Get It Right

Bob Hawes (bob.hawes@acgnj.org), ACGNJ

I made a mistake in my newsletter article last month (*Cut It Out*, in our January 2009 issue). It wasn't the first mistake I've made; and (realistically) it won't be the last. Sometimes I'm tempted to just gloss over such errors; but mostly I admit them. Generally speaking, the truth *is* the best policy, after all. Usually, I also include an explanation of what went wrong, and why it happened. (Though often, an explanation is really only an excuse in sheep's clothing). This time, due to a misconception on my part, I mistakenly criticized somebody's commercial product. So both an explanation *and* an apology are in order. You'll find both further below; but first, some levity:

Pat Pending

There's an IP rights management tool known as "defensive publication". The idea is that in lieu of actually applying for a patent of your own, you publish a document that describes a product, device or method so that it enters into the public domain and becomes prior art. That way, nobody else can patent it, either. So: At some time in 2008 (it might have been at a Board Meeting, or maybe at a SIG or some other kind of club meeting, possibly having to do with the By-Laws), I said something like; "In another ten years or so, everybody could be directly connected together by *Ment-O-Link*". Now I, at least, am greatly enamored of that double-hyphenated word. (I think it would make an ideal trademark). It neatly encompasses the concept. Plus, the product, the device *and* the method all flow quite obviously from that concept. Furthermore, said concept has really been around, in one form or another, for a very long time. I'm *not* claiming that the thought originated with me. (After all, *I'm* not the one trying to patent it). I'm just laying my version out here before the

world, in the dated publication of a technical organization. Patent Trolls, take note.

You think the patent system *hasn't* gone crazy? If you follow the link printed below, it will take you to the Patent Full Text and Image Database of the USPTO (United States Patent and Trademark Office). There, if you type the number 4,022,227 (with or without the commas) into the Query box and click the Search button, you'll be shown a *real, live* patent entitled; "Method of concealing partial baldness". The first sentence of the Abstract reads; "A method of styling hair to cover partial baldness using only the hair on a person's head". That's right! On May 10th, 1977, two guys named Smith were awarded a patent on the "comb-over". In the thirty-odd years since, things have only gotten even more ludicrous.

http://patft.uspto.gov/netahtml/PTO/srchnum.htm

I didn't make this particular discovery myself. I was led to it by Groklaw (*www.groklaw.net*), just two days before they *stopped* posting their daily "News Picks". Groklaw had become one of my first stops on the Internet each day, at least partly due to those picks. On the site, they presented good reasons for changing their policy. Reasons which, unfortunately for me, I consider to be valid; and therefore must reluctantly support. Still, I'm really going to miss them. Now, back to my own personal "bad stuff".

Right Readers

There are quite a few companies whose products (new ones, anyway) I will never trust again. The first and biggest is, of course, Microsoft. (After all, Vista is really a Digital Rights Management System rather than an Operating System). Now, for reasons that actually have nothing at all to do with Acrobat, Adobe has added itself to the list. Because this article only concerns Acrobat, I won't go into any more detail about those reasons at this point in time. In the future, I'll probably do an article about Adobe's alleged transgressions (and maybe one more about Microsoft's). Right now, we're just talking PDF Readers; and we'll start with an Adobe product I still like.

http://www.acgnj.org

Founded 1975

In This Issue

Officers, Directors and Leaders

Officers			Board of Directors		
President	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410	Director Emeritus	Sol Libes	(609) 520-9024
Vice President	Paul Syers	(732) 572-3481	Through 2009	Gregg McCarthy	
Treasurer	Malthi Masurekar	(732) 560-1534		Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
Secretary	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366		John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Past President	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070		Bob Hawes	
			Through 2010	David McRitchie	
Special Interest Groups				Don McBride	(732) 560-0369
C Languages	Bruce Arnold	(908) 735-7898		Bill Farrell	(732) 572-3481
Firefox Activity	David McRitchie			Lenny Thomas	
Genealogy	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681	**Standing Committees**		
Investing	Jim Cooper		APCUG Rep.	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681
Java	Michael Redlich	(908) 537-4915	Facilities	John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Layman's Forum	Matthew Skoda	(908) 359-8842	Financial	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
LUNICS	Andreas Meyer		Historian	Lenny Thomas	
NJ Gamers	Gregg McCarthy		Membership	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
VBA & Excel	James Ditaranto	(201) 986-1104	Newsletter	— open —	
Web Dev	Evan Williams	(908) 359-8070	Trenton ComputerFest	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410
Window Pains	John Raff	(973) 992-9002	Vendor Liaison	Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
			Webmaster	John Raff	(973) 992-9002

ACGNJ News

Submissions: Articles, reviews, cartoons, illustrations. Most common formats are acceptable. Graphics embedded in the document must also be included as separate files. Fax or mail hard copy and/or disk to editor; OR e-mail to Editor. **Always confirm**. Date review and include name of word processor used, your name, address and phone *and* name, address and phone of manufacturer, if available.

Tips for reviewers: Why does anyone need it? Why did you like it or hate it? Ease (or difficulty) of installation, learning and use. Would you pay for it?

Advertising: Non-commercial announcements from members are free. Commercial ads 15 cents per word, $5 minimum. Camera ready display ads: Full page (7 x 10 inches) $150, two-thirds page (4½ x 10) $115, half-page $85, one-third $57, quarter $50, eighth $30. Discount 10% on 3 or more consecutive insertions. Enclose payment.

Publication Exchange: Other computer user groups are invited to send a subscription to ACGNJ at the address below. We will respond in kind.

Address Changes should be directed to Martin Rosenblum (*m.rosenblum@ieee.org*) and/or to his attention at ACGNJ at the address below.

Membership, including subscription: 1 year $25, 2 years $40, 3 years $55. Student or Senior Citizen (over 65): 1 year $20, 3 years $45. Family of member, without subscription, $10 per year. Send name, address and payment to ACGNJ, PO Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076.

Typographic Note: The ACGNJ News is produced using Corel Ventura 5. Font families used are Times New Roman (TT) for body text, Arial (TT) for headlines.

In the past, I've downloaded several versions of Acrobat Reader. My favorite is version 5.0, which seems to have last been updated in April of 2001. I also downloaded versions 5.0.5 (apparently last updated in October of 2001) and 5.1 (apparently last updated in September of 2002). Those downloads measured 8.4 to 8.6 Megabytes, and supported Windows 95, 98, 2000, ME and XP. The Adobe Reader 6.0 download measured 15.9 MB, supported Windows 98 to XP, but *not* 95, and was apparently last updated in November of 2003. (Wow! They changed the name and almost doubled the size). The Adobe Reader 7.0 download measured 30.7MB (almost doubled *again*), only supported Windows 2000 and XP, and seems to have last been updated in March of 2005. Just for this article, I checked out Adobe Reader versions 8 and 9. I've never downloaded and installed either one of them, and I'm confident that I never will. However, if I ever *did* download them, it looks like the Adobe Reader 8.0 executable file would only measure 21 or 22 MB (down by a third), and the Adobe Reader 9.0 file would measure 33 or 34 MB (right back up again).

Those large size increases after version 5 *can't* be explained by a corresponding increase in features. (At least not "features" that the user can access). On the contrary, I know for a fact that there was one *less* feature. As I noted last issue in *Cut It Out*, version 5's Column Select Tool wasn't carried forward into versions 6 or 7. It's my theory that those size increases mark the point where Adobe started putting its own interests ahead of its users, by adding "phone-home" capabilities. I further contend that the simultaneous name change supports that speculation. (Reflecting an increase in corporate egotism, since it actually decreased "product recognition" by *un*linking Acrobat from their PDF reader). Based on these new realizations, I'm forced to withdraw my previous endorsements of Adobe Readers 6 and 7. I *still* say that Acrobat Reader 5 (if you can find it) is the best single-source all around PDF reader; but let's face facts: It's getting old. Therefore, by default, my recommendation for a new product must fall to Foxit Reader; and not entirely by coincidence, it was in my review of another Foxit product that I made my aforementioned mistake.

With computers, most times there's more than one way to get things done. Last month in *Cut It Out,* while describing my first experiences with Foxit PDF Editor, I complained because I could only find a *really, really* hard way to copy an image out of a PDF file. Since then, I've found a way that is, in fact, quite easy. I made my mistake by trying to impose the image selection criteria employed by the Adobe products onto Foxit PDF Editor. While Adobe let me swipe a rectangle and select either a whole image or just a part of one, Foxit would only let me select a complete image. What I didn't realize at the time was that, because of that built-in limitation, swiping wasn't necessary. Indeed, by insisting on swiping a rectangle, I'd made things a lot more difficult than they had to be. Here's the *right* way to use Foxit to get an image out of a PDF file: First, open the subject file in Foxit PDF Editor, go to the proper page, and scroll down to the desired image. Next,

put the mouse pointer anywhere inside that image and click once to select it. Then, use the usual cut-and-paste techniques to copy the image into an image editing program (such as Paint or the Gimp). Boy, do I feel embarrassed and foolish. So: Foxit Software, please accept my heartfelt, humble and sincerest apologies for my mistaken criticism of your excellent product. Now, having sufficiently groveled and abased myself, I feel the need to re-inflate my bruised ego by being critical again.

In *Cut It Out*, after discussing Foxit Reader's Select Text option, I purposely omitted another option because it didn't lead anywhere. Now, I'm putting it back in. On the Foxit Reader Menu Bar, if you click on the Tools menu, then click on the Advanced Editing Tools sub-menu, you'll find an entry labeled Image tool. If you click on that, you'll get a pop-up window saying that this feature is a part of the Foxit Reader Pro Pack and directing you to a website for details on how to purchase licenses for said Pro Pack. It also includes directions to a free offer promotion at another website; but when you try to go there, you get a 404 Not Found error. Now, from Foxit Reader 2.3 (which seems to have been last updated in October of 2008), this might be understandable. You could imagine that there had once been a free offer, but that it had expired by now. However, from their newly released Foxit Reader 3.0 (which was last updated on January 1st of 2009), you get the exact same message. That's *totally* unacceptable. Knowing my parsimonious nature, you shouldn't be surprised when I say that I *didn't* purchase a Pro Pack license. So I never found out just what that particular Image tool actually does.

There are, in fact, several other menu options in Foxit Reader which lead to advertisements rather than to working features. I'm only going to mention one more. From the Menu Bar, if you click on the Edit menu, and then click on its "Modify Content..." option, a small window labeled "Missing Component Found" will pop up, saying; "There is a certain component (Foxit PDF Editor) missing for Foxit Reader. You might need to download update from our website to display your file correctly. Do you want Foxit Reader to get more information about this component and show up the Download Manager? NOTE: this will require Internet access to Foxit server". Then you get a Yes button and a No button. If you're not alarmed by the slightly awkward English (which could be a sign of Nigerian spammers or the Russian mob); and you click on the Yes button, you'll start a process that will, in fact, install the evaluation version of Foxit PDF Editor on your computer. After it's installed, whenever you're in Foxit PDF Reader and you click on that "Modify Content..." option, PDF Editor will start up with your document from PDF Reader already loaded. Many people like allowing a link to install a program that way. Personally, I prefer to first download whatever installation files I need to a permanent subdirectory (where I can store them for later re-use if necessary), then do the installations myself, one by one.

Let's recap: You *can* copy information directly out of PDF files without paying Adobe enormous piles of money for the full version of Acrobat. If you haven't read *Cut It Out*, please

do so. It contains instructions for using free Adobe products to copy both text and images; and for using free Foxit products to copy text. Much as I'd like to, I just can't repeat those instructions here. However, I'll repeat that although the evaluation version of Foxit PDF Editor *will* put evaluation marks on all changed pages of any PDF file that you edit and then save, it will *not* in any way mark images copied out using the technique described above. Currently, I have Acrobat Reader 5.0 installed on my older "main" computer (which still runs Windows 98 SE, and is no longer allowed to connect to the Internet). I have the just-released Foxit PDF Reader 3.0 and the evaluation version of Foxit PDF Editor 2.0 installed on my newer "main" computer (which runs XP SP2, and is, in fact, getting a little "long in the tooth" itself). Though having to work with multiple programs is a bit of an inconvenience, those two Foxit products are what I would advise anyone to use rather than any Adobe Reader newer than version 5. You can get them at the following website:

http://www.foxitsoftware.com/downloads/index.php

There you'll find Foxit Reader versions 3.0, 2.3 and 2.2, plus lots of other stuff under the following headings: "Advanced Add-ons for Foxit Reader", "Critical Add-ons in Foxit Reader", "Other PDF Tools", "Foxit Reader for Mobile Devices", and "Remote Access Tools". EXE, MSI and ZIP downloads for Build 1011 of the Foxit PDF Editor 2.0 evaluation version (last updated 10/11/07) are listed under both "Advanced Add-ons for Foxit Reader" and "Other PDF Tools". I downloaded the ZIP version. (They also advertise a "TrialPay" version that comes with a 6-month free license. You *don't* need that).

Big Bucks

Here, from the Adobe website, are their current prices: $299 for Acrobat 9 Standard (or a $99 upgrade), $499 for Acrobat 9 Pro (or a $159 upgrade), and $699 for Acrobat 9 Pro Extended (or a $229 upgrade). There *are* free, fully functional 30-day trial versions of Acrobat 9 Pro and Pro Extended available, but you have to create a member account to get one (so I didn't). If you're wondering what's different in each version, here's a link to their product comparison page:

http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/matrix.html

Now, from the Foxit website, here are **their** current prices: $39 per user for Foxit Reader Pro Pack (or a $19 per user upgrade), and $99 per user for Foxit PDF Editor 2.0 (or a $49 per user upgrade). There's *no* download for the Pro pack. All its features are already included in the free Foxit Reader downloads (which measure 3.14 to 3.69 MB). They just have to be activated. The Foxit PDF Editor 2.0 download measures 1.89 MB. As downloaded, it's the evaluation version. Entering license information would change it into the full version.

Finally, just *look* at the size of the Foxit PDF Editor download! It's only about half the size of the Foxit *Reader* download; and less than a *quarter* the size of that long-ago download for Acrobat Reader *5*. I couldn't get any download size information from the Adobe website, but it surely says something that the optional on-disk copies of their two free trial offers (which Adobe will mail to US and Canadian customers only) are on *DVD* rather than CD. Foxit PDF Editor

has been getting a lot of good reviews lately; but is it even remotely *possible* for it to duplicate all of Acrobat's functionality? Bloated code certainly exists, and object-oriented programming has definitely contributed its share (especially in automatically generated code for graphical user interfaces); but could even the most elegantly, expertly and tightly written code fit into less than two megabytes what Adobe apparently can't fit onto a seven *hundred* megabyte CD? I don't know, but it sure doesn't seem likely.

It looks like Foxit might be taking a modular approach. Among the products advertised on their website are two whose features I would have thought to be included in Foxit PDF Editor: Foxit PDF Creator makes PDF files from printable documents, and Foxit PDF Page Organizer splits or merges PDF files and reorganize pages in PDF documents. The PDF Creator download measures 0.8 MB and costs $29.99 per user (or $16.49 per user for an upgrade). The PDF Page Organizer download measures 1.28 MB and costs $59 per user. (It's a new product, so there's no upgrade price). Currently, I don't *need* any of those functions. So I can't afford the time (or money) that it would take to investigate whether Foxit PDF Editor alone is sufficient, or if those two further downloads (and maybe others as well) may also be required. In the future, who knows?

Wrapping up: It's only been a few months since I learned that you even *could* copy text and/or graphics out of PDF files using readily available free tools. So far, I haven't done anything except practice on expendable files; but I already consider these features to be essential. Right now, it's my opinion that Foxit does them better. (Though, to be fair, I haven't yet checked out any open-source or Linux programs that might exist).

See you next month. ⌨

Back Issues Needed

The editor is attempting to build a CD containing all issues of ACGNJ News in pdf format, but our collection is incomplete. We're hoping some faithful reader has been hoarding them and will be willing to lend them to us just long enough to scan them. We promise to return them quickly. Thanks Joseph Gaffney, who loaned his collection for scanning. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: August

1976: January, February, March, April (pamphlet-size booklets)

1975: All issues except #1 (June). These are also pamphlet-size booklets.

If you can supply any of these missing issues (or scanned images or good clear copies), please contact the Editor by email (*bdegroot@ptd.net*). Those who supply missing issues will receive a free copy of the resulting CD as our thanks for your help. ⌨

The DealsGuy

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

*Suggested Reading

I'm sure you've heard about some of the innovations that United Parcel Service has created in the interest of saving money, such as calculating their delivery routes with a minimum of left turns. This article will inform you of many other ways they are saving money, some that will surprise you *informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=212900815*. Everything you can think of is under scrutiny. However, the most interesting part is further into the article.

*Feedback

I certainly had plenty of feedback from my experience with Best Buy. It seems that many others have had a bad experience with Best Buy and wrote to tell me about it. My preference for that type of store was Circuit City, but that has come to an end. I'm sorry to bid them farewell because Circuit City always treated me right.

*A Bit About Work

My wife and I have worked some great trade shows lately. One was the Fun Show, which is also called the Coin Show. I sure saw many dollars worth of coins etc. displayed by people from all over the US. Police continually patrolled the show floor and they now have police on horseback roamed the parking lot to prevent any robberies there, which have happened in the past. In fact, there have even been vendors who were followed by robbers to a distant town where they were robbed when they stopped at a motel for the night. Obviously, the robbery was substantial.

Then came the Surf Show, which happens twice a year. It's a large show and draws attendees from the US states with beaches, and from the Caribbean. Fashions make up much of the show, but there are lots of other things to see, not to mention the models (mmmm).

On the heels of the Surf Show came the "Shot Show" which occupied 1.1 million square feet of exhibit area in the West complex of Orange County Convention Center. *http://www.shotshow.org*. I saw a shotgun with a price tag of $100,000 and that booth also had a deal for four assorted shotguns and rifles for only $400,000. Too bad my Visa limit was too low for that. Those guns with their GOLD triggers would have made a nice gift for my wife's husband. The show had about 25,000 attendees and security was tight with all kinds of guns and knives all over the place. Most of the attendees I talked to said they were unable to see the entire show in one day. Others said they were back again to keep looking because you always find something you didn't see the first trip through. That is so true of trade shows.

I'll also give you the URL for the IAAPA Attractions Expo *http://www.iaapa.org* which is a show we worked in November that is all about amusement park rides and other attractions at carnivals. It's always fun to work it and some of the rides are set up and working right there on the show floor. There is as much as 65 feet of height in certain areas of that building if needed. There were many inflatable attractions this year and lots of food exhibits (Burp).

The Power Gen Show was extremely interesting with everything from small to very large generating systems *http://www.power-gen.com/index.html*. Three vendors offered giant windmill generators, GE, Mitsubishi and Vesta with impressive movies illustrating the construction. If I had one of those, I could power the entire neighborhood. You might also be interested in the Electronic House Expo that will be in Orlando in March. *http://www.ehxweb.com/*

*How About Repairing That File

DataNumen Inc. has released Advanced Access Repair 2.0. If .MDB files are corrupt or damaged, this powerful repair engine will recover the data with precision. The performance of Advanced Access Repair is improved and supports MS Access 2007 and Windows Vista. If the .MDB files are corrupt or damaged in some way, Access can neither open the files nor recognize any data in them. Advanced Access Repair uses advanced technologies to scan the corrupt or damaged Microsoft Access databases (.MDB files) and recover the data in them as much as possible.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 is based on a comprehensive understanding of the Access MDB database format. The advanced algorithm of this powerful tool allows you to recover every possible item in the MDB database files because the recovery process does not rely on the structure of the original corrupt or damaged MDB database file. Sometimes the structure is completely damaged and cannot be recognized, but Advanced Access Repair is still able to analyze the raw MDB database file byte by byte and recover most of the data.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 can successfully repair Microsoft Access 95, 97, 2000, XP, 2003 and 2007 databases, recover the structure and records of the tables in Access databases, or recover MEMO and OLE fields. It offers numerous features that are not available, or only partially available, in other repair engines. Among those features is support for the new Access 2007 format, batch recovery, command line support, shell integration, and drag & drop support. Advanced Access Repair 2.0 can also recover indexes, auto-number fields and relations, can output repaired MDB files in different formats, and can search for MDB database files on the local computer according to special criteria. Password encrypted Access databases? Recovered; deleted records and tables; no problem.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows, including Vista, and supports all versions of Microsoft Access including Microsoft Access 2007. A single-user license costs $299.95 (US). Volume buyers are entitled to discounts. They are offering a 10% discount if you use the code DNC-SGKO-DG when ordering. The code is good through March. Further information on the product, as well as a free trial copy is available from *http://www.datanumen.com/aar/*.

Direct download link: *http://www.datanumen.com/aar/aar.exe*

Continued

Review - Wacom Intous.3 Writing Tablet

Jerry Goldstein (jerryg (at) attygoldstein.com), The PCUG of Connecticut (www.tpcug-ct.org)

Tabula rasa (blank slate) has new meaning when you hold a pen to a writing tablet. Your creativity expands. After the stilted motions of a mouse you get free flowing precision to transfer your thoughts to the screen when you use a writing tablet and pen. For graphic work and photo editing the writing tablet is as invaluable as the palette is to an artist.

Writing tablets, aka digitizing, drawing, or graphic tablet have been around since 1888 when the Telautograph was patented. They have come a long way since then with one manufacturer carving out its own market niche. That manufacturer is Wacom. Wacom created and patented passive tablets that use electromagnetic induction technology. This technology uses horizontal and vertical wires that transmit and receive electromagnetic signals between the tablet and a pen or mouse. For the non-scientists amongst us that means the wires let the tablet know where the pen is on or above the tablet and translates that to the screen. The pens are equipped with pressure sensitive technology as well. This allows you to adjust what you do on the screen just by how hard and the angle by which you use the pen. Electromagnetic power also eliminates the need for a battery for the pen.

Wacom patents prevent competitors from using its technology. That has kept Wacom the premier tablet company for artists, graphic designers, architects, and, well . . . anyone wanting to use a graphic tablet. Other technology for tablets include Active Tablets, that use a battery energized battery to transmit a stylus's signal to the tablet, Optical Tablets, that use a small digital camera in a pen that matches patterns on paper, (watch future newsletters for an article on this emerging technology for note-takers), and Capacitive Signal Tablets, that use electrostatic signals. Touch screens are also similar to graphic tablets but you don't get the high level of precision a touch screen gives you. None of these other technologies are as popular as the electromagnetic tablets that Wacom offers.

When buying a writing tablet you have choices depending on your budget and needs. Budget considerations may over ride your actual needs but this is not a time to save. Wacom's basic or amateur level tablets used to be Graphire technology but Wacom has since introduced a new basic tablet and called it Bamboo. The Graphire line is only available now as a re-worked Bluetooth wireless tablet. Between my own research and what I have discussed with others who use graphic tablets you don't want to buy the entry level Bamboo unless you want to quickly be frustrated by its restrictions. Intuos is much more sensitive allowing precision detail in your work that is sorely missing in the Bamboo level tablet. I'm not saying that

Continued

DealsGuy, *continued*

*Keep An Eye On That Network

Softinventive Lab, the developer of software for IT Administrators, introduced Total Network Monitor, the program which enables IT Administrator to be continuously informed about every single moment of their network's performance. If there is any error or failure in a network computer's performance, the program immediately alerts you by sending a message to your E-mail, Jabber account or Event log. Total Network Monitor 1.0.1 helps to prevent serious bottlenecks and the program builds a detailed report on the type and time of any failure or error that occurred.

You can check any aspect of each utility, server or file system, HTTP, FTP, SMTP/POP3, IMAP, Event Log, Service State, Registry, and many others at any time. Total Network Monitor allows you to create monitor lists and customize them as much as possible according to your needs. It gives you all the tools for convenient monitoring of your network devices' state and has a number of specific probes checking the remote utilities and server's state. For your convenience all probes are divided into three main groups; Internet, Windows and Miscellaneous. The program enables you to build a demonstrative network map, which is handy in network control.

Total Network Monitor 1.0.1 runs under Windows 2000/XP/2003 Server platforms including Vista, and costs $145/112 euro per license for one installation, $115/89 euro per license for 2 to 5 installations, $95/73 euro per license for 6 to 10 installations. They offer a 20% discount on request. *softinventive.com*

Product page: *softinventive.com/products/total-network-monitor/*

Download: *http://www.softinventive.com/downloads/tnm-setup.exe*

*Use This Instead of Print Screen

Here is a suggestion by a reader who preferred not to be mentioned: When you want to save what's on your screen, many use Print Screen to save it to the clipboard. However, you don't always get everything you want, such as the curser, using that method. Why not try FastStone Capture, which is a freebie. The following is from their Web site: "FastStone Capture 6.3, Shareware (last update: 2008-10-15): A powerful lightweight, yet full featured screen capture tool that allows you to easily capture and annotate anything on the screen including windows, objects, menus, full screen, rectangular/freehand regions, and even scrolling windows web pages. It also allows you to record screen activities and sound into video files."

FastStone also offers other software so see *http://www.faststone.org/index.htm* for a description of their various products.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click bellsouth dot net. Visit my Web site at *http://www.dealsguy.com*

the Bamboo is a bad product for the money. It just isn't enough for most user's needs. You will pay almost double for the Intuos over the Bamboo. It is worth it.

Part of the value in buying a writing tablet is the bundled software that usually comes with your purchase. Wacom offers Adobe Photoshop Elements, Corel Painter Essential, Nik Color Efex. and Wacom Brushes with the Intuos tablet. Separately these softwares would cost you some $200. They come free with your Wacom tablet. Adobe Photoshop Elements is the basic level version of the well-known digital photo editing software.

Corel Painter is used to turn your photos into paintings and Nik Color Efex applies lighting filters to your photos. Wacom Brushes customizes the brushes used with Photoshop. When I researched purchasing a tablet I found a wide difference in what was being bundled with the offered tablet depending on the seller. Be careful what you are buying as what seems like a good deal could be a reseller offering older product with outdated software.

As you can see in the table at right the Wacom tablet comes in a variety of sizes. Wacom provided me with the 6"x11" size tablet (about $370) to review based on my working with dual monitors. When buying a tablet you want to buy the largest one that fits your budget. Stretching your budget for a bigger size will benefit you greatly later. The tablet space translates to the work you are doing. Precision is made easier when you are working on a larger tablet that understands minute motions. You can adapt a smaller tablet to work in tighter areas but that requires extra work which gets tedious. If you are working with only one monitor the 6x8 tablet is your best buy.

The tablet itself defaults as matching your monitor screen for size. When you reach the edge of the tablet surface you are also at the edge of the monitor. For dual monitors the tablet moves smoothly across the monitors as if they are one. The tablet divides itself in half so you work on both monitors like one big surface. The only problem I had with this was that my main monitor sits directly in front of me with the second monitor off to my left and up against the main monitor. This meant the tablet area that I mostly worked on was furthest from me when I worked with the tablet to the side of the keyboard. I found it easier to switch the tablet to work with just one monitor when I was doing quick photo fixes. The tablet comes with two sets of programmable hot keys to make the switch from one monitor to two relatively easy. When I wanted to work in depth with the tablet I found the extra sized tablet came in handy and made editing easier. The tablet is also light and sturdy enough to sit comfortably in your lap for those long editing sessions.

The tablet's installation is mostly plug and play, easy and quick. I say mostly because of the learning curve on the bun-dled software. The tablet itself is almost instantly understandable and useable. The software bundle is where the learning curve comes in. You'll have to do a lot of experimenting and manual reading to get the most out of the tablet software.

You will also want to experiment with the 1024 levels of tip and erasure pressure sensitivity that you get in the Intuos Grip Pen. As mentioned before the Intouos pen is battery free. That lightens the pen and avoids problems with using a pen with weak batteries. I found the pen easy to hold and maneuver around the tablet. The pen comes with a holder that allows you to keep track of where you put it between uses. It also includes a handy electronic eraser for easy fixes. I have not used the pen long enough to notice but other reviews I read indicate that the nibs on the pen do wear down with use. The pen nibs are replaceable. The pen is so sensitive that it has tilt sensitivity like a real pen or brush.

A nice touch to the tablet are the 2 touch strips placed strategically on the tablets. They made it easy to scroll and zoom the work for easier editing. The tablet also comes with a five button scrolling mouse that is ball and optics free. It works off the tablet's surface so no additional USB plugs are used for the mouse base. I did find it somewhat annoying using the tablet mouse as my sole mouse. You are restricted to the active tablet surface with the tablet mouse. I often found myself with a mouse that was not reacting to my motions when I went outside the tablet sensitivity surface. The tablet surface has a large non sensitive area that provides a great hand rest when working but no mouse control. It was distracting when doing general computer work, like writing this article, and using the tablet's mouse. For this reason I keep my old mouse handy for non-tablet work.

When buying an Intuos level writing tablet you may find it necessary to go to the stores website to find your tablet. Retailers can not afford to stock a wide variety of tablets in each of its stores. You probably won't even find a store display tablet for you to try out before you buy. Your research is going to mostly based on the reviews you find of which there are many.

All in all I found the Wacom Intous3 tablet to be a great addition to my computer repertoire. As regular readers know I love making home videos and mixing up photos with my PowerPoint presentations. The tablet makes my prep work easier and more comfortable. I definitely recommend the Wacom Intuos tablet as part of your photo editing or graphic work solution.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Circuit Writer

Jim Scheef (jscheef (at) yahoo.com), Danbury Computer Society (www.dacs.org)

It's Over – And So It Begins

As we all get used to the prospect of President Obama, some with trepidation, others with jubilation, the one thing we can be sure of is that change is coming. Trite as that sounds now, his presidency will be historic in more ways than we can possibly know right now. But how will it affect us, the computer-using public, is more important — to us anyway. For instance, the White House will have its first CTO (chief technology officer) recognizing the role of technology and information systems in everything we do. Hopefully, the White House will no longer need to worry about losing emails as it seemed to be such a problem for the outgoing administration.

A Future in Chrome

Will Chrome steal the plating off Microsoft's shine? This topic could be more complex than why the Republicans lost the elections. Fortunately, there are far fewer pundits talking about it so I will point you to two eWeek articles that get into some depth. *Google Chrome Could Nuke Microsoft From the Internet Market* (*Google-Chrome-Could-Nuke-Microsoft*) and *Google Chrome Keeps Pace with Web App Advances* (*A-Technical-Overview-of-Google-Chrome*)

The second is more technical and shows Flash crashing in a Yahoo webpage rendered in Chrome. With the 800-pound gorilla of Google pushing Chrome, it will become a player in how we interact with the web. Whether it will become Google's "web operating system", only time can tell.

Two Lists of Ten

Before we leave Chrome, here are *10 things to love (and hate) about Google Chrome* from TechRepublic (*10things/?p=422*). Read thru this article and perhaps you'll see why I think Chrome will be important — or at least a good browser.

The second list is *10 ways you might be breaking the law with your computer* (*10things/?p=356*) from the same blog. This one shows how insidious the intellectual property laws have become with the inference that these laws need to become more rational and reflect the needs of consumers as well as owners.

Does Search Really Work?

Why is it that when I search for "man bites mosquito", I get 400,000 hits for exactly the opposite? But if I search for "man bites grasshopper", the third and fifth items are articles about a man biting a dog? If first generation search was either simple word indexes built by web crawlers like Alta Vista or indexes built by hand like the initial Yahoo. Google brought in the second generation where search ranking is based on other criteria — like other links to the site or consistency of information within a site, etc.

Some people, like those who design new search engines or who write articles about it , (*The Problem-with-Search*) think the coming generation of search will be based on semantics and the "social graph". Semantics, of course, involved the meanings of words and thus their order becomes significant.

Current search treats your search arguments as keywords and the order you give them has little significance, hence the results to man bites dog are really for dog bites man (unless you search for the string in quotes which is still a different search).

I started to use this as my example but there is a movie out called "Man Bites Dog" so that search found many references to the movie but none to what I really meant. So semantics sounds great, right?

Social graph refers to the Google Social Graph API (*http://code.google.com/apis/socialgraph/*). This application programming interface allows developers of web sites that rely on users to build content, to use links that people have already made public to create links between social sites like Facebook and Classmates, to pick a couple that you have probably heard of. At least that is what the article implies.

I had to do some searching to find this as the article doesn't really explain it. Searching for the string "social graphic" returned forty results out of 135,000. Using my eyeballs on these results I found a reference to a gawker.com article about "Six Degrees Of Separation Between George W. Bush and Parker Posey." We know who the first guy is and Parker Posey is some kind of musician or something (I don't really care but apparently everyone agrees that the relationship strains credibility). According to the diagram in the article, these two people are linked by two chains of six or less "degrees".

A diagram of social relationships is what does this and social web sites like LinkedIn and Facebook could be a source for such information — maybe. In the immortal words of the excellent motivational speaker Dr. Richard Byrne, "It will if it does, and it won't if it doesn't." (Don't bother searching for Dr. Byrne as he passed away before the advent of the search engine.)

So why isn't search better? There is actually an incentive for current search engines to not get any better. If it takes you four or five tries to find what you want, Google or Yahoo get three or four additional opportunities to show you advertising. Remember, that's what pays for all this.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above). 🖳

Review - MagicJack

Constance Brown (constance(at)mystepco.com), Canton Alliance Massillon Users Group (www.camug.org)

Do you recall the poem by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet stating that no place on earth is more than 60 hours away? The authors were awed by the idea that distance was no longer measured in months but in hours. What would they think now that people have circled the world in spaceships and repaired orbiting space stations? On the other hand, my friends who boarded the plane last month found that it can take 60+ hours to arrive at a destination in our own hemisphere — if it happens to be Bolivia!

What does travel have to do with computers? Most trips begin with a call to a travel agent or visiting a travel web site to check prices and availability of flights. Then a flight is booked and paid online either by the purchaser or an agent. An e-ticket is sent to the traveler who then checks in via a computer terminal at the airport. Computerized controls are used to guide the plane. Computers everywhere. Great when they work. Annoying when they don't! They are here to stay and will be performing more and more of our communications. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could travel internationally and communicate with folk back home without paying those ridiculous international calling fees! Or stay in touch with friends who do not live in the USA? Guess what! You CAN!!

Several CAMUG members have VOIP (voice over Internet Protocol) phone service. Last week I ordered something immediately after hearing about it. I have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to test it. I can hardly wait to share it. Perhaps you have seen ads for magicJack. What is it? Here's a quote from PC Magazine online: "So simple it's almost perfect, magicJack is the best home VoIP gadget I've seen to date. Excellent call quality, a workable set of calling features, and an amazing price make this little box the VoIP wonder to beat."

In two minutes a USB device about 2 inches by 1 inch by 5/8 inches that I plugged into the powered hub that I run through my USB port gaive me capability to place calls via the Internet. I called Canada and Colorado. It worked well except when I looked up information on the internet at the same time.

Customer service said I can connect to the powered hub that runs directly to my router. I will have to restart the modem, most likely. That means that I don't have to have the computer turned on to make calls,.just like my current VoIP service. This is great.

What do I like about the magicJack?

The price. The gadget is $40, and that includes one year of service! The renewal service price is $20! Not $200. Just $20. In fact, we paid $60 for five years!

The price. Calls are free to US & Canada and reasonable to other parts of the world. Bolivia ranges from 12-14 cents. Guatemala was a little less. I didn't check farther.

The price. Register your magicJack with a US phone number and travel anywhere in the world. Place calls back to the US or Canada and the call is free! Purchase a magicJack and register it with a number in the USA, send it to your friends elsewhere in the world, and they can call to any place in the US or Canada for free — almost. Remember, you receive one year of service with the device.

Convenience. You can use the magicJack with any computer,.not just the one you registered.

Convenience. The magicJack is so small that it will travel extremely easily.

Convenience. You can use the magicJack to place calls over Wi-Fi, cable, or DSL. Even light high speed is fine as it requires only 80 kbps of bandwidth.

Services. You get all of them: voicemail delivered to you via email and also available by calling your number and entering your pass code, conference calling, 3-way calling, caller ID, do not disturb – have I forgotten anything?

Quality. The quality compares with other VoIP services. The calls pass over a private network.

Customer Service. Customer service was good, but busy. The online chat took a little time as the service person moved between customers. But it was good. He didn't have time to tell me about the Outlook add-on, so I am still waiting to discover what that is. Customer service apparently is improving, based on evaluations I read.

US News and World Report had an interesting article online dated September 27 about the magicJack. Here is a part of it: "The colorful and wealthy Borislow,.who also raises, races, and wagers on racehorses, has launched magicJack fast out of the gate. The startup has sold more than 400,000 devices just six months after its official unveiling. It's selling about 7,000 a day, the company says, adding twice as many net new accounts over the period as Vonage, an Internet phoning pioneer. MagicJack's appeal is not only the price, which falls to just $20 for a second year of calls, but sound quality that's consistently good. And it's flat simple to install and use."

Who is the inventor behind the magicJack? Dan Borislow. Here is information about him taken directly from the magicJack web site: "Dan Borislow is the founder of YMAX Communications Corporation, a modern phone company with the largest competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) network in the U.S, and inventor of the magicJack."

"Borislow has been in the telecommunications industry for over twenty years and is recognized in the industry for pioneering the development of breakthrough technologies. He previously held the position of CEO and founder of publicly-held Tel-Save, Inc. At Tel-Save, Borislow revolutionized low-cost long-distance for more than four million America Online (AOL) customers. While with Tel-Save, he saved customers over 40% on their phone bills and also received the prestigious J.D. Power and Associates Award for Customer Satisfaction. After a brief attempt at retirement, Borislow returned to the telecom industry and invented the magicJack. By eliminating the expense of local and long distance phone charges and saving the average customer around $1000 a year, magicJack is positioned to be the fastest growing telecom company in the world; Borislow likes to call it .Telecom Revolution Part II."

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Performing Better Searches

Sharon Housley (Sharon (at) notepage.com), NotePage Marketing for FeedForAll (www.feedforall.com)

Performing and perfecting search engine results can save web surfers lots of time and energy. Understanding the nuances of searching allows researchers to immediately drill down and locate the information they are seeking, without having to wade through a myriad of irrelevant search results in the process. The increasing complexity of search engines has made understanding search engines a necessity for those who spend any amount of time online. The following search tips are standards that will work in most of the major search engines.

How To Find What You Are Looking For?

As the popularity of the Internet grows, more and more results are returned for even the most obscure search phrases. In order to save time, web surfers need to increase their search relevancy. It is advisable to use multiple search terms to produce better search results. Searchers should use specific words and phrases to find what they're are looking for, while filtering out irrelevant and unwanted results.

In searching, more usually means less. Using more keywords in a search will help qualify the search and make it more specific to what you are looking for. It is all about striking a balance; more search terms will reduce the number of search results, but those results will be more accurate. Remember that you can always refine the search further if there are too many results returned in the initial search.

Capitalization Is Irrelevant

The major search engines ignore capitalization. Upper case and lower case search phrases will deliver the same results.

Order Matters

Keep in mind that the order in which the terms are entered into the search box will affect the search results. The most important terms should appear first in the list of search words.

Word Stemming

Major search engines will provide results that use word stemming. Word stemming includes variants of the terms that were searched for. For example, searching on the term fish in a major search engine will generate organic search results that also contain the terms fishing, fishes, and fisher.

Exact

Using quotations around a search phrase will generate search results that contain only that specific search phrase, exactly as it was entered. For example, searching on the exact phrase "rocking horse" in a major search engine will only generate search results that contain the phrase rocking horse. The results will not include any results that contain "horse rocking" — even though both terms appear, they do not appear in the proper order for an exact match.

Do Not Include

Adding a (-) negative/minus sign before a search term will filter the results so that they contain the first term but not the negated word. For example, entering the search phrase horses -rocking into a major search engine will return search results about horses but not about rocking horses.

Must Include

If you want search results that only include a specific word, just type a (+) plus sign in front of a search term. The results produced will always contain that term. For example, conducting a search horse + carousel will result in all search results that contain carousel, and may include horse as well.

Similar Words

Adding a (~) tilde character in front of a search word will generate search results that not only include the specified search term, but will also include all words considered to be related to the original search term. For example, using the search term ~soda will result in organic search engine results that not only include soda, but also include pepsi, pop, cola, coke, bottle, and soft drink.

Either Or

Adding an OR parameter between two search terms will result in search listings that include either the first or the second word in the search results. For example, searching on the terms soda OR bottle will generate search results that may contain both terms soda bottle or it will produce results that contain either soda or bottle but not both in the same search listings.

Advanced Searches And Segmented Searches

Many search engines allow you to specify the type of content you wish to search in. For example, you can often search just news articles, just blogs, or just images. If you are looking for a specific type of media, segmenting your search can be helpful. Searches can be conducted to locate webpages that contain a specific language, or a specific file type (ie. pdf, rss, etc). Simply use the search engine's advanced search option and select the content, language, file type, etc to filter your search results.

Search Meta Words

Meta keyword searches give search engines special instructions. When the meta search words are used, a specific type of search is conducted. Here are some of the most common meta search terms...

define: When define: is used at the beginning of a search word or phrase, the search engine results will be a definition of the word or phrase.

site: When site: is entered in the search box, followed by a domain, the search engine locates all documents within a specific domain and all of its subdomains. This is an easy way to get a rough idea of the number of pages indexed on a domain.

link: When link: is used and followed by a URL, the search results will include all the web pages that are indexed by the search engine which contain links to the specified URL.

Password Protection

Sandy Berger (sandy (at) compukiss.com), Compukiss.com (www.compukiss.com)

When technology is good, it is very, very good, but when it is bad it can be truly atrocious. So it is with the hacking of Sarah Palin's Yahoo email account. The bad guys are out there using technology for their own advantage. Whether they are serious hackers who want information for devious purposes or young students who just want to show their technological prowess, this theft shows that everyone is vulnerable.

The recent hijacking of Sarah Palin's email account is also a great example of how a hacker can gain access to an email account and how email accounts need to be better protected against such penetration.

We currently rely on passwords to protect most of our online activity. Professional hackers often use "password crackers" to guess passwords. Anyone can easily find these hacker tools on the Internet. They can even be purchases on CD. There are wordlists for common passwords and dictionary combinations of possible passwords in a variety of different languages. These tools are all aimed at giving a person all the technical tools that they need to guess passwords.

In Sarah Palin's case, however, the perpetrator didn't even have to use tools like this. A hacker identifying himself as "Rubico" claims to have been able to change the password on Sarah Palin's Yahoo Mail account quite easily. All he had to do was use her email name to log into the Yahoo Mail's interface and select the option to reset the password. Yahoo then asked him to provide her birth date and zip code, which have become public knowledge. He then had to answer her self-chosen security question which was where she met her husband. After several television interviews of Sarah and her husband, the answer to that question also became public knowledge.

Sarah Palin was thrown into the public arena quite quickly, but even those of us who are not public figures may find that their passwords and answers to security questions can be easily guessed. Do you use the name of your spouse, children, pet, favorite sport, birthday, or wedding date as your password? Have you entered security questions like place of birth or favorite color that are easy to guess?

Privacy as we knew it before the Internet is now a thing of the past. With the Internet, more of our lives are online than most of us realize. Many people use blogging as a past time and post information on MySpace, Facebook, and other social networking websites. Once posted, all of that information is publicly known. And the Internet is archived, so even when you remove current information, previously posted information can still be found in Internet archives. That information can be used to guess passwords and access personal information.

So here are a few ground rules that may help keep your private information a little safer online:

- Use passwords that are not easy to guess and cannot be easily cracked. (Look for more on how to choose good passwords in next month's column.)

- Choose a security question that others will not be able to guess the answer to. Or answer the security question with an answer that you create which is not necessarily the true answer.
- Use unique passwords, especially for important services and websites like banking sites and email.
- Keep your passwords private. Don't leave them on a sticky note on your computer screen or keep them in an unencrypted file on your computer.
- Change your passwords often.
- Do not change your password by clicking on a link in an email from someone claiming to be a system administrator, bank representative, or other seemingly reputable party. They may not be who they say they are. When you want to change your password, always type in the address yourself so you know you are at the real website rather than a bogus one.
- Use one credit card for all online purchases. This will limit your financial exposure.
- Keep your operating system up-to-date.
- Use a good anti-virus and anti-spyware programs.
- Consider using an encrypted password manager program.
- Check the Compu-KISS website at *www.compukiss.com* for more information on choosing good passwords.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above). 💻

Performing Better Searches, *continued*

inurl: When inurl: is used, followed by a keyword or phrase, the search results will include links to web pages that contain the specific keyword or phrase in the urls themselves.

intitle: When intitle: is searched on in conjunction with a keyword or phrase, the search engine locates search results that contain the specified keyword or phrase in the web page title.

Web surfers can save large amounts of time and energy by optimizing their search techniques with these helpful tips.

Sharon Housley manages marketing for FeedForAll http://www.feedforall.com software for creating, editing, publishing RSS feeds and podcasts. In addition Sharon manages marketing for RecordForAll http://www.recordforall.com audio recording and editing software.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above). 💻

SIG News

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@ieee.org)

http://home.earthlink.net/~barnold2002/Acgnj/index.html

This group is devoted to programming languages in general and C, C++, and C++ for Windows programming in particular. Each month a small but hopefully useful program (complete with source code) is presented for discussion.

January: Ship Guru Utility Random Number Check. The subject for January was a utility for packing shipping containers. This program takes as input a list of boxes to be shipped in a container. It then iterates a large number of possible locations for the placement of the boxes while calculating the volume of the container. When the program finishes, the dimensions of the smallest container is displayed along with the packing efficiency. The ideal is 100 percent. For example: 5 boxes dimensioned 3x4x4 will fit in a 9x4x10 container with a packing efficiency of 66.7 percent. The program demonstrates a number of tools as well as Monty Carlo iteration techniques.

Our *download site* has code and programs from most meetings.

Our next meeting February 17. 🖳

Main Meeting

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/mainmeet.html

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

December 5: Care & Feeding of iPhones (You too can have a book of bills) by Dave Mara (or Apple Store)

January 2: CANCELLED.

February 6: To be announced. 🖳

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/laymans.html

We meet on the second Monday of the month (no meetings in July and August) to discuss issues of interest to novice users or those who are planning to get started in computing. Watch our Web page for updates and announcements. 🖳

LUNICS (Linux/Unix)

Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

http//www.acgnj.org/groups/lunics.html

LUNICS is a group for those who share an interest in Unix and similar operating systems. While we do quite a bit with Linux, we've also been known to discuss Solaris and BSD too. We generally meet on the first Monday of the month at 8 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. *Our next meetings Feb 2, Mar 2.* 🖳

Web Dev

Evan Willliams (tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com)

This SIG is an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but the other langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc.

Our next meeting February 11. 🖳

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

http://www.javasig.org

The Java Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues.

January: Open Forum. This month's meeting was an open forum for discussing and reviewing a number of Java-related technologies.

Our next meeting February 10 . We will celebrate our 8-year anniversary this month. 🖳

Investment Software

Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_investment.html

The Investment SIG continues with presentations on how to use analysis programs TC2000 and TCNet. Large charts are presented on our pull down screen and illustrate the application of computer scans and formulas to find stocks for profitable investments. Technical analysis determines buy points, sell points and projected moves. Technical analysis can also be used on fundamentals such as earnings, sales growth, etc. We're no longer focusing on just Telechart -- if you are using (or interested in) Tradestation, eSignal, VectorVest -- or just in learning how to select and use charting and technical analysis, come join us !!

Our next meeting: February 12. 🖳

Traveling Then and Now - "Technically" Speaking

Gregory West (prospector16 (at) gmail.com), Sarnia Computer Users' Group [SCUG], Canada (www.scug.ca)

In 1974 Richard Nixon was the first US President forced to resign, while gasoline pricing rose to a whopping 55 cents a gallon US. They claim the reason was that "gasoline shortages and price increases throughout the world help to cause problems in most of the western worlds' economies" (*www.thepeoplehistory.com*).   Sound familiar? What isn't familiar is the technology that accompanies us on vacations.

I remember in 1974 driving to Fort Wilderness Disney World, Florida in a Volkswagen van built into a homemade camper, all decked out with plywood beds and a Coleman cooler for a fridge with a never-ending request for ice. CAA supplied the trip tik maps that marked out the route and the construction sections of the highway. We had the best of the best for navigating the trip. As well, we had a brand new Instamatic camera with 7 rolls of 126 film that cost us a small fortune. Our son, four years old, rode a small tricycle back and forth inside the van to while away the hours and hours of monotonous driving as seatbelt legislation was non-existent.

Today, we still face the gas increase excuses and we are well aware of the price of a liter of gasoline today. In that regard, nothing has really changed, only the numbers and the fact that we are all buckled into our seats. Although, one thing that has changed for travelers in 2008: "tech toys"; they have now become a "must have" for every family that does ground travel on vacations.

Our kids have been replaced by grandkids and the Volkswagen homemade camper van is long gone. People today are now hauling RVs of all sorts that host most of the comforts of home.

The CAA maps and my son's tricycle have been replaced by the latest technical and computer gadgets. Let's have a peek at how technology has changed road travel, some 34 years later.

Kids today are buckled tightly into the back seats as airbag protection in the front restricts them to the back seats only. While in the back seat they have the option of viewing DVD movies run through a DVD player onto 2 separate monitors that attach to the head rests of both front seats. They listen to via the vehicle stereo system or individual headphones. When they tire of the movies they can play video games by switching over to their PSP or a PS2 that plugs through the inverter. Of course there is always travel bingo if the tech stuff gets boring, but we won't hold our breath on that one.

For the driver and co-pilot there is a GPS display with voice directions, saving the hassle of trying to read the fine print on wrinkled and torn maps. Many travelers bring along laptops while traveling as their uses are many. For example, you can record your trip's information, download pictures and videos from digital cameras. The big thing these days with computers is reading digital books, or listening to audio books that have been previously downloaded from the Internet. Of course, when a live Internet connection becomes available (most RV parks have free Wi-Fi) you can check email, use Skype to call home, and research the places to see, all from your laptop.

The days of praying that there will be a pay phone nearby if we break down are long gone as many people have both a Canadian and American cell phone. For instance, one can purchase a Motorola TracFone that works only in the USA for under

SIG News, *continued*

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/winpains.html

Our intent is to provide members with Windows oriented application discussions, Microsoft and Linux style. Presentation to be directed to more heavy technological level of attendee, although newbies are welcomed.

January 16: Evan Williams, WEB 3.0: Collaborating on the global market using open sourcetools and technology.

February 20: To be announced   ⌨

FireFox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for **all** FireFox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All the browsers will be considered and examined. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion. ***Our next meeting February 16.***⌨

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be February 13, 6 p.m. to Saturday 12 noon — 18 hours for 5 bucks!

BYOC - Bring your own computer

BYOF - Bring your own food.

and if you don't like sitting on metal chairs... BYO chair!⌨

Guru Corner

If you need help with any of the technologies listed below, you can call on the person listed. Please be considerate and call before 10 PM.

Software

HTML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
CSS	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Home Automation	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

Windows 3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942

Discount Computer Magazine Price List

As described by the DealsGuy

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
Computer Games	$10.95	20.95	29.95
Computer Gaming World	14.95	28.95	41.95
Computer Shopper1	16.97	32.95	47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	15.95	30.95	
Mac Addict	10.97		
Mac Home Journal	15.97	29.97	
Mac World	12.95		
Maximum PC	9.95	18.95	27.95
Microsoft System Journal	21.95	39.95	
PC Gamer	12.95		
PC Magazine (22/44/66 Issues)	25.97	48.95	68.95
PC World	16.95		
Wired	6.00	12.00	17.00

These prices are for new subscriptions and renewals. All orders must be accompanied by a check, cash or Money Order. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to:

Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496

Telephone: 561-488-4465, e-mail: *hgoodman@prodigy.net*

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. As an extra service I will mail a renewal notice about 4 months prior to their expiration date. I carry more than 300 titles at excellent prices — email for prices. 💻

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Sign up online at *http://www.acgnj.org/membershipApplication.html* and pay dues with PayPal.

Dues

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	FOREIGN	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	$25	$10	$55	$20	$20
2 Years	$40				
3 Years	$55				$45

Mail this application and your check to:

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC., P.O. BOX 135, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

What topics would you like to see covered at club meetings? _____

Other Local Computer Groups

Princeton Macintosh User Group: 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, A-10, Washington Rd, Princeton, (609) 252-1163, *www.pmug-nj.org*	**Linux Users Group in Princeton:** 7 pm, 2nd Wednesday, Lawrence Branch Mercer Library, Rt#1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrence NJ *http://www.lugip.org*	**New York PC:** 3rd Thurs, 7 pm, PS 41, 116 W 11th St. For info call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC, *http://www.nypc.org*
Computer Education Society of Philadelphia: Meetings & Workshops at Jem Electronics, 6622 Castor Ave, Philadelphia PA. *www.cesop.org/*	**Brookdale Computer Users Group**: 7 pm,3rd Friday, Brookdale Community College, Bldg MAN Rm 103, Lincroft NJ. (732)-739-9633. *www.bcug.com*	**NJ Macintosh User Group**: 8 pm, 3rd Tuesday, Allwood Branch Library, Lyall Rd, Clifton NJ. (201) 893-5274 *http://www.njmug.org*.
PC User Group of So. Jersey: 2nd Mon., 7 pm, Trinity Presb. Church, 499 Rt 70 E, Cherry Hill, NJ. L. Horn, (856) 983-5360 *http://www.pcugsj.org*	**Hunterdon Computer Club:** 8:30 am, 3rd Sat, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington NJ. *www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org*, (908) 995-4042.	**NY Amateur Computer Group:** 2nd Thurs, 7 pm, Rm 806 Silver Bldg, NYU, 32 Waverly Pl, NYC. *http://www.nyacc.org*
Morris Micro Computer Club: 7 pm 2nd Thurs., Morris County Library, Hanover Ave, Morristown NJ, (973) 267-0871. *http://www.morrismicro.com*	**Central Jersey Computer Club**: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, College of NJ. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	**NJ PC User Group:** 2nd Thurs, Monroe Rm at Wyckoff Public Library, 7 pm. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432, *www.njpcug.org*
Philadelphia Area Computer Society: 3rd Sat, 12 noon Main Meeting, groups 8 am-3 pm. Upper Moreland Middle School, Hatboro PA. (215) 764-6338. *www.pacsnet.org*	**NJ Computer Club:** 6:15 pm, 2nd Wednesday except Jul & Aug, North Branch Reformed Church, 203 Rt 28, Bridgewater NJ. *http://www.njcc.org*	**Princeton PC Users Group**: 2nd Monday, Lawrenceville Library, Alt Rt 1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 218-0778, *http://www.ppcug-nj.org*

Classified

FREE TO MEMBERS. Use our classified ads to sell off your surplus computer stuff. Send copy to Classified, ACGNJ NEWS, P.O. Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 or e-mail to the editor, *bdegroot@ptd.net*. Classified ads are free to members, one per issue. Non-members pay $10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please.

apcug   Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

http://www.apcug.net

Radio and TV Programs

Computer Radio Show, WBAI 99.5 FM, NY, Wed. 8-9 p.m.

Software Review, The Learning Channel, Saturday 10-10:30 p.m.

On Computers, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

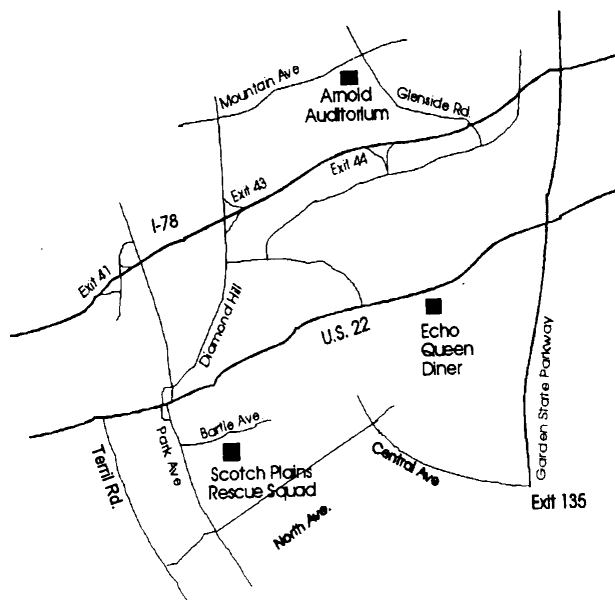**PC Talk**, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at *http://www.pctalkweb.net*.

MarketPro Shows

http://www.marketpro.com/

Dec 20-21: Raritan Center, Edison

Jan 3-4: Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus

Jan 17: Edison Holiday Inn

Directions to Meetings at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains NJ

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

Take Route 1&9 or the Garden State Parkway to US 22 Westbound.

From Southern New Jersey

Take Parkway north to Exit 135 (Clark). Stay on left of ramp, follow circle under Parkway. Bear right to Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and under RR overpass. Left at light to North Avenue; follow to light in Fanwood. Right on Martine (which becomes Park Ave). Right on Bartle Ave in middle of shopping district.Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is located on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed.

From I-78 (either direction)

Take exit 41 (Scotch Plains); follow signs to US 22. Turn right at light at bottom of hill and use overpass to cross Rt. 22. Follow US 22 Westbound directions.

From US 22 Westbound

Exit at Park Avenue, Scotch Plains after McDonalds on the right, diagonally opposite Scotchwood Diner on the left, immediately before the overpass. After exiting, turn left at the light and use overpass to cross US 22. Bear right at bottom of ramp to continue south on Park Avenue. Turn left at the second light (a staggered intersection). Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed. We meet on the second floor, entering by the door at the right front of the building.

From Western New Jersey

Take US 22 Eastbound to the Park Avenue exit. The exit is about a mile past Terrill Road and immediately past the overpass. Exit onto Park Avenue South and follow the directions above to the Rescue Squad building.

$10 and buy a "pay-as-you-go" card, making long distant calls back home cheaper and giving one more security on the highways in the USA.

Don't leave without your MP3 player. Podcasts of favourite shows and lectures can be easily downloaded from the Internet. MP3 players come with headphones that make for easy listening and do not disturb the other passengers or driver.

Walkie talkies are not a new item while on vacation, but the price certainly has come down and the range has expanded greatly. A quick stop in the grocery store for supplies will help you utilize your group to ensure precision targeted shopping whereby we all search out different items and meet at the same cashier, thus saving time. The walkie talkie is also used in many other scenarios for security and locating purposes. These units are a must have for anyone traveling with children. The Instamatic camera has been replaced by the digital camera, thus allowing people to take hundreds of pictures during a trip without any real cost. If some of the pictures are not that great they are easily deleted and forgotten without the worry of paying for more film.

An inverter will allow the truck battery to convert power from DC to AC so you can run the laptop while traveling to edit photos, read books, watch movies and connect to Wi-Fi hotspots. This also allows for the use of a PS2 plugged into the truck battery power as if you were at home plugging into a wall outlet. You can even plug in a refrigerated cooler with this inverter, making life just that much easier.

We can only imagine what traveling 34 years from now will be like and what 2042 will offer its road travelers.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above). 💻

ACGNJ MEETINGS

For the very latest news on ACGNJ meetings visit the ACGNJ Web Page (*http://www.acgnj.org*)

Monday, February 2, 2009
8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, February 3
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, February 6
8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*). CANCELLED

Monday, February 9
8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842. No meetings in July or August.

Tuesday, February 10
7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-246-0410.

Wednesday, February 11
7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams
(*tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com*)

Thursday, February 12
8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper (*jim@thecoopers.org*).

Friday, February 13
6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Monday, February 16
7 P.M. - Firefox Activity, David McRitchie (*firefox@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, February 17
7:30 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@ieee.org*), 908-735-7898

Friday, February 20
8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff (*john@jraff.com*).

Monday, March 2
8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, March 3
7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting. 💻

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains, N.J.
Directions and map inside back cover.