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AMD's Visionary Gamble

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Founded 1975

We computer enthusiasts have been the spectators in what I like to think of as a grand race. Leaving all the David and Goliath analogies aside, I like to think of the computer revolution like a car race. Different technologies race around the track — if one pulls a little too wide on a turn, it falls behind, only to make it up on the straightaway later. One “spinout” and you can be permanently out of the race.

There have been some grand reversals in this past year, quite unlike what I've seen in any other business. Quick and decisive changes leading to *huge* differences in market share. When I first started to play with computer hardware, Intel was king. For 35 years AMD (Advanced Micro Devices) was the “Beta” to Intel's “VHS”: a lot of people would only buy computers with Intel chips even though in many ways AMD was the better value. The problem that Intel ran into was the buildup of heat, and the gamble by AMD on the 64-bit processor. Intel ran their chips as close to 4 GHz as they could, but they couldn't seem to crack the 4 GHz ceiling. A lot of gamers did, by going to water cooling, but nobody in the mainstream wanted to deal with water cooling.

Then, multimedia computers came in as the next best thing. With Microsoft wanting to make headway into your living room, they came out with a new operating system, XP Media Center. Now we had an operating system strictly for a media center PC in your living room, but without a solution to the heat problem, we had water cooling, or a computer with a CPU fan that sounded like a leaf blower. You don't want to watch a movie when the computer running all of your media devices sounds like someone starting a two-cylinder motorcycle!

The other problem is obvious — you don't want laptops that will scorch the gonads off anybody foolish enough to use it on their lap (and eventually you won't be calling it a “laptop” anymore)! Intel found a solution in the Pentium M for the laptop, reducing clock speeds and heat, and increasing battery life. AMD focused on 64-bit computing. When AMD presented 64-bit architecture, there weren't going to be any applications to really take advantage of 64-bit computing for a long time and no operating system in sight, but the AMD chips had immediate and substantial gains in performance for gamers and they started to trounce the Intel chips in any performance face-off.

Also, clock speed doesn't remain as important when you have a 64-bit pipeline. Instead of continuing to increase clock speeds, 64-bit computing doubles the amount of data that can be processed per clock cycle. 64-bit architecture also means exponential amounts of memory that can be addressed. The best home computers can address 4 GB of RAM if the motherboard can handle it, but with 64-bit computing you can run 1 terabyte (1,000 GB of RAM). RAM is very fast and this adds substantial gains to the whole package. AMD then went to a true dual core processor which put two chip cores on the same die, the equivalent of two microprocessors in one. Then you need fewer clock cycles to process the same information — speed can remain the same with double the processing power and running 250 times the RAM.

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Clear Reading With ClearType

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My students know why LCD displays are superior to CRT monitors. When one of them complained to me that he found text difficult to read on his new 21 inch LCD Monitor, I told him it was probably because the screen resolution made the text too small to read easily. He didn't think so because his teen age granddaughter also thought the text wasn't clear. His comment made me think.

Flat panel LCD Monitors are designed to display information at a specific resolution known as the "native resolution". Manufacturers refer to them as "fixed-pixel displays" because they are limited to displaying only one resolution. If they receive an image signal that is either higher or lower than the native resolution, they convert or scale the image automatically to fit the native resolution.

If the incoming source has more pixels than the display's native resolution, you will lose some visible detail and sharpness. Very often you will need to carefully compare the images side by side to see any difference. Only the most exacting applications will suffer from this small constraint.

If the incoming source has fewer pixels than the native resolution, there is no benefit from the higher resolution. Extra pixels will not improve the appearance of a lower-resolution source.

Converting images from either a higher or lower resolution to the LCD's native resolution hardly affects the quality of graphic or video images, but it can make text appear blurry. Early LCD displays had no ready solution for this problem. All one could do was experiment with various font styles and sizes until an acceptable compromise was reached.

Microsoft didn't want to keep its customers waiting while it found an answer so it licensed TrueType fonts from Apple. The advantage of TrueType fonts was that text could be made larger or smaller with little distortion. Text became easier to read, and Microsoft made some improvements to the technology, but TrueType proved to be an interim response.

While Microsoft was working on Windows XP, it was also developing a new software technology designed to enhance text readability on flat panel LCD monitors, laptops, PDAs, Pocket PCs, indeed any device that used an LCD screen, no matter how big or small.

Microsoft claims that its development people spent two years studying typography and the psychology of reading to create ClearType. Instead of affecting individual pixels which are either treated as "on" or "off", ClearType works with a different type of pixel that is constructed of three individual pieces tinted with red, blue, and green stripes. The technology varies the brightness of the sub-pixels, making the screen characters appear smooth, clean, and sharp around the edges.

Now that you know what it is, how can you use it? You have three ways to turn on or "enable" ClearType for your LCD display. Let's start with the easiest way. Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/Step1.aspx>, and

follow the online directions to enable ClearType on your system.

Another way is to download the PowerToy version of the on-line tuner. This lets you do the same thing that the above procedure does, but you do it by accessing the Control Panel and activating the ClearType settings from there. Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/ClearTypePowerToy.msp>, and follow the online directions to download, install, and use. It's easy.

Finally, for the propeller heads and bit twiddlers in the audience, you can access the Registry. To enable ClearType for all users of your system:

- From the Start button, select Run and type Regedit in the Text box. (As if you didn't know).
- Navigate to HKEY_USERS/.DEFAULT/Control Panel/Desktop.
- Create or Modify the Data Type and Value Name as detailed below.
- Data Type: String Value
- Value Name: FontSmoothing
- Setting for Value Data: [Set Value to 2]
- Data Type: Dword
- Value Name: FontSmoothingType
- Setting for Value Data: [Change Value to 2]
- Exit Registry and Reboot

Enabling ClearType only for the current user instead of all users is identical to the above procedure except that instead of HKEY_USERS, work with HKEY_CURRENT_USER instead.

When you're finished, check the Desktop and examine the icon titles. Open the Start menu while you're at it and observe the readability of the text. You may find the text too small to read even though it is sharp and clear. If this is the case:

- Right click on the Desktop
- Choose Properties from the popup menu.
- Click the Appearance tab.
- Click the Advanced button and make changes there.
- Decide which technique is best for you, and enjoy text that is clear, crisp and sharp.

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Requiem for a Floppy (Part One)

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These days, if you want a new computer with a floppy drive, you pretty much have to build it yourself. Off-the-shelf PCs just don't bother including them anymore. For the most part, user files have grown too big to fit on floppy disks. "Sneaker Net" is truly dead, but there **are** still a few times when floppy disks can come in handy. People who use public computers (at libraries, etc.) to send out resumes and such, keep copies of their files on floppy disks. However, since they can't afford to buy their own computers, the manufacturers don't care about them. Then, there are the disks I use a lot — special boot floppies designed to run utility programs. There are workarounds (which I'll get to later), but none are as quick, as easy, or as versatile as booting from a floppy. Unfortunately, the tide is clearly going against me in this instance. So goodbye floppies. But before everyone forgets that they ever existed, I want to set down some of the many ways that these useful devices served me so well, for so long.

I got my first personal computer late for an enthusiast my age, completely missing the "frontier" days of CP/M and the dawn of DOS. I started with MS-DOS 3.30A on a 12 MHz. 286 with a 40 MB hard drive, an EGA monitor and a 1.2 MB, 5¼ inch floppy drive. (If I'd held out only a **little** bit longer, I might have had VGA and 3½ inch disks from the beginning). Aside from my printer, the first accessory I bought was a second 1.2 MB floppy drive, so I wouldn't have to alternately insert and remove the source and target disks a total of six times whenever I used DISKCOPY.COM to duplicate a 1.2 MB disk. (That was the first time I cracked open the case and fiddled with the guts of a machine that cost more than my first three cars **combined**. A truly traumatic experience).

Later, using a marvelous and now totally forgotten device called a Compaticard, I would add three additional floppy drives to my computer: two 1.44 MB 3½ inch drives (for easier disk copying) and one older (360 KB only) 5¼ inch drive. I needed that last drive to format and write 360 KB disks that I intended to give to other people. Here's why: 360 KB floppies (DD or Double Density) had 40 tracks on each side. (There were also Single Density floppy disks with even less storage space, but we don't need to go into them right now).

When the designers of the 1.2 MB floppy disk tried to squeeze three and a third times as much data into the same diameter disk, they couldn't do it simply by switching to a better magnetic medium and increasing the capacity of those existing tracks. They also had to increase the total number of tracks on the disk. So 1.2 MB floppies (called HD or High Density) had 80 tracks on each side, each only half as wide as the tracks on a DD disk. Thus, when a 1.2 MB drive formatted a DD disk, it wrote 40 half-size tracks with a lot of empty space between them. If you used a brand new disk, the wider heads on a 360K-only drive had no trouble reading those narrow tracks. However, if you tried to re-use a DD disk previously written by a 360K-only drive, the 1.2 MB drive's narrower heads only re-wrote part of the existing wide tracks. That was OK if you stuck to 1.2 MB drives. But if you tried to read that disk with the wider heads in a 360K-only drive, you got a combination

of the newly written data plus the old data from that part of the wide track that hadn't been overwritten. In other words, garbage. So the only safe way to make DD disks for someone else when you didn't know what size drive they had was to format and write them with a 360K-only drive. The newer 3½ inch floppy disks also had DD (720 KB) as well as HD (1.44 MB) versions. While HD tracks had twice the capacity of DD tracks, both disk types had 80 tracks of the exact same width, so they didn't have this particular problem.

This track number information led me to my first great invention — the 720 KB, 5¼ inch DD floppy. There were several higher capacity floppy disk format utilities available at the time, but all required that special drivers be loaded before their disks could be accessed. I liked the concept of getting more storage on disks that I already owned, but I didn't want to get locked into somebody else's proprietary software. I reasoned that when a 1.2 MB drive formatted a 360 KB disk, it was, in effect, writing to every other track. So I modified the standard FORMAT command for a DD disk in a 1.2 MB drive, telling it to use all 80 tracks — and it **worked!** MS-DOS 3.30A could read and write to those disks without any problems. I got twice the disk capacity, for free! Ultimately, I made 23 of these disks, filling them with copies of directories from my hard drive. They became my first dedicated backup medium. I was quite proud of them, and proud of myself for having created them. Then, I installed Microsoft's MS-DOS 5 upgrade, and my computer couldn't read them anymore. That was the first time a so-called upgrade dropped a feature I really liked about the old version. It **wouldn't** be the last.

As I said before, my first computer came with MS-DOS version 3.30A. The whole package, operating system files and all fifty support files from the hard drive's DOS directory (including GW-BASIC version 3.22), took up only 700 KB of a bootable 1.2 MB floppy, leaving 500 KB free for user-selected files. The only utility program I can be absolutely certain that I ran from an MS-DOS 3.30A boot disk was SpinRite (by Gibson Research), a really great hard disk utility that I still use today (a newer version, of course). I remember it changed the interleave in the two partitions (30 MB and 10 MB) on my 40 MB first hard drive to seven-to-one, down from the factory-installed one-to-one setting. (Apparently, the manufacturer had vastly overrated that drive's capabilities, since I got much faster input and output after the change, just like SpinRite promised). I remember just as clearly that I had already moved up to my 80 MB second hard drive when I switched to MS-DOS 5. At the time, I decided not to change the drive's three partitions (30 MB, 30 MB and 20 MB) into the single (then huge) 80 MB partition DOS 5 could support. I had a lot of batch files on the C: drive that pointed to programs and/or data on the D: and E: drives, and re-writing them all didn't seem to be worth the trouble. (The three extra Compaticard floppy drives came in as F:, G: and H:, and I had batch files pointing to those drive letters as well).

An MS-DOS 3.30A floppy disk (or hard drive, for that matter) actually needed only three files to boot: IO.SYS,

Continued

TaxACT 2005 from 2nd Story Software

Cass Lewart (rlewart@monmouth.com), ACGNJ

With the April 17 tax date quickly approaching I decided to use a new (for me) tax preparation program from 2nd Story Software called TaxACT. In previous years I used the two biggies — TurboTax from Intuit and TaxCut from H&R Block. I had problems with both and after reading of H&R Block indictment by New York State for underpaying state taxes and selling of negative return IRAs to customers, I decided to use a different program.

The name of the company “2nd Story Software” was hard to resist so I bought the deluxe version, sent for review, at the BCUG auction. I was pleasantly surprised. The phone support available to only deluxe version customers, was quick and efficient. Though the phone support is not toll free, who cares at 2.5 cent/minute rates. This was the first time I could reach a support person in less than a minute. As I hate the long “interviews” provided by all tax programs the support person explained to me how to skip them and enter data directly into the forms. I did it in no time, but when I was ready to send the forms to the IRS, I read an article in the Wall Street Journal, which I kept in a pile “to read before tax time”. The article

mentioned a new quirk (loop hole?) in the 2005 tax code, which would let me deduct sales taxes instead of the state income taxes. As we bought a new car in 2005 this little quirk was going to save me about \$500! I quickly corrected my mistake, printed all forms and ended up with a refund instead of a payment.

I also did the New Jersey tax return with TaxACT. All numbers from the federal form were correctly transferred and I am ready to sign and send the returns. It was interesting to see that the printed state return looked quite different than the standard tax form appearing on the screen. According to the support person at 2nd Story Software it is perfectly o.k. - the printed forms can be scanned by the tax people.

Overall I found the TaxACT program excellent, it let me do what I wanted without much fuss and the phone support was great. I will certainly use it next year.

The standard version TaxACT is free, the deluxe version including a state return is \$19.95 when downloaded, or \$15.95 when done on the web. ☐

Requiem for a Floppy, *continued*

MSDOS.SYS and COMMAND.COM. These were called the system files, and they could be installed by using the SYS command. Non-Microsoft operating systems used different filenames (such as IBMBIO.COM, IBMDOS.COM and COMMAND.COM for PC-DOS), but their function was the same: boot the computer from the floppy drive because, for some reason, you didn’t want to or weren’t able to boot from the hard drive. **Every single file** that came with MS-DOS 3.30A could fit on a single HD floppy with room to spare. That situation wasn’t to last much longer. The three system files added up to just 76 KB, leaving 78.4% of a 360 KB DD floppy or **93.5%** of a 1.2 MB HD floppy free for anything the user wanted. That wouldn’t last long, either.

I heard bad things about MS-DOS 4, so I didn’t bother with it. I heard good things about MS-DOS 5, so I bought it. By that time, I had re-arranged my five floppy drives so that A: (the default floppy boot drive) was one of the 1.44 MB, 3½ inch drives. The three DOS 5 system files now added up to 116 KB, but a 3½ inch HD floppy was a bit bigger too, so that still left **91.8%** of the disk free for user programs. But all the DOS 5 support files would have filled up **three** 1.44 MB floppies. From this release forward, only a few of the DOS utilities could be included on floppy boot disks. I always included FDISK, FORMAT and SYS. If there was room, I wanted at least ATTRIB, EDIT, FC, LABEL and MORE as well. Sometimes, I was even able to squeeze in XCOPY. At some point, Microsoft modified the SYS command so that it also installed a fourth file — a compression driver (for DriveSpace or DoubleSpace, depending on the version). I **always** deleted those files, and never considered them to be part of the operating system. So **none** of the total system file sizes given here or below include any compression files.

Not long after I got DOS 5, I got my first tape drive. That inspired me to create my first boot floppy that would have been

able to completely replace a crashed hard disk. In addition to the DOS utilities listed above, it contained a complete copy of the DOS tape drive software. I could have installed a new, empty hard drive in my computer, booted from that floppy, partitioned and formatted a new C: drive with FDISK and FORMAT, and made it bootable with SYS. Then, I could have created a new C:\TAPE directory and copied the files from the floppy’s TAPE directory into it. Finally, I could have pulled the floppy, re-booted the computer from the C: drive, stuck my latest backup tape into the tape drive, changed to the TAPE directory, ran the tape software, and restored everything else to the fresh new hard disk. I was ready for trouble. I was sort of disappointed that I never got to use it except for practice. By the way, that tape software was Colorado Backup for DOS. It had a few annoying limitations (such as not being able to run from a floppy), but for the most part it was fabulous. Feature for feature, I haven’t yet found a Windows program that beats it. Most don’t even come close.

In the early to mid nineties, I used a lot of boot disks professionally, running various operating systems, from Microsoft and other companies. Most were job-specific, and too varied to go into detail here. I used them for disaster recovery, drive maintenance and testing, virus removal, network troubleshooting for NetWare 3.x and 4.x, and network troubleshooting for Lantastic 6 and 7. (**There** was a wonderful program. It didn’t take much room. It did exactly what you told it to do, when you told it to do it, and it didn’t try to intrude where it wasn’t wanted. To bad Microsoft never adopted that philosophy). I didn’t get around to upgrading my own stuff again until MS-DOS 6.22. Those three system files added up to 130 KB, leaving **90.8 %** of a 1.44 MB HD floppy disk free.

Now we come to that fateful year 1995. Next month, I’ll go into the ways I’ve used floppy disks during the last ten years. See you then. ☐

From The DealsGuy

Bob (the cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I am a bit more settled this month because I'm on new blood pressure medication and it seems to be helping, but I was sure worried last month when the BP would intermittently go up in the 190+ range. That is not good and serious things can happen as many of you mentioned. My heartfelt thanks to the readers who were concerned. I even heard from folks I have not communicated with for a few years. I have four months to go yet on the Coumadin so it won't be any walk in the park the way it makes me feel. My cardiologist says I should stay on it for life, but my MD disagrees. I was surprised at how many others take Coumadin and learned things from my readers.

Due to the lack of ambition, as well as time, the column content has changed a bit lately. I am using some announcements sent to most user groups for new products — most officers do not have the time or interest to pass them on to the members. Some friends say I am not doing the readers any favor by passing that “junk” (their words) on since most of it is unfamiliar company names. I am not of that opinion and feel some of those products are interesting, but I seldom find the time to try them even though it would be easy for me to get a review copy. I'd like your opinion so I'll know whether to use them or try finding other things. I only use announcements that offer user group discounts in the column and I'm still on the lookout for other deals. The other announcements are posted on my Web site as I get time to post them.

***A Great Weekend With Friends**

We enjoyed attending the spring FACUG <http://www.facug.org> convention. I was told that 149 attendees enjoyed it, down just a bit, and 29 of them were first time attendees. About 44 user groups were represented. As you might have guessed, sponsor support was down, as is the trend. I feel we should stop asking for free meals at these events so sponsors can afford to help us. After a number of conversations with attendees, I am of the opinion that while a few would probably no longer attend if they didn't get the freebies; most still would if the hotel and meal price was kept reasonable. The Tech Session roundtables were always well attended, which gave us a good chance for exposure to some fine products. I was feeling bad at that time, but since it was only an hour drive from my home, I really needed to see my friends. It was well worth the effort.

***A Reminder**

Gene and Linda Barlow were at the FACUG convention and Gene did his usual great job. They have long been user group people's best friends and now offer some 18 outstanding products at great prices. They also have bundles that reduce those prices. Check their secure Web site at <http://www.ugr.com>. Order code is UGFEB06.

I mentioned to Gene my unorthodox backup plan to put certain files on a flash drive and just copy them to my other machines at times to update certain Eudora and other files, and he told me about a product he offers called SmartSync Pro 2.10 that will automatically sync designated files to other machines once you put them on the flash drive. He also stresses

his personal tech support for the products along with the vendor support, but sometimes you must be patient. He described their new home location in south Utah, and it sounds like a dream spot. He said they got tired of “snow” in northern Utah. Their new home is not far from a wealth of beautiful national parks and it rarely snows in St. George.

***Name Your Drive**

Have you tried putting a label on a flash drive? Good luck keeping it on! Memorex has introduced TravelDrive ID that has a small LCD screen good for eleven characters to name the drive or its contents, and shows how much memory remains <http://www.memorex.com/>. (Click on Travel Drives) Prices start at \$80. I mention this product because it is unique.

***Automate Your Tasks**

Make Any Manual Operation on Your PC A Fun Ride — NeoWise Software releases RoboTask 2.4, a Windows-based application that automates routine operations. It offers new features and enhancements suggested by end users. Set up automations right out of the box without the need to create complex scripts or batch files. RoboTask provides a visual interface and over a hundred actions that can be selected and combined into a task in a point-and-click fashion.

RoboTask has acquired a new plug-in for work with a POP3 server and analysis of email messages, and its actions let you easily organize, for example, a server that will receive commands by email. Also added are “Import Registry” and “Export Registry” actions that expand the backup abilities. Customers will discover new actions to synchronize a task with other tasks and processes called “Wait for File”, “Wait for Process.”

You can automate file operations like copy, move, rename; manage automatic backups; also schedule and run FTP and Web server operations. These jobs may be launched manually, scheduled to run automatically, or can be configured to be triggered by a wide array of changes in your PC. Read more information at <http://www.robotask.com/forum>.

RoboTask 2.4 runs under Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/2003 and costs \$99.95 (USD) for a single-user license. NeoWise will provide a 25% discount to user group members at <http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=75129&pc=7043J> (3.26 Mb). Registered customers are entitled to free upgrades to minor versions, considerable discounts on upgrades to major versions, and priority technical support. <http://www.robotask.com>.

***NeoWise Software (Edited)**

This announcement offers a discount on the product, but did not respond to my e-mail asking how to get it. This is the fourth vendor who did not respond and I am at my deadline. Perhaps you'll have better luck than I did.

NeoWise Software has released version 1.8 of Express Thumbnail Creator (ETC), a web photo album creation tool for Microsoft Windows. ETC lets anyone, regardless of their

Continued

AMD's Gamble, *continued*

With the addition of dual core processors and the expected increases in performance that come from splitting the processing of information between chips, AMD has again raised performance without increases in heat. These three things: 64-bit architecture, larger amounts of RAM, and splitting the processing between dual lower clock cycle cores have, for the moment, catapulted AMD from a distant second to an over 50 percent market share in personal computers. AMD is in first place for the first time in their 35-year history.

Does this mean the end for Intel? Not anytime soon, with Intel being seven times as large as AMD and with 34 billion dollars in revenue. Intel earns in 11 days what AMD will earn all year. Intel also sits on 14 billion dollars in cash, to AMD's 1.1 billion. This gives them a huge advantage in research and

development and in building state-of-the-art production facilities. AMD's surge in market share is due as much to the stumbling of Intel as it is to its own genius. The only thing that seems to be holding AMD back is the refusal of Dell to use AMD chips. If consumer demand becomes great enough for AMD chips and Dell makes a reversal, it could mean huge gains for AMD. It remains to be seen if Intel can soon regain the summit on which it once stood firmly!

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DealsGuy, *continued*

knowledge of HTML or CSS, create a compelling, high impact gallery for sharing digital memories with other people over the Internet. The ETC's wizard-style interface takes you through all the stages of gallery creation in a step-by-step fashion and gives a total control over its every detail. Use default settings or choose from 30 exclusive pre-built templates to help you jumpstart your project in a couple of minutes.

Just follow five steps of gallery building, adding images, selecting and applying a style to your gallery, specifying the look for thumbnails and full-size images. Customize size of tables on index pages, set titles, colors, links, and captions used on index and image pages and you can generate and save the project in HTML format. It is then ready for publication online and can be immediately uploaded to your website.

Express Thumbnail Creator 1.8 runs under Windows 98/Me/NT4/2000/XP and costs \$39.95 (USD) for a single-user license. Registered customers are entitled to free

upgrades to minor versions, considerable discounts on upgrades to major versions, and priority technical support. User group members receive a 25% discount by e-mailing *Alexey Surkis @neowise.com*. Additional information on the product, a set of sample albums, as well as a 30-day fully functional evaluation version of ETC is available from <http://www.neowise.com/etc>. **No privacy statement on the Web site, so be careful.** For more information, visit <http://www.neowise.com>. Direct download link: http://www.neowise.com/ftp/etc_setup.exe (4.1 MB)

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check for new announcement pages on my Web site. 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. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>. ☐

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 (pamphlet-size booklets)

If you can supply any of these missing issues (or scanned images or good 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. ☐

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10% discount for 3 or more consecutive insertions			

Google Earth

Joe Schmitt (jschmitt@tampabay.rr.com), Member of the Tampa Bay Computer Society (www.tampa-bay.org)

One of the greatest tools of the internet has always been that of maps. From the early days of the Internet www.mapquest.com was a great source for online geography. Now a myriad of new tools is available to home internet users to navigate through the world.

Believe it or not, one of the biggest uses for online maps is not for that big long trip to the Grand Canyon with the kids but for finding local addresses. How many times recently have you used a service such as www.mapquest.com or maps.google.com to find that new restaurant or new store? While the online services available can be used to find the next route cross-country they are more often used locally.

Another popular role that current cartographic sites such as mappoint.msn.com serve is where a particular place is in relation to your current location. There are many times when we are watching the news and someplace like pops up; there is now a great new tool to let you explore the world virtually.

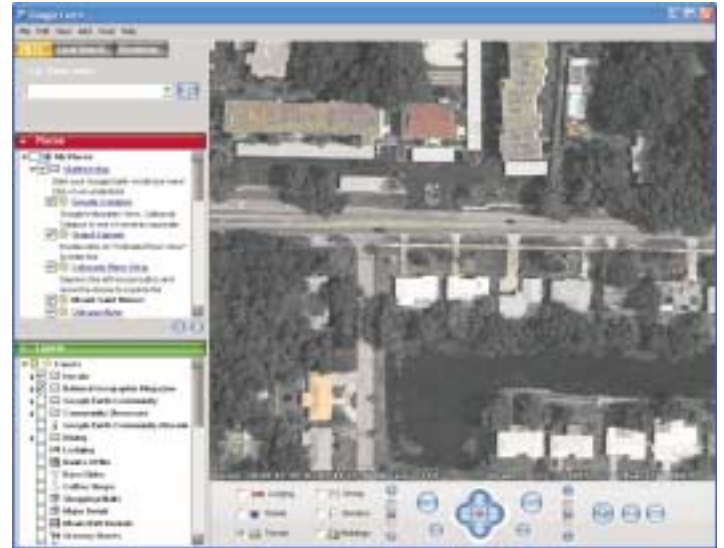
Google Earth (<http://earth.google.com>) is a new offering from Google that offers a unique spin on online cartography. While most mapping services try to offer you a straight forward approach to mapping, Google's newest tool takes quite a different tact. Described by Google as "a globe that sits in your PC," Google Earth offers a new perspective on mapping software. Like all its major competitors, Google Earth will allow you to find addresses, points of interest, or a driving route. What makes Google Earth different is the way in which items are displayed to the user. Google Earth has to install software on your machine, and once installed it needs an internet connection to display its images. Also be advised that Google Earth is resource intensive: it requires a fairly fast machine with 3D graphics capability.

When you first start up Google Earth you see this image:



Google Earth generates an image of the planet taken from a mosaic of satellite and aerial photographs. If you enter an address such as your home in the search bar, Google Earth

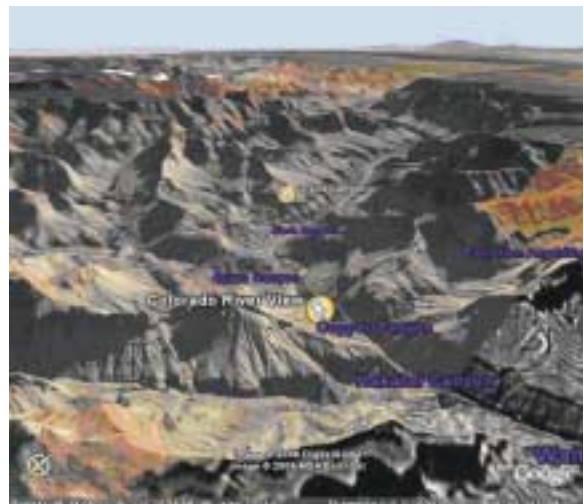
doesn't just pop a map of your neighborhood but actually flies to the location. You see the image of the earth get larger and larger as if you were descending on the location from outer space. All the time as the planet moves closer, the program



continually generates more detailed pictures of the surface until you are sitting above the location you are searching for.

Another great feature of Google Earth is angular display. Not only are dead top center views available but you can also tilt the plane of the viewing area to see things in the distance. Now this sounds like I should be able to tilt the image and see the windows on my house, but that just isn't possible. All the images are from satellite or aerial photographs that are also taken from straight overhead.

Topography is another feature that Google Earth incorporates makes the tilting feature quite impressive. Topography is how the terrain rises and falls in any given location. Google earth



Continued

Computer Hysteria: The Sentence

Berry F. Phillips (bfpdata@gbronline.com), Computer Club of Oklahoma City (www.ccokc.org)

I was terrified as I faced the Judge of the Spammers' Court awaiting my sentence. The Judge began reviewing my case. "You have been charged with sadistically deleting spam but reading 'ham'. Spam is described as unsolicited (usually commercial, usually unwanted) e-mail messages. 'Ham' is described as real e-mail messages. You are charged with a capital crime, spamocide in the first degree! Since your plea is not guilty, I will review your case."

The defendant's brief contains some material available from CAUCE, The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-mail which is an ad hoc, all volunteer organization, created by Netizens to advocate for a legislative solution to the problem of UCE (a/k/a "spam"). UCE is the leading complaint of Internet users. But junk e-mail is more than just annoying, it costs Internet users and Internet based businesses billions per year. Junk e-mail is 'postage due' marketing; it is like a telemarketer calling you collect. The economics of junk e-mail encourages massive abuse and because junk e-mailers can get into business very cheaply. The volume of junk e-mail is increasing every day."

Vint Cert, Senior Vice President, MCI and acknowledged "Father of the Internet" is quoted by permission "Spamming is the scourge of electronic mail and newsgroups on the Internet." It can seriously interfere with the operation of public services, to say nothing of the effect it may have on any individual's e-mail mail system ... Spammers are in effect, taking resources away from users and service suppliers without compensation and without authorization."

In 2002, Paul Graham discussed in a paper, "a Plan for Spam" developing Bayesian spam filtering to distinguish between illegitimate spam e-mail from legitimate "ham" e-mail. Many modern mail programs such as Mozilla Thunderbird utilize Bayesian spam filtering. Server-side email filters such as spamassassin and ASSP, make use of Bayesian spam filtering

techniques, and the functionality is sometimes embedded within the mail server software itself.

While there has been some excellent anti-spam software written, the increasing volume of spam clearly demonstrates the survival adaptability of the spammers. CAUCE indicates that very few legitimate marketers use spam. Spam takes a variety of forms, like chain letters, get rich quick schemes, quack health remedies, porno related products, pyramid marketing, pirated software (WareZ), and many more too numerous to mention which can loosely just be called various scams. There are various techniques to get your e-mail address to be placed on a spam list. One that is very common is the offer of free software. In my opinion, deletion is the "ounce of prevention that provides a pound of cure." However, we are losing the war on spam; you may want to join CAUCE's efforts to get legislation to stamp out spammers. If you want to join other Netizens to support the efforts of CAUCE, visit the website for more information at www.cauce.org.

The Judge at the Spammers' Court banged his gavel and pronounced my sentence. You have been found guilty of spamocide in the first degree! I remand you into custody of the processors at the Spammers' Cannery. I shouted at the Judge in the same spirit of Patrick Henry, "If I must be canned, then can me ham NOT spam!"

Thank goodness it was only a dream; I awoke looking at my e-mail client when I had obviously dozed off while deleting spam. However, this article must now end because I have a strange craving for a "ham" sandwich!

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Google Earth, *continued*

uses 3D technology to render the rise and fall of the land based on radar data gathered from multiple space shuttle missions. The images are melded with the topography and you have the impression of seeing mountains rise and canyons fall:

Not only does Google Earth provide these new ways to explore the world but they have included the ability to include data files of your own. If you choose to upgrade to the "plus" version you can import data from any of the popular GPS (Global Positioning System) receivers currently available. You can import waypoints, routes, and tracks from the unit.

Also, you can import images, such as a topographic map, and orient them as overlays on the satellite images. The application will let you resize and rotate the map until fits. Google Earth will also let you save data in files that can be shared with other users. One interesting aspect is files that can utilize data available on the web for dynamic interaction. Click on this link to see some examples: <http://earth.google.com/tour/thanks-win.html>. For example there is a link to a file that will track flights around the US live. It dis-

plays an icon for the plane and shows it in relation to where it is in the air.

Google Earth offers some new and interesting ways to explore our world. With thousands of user files, it can be customized to any number of needs to suit your tastes. A great resource for new ideas involving Google Earth is the Google Earth blog at: <http://www.gearthblog.com/> or at the community: <http://bbs.keyhole.com/ubb/ubbthreads.php/Cat/0>.

The only limits to Google Earth are what your imagination and determination can achieve.

Joe Schmitt is a computer and technology guru, who also has a love for the outdoors. He can often be found tromping around the woods with his GPS and digital camera. There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ☐

Windows XP Housecleaning

Dick Maybach (N2nd@att.net), Brookdale Computer User Group (<http://www.bcug.com/>)

Unless you are careful, after a period of use Windows will begin to slow down. This occurs because many programs are always active, even though you aren't using them and because the number of files increases, which means that searches take longer. Fortunately, Windows XP contains several tools to help you ease these conditions. Using these tools periodically (every month or two is reasonable) will help you keep your PC lean and mean.

Use Disk Cleanup to delete useless files. Right-click on a disk icon in Windows Explorer (C: will be the most rewarding); then click *Properties*, click the *Disk Cleanup* button, and select the actions. (I prefer not to compress old files as I've had bad experiences with compression.) Also be sure to check the actions available under the *More Options* tab, in particular deleting all but the last restore image. Finally search all your hard drives for the strings "*.tmp" and "*.dmp" in filenames. Delete anything more than a week or so old; however, Windows will refuse to delete any files it considers important.

Go through your saved e-mail and delete old messages. This will reduce the size of the mail database file and help you to find important e-mail more quickly.

Look at the list of installed programs (*Start Control Panel Add or Remove Programs*) and remove any you don't use. Most of find that new software often is less useful than we expected. Also, many PC manufacturers ship machines with software that we neither ask for nor need. While you're checking, be sure to click on the *Add/Remove Windows Components* icon in the left margin of the window. You find MS tools that you don't need.

Windows allocates a large portion of your disk space for use by System Restore (*Start All Programs Accessories System Tools System Restore System Restore Settings*). Select each drive and click on the *Settings* button. Reduce the Disk Space Usage by moving the slider to no greater than 1 GByte on each of your drives. Use less on small drives, especially if they contain nothing but data.

Check the startup folder for programs that automatically start; you will probably find that you don't want many of these running. *Start All Programs Startup* to view the contents of the startup folder. To stop a program from starting automatically right click on its icon then click delete. This does not delete the program; it only stops it from being started at boot-up.

Unfortunately, most programs that start automatically don't appear in the startup folder. To disable these, click *Start Run* and type "msconfig". Click the startup tab and uncheck any programs you don't want to run at startup. When you finish, Windows will ask you to restart. After boot-up you will see a diagnostic screen. On it uncheck the box that displays the diagnostic screen each time you boot.

You can also turn off Windows services that you don't need, but you shouldn't do this unless you are very knowledgeable. However, it doesn't hurt to look at what's running, and you may learn something. Open the Services window by clicking *Start Control Panel Administrative Tools Services* and the System Configuration window by clicking *Start*, then *Run*,

typing "msconfig" and selecting the services tab. Move the windows so you can see both. Clicking on a name in the services window will display a short description. Removing a check mark in the System Configuration window will disable that service, but no matter how confident you are, don't disable any service marked "essential".

Check for unsigned files and drivers; these can be corrupted files or programs not approved by Microsoft. Click *Start All Programs Accessories System Tools System Information Tools File Signature Verification Utility Start*. The search will take several minutes; then a list will appear showing all the program files without valid signatures. Consider deleting (by using the Add/Remove Programs tool) these.

Another utility you should know about is *System Information* (*Start All Programs Accessories System Tools System Information*). This doesn't allow you to change anything, but you can learn a lot about Windows by exploring it. For instance, if you click on the plus box by *Software Environment* then on *Startup Programs*, it will show you a list (after a pause) of all the modules that start at boot-up. It shows information in each entry that may enable you to track down a troublesome program. As is common with Windows utilities, you can sort any column by clicking on its header.

If you have problems with a program that ran with an earlier version of Windows, try running them in program compatibility mode. Click *Start All Programs Accessories Program Compatibility Wizard Next Next*. You will see a list of all the installed programs. Select the troublesome program and a compatibility mode (Win 95, Win NT, Win 98/Me, or Win 2000). Clicking *Next* brings up a screen allowing you to set a lower resolution on the screen, which may be needed for very old Windows programs.

You can tune your PC performance with very little risk, even if you are a novice. Right click on *My Computer* in Windows Explorer; then, click *Properties Advanced Performance Settings*. Usually, checking "Let Windows choose what's best for my computer" is satisfactory, but you might to try "Adjust for best performance" if your machine is slow. If you are more adventuresome, you can select *Custom* and disable individual features by unchecking items in the list. If you don't like the result, you can just go back to "Let Windows choose what's best for my computer."

After completing the cleanup check to see if you should defragment your disks. Right click on a disk icon in Windows Explorer; then click *Properties Tools tab Defragment now Analyze button*. If Windows says the disk does not need defragmenting, don't do it. Defragging the C: disk takes a long time, and seldom results in any noticeable performance improvement.

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The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman (swipcug@sigecon.net), SW Indiana PC Users Group (<http://swipcug.apcug.org/>)

Talking Turk-ey.

If you've ever earned some pocket money stuffing envelopes, the advent of e-mail may have put you out of business. But the Internet giveth what it taketh away. Much of the unanticipated success of the Internet is due to the contributions made by selfless volunteers. Businesses then realized the importance of the Internet to advertise themselves, and Wile E. Coyote would now be able to order his Road Runner catchers from www.acme.com (there actually is such a Web site). Nevertheless, volunteers expect to derive some form of satisfaction from their efforts, and the equivalent of envelope stuffing for free does not draw many aficionados.

The Internet would not be more than a large flea market were it not for the powerful search engines capable of retrieving information almost instantly. Retrieval algorithms depend on vast indexes maintained by constantly culling millions of Web sites. Only computer-readable text is indexable. Yet, there are many other types of valuable information on the Web that are not computer-readable, such as hand-written documents and graphical images. It is almost impossible for a computer to distinguish a picture of Picabo Street from Mother Teresa. A human can distinguish them at a glance. Hand-written documents must be retyped, as genealogy indexers know. Thus there is a great need for indexing graphics and hand-written information that requires human input. There are many other instances where human input is required, such as rating the validity of computer-generated keywords describing search targets, or retrieving numbers from scanned documents, such as transfer deeds.

Amazon, with its interest in computer searching with its A9.com search engine, has established a program that enlists human help for such tasks. The program is called Mechanical Turk, after a chess-playing automaton in 1769 that defeated nearly every opponent it faced. It featured a life-sized wooden mannequin, adorned with a fur-trimmed robe and a turban, seated behind a cabinet. It confounded such brilliant challengers as Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon Bonaparte. The secret behind the Mechanical Turk — a human chess master cleverly concealed inside.

Amazon has set up a Web site (www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome) as a link between programmers looking for "artificial, artificial intelligence," and paid volunteers providing human inputs to perform requested tasks, referred to as HITs. These are typically of a simple, repetitive nature and pay a minimal amount, a penny or so, for each input. I saw a HIT listed to look up deed records on a Web site and find the transfer taxes. The volunteers are rated on proficiency and accuracy and build up a reputation that qualifies them for somewhat more challenging and higher-paying HITS. It is an interesting concept that may catch on as it is further refined. (Mentioned in Bill Machrone's column in *PC Magazine*, 2/17/06).

Oldie Tribulations

I own a 6-year old former dream machine, once briefly the envy of friends and relatives, a Dell desktop with a 600MHz Pentium III processor and a 20GB hard drive. Over the years I added another 20GB hard drive, upped the RAM to 256 MB,

and upgraded from Windows 98SE2 to Windows ME. Lately I have been using it to evaluate a variety of Linux distributions that I installed on the second drive in separate partitions.

Recently I took advantage of a special offer to update my version of Xandros (Linux) Desktop Open Circulation to the DeLuxe Edition. I wanted to install it in a clean 10 GB partition, but as a result of the many installations of different operating systems, the second hard drive could not be repartitioned because of a faulty partition table. I could read and write to the disk, but neither Partition Magic nor any other disk software was able to repartition the drive, or even to reformat it. It was time for drastic measures.

I discarded the faulty slave drive, bought a new Western Digital 80GB hard drive, installed it as the master, and relegated the 20GB master drive to slave status. All I needed to do was reinstall Windows ME and then repartition the disk to make room for Xandros and Linspire, my favorite Linux distributions. Easier said than done, as it turned out. I'll try to summarize the lessons I (re-)learned.

- Windows ME only upgrades from Win98, not from DOS.
- Read the manual about proper location of itty-bitty jumpers that determine if a drive is the master or the slave. Don't just go by the markings on the drives — all drives are different.
- Re-use the old IDE cable if the new cable doesn't reach both drives.
- Even the most recent BIOS version for this computer available from Dell (dated 2000) is not able to recognize more than 32 GB of the 80 GB drive.
- Believe it when the box says the drive requires Windows XP or better.
- The special software, provided by Western Digital, to reach and repartition all 80 GB on an old computer must be used before installing the operating system.
- After using the special WD software to set up the hard drive, don't use Partition Magic 8.0 to further repartition the drive. You won't be able to reboot and will have to start all over.
- The computer won't boot any longer from the old hard drive, reinstalled as the master — you can't go home again.
- After protecting the system with a ZoneAlarm firewall and F-prot antivirus you think it is safe to go online to update Windows ME and install Internet Explorer 6.0. You'll still receive half a dozen instances of a spy program called Alexa, courtesy of Microsoft. AdAware will identify and remove it.

All's well that ends well. The computer now has 20GB of Windows ME, 30 GB of Linspire 5.0, and 30 GB of Xandros DeLuxe Edition, complete with boot manager.

Maybe I should have bought a cheapy Dell computer. But removing all the junk programs they come with might have been just as frustrating. I'll hold out for a system using the 64-bit AMD chip. That excludes Dell, which uses Intel only. Linux has long since run on 64-bit processors, and Windows Vista is just getting around to it. Now is not the time; later this year, maybe. I might have a local dealer build one to order.

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SIG News

Investing

Norm Wiss (cut.up@verizon.net)

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. **Our next meeting: May 11.** ☞

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

www.lanparty.com

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

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

This meeting is a combination of the older PC Symposium, PC User Group and Random Access Session which are now defunct. The intent is to provide the members with Windows oriented application discussions both Microsoft and Linux style. The presentation will be directed toward the more heavy technological level of attendee, although newbies are welcomed. **Next meeting May 19, subject "Use of Computer in Financial Markets".** ☞

Main Meeting

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

Evan Williams (nhpressgo@blast.net)

May 5: Personal Navigation GPS Google Earth. ☞

Visual Basic

Rick Elbanna (rick@mastersofthecode.com)

<http://mastersofthecode.com/html/sig.htm>

This is a public Special Interest Group sponsored by Online Marketing Network LLC and Ricardo Capelli Associates LLC. This is a co-operative meeting with the Excel VBA and WebDev group. **Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at East Brunswick Public Library in East Brunswick, New Jersey.** Meeting times vary depending on the busy schedule of the Library. Times will be emailed to interested developers — send email to Rick to put your name on the notification list. Because of limited seating, those expecting to attend should email Rick prior to the meeting. Walk-ins are welcome, but are not guaranteed a seat. ☞

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 8:00 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. **Next meeting May 1.** ☞

Web Dev

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson in charge. 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. One can also send projects to the ACGNJ Newsletter editor for inclusion in the next volume.

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 languages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc. **Our next meeting May 17.** ☞

Human Networking

<http://www.acgnj.org/groups/hns.html>

Mark Douches (mad-networking@pobox.com)

The purpose of this SIG is to expand the number of professionals that we know so that connections can be made into different markets or industries when a career change or business need is necessary. We are not just a group of people who like computers or technology. Our membership consists of Information Technology professionals from various industries. We will discuss over a time period the tools and skills that are necessary to cross a bridge advance your career. **Meetings are held 2nd Wednesday of the Month at 7:00 P.M.** ☞

Genealogy

Frank Warren (kb4cyc@webwarren.com)

<http://www.webwarren.com/kb4cyc/gensig.shtml>

Genealogy SIG is for genealogists interested in computers and computer users interested in genealogy, and is a forum to assist members in furtherance of both endeavors. Meetings usually focus on genealogy more than on computers. We meet at 8 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month, but we do not meet in November or December. In addition to our Web page, we also have an electronic mailing list. Messages to the list should be addressed to gensig@webwarren.com. To subscribe, include the line "subscribe gensig" in the body of the message. **Next meeting May 25** ☞

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

<http://www.blast.net/barnold>

This group is devoted to discussing 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.

April: MFC Windows Programming using Microsoft Visual C++ version 6.0. We discussed a file copy program. I like to keep my VC6 C++ completed executable files in a "Core" folder so that they are easy to find and run. This month's program is called "CoreFold" and the compiler will create it as "C:\Program Files\Microsoft Visual Studio\Projects\Corefold\Release\corefold.exe". My "Core" folder is "H:\Core", and I usually use Windows Explorer to copy the file. Keeping 50-100 different projects up to date in this manner has become quite tedious and takes about a minute per project to copy the executable. The strategy: Build a list of potential source files and copy the newer files to the core folder. The manual operation which previously could take over an hour now takes less than a minute with this automated file scan and copy. **Our next meeting May 16.** ☐

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. ☐

Lotus Notes

Mike Barlow (mwb@injersey.com)

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

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the offices of Bright Ideas Software, 1060 Amboy Avenue, 2nd Floor, Edison NJ at 7 PM (Random Access 6:30). Call (732)417-5778 for last-minute changes, cancellations, information on future meetings, locations, directions, etc. Directions are posted on our Web page. ☐

DotNet

Jim Wong and Jim Boyd

<http://www.jimw.net/acgnj/>

April: Started using the IDE for Visual Basic 2005 Express Edition <http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/express/vb/>. Our next meeting May 18,

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

<http://www.javasig.org>

The Java Users Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include related topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month starting promptly at 7:30 PM.

April: Mapping a POJO Domain Model to an SOA Using Intermediation and Dynamic C.

May: To be announced ☐

Macintosh Users

Keith Sproul (ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu)

This group is no longer meeting, but Keith is still available to help Mac users via telephone or email (see page 2). ☐

MCP

(Microsoft Certified Professional)

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

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

The MCSE SIG is a study group with the goal of preparing for the Microsoft Certification Exams. In February of 2000 "Windows 2000" debuted along with new MCSE tests. It's two years later and we have settled somewhere between W2k Pro/Server and Windows XP in our studies. Windows NT while still viable, is history as far as Microsoft is concerned. Windows .NET server should be out this year and should look like Windows XP-Server.

The books we will be using are "Mastering Windows 2000 Server" by Mark Minasi and the "MCSE Self-Paced Training Kit" from Microsoft Press. These books are important because as a study group we won't have a teacher to explain the concepts. We'll **need** to discuss them in the group. This is a study group, not a class taught by a teacher. Since hands-on training is crucial in acquiring the skills needed for these tests, we try to focus on lab work as well. The Microsoft training kits are good for labs.

We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7 pm to 10 pm. Attendees are encouraged to bring a PC properly configured with NT, 10BaseT network card, and Netmeeting 2.1. For more info, reading assignments, course schedule, visit our website. ☐

Guru Corner

Jo-Anne Head (tinarock@aol.com)

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.

	Hardware	
	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169
	Software	
HTML	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
CSS	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
ColdFusion	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
e-Commerce	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Networking	Scott Vincent	973-539-8169
Home Automation	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	Operating Systems	
WindowsNT	Scott Vincent	973-361-5793
Windows95	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows98	Rick Elbanna	800-323-7575
Windows3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942
	Charlie Huffsmith	732-549-1734
	Macintosh	
Mac O/S	Keith Sproul	(732) 821-4828

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.

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	Dues	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	NY/NJ/CT Relational Database User Group: Corporate and independent users. (212) 839-0125	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: 2nd Thurs., Bill Traywick, (201) 635-5393	Central Jersey Computer Club: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, Trenton St. College. 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) 842-9600. www.pacsnet.org	Fairlawn Computer Club: Last Monday, Fairlawn Senior Citizen Center. Joe Mathias (fair.lawn.computer.club@juno.com)	Princeton PC Users Group: 2nd Monday, Lawrenceville Library, Alt Rt 1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 218-0778, http://www.ppcug-nj.org
Workshop, Hands-On: 2 P.M. to Midnight on last Saturday of the month. First United Methodist Church, Church and Atlantic Streets (one mile from GSP exit 117A), Aberdeen NJ. Bring your project, computer and extension cord. For information call Burke Mawby, (908) 566-7445.		

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.



<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>.

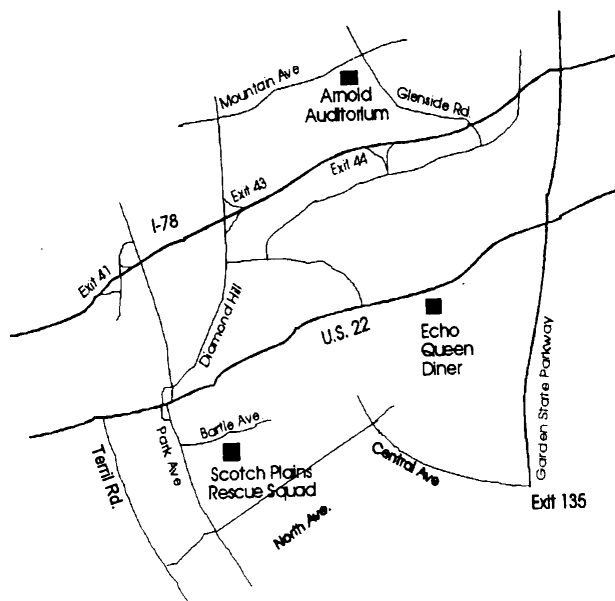
MarketPro Shows

<http://www.marketpro.com/>

May 27-28: Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus NJ 9:30am-4pm.

June 3-4: NJ Convention Center, Edison

June 24-25, Meadowlands Expo Center Secaucus



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. ☐

Upgrading Your Monitor

Vinny La Bash (vlabash@home.com), Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group

Recently I wrote about buying a PC for 2006, but other than size I was vague about the monitor. Many more folks than I thought are getting the urge to watch high definition video on their personal computers. If high-def has you captivated, pay attention to the technologies known as HDMI and HDCP.

HDMI or High Definition Media Interface is a technology that connects video receivers and DVD players to devices such as a television. It makes no difference to HDMI if your set is high definition or not. The technology handles both standard and high definition resolutions.

HDCP or High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection is a completely different animal. Intel developed the technology specifically to prevent distortion or any kind of electronic interference between source and receiver. For example, HDCP encrypts the digital content of anything that a device such as a DVD player might send through a Digital Visual Interface (DVI) to a television set, a projector or a computer monitor. The encryption used is not a form of copy protection, but a process designed to protect the integrity of the data. In other words, HDMI makes sure that what is sent is what's received.

It's important to understand that HDCP is content protection, not copy protection. It won't prevent you from pausing live programming or recording a program to view at a later time. Any content provider that did this would soon be at war with its customers. As long as features such as "time-shifting" keep appearing, protecting copyright material becomes increasingly difficult. Copyrights are important because without them there is no protection for the artists, authors, and performers who create material or those who use them.

Your home equipment can implement any kind of copy protection, but a content provider might allow no copies whatsoever. Another provider might let you make a limited

number of copies. Still another might put limitations on how the material is used. Many factors come into play. The mechanism for distribution, source, equipment design, and equipment configuration all have their unique effect. A content provider will usually insist on enforcing its own brand of copy protection.

HDCP makes its appearance at the DVI connection, the last link in the video chain. HDCP makes no decisions on any type of copy protection strategy, it merely protects the choice.

It may be a let down to find out that HDCP isn't an issue yet. However, it will become more important when high definition takes over. Expect all high definition DVD players to eventually use HDCP. If you own a DVD player that isn't HDCP compliant, you will still be able to use it even if your TV isn't HDCP compliant, but won't experience high definition quality images. HDCP will restrict playback to standard quality. This prevents pirates from getting perfect copies of movies or other digital content. Upgrades are definitely in most people's future.

Windows Vista will certainly support HDCP, as will upcoming versions of the Mac OS. What it comes down to is if you want to watch high definition content on your computer monitor, the monitor must be HDCP-compliant. Almost any television set you buy today will use HDCP, but very few computer monitors are HDCP compliant. Research carefully. If you want to watch high definition on your monitor, it must be HDCP compliant.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of APCUG, an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ☐

ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Monday, May 1, 2006

8 P.M. - Lunics (Linux/Unix). Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org), cancelled.

Tuesday, May 2

ACGNJ Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 3

7 P.M. - MCSE Study Group, Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net).

Friday, May 5

8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Evan Williams (nhpressgo@blast.net).

Monday, May 8

8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com), 908-359-8842.

Tuesday, May 9

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

Wednesday, May 10

7 P.M. - Human Networking, Mark Douces (mad-networking@pobox.com)

Thursday, May 11

8 P.M. - Investing, Norm Wiss (cut.up@verizon.net).

Friday, May 12

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

Monday, May 15

8 P.M. - VBA, Jim Ditaranto (fryr92a@prodigy.com), 201-986-1104

Tuesday, May 16

8 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net), 908-735-7898

Wednesday, May 17

7 P.M. - WebDev SIG

Thursday, May 18

8 P.M. - DotNet, Jim Wong & Jim Boyd

Friday, May 19

8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff.

Thursday, May 25

8 P.M. - Genealogy SIG, Frank Warren ☐

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