Turning ON and OFF Security, Restore, On-Line, and Update Controls*

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{by Ron Matteson} \\ \textit{Rochester Computer Society, Inc.} \end{array}$

Then doing a full backup, a large download, an install, or a disk defrag, many things needs to be shut down. Programs starting up and running can prevent the desired process from working correctly. A firewall or anti-virus can even keep a home network from working properly. These "features" in Windows XP, Internet Explorer, FireFox, Outlook Express, ThunderBird, etc. have a mind of their own that can interfere with the successful completion of desired tasks. I finally made up the following chart so that I could easily find out how to turn on and off some off these features. It is probably not necessary to shut all these things down for all processes you may want to run. However, this will be a guide that can be used by trial and error to discover which ones do need to be shut down.

CP- Control Panel

RC- Right Click

LC- Left Click

DC- Double Click

Windows Firewall:

Turn On CP> Windows Firewall> General tab> Ck Off Turn Off Start> CP> Windows Firewall> General tab> Ck On

Windows Update:

 $Turn\ On\ Start>\ CP>System>\ Automatic\ Updates>\ Ck$ Turn off Automatic\ Updates

Turn Off Start> CP> System> Automatic Updates> Ck Notify me but...

FireFox Update:

Turn On Open FF> Tools-Options> Advanced> Uncheck Software Update Boxes

Turn Off Open FF> Tools> Options> Advanced> Check Software Update Box(es)

Norton Internet Security:

Turn On RC on icon> Disable

Turn Off RC on icon> Enable

Norton AntiVirus AutoProtect:

Turn On RC on icon> Disable Auto-Protect

Turn Off RC on icon> Enable Auto-Protect

Grisoft AVG AntiVirus automatic update:

Turn On Open Control Center> LC on Service> LC on Schedule Update> Uncheck both boxes.

Turn Off Open Control Center> LC on Service> LC on Schedule> Update Check both boxes.

Zone Alarm firewall:

Turn On Rt. Clk. (RC) on ZA icon> select Shutdown Zone Alarm

Turn Off Start> All Programs> Zone Labs> Zone Labs

Zone Alarm automatic updates:

Turn On DC ZA icon Select Overview in left panel, and Preferences tab in Check for Updates window, LC Manually.

Turn Off DC ZA icon> Select Overview in left panel, and Preferences tab> in Check for Updates window, LC Automatically.

Int. Explorer/Outlk. Express Off Line:

Turn On Open IE or OE, File> check Work Offline Turn Off Open IE or OE, File> unCheck Work Offline FireFox Off Line:

Turn On Open FF, File> check Work Offline
Turn Off Open FF, File> unCheck Work Offline

ThunderBird Off Line:

Turn On Open TB, File> offline> check Work Offline
Turn Off Open TB, File> offline> unCheck Work
Offline

Windows System Restore Points:

Turn On Start> CP> System> System Restore tab> Ck Turn Off System Restore (**Note**: all previous restore points are deleted!)

Turn Off Start> CP> System> System Restore tab> Clear Turn Off System Restore

To Restore to a previous good condition. Start> Help and Support> Undo Changes with System Restore> LC Restore my computer to an earlier time> Click Next, select a date when a good condition existed, click Next, etc.

To Set a new restore point. Start> Help and Support> Undo Changes with System Restore> LC Create a Restore Point> Click Next, etc.

*Note: There are usually more ways than one to do most of these functions. This chart only lists one.

Got a scanner? You need this book. Scanning for the SOHO Small Office and Home Office by local author and engineer Ron Matteson. ISBN 1-58939-554-9, \$14.95, Virtual Bookworm Publishing (2004); 286 pages, 121 figures, 21 tables. Visit the book's web site at http://www.sohotechnology.info for FREE tutorials, FREE chapters, instructions for ordering the entire book, etc.

Review of: Windows XP Pro: The Missing Manual

by David Pogue, Craig Zacker & L.J. Zacker by Jack Baly

Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

his book is for the novice and intermediate users who want to master Windows XP Pro and get the operating system working for them. The authors state that the purpose of this book is to be the manual that should have come in the box with the OS.

The book is divided into six parts, each containing several chapters.

Part 1. The Windows XP Desktop, covers everything you see on the screen when you rum on a Windows XP computer: icons, windows, menus, scroll bars, the Recycle Bin, shortcuts, the Start menu, shortcut menus, and soon.

Part 2. The Components of Windows XP. is dedicated to the proposition that an operating system is little more than a launch pad for programs. Chapter 5 describes how to work with applications in Windows-launch them, switch among them, swap data between them, use them to create and open files, and so on.

This part also offers an item-by-item discussion of the individual software nuggets that make up this operating system. These include not just the items in your Control Panel folder, but also the long list of free programs that Microsoft threw in: Windows Media.Player, Movie Maker 2, WordPad, and so on.

Part 3. Windows Online, covers all the special Internet-related features of Windows, including the wizards that set up your Internet account. Outlook Express (for email). Internet Explorer 6 (for Web browsing), chatting or video conferencing with MSN Messenger, and so on. It also helps you fortify your PC, using Service Pack 2 and the Windows Firewall.

Part 4. Plugging into Windows XP, describes the operating system's relationship with equipment you can attach to your PC-scanners, cameras, disks, printers, and so on. Special chapters describe faxing, fonts, troubleshooting your PC. and preventing problems from even arising.

Part 5. Life on the Network, honors the millions of households and offices that now contain more than one PC. If you work at home or in a small office, these chapters show you how to build your own network; if you work in a corporation where some highly paid professional network geek is on hand to do the trouble-shooting, these chapters show you how to exploit XP Pro's considerable networking prowess.

At the end of the book, three appendixes provide guidance in installing this operating system, a menu-by-menu explanation of the Windows XP Pro desktop commands, and an introduction to editing the Registry.

This book can serve two purposes.

- 1. If you have been reticent about installing Windows XP Pro because all the help files are in the OS or on line which is of no help if your system can't get to them, then this book can be your hard copy crutch.
- 2. Your OS is running but you want a source that describes features and options available in an easy and understandable manner that can be read anywhere (the hammock, kitchen table, reading throne, etc...). Or you're having a problem that the help files and/or

WEB sites haven't solved for you and this book confirms that what you tried was correct, but the area is problematic or an unadvertised feature.

I've used the book several times in this mode and found it useful.

The book is well written and organized and if you think that a hard copy manual is a good tool to have available this book can be found from about \$20 to \$40 used/new.



From the DealsGuy

by Bob Click Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Purchase Dates For Hard Drives

quickly heard from readers expressing their displeasure about the HD warranties I wrote about last month. I didn't like the fact that a HD warranty starts on the build date either and I don't know where the purchase receipt is for a new drive I bought (shame on me). I may be able to find it, but this HD has been lying around here for a while. Your purchase receipt for a Western Digital drive means you're covered, but I don't know other manufacturer's policies. When I opened the box for a new Western Digital 80 gig HD the other day, the warranty wording for it was inside its box, under the drive, printed on the bottom layer of the box. The warranty is "for one year from the date on my original purchase receipt." That works, but also included was a card to purchase a three- year extended warranty for \$14.95. Stores don't let you open the box to read the warranty but they might show you a copy or refer you to a URL.

Email Problem Fixed

I got the run-a-round from Earthlink tech support trying to get my old Eudora e-mail program back in operation when it stopped working. They said port options could not be changed for their new servers (true). I downloaded Eudora's version 6.2 .1.2-sponsored (free) e-mail program to try. Eudora has a link to Earthlink's own Web site for a tutorial to set up the Eudora product, but it still didn't work right. I later bought the paid version and Eudora's tech support walked me through steps to make the change that Earthlink's tech support said couldn't be done in ver. 6.2 either. It involved copying and pasting a file to get the option. That can also be done on the sponsored version. That info is on their Web site. In all, Earthlink's tech support was no help and hard to understand, although apologetic; and they were wrong. Its working, but I still have a minor problem I hope to iron out.

Remember "CameraMate VideoSafe" and "Camera-Mate Real Time Video" by Zio Corp. from last month's column with rebates (sticker on the product's box bought from the retailer) extended through Sept. 30, 2005.

Popular Deal Revived

Twice in the past few years I have featured a discount on products purchased from InkSell.com, and both times I featured it, the deal was quite popular. I am not familiar with prices on inkjet products so you should do your own research. Bryan Hawkins, marketing manager, has offered to repeat this deal for us and it is as follows: "We are going to do a promo code for your readers. The code is for 15% off all compatible "inkjet" products. OEM cartridges are excluded. The promotion starts today (5/16/05) and runs till a year from now. The code is "pcdeals2005."

Their Web site is [http://www.inksell .com] for product information. To order, go to checkout and put in the shipping information then click on the "continue" button. After putting in the billing info, there is a place to enter in the your e-mail address for e-mail confirmation. Below that is the coupon promotional code field for entering the code "pcdeals2005," then click "apply." Or; Mon-Fri. 9am 6pm CST order by phone at 1-800-255-0483.

Why Not The Latest Locking System For You?

I thought the battery-operated lockset that opens with a keypad was great technology for the door to my house, but I like this product better. How about just laying your finger on a pad and having the lock automatically open. You can also set it up so a different finger performs another action, such as opening your garage door. eKeyUSA Systems offers biometric fingerprint technology for everything from home to business, and its possible to even track who enters, and the times. I was impressed with this product when I saw it.

Get more information at [http://www.ekeyusa.com]. You don't need a computer for the lock to operate, but eKey can be used with a computer to keep a log of the users. The weatherproof reader can be used either inside or outside to trigger a device such as a door striker plate or garage door opener. Keep in mind that eKey only provides the biometric fingerprint products to operate electronically controlled locks, but they do not sell locks. However, you might find locks to work with this product at [http://www.smarthome.com].

Home models offered include:

- 1. Ekey TOCAhome with 1 output for a door /gate (1 relay) MSRP \$699
- 2. Ekey TOCAhome 3 with 3 outputs for doors /gates (3 relays) MSRP \$899
- 3. Ekey TOCAhome pc with 3 outputs for doors/gates (3 relays), incl. RS232 interface, cable and PC-Software MSRP \$1149

Each model can be trained for up to 99 fingerprints (in case you have relatives staying with you). DealsGuy readers are offered a 30% discount from those prices. Contact them at Hassan.HaresekeyUSA .com or (941)782-1227. To get this discount, use the password "dealsguy05."

An Announcement I Received (Edited)

Company: WisePixel Multimedia E-mail: [press@wisepixel.com]

HandySnap1.0: High-impact screenshots without complexity

"WisePixel Multimedia announces HandySnap 1.0, a screen capture utility for Windows platforms. With HandySnap, you can illustrate your multimedia presentation, manual, or marketing copy with screenshots that will make it not only aesthetically pleasing and professional – you create an easy to understand presentation that will convey complex information in a manner anyone can grasp within seconds.

"HandySnap features a concise, Photo-shop-style toolbox interface, familiar to millions of Photoshop users, which floats on top of other applications and takes minimum space on the desktop. The interface consists of three main areas with a set of icons — capture tools area, built-in editor, and screenshot operations area. Any screenshot action can be performed in one click on an icon without walking though complex drop- down menus.

"Capture any portion of the screen by using a resizable trimming frame, take a snapshot of an active window or the whole desktop. After a screenshot is taken, the image displays in a separate window where it can be further edited. The user can add a multitude of markers, including textual comments, pixel art symbols, arrows, free-hand lines, rectangular frames, and ellipses. You can experiment with a semi-transparency effect and modify color and line size. All objects can be easily moved over the screen hot.

"Easily configure hotkeys to trigger capture actions. With the hotkey support, you can take snapshots of drop-down menus, splash screens and other events, which, as a rule, cannot be captured. You can get HandySnap to automatically generate file names for screenshots based on the specified pattern, send screenshots to the clipboard, or save them to files.

"HandySnap 1.0 runs under Windows 95/98/Me/2000/XP and costs \$29.00 (USD) for a single-user license. User group members get 20% off the regular price using coupon code GRP01 through August. A 30-day fully functional evaluation version can be downloaded free at [http://www.wisepixel.com/downloads/hsnap_setup.exe].

For more information, please visit [http://www .wisepixel.com].

E-mail: [press@wisepixel.com]"

Another Announcement (Edited)

"April 12, 2005: Neowise Software today announced the release of RoboTask 2.2, the latest version of a high performance automation tool for the Windows platforms. The application features a unique set of over a hundred automation options that will give users with almost any level of computer competence – from home users to experienced programmers – the ability to automate their routine computing tasks and eliminate many time consuming manual operations.

"It will help you automate backup processes, folder synchronization, cleanup of temporary folders, e-mail retrieval and processing, just a few options out of one hundred available. Get more focus on work with no need to write complicated automation scripts.

"RoboTask works transparently throughout the OS and consumes minimum resources. By default it launches at Windows startup and sits in the system tray. It features a clear, self-explanatory GUI interface that displays a list of tasks, their current status, provides a quick access to the task-related operations and program settings. By clicking on the 'Create New Task' icon, you open the wizard- style dialog that will assist you in selecting an action, configuring its behavior settings, and setting up an action trigger.

"With sixteen event triggers in hand, you have full control in defining when and how to launch automations. You can get them executed at any specified run time or after a certain time interval. Power users can go beyond these scheduling basics.

"RoboTask 2.2 is designed for Windows 98/Me /2000/XP/2003 and costs \$99.95 (USD) for a single user license. We offer users group members a 25% discount on RoboTask until Aug. 31, 2005. The coupon code is 'RT-discount-25.' Registered customers are entitled to free upgrades to any minor version. A 60-day fully functional evaluation version of the program is available for free at (direct download link) [http://www .robotask.com/downloads/RobotaskSetup.exe]. (2.7 MB) "Product page link: [http://www.robotask.com] E-mail: [oleg@neowise.com]"

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [bobclick@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [http://www.dealsguy.com].

Changing File Associations

by Kim Komando

Q. I got RealPlayer so I could listen to old radio interviews. Now all of my music opens in RealPlayer. Is there a way to change them back, or do I have to uninstall it?

A. This is a pretty common problem, and not just with music files. Often, when you install a photo-editing program, it takes over the job of opening your images. Luckily, it's an easy fix so long as you know the steps. And to that end, let me show you the way. The problem is in Windows file association. File associations tell Windows what program to use when a file needs to be opened. So you need to change the association.

First, open Windows Explorer. Click Start >> All Programs >> Accessories >> Windows Explorer. Find a music file. Right- click it. Click Open With. If you don't see the program you want, click Choose Program. This will give you a more extensive list of programs. If your preferred program is still not listed, click Browse. Navigate to the program and file you're seeking. Click Open. Back at the Open With window, select "Always use the selected program....." Click

That will change the association permanently. RealPlayer probably changed the file association when it was installed. When you install new programs, pay attention to each prompt. As I mentioned, this goes double for music players and image programs. There's usually a checkbox labeled something like "Use this as my default player," or "Always use this program to open images." Sometimes the checkbox is already marked for you. This used to happen with almost every program. The more these programs pop up to open files, the more useful they seem. The latest versions tend to be better about this. Regardless, be careful with every program that you install.

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Computer Hysteria: Crash!

by Berry F. Phillips

Computer Club of Oklahoma City

**** rash! Crash! That was the sound of Stephen King's sledgehammer bashing the car that hit him while jogging. Perhaps he thought Christine from his earlier horror novel had come back to haunt him!

Crash also strikes terror in the hearts of computer users. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project approximately two thirds of Americans use the Internet and about 87% of them through connections in their homes. While there is no research

data on the number of computer users that cannot master their computers, there is evidence of anger and frustration with computers that could escalate into what one psychologist calls "computer rage."

University of Maryland Professor Kent Norman says, "Men and women are taking out their frustrations on the computer and unfortunately, sometimes misdirecting it to other people." Norman, who directs the Laboratory of Automation Psychology and Decision Processes at the University, conducted an online survey where twenty percent of the respondents admitted they dropped a computer on the floor out of anger. They described smashing, microwaving, and cursing their computers. One claimed he threw his laptop in a fryer and several claimed to have shot hardware. The study further suggested computer users were most annoyed by: e-mail snafus including spam, waiting while a computer completed a simple task, having to redo something because of a glitch and having to upgrade obsolete programs. Microsoft ranked high on the list of objects of ire. With the increased popularity of wireless networks, DVD players, and game systems, the possibilities of irritations are almost endless.

You can lower your cyber blood pressure by taking some preventative medicine. Increase your knowledge to make yourself a more-informed user. Join the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and network with other computer users and learn from their experiences (misery loves company!). Do NOT go on the Internet without a regularly updated and weekly-maintained complete computer security system including anti virus, anti-spyware and firewall software. (Not having the money for commercial applications is no excuse as there are several excellent freeware security software programs available online. Often forgotten is a good registry and unnecessary-file cleaner that has automatic backups, which can substantially reduce your crashes. Defrag weekly if needed and scandisk at least once a month. Do not forget to make an emergency boot disk.

Finally, in case of a crash, do not panic. Write down what you did immediately prior to the crash, and any instructions you receive from your computer. Make sure you have been taking fruit to lay at the feet of your computer guru or lay money on your friendly computer tech. The life you save may be your own computer. SOS stands for Save Our System!

Adventures in Linux-land

by Siles Bazerman Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, CA, APCUG Representative

s many of you know I became bored with Windows XP a while ago. Bored with both writing

about it and actually using it. Windows went from "Gee, look what I found!" in Windows 3 to using an appliance in Windows XP with the release of SP2. Very usable but not much fun to play with.

I decided to give Linux another try. The first time was with Red Hat 3 back in 1998-1999. At that time it was not ready for Prime Time and there was still a lot to discover in Windows 98 and 98SE. Also, there were only one or two other distros (distributions) available and little in the way of a GUI, so you used mostly command line.

Now there are many, many distros out there, some commercial and some free. Red Hat went commercial, but is available as Fedora for free download. One of the more popular free distros is Debian (Debra and Ian Murdock, authors). It too is available in several varieties. The two most useful for beginners to Linux are Knoppix and SimplyMepis. I use the latter. Both of these are downloadable, fit on one CD with a number of useable programs, and can run from the CD without installing on your hard drive. You can also install them if you so desire.

After downloading Mepis, using it and finally installing it, I decided I needed more information than was available on line. I found a book Point and Click Linux by Robin Miller that was written to exactly parallel the CD. For less than \$22 from Barnes and Nobel on line I received the book, a CD (exactly the same as the download) and an instructional DVD. The distro uses the KDE (K Desktop Environment) and includes several editors, Open Office Suite (similar to Microsoft Office, but free), a CD/DVD writing program, GIMP graphics program (GNU Image Manipulation Program) and Mozilla web browser. There are numerous other programs included but I have listed the main ones. Also you can download and install many other programs free to enhance or replace the ones on the CD.

If all you want to do is send and receive email, browse the web, do some word processing or similar things, then you can use Mepis as installed. Web browsing is relatively virus free and almost totally popup free. Both Mozilla and its successor, Firebox, are also available for Windows, but windows update will not work in any other browser but IE. Linux is relatively free of viruses for two reasons. First, it represents only a very small percent of desktop installations and virus writers want the biggest "bang for the buck" so they don't bother. Second, you work in Linux as a user, but all changes to the system must be done as either an administrator or "super user" which are not accessible from outside and are password protected. Also the browser does not allow popups. This would be labeled EASY.

If you wish to do customization or add established Debian packages then it can be easy or difficult depending on the need for the command line interface. Many of the commands are arcane and rather like in a foreign language, although they are really in English. I believe much is written in C, Perl, and Python. I am sure some other programming languages are involved also. Many of the free backup programs are written for Tape Backup Units, although they might be con-figurable for other media such as HD or CD/DVD. These things would rate *difficult*.

I have one must have, no substitutes allowed, program. It will run only in Windows, not in Linux or on a MAC, or any other operating system. I have tried to port it to Linux using four different Windows Emulators. The commercial three all have free trials available that are time limited but otherwise full. The free gemu (Q EMUlator) requires an installation of Windows 98 from a full install, and does not seem to ever access the CD drive or, for that matter, any drive outside the virtual machine. This prohibits the addition of other programs. Of the commercial ones, Crossover Office allows installation of Microsoft Office and a number of other programs whose hooks are built in. It will also allow the installation of some others but it is hit or miss. Paint Shop Pro 7 will install and work, but will not print, as an example. Newer versions of PSP will not even install. Photoshop 6 or 7 will work but not later versions. Crossover Office does NOT require a copy of Windows to work. All the others do.

VMWare never did load on my system as I could not find one compatible with the kernal version I am using, and I do not have sufficient knowledge to recompile one myself; besides who wants to bother? That leaves the two versions of Win4Lin, regular and Professional. The regular version works with all the DOS-based Windows up and including Windows ME. The Pro version works with Windows 2000 and XP. I did find that loading WINDOWS XP in the pro version was about like loading Windows 3.1 on my old 286. S----1----o----w. It loaded Windows 2000 about the speed it loaded on my P3; I am running an Athlon T'bread 2600+ with 1G of memory. Under Windows XP, when I tried to load my program I received the message "Catastrophic Failure." What the Hey? Under 2000 it installed but when run would fail with "ActiveX could not create a database module." I spoke to one of the programmers of my program and he never heard of the first and could not suggest how to fix the second. As a matter of fact, he asked me to call him if I had any success in porting it over. He knows of no one else even trying. (Figures) I could devote several pages to just this area, but not now. This whole area is very frustrating.

Keep tuned and I may present more Adventures in Linux-land in the near future. That is if I don't find playing more appealing than writing.

Browser Doohickeys, Doodads & Gizmos

by Vinny La Bash

Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

ost people change their surrounding to suit themselves. Your desk probably has some pictures that trigger pleasant memories. You may have added some new plants to your garden. Whether you have engaged in something as monumental as redecorating your house or as trivial as changing the default ring on your cell phone, your general point is to make your surroundings look and act they way you want them to, not the way someone else thinks they should.

Tweaking your internet browser isn't any different. Due to the number of software add-ons available, you can change or add many different features. Some allow you to change the appearance of the interface; others help you to retrieve information more quickly. Several of them may even make using the internet easier. Despite their sophistication, most install quickly, and the majority of them are free.

Almost everyone who searches the Web uses Google, Yahoo or both. There are many other search engines, but these two dominate the bulk of the traffic. Switching between the two sites gets old quickly, so why not try Google's tool bar? It maintains a link to Google's web site, allowing instant access to many of Google's features no matter where else you may be on the Web. You can search, spell-check, block pop-ups, even turn UPS tracking numbers into web links.

Yahoo's tool bar has similar features, and it lets you search on-line yellow pages. You can check local movie and TV schedules. Yahoo has a nice email element, and it's very strong in financial features. You also get an anti- spyware tool.

Yahoo's tool bar is easy to find. Go to http://www.yahoo.com. Look toward the upper right hand corner of your browser window, click on the link, and follow directions.

For Google's entire bag of goodies, direct your browser to http://www.google.com, and then click on the more button. You may need to scroll down the list of other tools to get to it. When you're finished make a trip to http://labs.google.com and enjoy the feast. This is Google's technology sandbox. These are prototype projects Google is currently working on, meaning they are not quite finished yet. Even if you're not particularly adventurous, try the new Map feature. You may be so impressed you'll never use Mapquest again.

I do a lot of research online, and I have become a fan of Net Snippets because I can straightforwardly save a snapshot of a web page or any part of the page. The utility lets me save these "snippets" to organize for offline viewing. This eliminates the need to search for the same page multiple times, and is a godsend if the site ever goes offline. Net Snippets is the kind of tool you never knew you needed, but now you can't live without it. There is no one thing that grabs you, but a host of little things like the ability to highlight and annotate that make Net Snippets a "must have" tool. Get it at http://www.netsnippts.com.

RSS readers are rapidly emerging from obscurity to necessity. Depending on whom you ask, RSS stands for "Rich Site Summary," "RDF Site Summary," or "Really Simple Syndication." RSS is a dialect of XML and its "geek-speak" nature has probably contributed to its slow acceptance, but its benefits are undeniable. The technology notifies you whenever something on your favorite web sites changes.

The original RSS was designed by Netscape as a format for building portals of headlines to mainstream news sites. It has rapidly evolved into something far different and much more useful. Get news headlines, stock quotes, or alerts when an item you've been waiting for is available. You can save yourself a lot of time because you don't have to visit individual web sites to see what's new. A large bonus is that RSS feeds can't be tampered with. What that means is they are immune from attacks by spyware, viruses, Trojans, and other assorted evil-intentioned software.

In Windows, Pluck is the most popular RSS add-on. It's easily downloaded from http://www.pluck.com. If you're still using the basic plain vanilla browser, try at least one of these tools to boost your web experiences.

Simple Password Practices Keep PC and Online Data Secure

by Gabe Goldberg

APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

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

What to do?

First, basics. A password is just the key that opens a computer lock. It may gain access to a newspaper's online edition, protect banking records, let you bid on auctions, open a frequent-flyer account, or do anything requiring verified identity.

Some Web sites assign passwords; most allow choosing them. Rules for selecting passwords are easy to find but are often impractical. Don't use easily guessed familiar names or words; use letters and numbers and special characters? OK. Avoid anything related to facts about yourself? Makes sense. Don't

share passwords with anyone? Good advice. Change passwords periodically? Oops, it's a memory test [http://www.evalu8.org/staticpage?page=review &siteid=8906]. Use unique passwords everywhere? Hm, that takes a *lot* of passwords. Don't write them down or store them in a computer file? Tilt!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On business-owned PCs, separate personal from work-related material. Determine whether your office has policies for personal computer use and monitoring of computer activity. Some businesses install keystroke loggers which can capture passwords before they're encrypted. And remember that system administrators can often defeat security measures as part of their job, so you may not want to store sensitive personal material at work.

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

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

(Re)defining Computer Literacy

by Bill Stewart

Houston Area League of Computer Users

Te live in tumultuous times. The world is changing so fast that sometimes it's hard get a handle on what is really going on and where things are heading. Whether we consider the absurdities of politics, ominously changing weather patterns, dubious wars or advancing technology, it can

often seem like common sense is nowhere to be found. I can only speak with any real authority on the last topic, technology — but it's a hot one. Here in the US it would be fair to say that we live in a computer driven society that is, for all practical purposes, computer illiterate. We are surrounded by the ridiculously inexpensive and varied fruits of an astonishing and powerful technology which is profoundly changing how we live, work and play. Like it or not it is a runaway freight train that is rapidly transporting us headlong into the new "Information Age." Unfortunately most are experiencing a bumpy and uncomfortable - even scary - ride. Far worse is how this is impacting our ability to thrive in the global market. As a nation of complacent, technical illiterates, we are rapidly losing our competitive edge.

Consider: the average high school graduate is not, by any realistic standard, computer literate. Whether they come from affluent or poor school districts, the vast majority of students entering college are not prepared to use computers in such a setting. Sure, most of them have grown up with computers, aren't afraid of them and, over the years, have learned to search the web, write reports, play games, download music, communicate with their friends and many other interesting and useful things. But their knowledge is very superficial. Although most public schools have technology available, if students learn anything at all it's how be consumers of a technology they do not understand. Many colleges and universities are recognizing that there is a serious problem here but aren't sure how to fix it. Some try to implement remedial programs that generally don't address the central issue. Of course it doesn't help that often, much of the faculty and staff are not computer literate either.

Consider: in many companies, management, IT personnel and end users are at odds with each other. Today's "corporate culture" does not include a simple, common language that allows for meaningful communication about technology. As a result, important policy decisions are often made without an adequate understanding of the technology involved; executives often need constant help with basic computer problems; IT specialists waste time helping others with remedial problems and fixing problems that should not have occurred in the first place; users are fearful of going beyond memorized procedures; help desk activity is typically reduced to bailing people out of problems that often recur because the underlying causes cannot be adequately explained or understood. Company wide there is often a great deal of resentment, exasperation and feelings of inadequacy.

At this point I can imagine someone saying "Oh, come on now, do you really believe things are that bad?" I think if you look at it objectively, the answer

is a definite yes, things are that bad. Unfortunately, in business and education, gross inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the use of technology have become the norm over the years. It's pretty much accepted that, well, This Is Just The Way Things Are. But beneath this surface of normalcy is a powerful undercurrent of uneasiness. How many people do you know who are not comfortable with computers and regularly express their frustration?

It is not surprising it has come to this. First, the speed at which technology has advanced has been so rapid there hasn't been near enough time for the world to adjust. While many have taken to it enthusiastically, it's reasonable to expect the vast majority of any population to be resistant to fundamental change of any kind. Becoming a digitally based society is such a profound transformation that it cannot possibly be a smooth one. More specifically, the powerful influence of Micro soft, which is how many people are first introduced to technology, has created a user interface that, while making things easy to do, obscures the simple realities behind everything we do with computers, making them unnecessarily complicated and virtually incomprehensible.

Although this technological disconnect is pervasive and weighs heavily on us, it can be overcome. Actually it can be fairly easily overcome – at least in the sense of getting out of the conceptual fog most of us are in. The first step is to establish a definition of computer literacy that is sensible and universally acceptable. You can Google and get a variety of definitions for computer literacy from a number of authoritative sources, nearly all of which are completely off-base and usually boil down to one thing: the ability to use applications (Microsoft programs are often specifically mentioned). Memorizing procedures to use software is generally how computer literacy is defined. And herein lies the problem: the reason so many people have so much trouble managing files, for example, is not because they don't know how to do it – most people are familiar with the mechanics of using a mouse and keyboard and can open and close, click and drag, etc. – it's because they don't know what a file actually is. People work with files every day and don't know what they are in a physical sense; they don't have a clear understanding of the difference between the hard disk and memory or what subdirectories are; they don't understand what Windows is and its role as an operating system. And yet none of this is beyond the ability of the average eight-grader to understand. For so many people to be so in the dark about the most basic concepts – concepts that are critical to mastering the most important productivity tool we have — is completely unacceptable.

The biggest obstacle to achieving a reasonable level of computer literacy was created by Microsoft (who, it should be noted, borrowed heavily from Apple). The Windows interface so distorts reality and creates so many distractions and unnecessary complications that many (probably most) people struggle for years and never figure any of it out. That is, they are unable to connect the graphical objects they see on their monitors to the physical things they represent: the simple principles and concepts are lost in all the flash and glitter. If we compare software to books, it's as though Microsoft found all the prettiest and most expressive words and typeset them on beautifully bound pages but didn't bother to string them together in a coherent way. When we read the words in a book, we expect them to form a clear mental picture for us. We should expect the same from our computer's software interface; there is no good reason for the critical software we depend on to be so disjointed and inconsistent. Far too many people have resigned themselves to believing that, for them, a computer will always be a magic box that they will never fully comprehend: it will always be a struggle and they will always be severely limited. But it doesn't have to be this way.

We must first do away with the notion that computer literacy means using Windows based software. It's not that learning current software isn't important, it's just that while this alone may make one functional it does not make one computer literate. This will require quite a shift in today's current thinking since nearly all "Intro to Computers" classes, books and courseware center around "learning Windows." Consider a definition that we at Computer Literacy USA and the Leisure Learning Computer Center believe makes more sense:

"Computer literacy is the essential knowledge needed to function independently with a computer system. This functionality comes from an understanding of the concepts, terminology and operations that relate to general computer use and includes being able to solve and avoid problems, adapt to new situations, manage information, and communicate effectively with other computer literate people."

Note that this definition says nothing specific about software. It stresses a general understanding of the principles and concepts involved in using any computer, much like learning what side of the road to drive on and how to interpret traffic lights and street signs before getting behind the wheel of a car. Once you have a clear understanding of the digital nature of hardware, software and data you can safely and effectively begin using a computer. Once you are literate in this sense, you are prepared to become functional. From this definition we can then build a meaningful set of standards and teaching methods for computer literacy.

It has been my experience that anyone can comprehend the basic concepts in a reasonably short time.

At the Leisure Learning Unlimited Computer Center, our Computer Orientation series of courses, which are for new and experienced computer users, consist of thirteen hours of lecture and demonstration before we provide any hands-on classes. In fact, many already know the hands-on aspects: they are familiar with the Windows environment and can use the mouse and keyboard to navigate through their programs, edit and save data, manipulate objects, etc. The reason they decide to take a "beginning" course is because they have far too many problems and frustrations and realize there are large gaps in the general knowledge. Even though people come in at all levels of experience, once everyone has a solid foundation and can communicate using the same language we can move on. At this point new computer users go to a remedial hands-on classes while those with more experience skip ahead to more advanced Windows classes or specific applications.

Without a consensus on how we define computer literacy and develop the educational standards for it, we will fall far short of the potential and promise of Information Age.

Bill Stewart has been the director of the Leisure Learning Unlimited Computer Center since 1990. Over 15,000 people in the Houston area have attended his Computer Orientation classes. To find out more about Bill's work and philosophies visit www. computer literacyusa .com. You can reach him at bstew@neosoft or 281-489-7944. The LLU Computer Center web site is www.llucomputer.com.

Another Silent Attack on Our Computers

by Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, Texas' Radio Show Host; Police Officer

Websites:

http://research.microsoft.com/rootkit

http://www.sysinternals.com/ntw2k/freeware/rootkitreveal.shtml

http://www.f-secure.com/blacklight

http://www.f-secure.com/blacklight.rootkit.shtml

Corpus Christi, one of the speakers mentioned something that I was vaguely aware of as a threat. The threat is considered as a silent attempt to invade our computers for the purposes of installing viruses, Trojans, worms, or other malware devices. This silent threat may be used by terrorists to launch a coordinated attack on our infrastructure, steal our personal information, or otherwise wreak havoc. So insidious is this threat that it would sound like the content of an urban legend, yet it is documented as real. Imagine a threat that would be undetected by the current antivirus, firewall, and anti-spyware software, yet be so powerful as to effectively take

over our computers, without our knowledge. This threat, formerly considered solely as an unproven concept, is now known to be real. This threat is also now implicated in taking over countless computers. This contemporary threat is known by the innocuous term "Rootkit."

A rootkit is defined on the Sysin- ternals website as, " ...the mechanisms and techniques whereby malware, including viruses, spyware, and trojans, attempt to hide their presence from spyware blockers, antivirus, and system management utilities. There are several rootkit classifications depending on whether the malware survives reboot and whether it executes in user mode or kernel mode." The security software company F-Secure expands the definition with, "Rootkits for Windows work in a different way and are typically used to hide malicious software from for example an antivirus scanner. Rootkits are typically not malicious by themselves but are used for malicious purposes by viruses, worms, backdoors and spyware. A virus combined with a rootkit produces what was known as full stealth viruses in the MS-DOS environment."

Because rootkits are currently very effective at hiding malware from our antivirus and anti-spyware scanners, it is quite possible or even probable that our computers are infected, despite repeated scans with properly updated software.

Microsoft, and other vendors, have acknowledged the threat and are now beginning to produce software that can detect and destroy the rootkits on our computers. The software is still in its infancy, and lacks the ease of use, automation, and attractive graphical interfaces that we are used to with our antivirus software. It is inevitable that as word of the rootkit threat spreads, and more computers are identified as having stealthy rootkits hiding viruses and other threats, that the small current crop of rootkit detecting software will improve, and other competitors, probably the major anti virus vendors, will join the fight. If rootkit technology continues to spread, the current crop of generally excellent computer security suites from the likes of Symantec (Norton), McAfee, Panda, TrendMicro, and others will be forced to add rootkit protection to their respective suites, or face competitive obsolescence.

Fortunately for us, there are a few rootkit detectors already available, mostly for free! This first generation of products still needs much refining to enable the average person to scan for rootkits with ease, but they are still a very good first step. There are a few rootkit detectors available which are currently free. One "RootkitRevealer" is from a company known for its excellent and often free software, Sysinternals. This software uses a patent-pending technology to detect rootkits, and is currently available for down-

load at www.sysinternals.com/ntw2k/freeware /rootkitreveal.shtml. Rootkit Revealer will run on almost any Microsoft operating system, NT4 and later, which includes Windows 2000, and XP.

Another rootkit detector is from F-Secure, a well-known computer security company headquartered in Finland, with offices in the US and elsewhere. F-Secure's product is "Blacklight," available as a free beta (pre-release) version until July 1. Blacklight can be downloaded at www.f-secure.com/blacklight.

I have recently tried both products, and I personally found Blacklight the easier to use. It seemed effective at detecting and eliminating rootkits.

Microsoft will shortly be making available its rootkit detector, the "Strider Ghost Buster," details at research.microsoft.com/rootkit.

Persons unknown who wish to do us harm, either at a personal level such as stealing our account information and committing the crime of identity theft, or the impersonal level, such as cyber terrorists intent on shutting down our critical infrastructure, may use the rootkit technology to bypass our otherwise necessary defenses.

Until such time as the integrated computer security suites catch up with this threat, I will now have to add a rootkit detector to my recommended list of essential computer security utilities, alongside antivirus software, a good firewall, and a spyware detector. It is also imperative that all four of these utilities be frequently updated to ensure a reasonable degree of personal security. We will also have to add rootkits to our vernacular of cyber threats, along with the now ubiquitous terms "virus," "spyware," and "hacker."

I shudder to wonder what may be coming down the pike next.

Search Engine Tips and Tricks

by Richard Johnson TUGNET, Granada Hills CA

Part 1: Google

I don't have to tell you about Google, which has for many years been the search leader. Aside from the quality of its searches, a big plus is that all Google's paid listings are clearly distinguished, and do not even appear in the same part of the page. This is unfortunately not the case with other search services such as Yahoo, which intersperses undifferentiated paid and unpaid listings.

Newbies will want to know they can initiate a Google search at www.google.com. All the services I'm recommending here, most of them from Google but a few from other sources, are entirely free.

Google Toolbar

If you don't already use the Google Toolbar, you're missing a terrific navi-gational aid. Its features are

really too numerous to detail here, but I find especially useful its ability to readily bring up a parent Web page, search within a website, find pages similar to what you're looking at, find sites linking to that page, translate a page into English, browse by name (if you don't know the URL), highlight search terms on the page, find on the page your search terms or any other terms (more handily than with your browser's "Find" function), fill forms, and block popups. (There are better pop-up blockers and form fillers, but Google's may suit you fine.)

The toolbar enables most of the standard Google tasks, including some described in the next section. Not only are all these tasks easily accessible, but also you won't have to re-type your search terms (for example, when you search for an image after a standard search).

I strongly recommend version 3, which adds many useful tools, the best of which will allow you to spell-check what you've typed on a Web form by clicking a toolbar button, bring up a map page (using the impressive new Google Maps — see below) just by clicking on an address, and track a delivery by clicking on its tracking number.

Since it's still in beta, version 3 is not publicized, and won't automatically replace your present Google Toolbar. To get it, go to www.toolbar.google.com/T3.

Other Google Goodies Google Maps and Google Local

Google has recently introduced its own map system, that's head and shoulders above the competition. It's available as a standalone service at http://maps.google.com and as an adjunct to the more established Google Local, at http://local.google.com.

Compared to other online maps, the area of a Google map is huge, taking up more than half the screen, and expanding to fill any additional space (for example, if you move to a full-screen view). Zooming (in or out) is very quick, and re-centering is instantaneous. A new feature brings up a birds-eye view if you click on "Satellite."

Google Maps and Google Local are now pretty much the same service: A page brought up by Google Maps has a link to "Local Search," which provides the local data on the same page; and a page brought up by Google Local includes the map (which, although smaller, can be expanded with one click). The local data includes the names, addresses, phone numbers, and websites of businesses, and, often, third-party reviews (like restaurant reviews).

You can now get to Google Maps by typing a location in the standard Google search bar. And you'll find a link to Google Local at the top of every page of Google search results.

The best of the rest

The following are, in my experience, the most useful (or most interesting) of Google's non-standard services. You do not need the Google Toolbar to employ them:

Google's image search at www.google.com/imghp, touted as the Web's most comprehensive, indexes (according to Google) over 880 million images.

Google will give you a business address and phone number. The easiest way is through the ResearchBuzz! form at www.researchbuzz.org/archives/001408.shtml.

Google will bring up one or more definitions for nearly any word. In the Google search box just type "define:" (without the quotes), followed by the word of interest. This service is now multi-lingual.

Reverse phone directory. In the search box type the area code and phone number (with a space between them), and there's a good chance you'll bring up at the top of the results page not only the person or company name for that number, but also the address.

Google offers special searches, limited (for example) to U.S. government or to Microsoft. Go to www.google.com/options/specialsearches.html.

For those who like to purchase through the use of catalogs, Google's catalog search is at http://catalogs.google.com.

Google will enable you to view a page that's been removed from the Web. Look for the "Cached" link after the description of the page in a search result. (Or click the Page Info button on the Google Toolbar.) This function will give you access to many closed-down sites not yet available via the Internet Archive. (The Internet Archive – not a Google service – is at www.archive.org.)

The Google Directory at http://directory.google.com combines the Open Directory Project (the Web's largest human-edited directory) with Google's proprietary ranking system. Use of the directory is helpful to narrow down what might otherwise be an overly broad search. (This tool is also available from the Google Toolbar.)

Google Answers at http://answers.google.com/answers is a paid research service – but users are free to browse previous answers, which can be quite helpful.

Weather forecasts are easily obtained by typing in the Google search bar the word "weather" followed by the city of choice (for example, "weather canoga park.") The fore-cast will speedily appear at the top of a page of search results.

Froogle, a comparison service for online shopping whose listed vendors pay neither for inclusion nor placement, is at http://froogle.google.com/froogle.

Google Print gives you access to books' contents and lets you search within those books. Look for the "book results" entry in standard search results, accompanied by the Google Print logo.

Google Suggest, at www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en, appears and acts like the standard Google search, except that as you start typing your search request, Google types its own suggestions. These could save you time and also point you to related searches.

Google Desktop, to search files on your own computer, can be downloaded from http://desktop.google.com. Unfortunately, it's available only for users of Windows 2000 and Windows XP.

Gmail, which on March 31 started offering rich text formatting, has as of April 1 doubled its storage capacity to a whopping 2 gigabytes. Gmail is not yet open to the public, but invitations can be obtained from various sources, including this writer.

Note that without re-typing you can extend your standard Web search not only to Google Local but also to Google Images and Froogle (as well as to Google Groups and Google News), by clicking on links at the top of every results page. Or you can skip the Google entry page and go to Xtra Google at www.xtragoogle .com for a selection of twenty Google tools, all tied to one search box.

Google Tips - Toolbar tips

Use Alt-G to enter search terms in the search box. For your news search, don't enable the separate news button, but instead use the Search News option in the drop-down Search the Web menu. That way you'll be able to use the Alt-G shortcut to enter your news search query, and to use the same query for news and general Web searching, without retyping. When using the word-find function, hold down the control key to find the exact whole word, and similarly use the shift key to move backwards.

Other Google tips

For academically oriented results (often the most useful), try typing site:edu either before or after your search terms. This will eliminate commercial sites, and limit results to those from educational institutions.

Although Google now implements "stemming" (automatically searches for variants of words as well as the words themselves), you can cover still more bases by using the tilde [~] symbol right before a search term (leaving no space). This will tell Google to use synonyms as search queries. For example, a search for ~food ~facts will turn up cooking information.

Don't worry too much about misspelled words. With any search engine, a search query with a misspelling might get you some good results that you wouldn't see otherwise! Google will suggest a corrected spelling along with its search results, but if the initial search comes up empty will correct the spelling on its own and re-run the search.

Google will ignore some common short words (like a, on, and by) in your queries. The best way around these so-called stop words in most cases is simply to enclose the phrase in quotes, which will force Google to search only for the phrase as given. (A phrase search will of course come in handy on other occasions as well.) Otherwise, you can precede a suspected stop word with the plus sign (for example, +on).

Google recognizes the OR operator, or, in its stead, the vertical line. So if you're seeking search results concerning cats or dogs (but not both), you could type "cats OR dogs" or "cats | dogs" [without the quotes]. Use the minus sign right before a search term for "not." ("Animals-dogs" [without the quotes] would ignore dogs in the search.) For complicated queries, you can if necessary group search words within parentheses.

Instead of clicking on the main link at the top of each Google search result, try clicking on the word Cached. The page that will come up will now have your search words highlighted. (Don't use this technique if you need to see the most recent page revisions.)

Google supports word wild cards. That is, you can in your query use the asterisk [*] as a stand-in to represent any word. (This won't work in Google for parts of words.)

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder /administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (http://theskillspool.org).

Tech News

by Sue Crane Vice President & Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, CA

Paralyzed man controls his PC and TV using thought alone

ybernetics – the fusion of human beings and technology – is helping one paralyzed man control his environment by connecting his brain to his PC. Quadriplegic ex-American football player Matthew Nagle is using a system that converts his thoughts into actions on a computer. Nagle's brain is connected to his computer by the BrainGate system, which thought impulses using a sensor implanted in the motor cortex of his brain. Now, neuroscientists monitoring his progress hope he will soon be able to use the system to control other devices including electric wheelchairs.

Electronic Pill Boxes

Two health companies have teamed up to distribute an electronic pill box that does much more than help patients organize their medicine. The Med-eMonitor reminds patients when to take medicine and makes patient-specific inquiries about health measures like blood glucose levels, side effects or just general wellbeing. The device sends this information to a secure Web server, where practitioners monitoring a patient's care can see the information and intervene quickly if the patient stops taking medicine or reports ill-effects. The Web server also updates the device with new alerts, like upcoming doctor visits or changes in dosages.

RealNetworks Launches Napster Challenger

Streaming-media giant RealNetworks has launched an updated version of its Rhapsody subscription music service to challenge competitors such as Apple Computer's iTunes and Napster To Go. The new Rhapsody, which offers subscribers access to more than 1 million songs, will come in three flavors, one of which is free and provides 25 song downloads each month.

Longhorn to Support Handwriting and Touch Screens

Microsoft plans to include touch screen functionality as a feature of the operating system in the next version of Windows, code-named Longhorn, in addition to support for pen-based input that Microsoft currently offers in Windows XP Tablet PC Edition. Longhorn will also include a new document format that rivals Adobe's PostScript and PDF.

VoIPs to get 911 Access

VoIP companies still can't successfully route a 911 call to the right emergency calling center or provide emergency operators with the caller's phone number and location, but Verizon Communications, the largest of the Baby Bells, said it plans to open its 911 emergency calling infrastructure to providers of Net-based phoning and Qwest Communications International struck a deal with Vonage for access to Qwest < h ttp://news.com.com/Qwest+gives+Vonage+the+911/2100-7352_3-5678598.html?tag=nl>'s 911 infrastructure. The developments are major for all Net-phone operators, including cable operators, AT&T CallVantage and Net2Phone, which are facing mounting pressure to 911 services.

Society News

Help's Half Hour

Tuesday, June 14, 2005 Led by: Ron Matteson Recorded by Jan Rothfuss

Q: One of our members now has a new computer. She backed up the original Corel files to CD but, when loading them onto her new machine, they cannot be opened.

A: She may need to 'save as' another version because Word Perfect is not on her new one. If she uses RTF format almost all soft-ware can read it. Another option is to install Open Office as this software will open almost anything.

Ron reported back to us about the problem that he was having as he tried to network two computers. He

Picnic

Tuesday, August 9 at the cabin in Perinton Town Park

> Socialize 4-5:30 pm Eat 5:30 pm Flea Market 4-9 pm

RCSi will provide meat, pop, coffee, and tea. A \$5 per person deposit is required when you place your meat order. It will be returned to you when you arrive at the picnic.

Deadline for reservations is August 1.

Meat choices are red or white hots, cheeseburgers, or Italian sausage.

Send your deposit and meat choice to Steve Staub, 2 Bambi Lane, Rochester, NY 14624.

Questions? Srstaub1@rochester.rr.com

Bring a dish to pass and your flea market offerings. If your last name falls between A-I please bring a munchy, J-Q a salad, R-Z a dessert.

could pass data from one to the other but not back. He had to go in to the Registry and change a value so that the two way communication was restored. It might have been related more to the Norton firewall than the antivirus software.

There is free antivirus software available from www.grisoft.com http://www.grisoft.com. It is called AVG and can also be found at www.Downloads.com http://www.Downloads.com. CompUSA had a bundle of Norton AntiVirus and Firewall with rebates so that you only paid \$7. Would probably be cheaper for those who's antivirus will be expiring.

Q: A member is having trouble printing off web pages. Is there a way to control the print?

A: The print preview feature may help to see what will be coming out before you print it off.

Q: The Thunderbird email program show my address book in alphabetical order but comes out scrambled when printed off.

A: We have heard of this before – no answer available.

Q: One member wants to burn some ABI files to the DVD. He would like the DVD to be readable on a standard DVD player.

A: Not all DVD players can read ABI formats. They may work in your computer but not in your entertainment player. Some also need to use the DVD-R or DVD+R. At this point there seems to be no standard DVD format. The user must also be sure to 'close' the

writing file as this can prevent the reading of the content.

Q: I have a laptop that has only USB 1. He would like to have a USB 2. Is there a way to make this possible? Currently he is using Win 98.

A: There may be an adapter to switch up to 2.

Business Meeting

Led by Ron and Steve

the Webster Library on Hard Road in the plaza just south of Route 104. The speaker is from Smart Computing Magazine. We are also looking for a contact with the Linux group so that we can ask them to come as a Fall program. Perhaps they could do a program on Open Office, too. We are also thinking about inviting a local vendor to speak to us about wireless networking they may bring along the hardware needed.

The officers reported that this month's *Monitor* was printed on our LaserJet printers. It took over 40 hours because of the failure to get the color printer working. As a result the covers had to be sent to the black and white. There was also an issue with the printer memory which should be expanded before the next printing.

Steve announced that all members with dues due should pay them promptly. The Planning meeting will be held next week at Sally's house starting at 7:00 p.m. sharp. The newsletter assembly session is scheduled for Saturday, June 25th starting at 9:30 a.m. at St. Stephens. We need someone to run Help's Half Hour on a regular basis. If no one steps forward we will have to go to a volunteer rotation. He also let the group know that we are looking for a new location for the New Users Group. Dave Thompson held the Digital SIG met on Thursday, June 9th.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

President: Arpad Kovacs
Vice-President: Dan Rothfuss
Secretary: John McMillan
Treasurer: Steve Staub
Board Members: Sally Springett
Tony Dellelo

Following a break, Arpad gave his pre-sentation on Microsoft MediaCenter.

Treasurer's Report

	ri casai ci s ixepoi i
	by Steve Staub, Treasurer
Balance as of 5/17/05	\$1,102.79
Income	
Picnic	\$30.00
Dues	60.00
Donations	<u>11.00</u>

Total			\$101.00
Expenses			
Staples	 	 	\$31.21
St. Stephens	 	 	60.00
Post Office	 	 	50.00
Total			\$142.21
Balance as of $6/21/05$			\$1,062.58
Renewing Members:			
Robert Panello			
Don Nichols			

The Lighter Side

A group of young children were sitting in a circle with their teacher. She went around in turn asking questions.

"Danny, what noise does a cow make?"
"It goes moo."

[&]quot;Alice, what noise does a cat make?"

[&]quot;It goes meow."

[&]quot;Jamie, what sound does a lamb make?"

[&]quot;It goes baaa."

[&]quot;Jennifer, what sound does a mouse make?"

[&]quot;Click!"