Suite Free, or the commercial TrendMicro Titanium Maximum Security for my protection from cyber threats.

Much has happened in terms of computing over the past year; faster new processors are still frequently being introduced and put into production, pushing yesterday's new "gee whiz" processors into bargain priced computers, or into the discontinued clearance bargain bin. Hard drives have become larger in capacity, faster, and cheaper. A year ago a terabyte (1T) hard drive (1024 gigabytes) was uncommon and expensive, but today they are available for as little as \$50, with 1.5T and 2T drives becoming readily available, and priced in the \$100 range. Newly released video cards are becoming faster and more powerful, with many supporting HD video, and capable of simultaneously running a monitor and an HDTV. This has expanded the demand for streaming media, including on demand HD movies from Netflix, Amazon, and other providers, negating the need to order and return DVD discs via the mail. On a recent trip to visit my daughter's family, I watched videos on my computer streaming from Netflix, connected to her 802.11N wireless router. She watches streaming Netflix videos directly on her HDTV, which is connected to her broadband internet. The distinctions between computers and home entertainment are blurring, as systems become integrated, bring both computing and entertainment together on a big screen TV.

If this is just a microcosm of what has happened to home technology in 2010, I eagerly await what we will see in 2011.

## RFID Chips - Are They Secure?

by Bob Rankin

**R** FID Enhanced Driver's License Radio-frequency identification or RFID chips are commonly embedded in merchandise these days to prevent shoplifting. Two more recent trends involve RFID chips in personal identification cards and payment cards: driver's licenses, passports, social services benefits cards, and debit cards such as Mastercard Paypass. These applications have raised alarms among security researchers.



RFID works by broadcasting information stored on a chip via short-range radio signals. By "short range," we mean about a few inches. An RFID receiver plucks the chip's data out of the airwaves when you wave your card near it, or tap the card on the receiver. No more swiping a card, entering a PIN, or punching lots of buttons. Purchases and passport checks go much faster. But what about security?

The rumor that "walk-by" hackers armed with inexpensive receivers could pluck your RFID

cards' data out of the air without even touching you is real. It's demonstrated in this YouTube video from 2009. But look closely at what the hacker got: a cryptic string of numbers and digits, not your name, photograph, Social Security Number, etc.

"There is no personal information written to the RFID chip. This chip points to a stored record in secure government databases," the U. S. State Dept. emphasizes on its e-passport card Web page. The RFID chip bears only an index key that is used to look up your passport record in some government server. The Immigration agent has the password that grants access to that database; hackers cannot access your passport data with what's stored on the e-passport card!

But with your e-passport index key, argue the alarmists, someone could program a counterfeit e-passport card to impersonate you. Well, yeah, if he happens to look just like the photograph of you that's retrieved from that secure database and displayed to the Immigration agent. Over 2.7 million U. S. e-passport cards have been issued since 2007, and other countries use RFID e-passports too. There have been no reports of identities stolen this way.

Similarly, "enhanced driver's licenses" (also called EDLs or EIDs) with RFID chips don't contain any personal information. A unique reference number stored on the card can be used to identify you when you're at a border crossing station, in lieu of an American passport when traveling to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.

### **Do You Need a Tinfoil Wallet?**

Nonetheless, there's a brisk business in metal foil-lined wallets for e-passports, driver's licenses, and other personal identification cards equipped with RFID chips. The US State Department, as well as states that issue EDLs even provide a free foil-lined jacket just to satisfy privacy concerns.

Mastercard Paypass and other forthcoming payment cards with RFID chips embedded in them are simultaneously more secure and less secure than traditional payment cards. Yes, a hacker who gets within touching distance of your unshielded Paypass card can read its data without your knowledge. On the other hand, the card never leaves your hand. How many times per week do you hand a credit card to a waiter who disappears for a few minutes, long enough to copy all the data he needs for an online spending spree?

Another protection offered by Mastercard is the requirement of a handwritten signature for Paypass purchases of more than \$50. So Paypass is convenient for a quick cup of coffee or fast food lunch, but works just like a regular credit card for more expensive purchases. The same charge-dispute policies that protect you against fraudulent charges on other cards apply to Paypass, too.

RFID chips pose no greater identity theft risk than other identification documents as long as they don't store any personal identification data. But you may feel better with a tinfoil-lined wallet, and you can make your own pretty easily. Of course, you'll also need a tinfoil hat to avoid the government's mind control rays, but that's another topic altogether.

# Software Review: System Mechanic v10

by Mark Mattson

*Computer Users of Erie, PA*

There's been many reviews done in these pages over the years, but I can't remember seeing one before for a utility suite such as the one covered this time around.

There are several popular ones on the market currently, but this is the most popular one, with a base of 23 million users according to the latest statistics. I am speaking of course, of System Mechanic.

This 12 year-old product is now at version 10, the most current release available, brand-new for this year. It's an integrated collection of system tune-up and configuration tools, giving you the ability to repair problems and optimize your entire computer from one central location.

The application is available to those users that run Windows XP, Vista and 7. Support for older versions is not available with this release. You also need Internet Explorer v6 or later, 30Mb of hard drive space for installation, and an Internet connection for license activation. Delivery is via download from the 1010 website (a 19Mb file). At the present time, it is on special pricing of \$39.95, a \$10 savings. This allows you to install the product on all your HOME PCs via the Whole Home licensing concept, using the same license key. However, if any of them are used for business, you need to follow their Business Licensing regulations.

If you'd rather have a boxed product complete with disc, you may purchase the package at Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Target, and several other popular retailers (see their website home page at [www.iolo.com](http://www.iolo.com) for the list).

So what is System Mechanic? It is an integrated suite of utilities and applications that allow you to tune up and repair problems on your computer system that cause slow-downs, crashes, and poor performance.

There are several ways to run the program. The first, which is the way most users (especially novice ones) is to run the system Analyzer, and follow the recommendations for repairs and optimizations that are given. This gives you the most comprehensive and automatic way to scan your system, finding the most problems with the least amount of effort on your part.

The other way, which more advanced users will find useful, is to run the individual utilities on an as-needed basis, giving you more control over what is performed on your computer.

When you first run the program, you are presented with the Dashboard, which is where you perform all major system operations:

When the Analysis is complete, you are presented with a report of the problems that were found:

Besides the usual cleanup tools, which remove system clutter such as temp files and internet cache files, you'll find those that enhance performance in other ways: defragmenters for the registry and your drives, registry cleaner, program optimization (Defrag the program itself, to keep all parts together on the drive ... which is different from the drive defrag utility).

There are tools that analyze your startup and give you the opportunity to disable unneeded programs to conserve memory and resources.

There are also utilities that analyze and tune your Internet connection settings, boosting your web surfing and downloading experiences. And for even more powerful tuning and repair

options, run the all-in-one tools in the so-named category to further improve your system.

I have been testing and using this suite on my personal systems here at home for the past couple of months, testing and tweaking different areas to improve my systems.

So far, everything has worked as it should. With only one exception.

There is a tool called Drive Medic that you find in the toolbox. As part of my testing, I ran it, and was surprised by the results, especially on my wife's machine.

Drive Medic is a tool similar to the Microsoft CHKDSK utility, that checks and repairs errors on your hard drive, such as bad sectors, corrupt files, and so forth.

I had just replaced one of the internal drives in this machine, and was surprised to find Drive Medic reporting bad sectors on it. I ran it, and it kept reporting bad sectors and corrupt files on the drive. Subsequent repairs continued, but eventually the drive became so corrupted, I was forced to do a low level format on it, and reload the system from scratch.

The drive in question was, as I mentioned, a brand-new 500GB Western Digital IDE drive. I ran the WD utilities on it, and it reported absolutely no errors present. But, again, when I got the system rebuilt, Drive Medic again reported bad areas on the disk.

In an effort to give 1010 tech support as much information on this problem as possible, I ran Drive Medic on my other two machines here, and had similar results: errors reported on all drives, while the utilities from the drive manufacturers (both WD and Seagate), show nothing wrong at all with the drives.

After contacting support, I was asked to try running Drive Medic from the rescue disk you can create from inside System Mechanic. This disk tests and repairs (if needed) the Master Boot Record and file tables on your drives, in case your system become totally unusable and can't be booted.

Running this test showed no problems with the MBR and file table, but did nothing to scan the drive itself for errors ... which I found strange.

I am currently waiting for a response from 1010 support about this problem, but have heard nothing for over two weeks now. Probably due to the holidays.

Overall, System Mechanic v10 is a very useful set of tools for maintaining and tuning your computer. It performs a wide variety of tests, and can increase performance slightly or greatly, depending on your particular machine's circumstances.

Is it worth the price? See for yourself. Download the free trial and give it a whirl on your system. But until the Drive Medic issue is fixed, I strongly advise against using it on your system. Stick with the Microsoft Windows-resident drive check utility to be safe. For more information on System Mechanic, visit the 1010 website at [www.iolo.com](http://www.iolo.com).

*Reprinted from the January 2011 issue of Horizon, newsletter of the Computer Users of Erie, PA. Mark Mattson is editor of the newsletter.*

## Malware, Viruses, Trojans Defined

by Ira Wilsker

**I**n the past week, I was called upon four more times to clean malware off of infected computers. One user had a major name brand antivirus program installed, running, and updated and could not understand how the malware had penetrated his antivirus software and contaminated his computer. He had purchased the antivirus software last fall from a big

box electronics store based on the recommendations of a salesperson. He had been told that this particular brand of security software was the best as it was their top seller, and that antivirus software was all that he really needed.

Based on that recommendation he plopped his hard earned money on the counter, went home, installed it, updated it, and blissfully surfed the internet, opened email attachments, downloaded software and music, and had just a jolly good time online until his computer gradually slowed to a crawl, and friends informed him that they were receiving spam emails from him. This user was perplexed, as his antivirus software was running, and indicated that it was updating several times a day.

He just could not understand how 90 different malware programs had infected his computer. His problem started when he purchased inadequate security software; while the product he bought was excellent at protecting his computer from viruses, and some Trojans and spyware, it did not offer the all-inclusive protection of the comprehensive security suite offered by that publisher (and others as well) that would have only cost him a few dollars more.

There is a common misconception in user circles that viruses are the primary computing threat, as users have had heard about viruses for several years. Today, viruses are present, but a relatively minor threat in terms of prevalence. I did a quick analysis of the most common new threats recently listed by TrendMicro, and found that viruses only made up 4% of the new significant threats to our computing security. On the other end of the spectrum, Trojans made up 42% of the commonly seen new threats, worms were at 14%, backdoors at 14%, web based threats were at 6%, java script malware was at 6%, 4% were hacking utilities, 2% adware, and about 8% other threats.

It is obvious that protective software that protects the computer primarily from viruses is failing to protect the user from the majority of contemporary threats; it is precisely this fact that led to this user's infected computer, despite his premium quality antivirus software. A lot of users have a misconception about the common threats in circulation, believing that they are generically all viruses, but, as I saw in this case, this blissful ignorance may lead to a computing nightmare.

While not necessary to use a computer, it would likely be beneficial for computer users to be aware of the different threat groups that can impact our computing. According to Wikipedia, "A computer virus is a computer program that can copy itself and infect a computer." Many viruses attach themselves to legitimate programs or data files on the infected computer. The fact that a computer virus can copy itself to infect other computers is what makes it different from other types of malware, for which viruses are commonly confused. Viruses can be spread through digital media (USB drives, CD or DVD discs, and floppy discs) or through network connections that the virus can use to copy itself to other attached computers.

Once a virus has infected a computer it may perform a variety of tasks as programmed by its author. Viruses may damage the data on a hard drive or degrade the performance of the computer. Some of the viruses are stealthy and their effect may not be noticeable by the user, as the viruses do their damage in the background. Some viruses are functionally benign, other than they reproduce themselves countless times on the infected hard drive, until they consume

all of the free space on the hard drive.

Computer worms are a malicious computer program that wriggles through computer networks sending copies of itself to other computers attached to the network. Most worms are free standing programs, and are commonly programmed to spread themselves through the network without any action by the user. Most worms have an explicit nefarious function such as deleting files on the infected computer, or encrypting critical files, only releasing them after an extortion payment is made to the cyber criminal.

Some worms open a backdoor into the computer that will enable the creator of the worm to take remote control of the computer, converting the computer into a "zombie" under his control, which can be used to generate revenue for the originator of the worm by sending spam mail from the infected computer, with the spam fees collected going to the author of the worm. Some worms are used to create a zombie network of computers, also called a "botnet", where the compromised computers can be used to launch directed cyber attacks on other computers or networks, in an act of cyber terrorism.

For those who are aware of the epic "Helen of Troy" of Greek mythology, the term "Trojan Horse" means an object looks like it serves one purpose, but really has an unobvious, usually nefarious, purpose. Cisco, the networking company, describes a Trojan as, "It is a harmful piece of software that looks legitimate. Users are typically tricked into loading and executing it on their systems." In cyber speak, a Trojan Horse, typically shortened to the simple moniker "Trojan" is a program that appears to have a useful function, but after being installed by the user, the Trojan may be used to perform other undesirable functions. Some Trojans are money makers for their authors because they place paid (and usually unwanted) pop up advertisements (Adware) on the infected computer, redirect web searches, or shift online purchases to a seller not of the buyer's choice without his knowledge. Some Trojans are keyloggers, which are commonly used for identity theft, or to give unauthorized users access to a computer system. Trojans are often spread through intentionally downloaded software, surreptitiously bundled with another often legitimate program, from email attachments, and purloined websites with executable content (ActiveX is sometimes used for this). Some Trojans can be installed on the target computer by way of code written in Java, or a Java script, that when executed, implants the harmful content on the victim computer.

One of the more recent and costly types of malware to attack our computers is generically referred to as "Rogue Antivirus Software," which is usually implanted on the victim's computer by a Trojan. There are thousands of these rogue programs in current circulation, infecting millions of computers at any given time. Rogue antivirus is sometimes installed by the user using "social engineering" tactics, which tricks the user into clicking on something that installs the rogue software.

Some of the common lures to ensnare the user into loading rogue software on the computer are offers for free screen savers, toolbars, utilities to play specific video formats (often attached to an email), sham online security scanners, contaminated PDF files, insecure web browsers, and other vectors. The common thread of this rogue software is an authentic looking popup that informs the user that his computer is (falsely) infected with hundreds of viruses and Trojans, and for a fee it will clean the computer. These popups which will not permanently close will typically hijack the computer, destroy the installed legitimate security software,



prevent access to online services that can kill it, prevent cleaning utilities from executing, and otherwise take control of the computer until the user pays a fee, typically \$30 to \$70.

This fee is to be paid by credit card or other online payment service to a website that looks legitimate, but is really a complete scam. Not just will the rogue software not clean the computer of the pseudo infections after the fee is paid, but now a cyber criminal, often in Russia, has the user's credit card information. It is not uncommon for that same credit card information to promptly be sold on illicit websites, and to have substantial unauthorized charges appear on the compromised credit card account.

While there are many other cyber threats out there, those listed above are among the most commonly encountered by users. The traditional antivirus software will protect from some of the threats listed, but not all of them; this enhanced security capability is in the purview of the comprehensive security suite, or a combination of different types of individual security utilities, and not the free standing antivirus program. This is explicitly why I currently recommend a high quality integrated security suite, rather than an antivirus program. There are several good commercial security suites available, as well as a few free security suites. Just be aware that antivirus software by itself is inadequate to protect against today's contemporary cyber security threats.

#### Websites;

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malware>

<http://www.ilovefreesoftware.com/08/featured/definon-of-various-security-related-terms.html>

<http://lifelacker.com/5560443/whats-the-difference-between-viruses-trojans-worms-and-other-malware>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_virus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus)

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan\\_horse\\_\(computing\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan_horse_(computing))

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rootkit>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backdoor\\_\(computing\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backdoor_(computing))

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogue\\_antivirus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogue_antivirus)

[http://us.trendmicro.com/imperia/md/content/us/trendwatch/researchandanalysis/12\\_december\\_2010\\_threat\\_roundup\\_\\_010711\\_.pdf](http://us.trendmicro.com/imperia/md/content/us/trendwatch/researchandanalysis/12_december_2010_threat_roundup__010711_.pdf)

## The 2011 I'd Like to See

by Harry McCracken

**T**his newsletter is the last significant bit of Technologizer content I plan to write in 2010. I've spent some time looking backward already—here and here, for instance. In this newsletter, I'd like to look forward—but instead of engaging in the dangerous sport of making predictions, I'm just going to share a few tech-related things I'd *like* to see happen in 2011. (If half of them come to pass, I'll be startled and thrilled.)

### Good 3D TV, No Glasses Required

I've given up on ever being truly impressed with any form of 3D TV that involves glasses—sitting in your own home with a pair of funny spectacles on is just too unnatural. Decent 3D without glasses is an even bigger challenge, but it's worth tackling. We're going to see multiple attempts this year – starting next week at the Consumer Electronics Show – and while I'm

skeptical that any of them will be truly impressive, I hope I'm blissfully unaware of some breakthrough that's nearly ready for your living room and mine.

### **An Unexpectedly Exciting Windows 8**

Rumor has it that Steve Ballmer may provide a peek at Windows 8 during his CES keynote. Even if he doesn't, it's a safe bet that we'll get plenty of details on the upgrade before 2011 is over. I was happy that Windows 7 focused on low-key improvements rather than knockout new features. But it would be pretty cool if Microsoft came up with genuinely surprising stuff for Windows 8 – changes which reflect, as Apple's Lion does, a desire to build an OS that'll still be relevant in a decade or so.

### **An Unexpectedly Laid-Back Apple**

Overall, Apple loosened up its micro-managing approach to the iPhone/iPad App Store in 2010, but only by a little. I'd love to see it go further in 2011, by allowing more sorts of apps to reach iPhone and iPad owners—especially ones which allow consumers to customize their experiences in ways that Apple now prohibits. I think that competition--from the Web as much as from Android and other OSes--will eventually lead the company to decide that loosening up is a prudent business decision. Why not get ahead of curve?

### **A Truce in the Streaming-Video Wars**

Hollywood's resistance to let consumers stream shows over the Internet to an HDTV has left the new Apple TV looking incomplete. And it's pretty much ruined the whole idea of Google TV. It's as if the Beatles were in charge. I don't expect everything from prime-time to be available on streaming boxes for free any time soon, but I'd like to see more evidence that content owners are thinking about the future rather than hunkering down.

### **An Amazing Tablet That Isn't an iPad**

2010 may have been the first year that tablets mattered, but nine months after the iPad hit stores, it still faces only one semi-serious rival: Samsung's Galaxy Tab. In 2011, there are going to be gazillions of would-be iPad competitors — the BlackBerry PlayBook, unnamed models from HP and Motorola, and many, many more. I expect that some of them will be reasonably decent and some will be pretty dreadful. But I like competition, so I hope that at least one will be, for some folks, a truly compelling alternative to the iPad—at least as much so as a top-notch Android phone such as the Nexus S competes with the iPhone.

### **An Android Upgrade With No New Features**

Did I just praise the Nexus S? It's a nice phone in multiple respects, but it's not as nice as it would be if Android had a better user interface. iOS, WebOS, and Windows Phone 7 all prove that there are multiple routes to an intuitive, simple, quick smartphone experience; Android, however remains clunky and kludgy. I'd be thrilled if I heard that Google was placing a moratorium on new features until it improved the usability of the ones the OS already has. (It does seem to be promising a better experience in the upcoming Honeycomb upgrade, and maybe the next update after that as well.)

### **Solid-State Storage for Mere Mortals**

One of the best things about Apple's new MacBook Airs is that they've all got SSDs—even the \$999 low-end model. I enjoyed trying one so much that I went out and bought an SSD for my Windows laptop ... even though still-daunting prices forced me to buy a tiny 128GB SSD

to replace a 500GB hard disk. We're not going to see price parity between flash and drives by the end of 2011, but I'll be happy if SSD becomes a small decision rather than a big one.

### A Breakthrough in Phone Camera Technology

The iPhone 4's camera is the best one I've ever used on a smartphone, but it's still hobbled by the basic limitations of phone-camera technology—the sensor is too small, the lens is too chintzy (and lacks zoom capability), and the harsh, rudimentary flash is enough to make anyone look like a heroin addict. If phone cameras are going to render point-and-shoots obsolete—or at least less essential—we need a technological great leap forward of some sort. Probably several of them. I'm optimistic enough to assume we'll get them someday—and it would be nifty if they show up in time to be a highlight of 2011.

What's on your wish-list for the year ahead? Drop me a line and let me know (Technologizer, 235 Westlake Center #401, Daly City, CA 94015).

Happy new year—and see you at Technologizer.

Every two days now we create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilization up until 2003. That's something like five exabytes of data.  
—Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, as reported by *TechCrunch* <<http://techcrunch.com/>> (Aug. 4, 2010)

### Taming Troublesome Taskbars



Q. Several months ago, the Taskbar at the bottom of my screen became wider. Nothing I do seems to be able to make it return to the narrow size it was in the past. Can you help, Mr. M?

A. The Taskbar is designed to be expandable, so what you're seeing is easily adjusted. Start by right-clicking the Taskbar to make sure "Lock the Taskbar" is not checked.

Next, place your cursor on the upper horizontal edge of the Taskbar. When it is precisely on that edge, it will change into a double-headed arrow. Don't be frightened. At that point, hold down your left mouse button and slowly drag the edge down towards the bottom of your screen, incrementally narrowing the Taskbar in the process. When it is the size you want, right-click the Taskbar and select "Lock the Taskbar" to prevent any future unruliness.

Q. How do I activate the Print Screen (PrtScrn) key when I want to print what appears on screen?

A. The Print Screen key is always functional, so there really is nothing to activate. Contrary to what its name suggests, it does not literally print the screen when pressed. The Print Screen key saves a snapshot image of what appears on your screen to the Windows Clipboard.

That process is invisible and occurs behind the scenes, so it appears as if nothing happens when you actually press the key.

To print the captured image, go to your destination location (such as a word processing document or email composition screen), right-click and select Paste. Whatever was captured to the Clipboard will pop onto the page. Once it appears, you can then print normally.

If you want to manipulate the captured image, you will need to paste it into a graphics editing program. Windows includes a relatively primitive graphics editing program called Paint (located under Programs > Accessories) that can be used for simple editing.

Q. When I turn on my computer, it asks for my password. Above that, there is a small square with a picture of some chess pieces. How can I change that picture? I am using Vista.

A. Go to the Control Panel > User Accounts & Family Safety and you will see where you can "Change your account picture."

Q. I have an Excel spreadsheet with column headings. I need a way to scroll down the rows, but still see the column headings. How can I do this? Thanks, Mr. M. I look forward to your newsletter (MrModem .com) every Friday.

A. Highlight the row directly below your column headings by clicking the number of the row. For example, if the headings are located in Row 1, click Row 2. Then click Window > Freeze Panes.

Once frozen, the column headings will remain visible as you scroll through the rest of your spreadsheet. You can reverse or undo this action by clicking Window > Unfreeze Panes.

Q. I have a printer that's not working properly and I need to know how to remove it so I can reinstall it using its installation disk. The printer isn't listed on the Add/Remove uninstall list.

A. A printer is hardware, as opposed to software, so it won't typically appear in the Add/Remove Programs list, so that part is normal. (Insert "Whew!" here.)

Before you do anything, check your printer manufacturer's Web site to determine if there are any new drivers available. If so, download them. You'll find instructions on the Web site, if needed. A driver is a small program that provides instructions to a device such as a printer, disk drive, keyboard, mouse, etc. Updating its driver can often resolve a printer problem.

To remove a printer, go to Control Panel > Printers (or Printers and Faxes). Right-click the printer that you want to remove, then click Delete.

If you can't delete the printer using the above method for any reason, right-click the printer icon again, click Run as Administrator, then click Delete. If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type your Windows password, if you have one, provide confirmation, or press Enter.

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

### **Academic Earth**

I've always said that "Hire education are a good thing," and consistent with my philosophy, here you can view thousands of video lectures from top scholars and instructors from M.I.T., Stanford, Berkeley, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Subjects include Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, English, Entrepreneurship, Law, Medicine, Philosophy – more than enough to give you a splitting headache.

[www.academicearth.org](http://www.academicearth.org)

## Totally Looks Like

Famous people and celebrities who look like other individuals, animals and objects. (Caution: A few of the items are a bit on the coarse side, so easily offended individuals might want to avoid this site.)

<http://totallylookslike.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 0847 and receive a free month (four weekly issues!) with your six-month subscription. To view a sample issue or subscribe, visit [www.MrModem.com](http://www.MrModem.com).*

### A Tip from *Smart Computing*

- **GOOGL It:** When you are looking for something in an unfamiliar area, it can be a real pain to figure out where things are. But if you send a text message to GOOGL (46645) with a search query, such as "Pizzerias, Omaha," you'll get a free text message right back from the search company, with the answer to your query. You can also use this service to define words (for example "define zenith") and more.

## Awesome: Del the Mouse. NEVER! Ohhh?

by Janet J. Thompson

**B**ambooWacom's BAMBOO Touch & Pen can replace your mouse with a pen and your fingers. Well, I'm here to tell you this is one awesome digital tablet. It is an interactive, digital editing device, meaning that it will remove the red eye in a photo post haste or change the character of an entire photograph. It is a delight to use, inexpensive and easily learned. Shift between using a light weight, battery free pen or your fingers, like the laptop touch pad – yes, one finger navigation.

Remember how the forensic folks on TVs CSI will place two fingers on a photo and increase/decrease its size, or rotate it or finger gestures to zoom, flip and rotate documents and images to one of the mega monitors? Ditto for the Bamboo tablet. Install the software and plug in the USB 2 cable and you are ready. It comes with Adobe Elements 8 and Nik Color Efex included. With Bamboo, a simple tap with a finger on the digital pad will select an icon, open a menu or start an application.

"Bamboo is aimed at consumers who use computers as part of their digital lifestyle to communicate, share and create content. It can be used to customize emails, letters, spreadsheets, presentations and documents with signatures, notes, doodles and scribbles."

Users can easily produce more natural and authentic-looking paintings, sketches and drawings as well as retouch, improve, manage and share digital photographs. This tablet is for you if you use hand-writing recognition software.



Notice the red Levi jeans style tag on one side – that’s a pen holder – I would have preferred a more upright configuration. The tablet looks stunning, sleek and sexy.

Some details to consider:

1. Pen doesn’t use a battery and has a very natural feel and you can vary the line width/pressure
2. 512 levels of pressure/sensitivity
3. Connects w/a USB 2 cable – complete mobility
4. Great resolution – 2450 LPI
5. Thin – about ½” and light weight (370 grams) – easily packed w/your laptop
6. Works w/PC or MAC (O/S X)
7. Four user defined quick access keys
8. Configure for left or right hand
9. Only slight learning curve

The Bamboo Dock (separate, extra cost) houses widgets and applications for the tablet. Included are extra pen tips and a tool to change it out.

The Bamboo can only recognize two digits at any time. It's not possible to use the pen and the touch gestures simultaneously. The new Bamboo range is available in different models – go to Wacom’s site for details.

UTube – info/demo videos – usually good, even ones in German! Go to:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m6R6qMu3ao&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m6R6qMu3ao&feature=related)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=UigPWJT\\_lFk&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UigPWJT_lFk&feature=related)

[http://wn.com/Wacom\\_Bamboo\\_Fun\\_Pen\\_Touch\\_Graphics\\_Tablet\\_Review](http://wn.com/Wacom_Bamboo_Fun_Pen_Touch_Graphics_Tablet_Review)

The real magic comes when you pick up the Bamboo’s stylus. The Bamboo tablet can sense when the stylus tip is approaching its surface, moving the cursor as you hover above, before clicking it when you tap down on the Bamboo’s surface. A slight magnetic field will confirm that the pen is working as a mouse button. This Tablet turns your computer into a virtual canvas creating artwork with the touch of a pen and on textured surfaces. Can you tell I really do like this Tablet?

With the Bamboo pen, digital drawing and painting are easy because the surface is designed to emulate the organic feel of working with traditional media. Yes, there are a few minor Cons, but the Pros are just awesome. It works flawlessly, it is easily learned and navigated and it is very reasonable (about \$80 street price). For more info, instructional videos and updates go to: [www.wacom.com/index2.php](http://www.wacom.com/index2.php)

*Janet J. Thompson is a HAL-PC family member who is a graphic design supervisor for a large regional retail chain.*

## 12 Smart Firefox and IE Add-Ons

by Steve Bass

### Fix Up Your Browser

I can't get enough of the handy-dandy freebies that clump onto Firefox (and Internet Explorer) and make the browsers smarter and easier to work.

Finding the right one is sometimes just a matter of saying, "gawd, why can't I..." and sticking it into a Google search field. So here are a few that I've found – and integrated into my browsers.

One thought, though, before you start. Adhere to the Bass International *one at a time* rule. It's the best way to experiment when modifying your browser with add-ons or extensions. You know the reason: If your browser starts acting hinky, you'll find the culprit pretty quickly with only one new add-on installed. Also, adding a bunch at a time has been known to cause sunspots and make people faint. No, seriously.

Okay, then, let's get started with Firefox.

### **A New Annoyance: Local Shared Objects**

LSOs are tracking cookies created by Adobe Flash applications. They never expire and there's no way for you to look at them as you might regular cookies. Even the Wall Street Journal has taken notice, saying some sites can stick over a hundred tracking components on your computer. I've got BetterPrivacy <<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/betterprivacy/>> running in the background to dump these intrusive little buggers.

### **Take a Note!**

Every so often I'll feel the need to scribble a note about a Web page I'll revisit later. (No surprise that by the time I'm done for the day, I've forgotten about the site and never get back to it. But that's another story.)

Web Notes <<http://www.webnotes.net/>> is handy: Click its toolbar icon and a small Web Notes window appears on the Web page you've got open. The note you enter stays with the page, and the little window hangs around if you want it to. If you don't put a note on the page you're on, the note rolls up. Web Notes is less intuitive to use than I'd like, but easy enough once you get the knack.

A smarter note-taking tool, and the one I like best, is Internote, <<https://add-ons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/internote/>> which is still in beta at version 3.0beta2. Individual notes stick with the page, have changeable background and text colors, and are easily added or removed. I like the note management feature that lets me search through my notes and open the search result's corresponding page. You can find product features and screen caps on the developer's SourceForge <<http://sourceforge.net/>> page.

### **Desktop Shortcut**

Remember how you have "Create Shortcut" on Internet Explorer's right-click context menu? Now you've also got it in Firefox with deskCut. <<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/deskcute/>> (Okay, I hear the IE crowd gloating; I agree, the Mozilla folks should have built it in, but they didn't.)

### **100 Ways to Use Google**

There are a dozen or so Google spots I visit often – Accounts, Maps, Web History, and others — and Google Shortcuts <<http://www.google.com/shortcuts.html>> gives me a handy way to stack my Google favs in a pull-down toolbar icon. There's also a version for Chrome.

### **Back Up Firefox**

Xmarks <<http://www.xmarks.com/>> syncs your favorites in the cloud (actually, on an Xmarks server) and lets you retrieve them from anywhere. So if you're on the road, you'll always have access to your favorites. (It's also available for Internet Explorer.) While you're

adding add-ons, grab a copy of Firefox Environment Backup Extension to save a copy of your profile, extensions, themes, preferences, cookies, user names, and passwords.

### **Download and Run**

Remember the Internet Explorer Run option? Now that you've switched to Firefox, you'll need OpenDownload <<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/opendownload-10902/>> to the same thing.

### **Send E-mail**

If you need to send the link for a page to a buddy, it should be a no-brainer in Firefox. Unfortunately, you'll need Email This! <<https://add-ons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/email-this/>> to do it.

### **Free Internet Explorer Add-ons**

I don't know why, but developers aren't nearly as interested in creating add-ons for Internet Explorer. It's probably because they use IE only when they have to – or it could be that Internet Explorer 8 is notorious for becoming unstable when too many add-ons are installed.

If you have trouble with any Internet Explorer add-on, Microsoft has two spots to give you a helping hand. The first explains how browser add-ons <<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/Windows7/How-do-browser-add-ons-affect-my-computer>> can screw up your computing experience and gives you instructions for disabling them. Okay, no, the Microsoft folks don't use my descriptive language, but that's essentially what they've said. The other page supplies a more comprehensive FAQ <<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/Internet-Explorer-add-ons-frequently-asked-questions>> about add-ons.

### **Back Up Internet Explorer**

BackRex Internet Explorer Backup <<http://www.backsettings.com/internet-explorer-backup.html>> does what Xmarks does (there's an IE version), but backs up favorites locally, on your hard drive. BackRex also stores IE's security zones, cookies, history, and any other customized settings. I'd use BackRex as well as Xmarks, just for the extra stuff it saves.

### **Nice Gesture**

Move your mouse this way and move back a page. Flick down and close a tab. Mouse Gestures are nothing new (except to IE) and can really speed things up when you navigate. <<http://www.ysgyfarnog.co.uk/utilities/MouseGestures/>>

### **Max Out**

If you're willing to give up on Internet Explorer, try Maxthon <<http://www.maxthon.com/>>. It's a browser that uses Internet Explorer's core engine, but its feature set far surpasses IE and gets close to what Firefox offers.

That's it. Really. I searched – lots – and couldn't find any other cool tools. And I even looked on Microsoft's Add-ons Gallery, an embarrassingly boring array of mostly toolbars and search engines. That's too bad, too, because every time I use Internet Explorer, I can't imagine why Microsoft would maintain its lameness.

### **Bass Is Cooking with CoolHotNot**

In January, you'll see me on CoolHotNot, a site with notable tech experts and lots of



giveaways. <[http://www.coolhotnot.com/techxperts /index/wanted/](http://www.coolhotnot.com/techxperts/index/wanted/)>

*Steve Bass is the publisher and self-appointed Chief Content Officer at TechBite; he continues to experience the cool feeling of having his own newsletter. Send him your feedback at TechBite <[stevebass@techbite.com](mailto:stevebass@techbite.com)>. To sign up for TechBite's free Steve Bass Technology newsletter, head for our sign up <<http://www.techbite.com/>> page.*

## Adobe Photoshop Elements 9

Reviewed by Anonymous User

**P**hotoshop Elements 9 has been released with some enticing new features for Mac and PC users, opening up new and creative possibilities. Elements is one of the best available to hobbyist for organizing photos and fairly significant photo editing.

### "The long-awaited Layer Mask Option is now part of Elements"

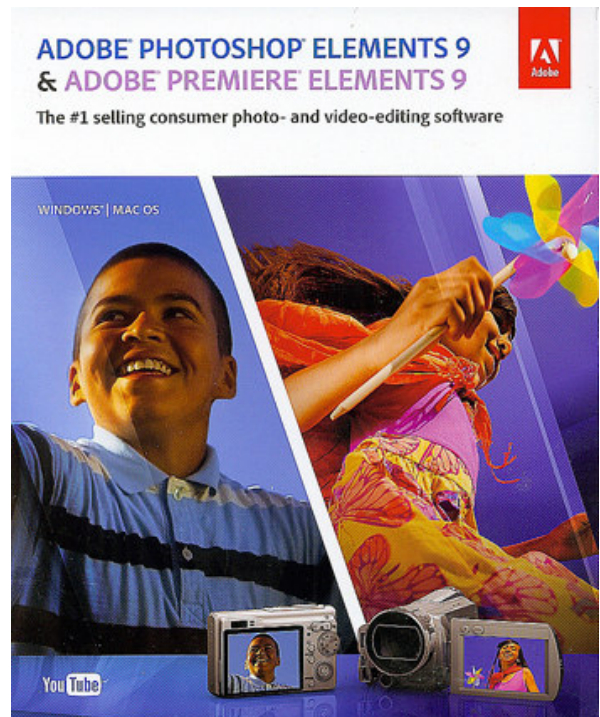
Elements comes in two parts: The Organizer and the Editor. The Organizer is the hub where you import, tag, share and make projects with your pictures. Editing, of course, happens in the Editor. The organizer remains a separate application (also available in Adobe Premiere Elements), and the separateness makes working with multiple photos clumsy.

You will be happily surprised that two of the best tools of Photoshop are now available in Elements: the Content-Aware Healing Brush (which recently made its debut in Adobe Photoshop's latest and greatest, CS5) and Mask. Elements 9 users can now enjoy this capability with the spot healing brush.

For the novice: The new Perfect Portrait feature basically steps you through the use of various editing tools, such as the spot-healing brush and the red-eye removal tool, to improve your pictures. Photomerge Style Match feature lets you specify a source photo and applies its qualities to another photo of your choice. I use a few sliders to adjust the effect and two brushes to either remove the effects from portions of the image or add it. There are others for the novice. Keep reading.

The long-awaited layer mask is now part of Elements; a feature that had set it apart from Photoshop CS version. Up until now, Masks have only been available when using adjustment layers. But with this version you can do really sophisticated photo editing and compositing previously possible with the more expensive Photoshop.

Elements 9 has new Guided Edit mode, which are step-by-steps for creating popular effects and finishes to your art work. These include making reflection effects recreating pop-art, and applying Lomo-style effect. Creating panoramas is easier than before, with the improved blending technology, automatically stitching images and filling empty spaces. Out-of-Bounds – this is a fun effect that make an object spring out of the frame. Perfect Portraits – Retouching can be a tricky job but the new option on Guided edits makes things simple.



Pop-Art - a classic look that is made easy in Photoshop Elements 9.

## Is Elements for You?

Despite the happy addition of some sophisticated editing tools, Elements remains a program best suited for hobbyists rather than truly committed photographers. The biggest reason? Its handling of RAW files. Sure a version of Adobe Camera Raw is included, but ACR tools are slight compared with those in Lightroom or Photoshop.

### What's Hot:

1. Easy Facebook uploads, improved panorama feature and spot- healing brush—tho' a bit clumsy because it must first go through Organizer.
2. Big news for Elements users is that this version sets the mask feature free. Elements now has full mask capability.

### What's Not:

1. Two applications complicates workflow and its auto-analyzer feature is very slow.
2. The analyzer worked at a snail's pace on Windows 7-64 bit system.

When you're finished working on a photo in the Editor, you can now click on a button that is supposed to let you share it on Facebook; but when you do so, it sends the image back to the Organizer to complete the action.

Elements is still a 32-bit application. Elements does not offer an upgrade option to this version, so it may only be worth trading up to this version if you care currently using version 6 or 7. The transition from Elements 8 to 9 is too subtle to make purchase advisable. I must say, though, for me, the new Mask feature as well as Content-Aware Healing Brush in addition to the many other fun feature were sufficient enough to convince me to buy it.

### Specifications:

Window: XP or newer. 1.6GHz processor, 1GB of RAM, 3GB HD space.

Mac: OS 10.5.8 or newer, multi-core Intel processor, 1GB RAM, 3.4 GB HD space.

PRICE: \$100 regular, but shop around for cheaper price and rebates. For more info go to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

Anonymous User is a HAL-PC member and an accomplished graphics designer and user of Elements. No questions accepted.

### Elements 9 Information Links:

<http://tv.adobe.com/show/learn-photoshop-elements-9/>

<http://www.photoradar.com/category/videos/elements>

<http://www.photoradar.com/news/video/adobe-photoshop-elements-9-new-features-video>

<http://www.photoradar.com/videos>

<http://www.photoradar.com/techniques/tips/225-photography-tips-to-inspire-you>

<http://www.photoshopelementsuser.com/learningcenter/>

Editors note: The Tablet, separately reviewed, includes Elements 8, but version 9 was used for the review.

*From the December 2010 issue of HAL-PC Magazine, the newsletter of the Houston Area League of PC Users.*

# Sams Teach Yourself Flickr in 10 Minutes

by Ted Littman

North Orange County Computer Club

This 200-page paperback is authored by Steve Holzner and published by Sams/Informat. It lists for \$15 but can be bought at amazon.com for about \$12, including S&H. The title is intended to grab your attention, since the "ten minutes" is actually the author's assessment of how long it will take you to read one lesson (or chapter, if you prefer). Since there are nine print lessons, in tutorial format for the most part, expect to go through the entire book in about an hour-and-a-half, if you are a bona fide speed-reader! For practical purposes, especially if you are simultaneously trying things on the Flickr website, it will take a lot longer to learn all of the features that Flickr offers. A 19-page 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Trouble-shooting and Tips*, in Q&A format, can be viewed online at [www.informat.com/title/9780672330957](http://www.informat.com/title/9780672330957).

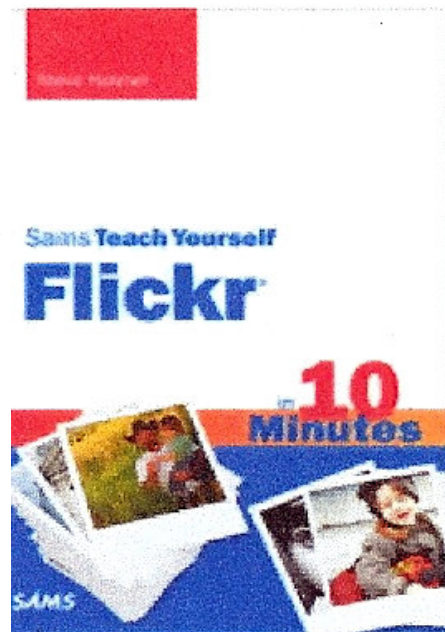
## Flickr, the Website

Unless you' have been living on another planet, you should be aware that the world is inundated with the so-called social websites (Facebook, My Space, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others). According to Wikipedia, the free web encyclopedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flickr>): *"Flickr is an image-hosting and video-hosting website, web-services suite, and online community created by Ludicorp and later acquired by Yahoo! In addition to being a popular website for users to share and embed personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers to host images that they embed in blogs and social media. In September 2010, it reported that it was hosting more than 5 billion images." "Flickr offers two types of accounts: Free and Pro. Free account users are allowed to upload 1 00 MB of images a month and 2 videos. Also, if a free user has more than 200 photos on the site, they will only be able to see the most recent 200 in their photostream."* A number of free 3<sup>rd</sup> party tools are available also, including Downloadr for Microsoft Windows to batch-download multiple photos: <http://janten.com/downloadr/>. If you want to learn more, read the Wikipedia article online.

## Flickr Book Review

The book is easy to read and has lots of screen shots to illustrate the lessons. If you like to read print books, and you "do" tutorials, you can learn the essential of Flickr before trying it online. On the other hand, you can use the book to guide you in trying the feature at the web site. Computerists who prefer the "dig-right-in-trial-and-error" method can learn to use the website easily by just going there and trying stuff. However, in spite of Flickr's Help resources with its user Forum, FAQs, email help, and issues/explanations in various categories, I did not see a tutorial similar to the book.

Surprisingly, the book did not address how to download photos that your friends or family members (or even strangers) upload to Flickr. If there are shots that you want to save on your



computer or make print copies of, for instance, the book only addresses using one of the for-pay web printer services associated with Flickr. Flickr's Help does tell you how to download individual images and you can use a 3<sup>rd</sup> party utility to download multiple ones. In addition, the book does not explain the limitations on ordering prints; for example, if you want to order a print of a photo posted by someone other than you, that person must authorize it.

Some comments from the book that are noteworthy:

- Flickr is user-friendly, intuitive, and feature-rich.
- The core of Flickr is social via image sharing—you don't even have to be a member to view other's photos.
- Many Bloggers use Flickr as a repository for their Images.
- What the basic web site lacked has been fixed by free 3<sup>rd</sup> party utilities from users.
- There are numerous ways to upload photos to your Flickr *photostream* and to organize them.
- You can upload images in JPEG, GIF, & PNG format.
- Even TIF, which Flickr converts to JPEG.
- In addition to sharing your photos online, you can use Flickr as a backup for photos that you store on your computer.
- The Flickr staff routinely browses images that members upload and label Public and posts the most interesting ones accessible to all via the *Explore* page.

*From the December 2010 issue of Orange Bytes, newsletter of the North Orange County Computer Club, CA.*

## **GIZMO's FREEWARE**

<[www.techsupportalert.com](http://www.techsupportalert.com)>

### **The Easy Way to Repair Your Internet Connection**

It can be a nightmare repairing broken interconnect connections on Windows PCs. There are many possible causes some of which require technically complicated solutions. This free utility addresses this problem by providing a whole series of connection repair options that can be implemented with the click of a button. A must-have utility for your tech toolbox.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/easy-way-repair-your-internet-connection.htm>

### **Microsoft Security Essentials Wins Gizmo's Freeware Product of the Year**

Our user poll has closed and the product that received the most votes is Microsoft Security Essentials. Our readers have made a fine choice as MSE is a great free product. You can read our comments on MSE and the other 19 nominations [here](http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/gizmos-freeware-2010-product-year.htm).

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/gizmos-freeware-2010-product-year.htm>

### **Important and Useful Windows Applications You Didn't Know You Already Had**

There are lots of useful tools and features buried so deep inside Windows that most people don't even know they exist. In this article our tips editor Vic Laurie shows you how to access four of the most handy: the Computer Management console, Device Manager, the Disk Management Console, and the Services Console.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/important-and-useful-windows-applications-you-didn-t-know-you-already-had-microsoft-manageme>

### **Really Useful Stuff You May Not Know about**

One of the most useful but least used pages on our website is the list of the best articles as rated by our users. There are some absolute gems hidden away here so it's definitely work

checking out.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/all-articles-by-rating>

### **Get \$130 of Ashampoo Apps for Free**

This is a good deal. You get Five Ashampoo apps for free: Burning Studio, Home Designer, Snap (screen capture), WinOptimizer and Photo Commander. Well not quite free, they will want your email address in return; it's up to you to decide whether its worth the price. Mind you, it is also up to you to decide which email address you give them :)

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/get-130-ashampoo-apps-free.htm>

## **Society News**

Led by Carl Schmidtman

by Jan Rothfuss

**Q:** A member's monitor displays the clock in military time. How can he change it back?

**A:** Click on the clock in the lower right hand corner, and the display will allow you to change it. There may also be a way to set it using the Control Panel.

**Q:** When bringing up his computer, he gets a message about Pure Network. He tried to remove the program but some dlls still remain.

**A:** Try to boot the system in safe mode and then delete them. In that mode they will not be initiated.

**Q:** I now have RoadRunner. Do I have to use their email account?

**A:** Simply do not use it. You can still use a Gmail account.

**Q:** He received an email that had a link to YouTube. It keeps stopping and starting rather than just playing the video. How much memory do you need to play it uninterrupted?

**A:** More than likely the server is busy. Usually YouTube videos run fairly well. You could also pause it and wait until most of the download is complete. It should then play through.

**Q:** On Sunday Nick mentioned that there is a virus that cannot be cured with the Tango. This is a virus that infects the boot sector. He suggested putting the drive on another CPU. How can I connect?

**A:** The connector needed is usually SADA. You could also buy an external box and it would then run stand alone.

**Q:** It seems that almost every one of my programs seems to slowly slow down until it becomes unbearable.

**A:** The Windows programs that are installed and then uninstalled, pieces are left behind. The Registry can get huge and all of the memory will be taken away. You likely also have many dlls that you are no longer using. A new full install will give you a fresh start but all applications would need to be reinstalled. It was also suggested that he use Revo uninstaller. If this is used in level 4, it will help to clean up your system.

**NOTE:** Darktable is now available for Linux that allows photo editing.

## **The Lighter Side**

**O**nce I went on site to set up a computer for a school. I spent several hours setting up the equipment and configuring all the software and checking the Internet connection. When I left, everything was working perfectly.

The next morning, I got a call from the teacher, saying that the computer wouldn't turn on. Perplexed, I paid another visit. I sat down at the desk and looked at each component: the scanner was on, the monitor was on, the speakers were powered up, but the screen was blank. I looked under the desk, and, sure enough, none of the lights on the face of the computer were lit. I reached down, pushed the main power button, and the computer immediately came to life and booted up normally.

"Why didn't you try that?" I asked.

Customer, pointing to the speakers, said "The light on the brain was on...."

In case you don't feel old enough now this should do it <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdSHeKfZG7c&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdSHeKfZG7c&feature=player_embedded#)>.