
Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey NEWS

Volume 32, Number 6

June 2007

2007 Hobbyist of the Year — Claude Kagan



Photo by David McRitchie



<http://www.acgnj.org>

Founded 1975

Claude Kagan is retired from AT&T and Western Electric. He has been a member of the IEEE since the late 1940's and has written more than 50 technical publications. He has received award from both the IEEE and its computer Society for his many contributions to computing. He has donated equipment to INFO AGE from his collection of computers and telecommunications equipment. He is an advocate for the use of the Dvorak keyboard layout and has placed videos in YouTube in support of the Dvorak Keyboard.

Around 1967, Claude founded RESISTORS (Radically Emphatic Students Interested in Science, Technology and Other Research Subjects), the first computer club in NJ. This was ten years before ACGNJ was founded. He founded the club for a group of school children from Hopewell and Princeton area who discovered that Claude had a mainframe computer in his barn in the early 1960's and chose to follow their interest in the computer there, working after school.

The primary computer in the barn at that time was the Burroughs 205, a vacuum tube computer weighing about 9 tons. Power to run the computer cost about \$1 an hour (a considerable sum for teenagers in those days). The computer used enough power to heat the barn during the winter and could not be used during warm weather. Some of the other artifacts in the barn included an early typewriter with a piano keyboard, an early IBM paper tape punch that made square holes (not round), an official IBM song book, early prototypes of touch-tone phones, Teletypes, Flexowriters, an early IBM time clock, manual telephone switchboards, electro-mechanical telephone switches, and music boxes. Early R.E.S.I.S.T.O.R.S. wrote programs in SAM76, a language developed by Kagan, and even wrote a primer about the language.

He said, "*The RESISTORS started in Hopewell Township prior to 1967 consisting of a group of Hopewell Township School students who formed a club to smoke pot in a small stone building on Poor Farm Road in protest of the lack of decent science program in their school system. They visited me in my barn and changed their purpose, getting high on computers instead.*" 

ACGNJ News will not be published during July and August — We'll be back in September.

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Vice President	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
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Past President	Frank Warren	(908) 756-7898

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Best Choice Investment	Norm Wiss	
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Firefox Activity	David McRitchie	
Genealogy	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681
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Layman's Forum	Matthew Skoda	(908) 359-8842
LUNICS	Andreas Meyer	
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Director Emeritus	Sol Libes	(609) 520-9024
Through 2008	Bill Farrell	(732) 572-3481
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	Malthi Masurekar	(732) 560-1534
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	Arnold Milstein	(908) 753-8036
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Standing Committees

APCUG Rep.	Frank Warren	(908) 756-1681
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Historian	Lenny Thomas	
Membership	Mark Douches	(908) 889-2366
Newsletter	— open —	
Trenton ComputerFest	Mike Redlich	(908) 246-0410
	John Raff	(973) 992-9002
Vendor Liaison	Bill Farrell	(732) 572-3481
Webmaster	John Raff	(973) 992-9002

ACGNJ News

Editor

Barbara DeGroot
145 Gun Club Road
Palmerton PA 18071
Tel: (570) 606-3596
bdegroot@ptd.net

Publisher

Associate Editor

Bill Farrell
(732) 572-3481
wfarr18124@aol.com

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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?

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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.

E-Mail Addresses

Here are the e-mail addresses of ACGNJ Officers, Directors and SIG Leaders (and the Newsletter Editor). This list is also at (<http://www.acgnj.org/officers.html>).

Bruce Arnold	barnold@ieee.org
Bill Brown	onlineauction@acgnj.org
Jim Cooper	jim@thecoopers.org
Barbara DeGroot	bdegroot@ptd.net
Mark Douches	pcproblems@pobox.com
Bill Farrell	wfarr18124@aol.com
Sol Libes	sol@libes.com
Malthi Masurekar	masureka@umdnj.edu
Gregg McCarthy	greggmc@optonline.net
David McRitchie	dmcritchie@hotmail.com
Andreas Meyer	lunics@acgnj.org
Arnold Milstein	mrflark@yahoo.com
John Raff	john@jraff.com
Lela Rames	lrames@att.net
Mike Redlich	mike@redlich.net
Matt Skoda	som359@aol.com
Keith Sproul	ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu
Lenny Thomas	lennythomas@technologist.com
Scott Vincent	scottvin@optonline.net
Frank Warren	kb4cyc@webwarren.com
Evan Williams	tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com
Norm Wiss	cut.up@verizon.net

From the DealsGuy

Bob Click (bobclick@mindspring.com), Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

This article about a new operating system to be released later this year might interest you. <http://informationweek.com/> It's a free XML-based OS that runs inside a Web browser. Free software, especially an OS, might be good news, but we'll see when it is introduced.

Also, here is an article about some amazing technology to "re-wire the brain" of stroke victims and perhaps help the patients develop movement. <http://www.informationweek.com/>

In the Feb. 5, 2007, issue of Information Week was a lengthy article about conflicting opinions inside the open source community that are hindering further development of it; even some of the foremost developers don't agree. <http://www.informationweek.com/>. There were also some side articles on particular versions.

We worked the 2007 CTIA Wireless show <http://www.ctia.org> that you might have seen news reports on. It was a large show taking the entire West building of the Orange County Convention Center (1.1 million square feet of exhibit space) and I didn't get much chance to tour that show. A couple of editors asked me if I would write up something, but I didn't feel up to going in early to look around. Actually, I don't know enough about that subject to write an intelligent article on the show. Past Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton were the featured keynote speakers. I read about an interesting comment by George H.W. Bush. He said, "This hour I'll be up here (speaking) is about the longest I ever go without using my Blackberry."

It was unusual that after the keynote speech the presidential entourage entered the show floor to see some exhibits, probably because this show was important for all the new products introduced, especially concerning security. The security company working that show, building security and the Secret Service cleared a 15-foot path for them to caravan from one booth to another for a while. I'll bet a few attendees were thrilled to be that close to those guys regardless of the politics. There may also have been security people watching from the catwalks 40 feet above the show floor. I was working afternoons, and missed all that.

May 2007 will bring the largest trade show ever (in total exhibit area) <http://www.nationalhardwareshow.com> to Orange County Convention Center. It will take both the old and the new CC buildings (over 1.1 million square feet of exhibit space in each building, not including meeting rooms, concourses, lobbies, etc.). Some of the show and its events will be in at least four hotels nearby, and even two tents will be in set up in the parking lot.

Microsoft's Tech Ed 2007 show will also be back here in June, and it's only \$1,995 to attend the full conference <http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=6643812>. You'll have 440 breakout sessions to choose from if you attend.

*Now For The Deals

I have not tried any of the items below so study them well if you are interested. A klutz like myself is not qualified to try out and give opinions on most products. The write-ups are

theirs, but edited by me to shorten them, and correct some wording.

*Chop Up Your PDF File Without An Ax

A-PDF Solution has announced the immediate availability of A-PDF Size Splitter 1.2, the newest version of a useful and handy tool for splitting any Acrobat PDF file or group of files into smaller-sized PDF files. A-PDF Size Splitter 1.2 doesn't require Adobe Acrobat and works independently producing PDF documents compatible with Adobe Acrobat Reader 5 and above.

A-PDF Size Splitter 1.2 is a flexible utility letting the user set any size of split files, and supports batch operations. Thanks to the built-in output file name pattern, each of the split PDF files is logically named and can be easily identified later. A-PDF Size Splitter 1.2 works even with password protected PDF files. It keeps the original PDF file encryption. Additionally, the generated split PDF files can be recombined with other PDF files, using A-PDF Merger, another utility developed for forming new composite PDF files.

A-PDF Size Splitter 1.2 runs under Microsoft Windows 98/NT4/Me/2000/XP/Vista and costs \$49 (USD). Users group members get 20% discount on a purchase using coupon code APD-AASX. Click the "Buy now" button, then click the "Add to basket" button and input the code. A free 15-day evaluation version is available to download at http://www.a-pdf.com/size_splitter/a-pdf-ss.exe. For more information, please visit <http://www.a-pdf.com>.

Product page link: http://www.a-pdf.com/size_splitter/

*Manipulate Your Files and More

SoftPrime today announces the release of Advanced File Organizer 3.0 that not only features an opportunity to collect all information about drives, files and folders, but developers placed great emphasis on the ability to use this information later. Advanced File Organizer offers several ways to organize your data: add searchable comments for your files and folders; combine disks and folders into groups based on any feature you want; or sort your data by categories. All files can be referred to one or several categories that form a hierarchical tree, making your own virtual file structure. You can restructure your data collection in a minimum of time and effort by just dragging a certain item (file or folder) and dropping it wherever necessary in categories.

The program includes an ability to extract information from ISO and Nero CD/DVD images and import it as a folder, and to import information from DVD-Video thereby getting a comprehensive catalogue of all information on your hard drive, and any other data storage media.

Advanced File Organizer runs under Windows 95/98/ME/NT 4/2000/XP/Vista and costs \$29.95 (USD) or 24.95 (Euro). Users group members get a 10% discount on Advanced File Organizer 3.0 by following this link: <http://www.softprime.com/discount/group.htm> and using the SOFT-6C6F coupon code. The trial version is available at

Continued

A Slightly Faster and Safer Internet FREE!

A small step for your PC, a giant leap for you

Carey Holzman (Carey@ComputerAmerica.com), Co-host talk radio show www.computeramerica.com

Author: *The Healthy PC* (McGraw/Hill); *Smart Computing* magazine (www.careyholzman.com).

You may have never heard of a DNS before, but if you use the Internet, you use DNS all the time. DNS is short for Domain Name Server and I'm going to teach you what it does and why you should care. To understand what DNS is, let's start with something similar you are probably already familiar with – cellular phones.

If you're like most people, you own a cellular phone. You probably have your friends and family programmed into your phone so all you have to do is find their name in your phone's contact list, or if you have a fancy phone, just speak their name and the phone will dial them for you. In my phone, for example, I have Mom in my contact list. When I want to call Mom, I just search for her name in my phone and my phone knows to dial the number associated with that name. This is just like what a DNS does.

When you type a web address into your Internet browser, such as *Microsoft's Internet Explorer* or *Mozilla's Firefox*, the DNS looks up the number associated with that name and then "calls" it. That number is called an IP Address, but it's really not all that different from a phone number.

For example, if you go to www.google.com you are really going to 208.67.219.230. But that would be tough to remember, wouldn't it? Can you imagine if you had to remember 4 sets of numbers for each web-site you wanted to visit? What a nightmare! To make using the Internet simpler, all you need to

know is the site's "name" and your Internet Service Providers DNS will look it up for you.

The problem is that some Internet Service Providers DNS computers are out of date or over-worked. Others may be well maintained, but none of them do any filtering for you. If you were to receive an email from your bank asking you to verify your account or encouraging you to login to your account to resolve some issue, you may actually be taken to a site that looks like your bank in every way, but isn't a bank at all. Instead, thieves have found a way to copy entire web pages, word for word and graphic for graphic, and place it on their own computers. They have a way to make the link you click on in the email take you to their site, instead of to your real bank. When you enter your account number and password, you are effectively telling them your account number and password. If you enter any other information about yourself, such as your first and last name, address, secret PIN for your debit card, social security number, mother's maiden name or other personally identifiable information about yourself, then you can kiss your identity goodbye. You've just given them all the information they need to fill out credit card applications, log into your bank and withdraw all of your funds or even get a job using your social security number, but never pay any taxes. All of which will have unfortunate and long term repercussions for you that can also be quite expensive and frustrating to fix.

Continued

DealsGuy, continued

<http://www.softprime.com/download/aforg.exe> (1.85 Mb). Company website: <http://www.softprime.com>

*Translate Everything For FREE

New York, 4/16/07 - LingvoSoft (lingvosoft.com) has announced the launch of the newest web-based translation service for anyone needing to work with foreign languages. LingvoSoft Online (<http://www.lingvosoftonline.com>) provides visitors with an array of indispensable translation utilities. It features a selection of tools that can be used to communicate over the web. LingvoSoft Online not only delivers dictionaries based on its own translation vocabularies, but also an online PhraseBook that is able to translate between 45 of the world's most popular languages, and their FlashCards language learning utility.

The service is available for over 40 languages, and offers voice capabilities. LingvoSoft Online provides the voicing of translations out loud using the latest TTS (text-to-speech) technology as well as native-speaker voice narration of the PhraseBook entries. It has an advanced spell-check function that finds misspelled and incorrectly entered words, and a

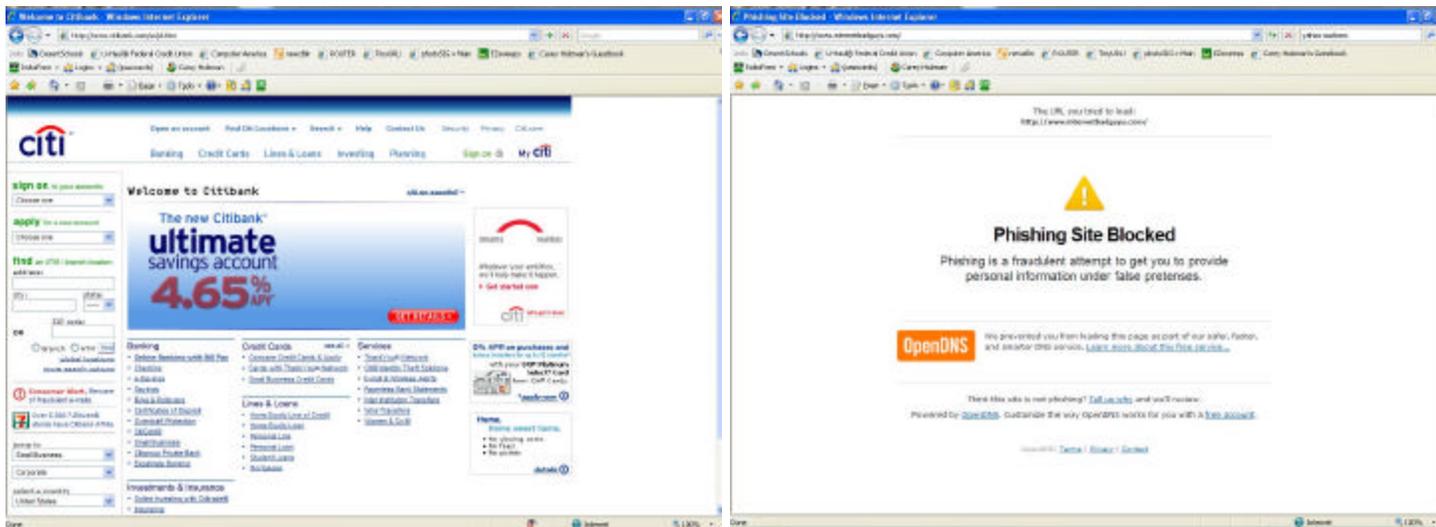
similar word search that provides a list of synonyms for a word.

LingvoSoft offers other website owners the opportunity to put the added functionality of online translation to work for them on their own sites by providing the opportunity to include a LingvoSoft translation module on their pages to increase traffic and keep visitors coming back for more.

*A Bonanza Of Freebies From Microsoft

Here is an excerpt from the Microsoft Newsletter if you are not getting it: "Here are 101 fantastic freebies by clicking on <http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=6626107>. Want to make your PC more productive, secure, informative and entertaining? These downloads and services will do the trick and they don't cost a dime." These goodies were actually selected by PC World.

That's it for this month. I'll soon have more new product announcements on my Web site. 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. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>. ☐



On the left, what a fraudulent web-site might look like without OpenDNS. The image to right is what a fraud u lent web-site will look like with OpenDNS.

We refer to this process of criminals obtaining your information in this manner as “**Phishing**” (pronounced as “fish ing.”) Perhaps you’re under the impression that if you don’t click on any links in email (advice of ten offered as a security measure to prevent becoming a phishing victim) you’ll be safe. But that’s not guaranteed. Criminals have figured out ways to manipulate some DNS computers to take you to their site! Imagine if someone could change the number in your cellular phone for Mom, so that each time you went to call Mom, your phone dialed a 1-900 number that charged you \$2 per minute! When crooks manipulate a DNS computer in this manner, we refer to it as “**DNS cache poisoning**”.

Generally speaking, the Internet Service Providers are doing a great job of preventing their DNS computers from being compromised, but how can you be sure? Your Internet Service Provider has a lot of things to do besides maintain their DNS computer. They have email and spam to contend with and they may even provide cable TV, telephone or other services. So how much time and attention do their DNS computers receive?

One company, OpenDNS.com (<http://www.opendns.com/>) does nothing but maintain their DNS computers. In fact, they go a step further by filtering dangerous web-sites. If you were using their DNS computers, instead of the ones you are using right now, and tried to visit a fraudulent web-site masquerading as a financial institution in order to collect your personal information, it won’t let you go there!

What’s more, OpenDNS.com offers their DNS computers free, for any one to use, forever. Because their sole focus is on DNS, their computers are extremely fast and are updated constantly with new, dangerous web-sites to block. You don’t have to install any software, sign any license agreements or even tell them who you are to take advantage of their free service.

If you’ve ever thought your Internet was down, it may have only been that your Internet Service Providers DNS

computers were unavailable for some reason. When the DNS computers are unavailable, your computer is unable to resolve the web addresses and it will appear as though your Internet connection is not working.

OpenDNS.com has high performance DNS computers in numerous locations around the world to ensure reliability and speed. They are so proud of how reliable their system is, you can check the status of their entire system at any time. Curious? Click here <http://system.opendns.com/> to see the current status of all of the OpenDNS computers (green = good, red or yellow = bad). If you choose to register with OpenDNS.com, which is also free, a few more features also become available to you. This may actually appeal more to a business owner than a home user, but if you’re curious, it might be worth checking out as well.

OpenDNS.com works with all computers, running all versions of Windows, Linux and even Apple PCs and gaming machines like the Xbox or PlayStation. It can also work within your router, and if your phone has Internet access, it can work with it as well! Best of all, they provide a free click-by-click walk-through (<http://www.opendns.com/start/>) of how to configure it on all of these devices.

Start Using OpenDNS

If your computer runs any version of Microsoft Windows, you can quickly configure your computer to use OpenDNS by following a few simple steps that every one can easily understand right here (<http://www.opendns.com/start/windows.php>). To learn more about how OpenDNS works, visit their Frequently Asked Questions (<http://www.opendns.com/faq/>). If you want to learn more details of exactly how DNS works, visit (HowStuffWorks.com).

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Info, Info Everywhere, and Not a Thought to Think

Vinny La Bash (labash@spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG (www.spcug.org)

Many people think that the internet is the greatest thing since sliced whatchamacallit or the worst abomination that's ever been inflicted upon the human race. As usual the truth lies somewhere in-between. There is no doubt that the internet is a great source of seemingly limitless information, and the information found there tends to fall into three general categories:

1. Information which is totally useless. Did you know that the average cloud weighs 300,000 pounds? Neither did I, but that's the sort of thing you are most likely to get on the internet unless you are careful.
2. Information which is useful, but not at the moment. I invariably discover a great tax deduction I didn't know about on April 16th. It's too late for this year, and I will probably either forget about it next year or misfile the thing where I can't find it.
3. Information which is useful now. This is extraordinarily rare, comparable to finding eyebrows on eggs, but we all get lucky occasionally.

The data you find in the first category is not only safe to ignore, it's essential to your sanity to ignore it. The third category usually takes care of itself. Simply use it for whatever purpose you have in mind and you're done. The second category is the one that requires a good degree of sound management to avoid wasting time, and that is the problem.

World wide productivity could double overnight if the internet would only send us the information we need at the right time. We spend too much time refining our Google searches, investigating blogs, experimenting with RSS feeds or mucking around our own data bases. One piece of missing information has the potential to make the best presentation look like the product of a misinformed dolt.

Is having the information you need when you need it nothing more than a World Wide Web fantasy? Perhaps not. Did you know that you can set a reminder email for future delivery in Outlook? Here's how to do it:

1. Open Outlook (obviously).
2. Select the email to forward.
3. Click on the Forward button.
4. Click on the **Options...** button.
5. Put a check in the **Do not deliver before** box.
6. Select the date of delivery.
7. Click **Close**.

Don't set a delivery date to a point where you are unlikely to have your present computer unless you are in a corporate network where the systems administrator can make the proper adjustments. Even then, be realistic.

Send yourself notes about meetings shortly before you need them. Include information not only about the subject of the meeting, but about the people attending with you. Your colleagues will think you're a certified genius.

All kinds of things can be done with Outlook and its future delivery capabilities. The usual subjects such as birthdays, anniversaries, and recurring meetings suggest themselves. Investors can send themselves reminders that an option they

own is about to expire or to watch for that important dividend payment. Almost any kind of regular to-do item lends itself to this task. Get that tax form in the mail by April 15th. Do you really need a reminder for that?

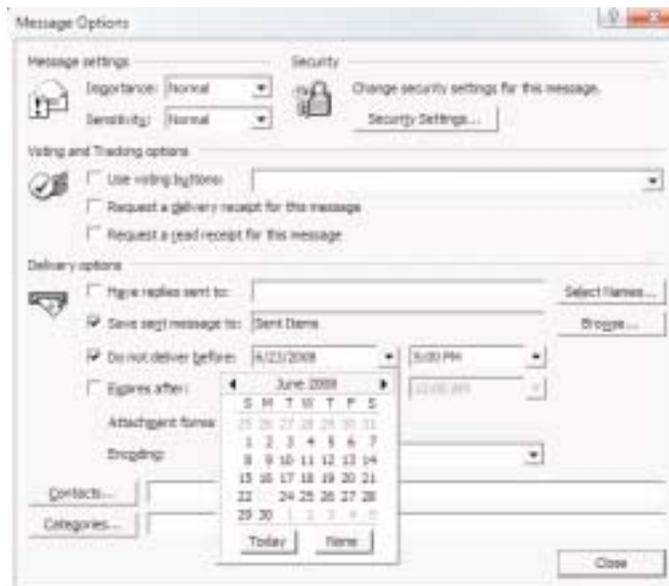
What do you do if you don't have Outlook? Neither Yahoo, Hotmail nor Outlook Express offers this feature, but there is a web site that can help. Go to www.futureme.org and create your email for future delivery. This site is well suited for information you won't need for months if not years. Of course, delivery depends on the web site still being in existence when you need it, and it doesn't handle attachments. If you can live with those limitations, go for it.

People talk a lot about traffic congestion, but unlike the weather, you can do something about it. If you commute regularly to work take a peek at www.traffic.com. The site will send you real-time traffic maps, road condition alerts and jam alerts. This site is great for road warriors or anyone who drives over regular routes.

Do you suffer from springtime allergies? Then take a trip to www.weather.com to have pollen, weather, and other alerts delivered directly to your desktop. Not everything has to be delivered by email.

Cutting down on information overload is the best reason for using these tools. Avoiding data until you need it will free you from the drudgery of sifting through piles of irrelevant information to find the one item you need, and best of all, you won't worry about being unprepared when an unexpected deadline suddenly looms up before you.

Use information efficiently and you will become respected, admired, and the opposite sex will seek you out. When people



inevitably accuse you of having a perfect memory, tell them you have a photogenic mind.

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Going 100% Digital with Genealogy – or Any – Records

Tom J. Thiel (tthiel5@comcast.net), Lake-Sumter Computer Society (www.lscs.us)

In April 2007, I offered a presentation with the same title as above at the Lake-Sumter Computer Society's Genealogy Special Interest Group. For a handout see <http://www.lscs.us/presentations/070412%20Thiel%20Going%20100%25%20Digital%20Handout.pdf>

In my presentation — which was based on an excellent article with a similar title by Dick Eastman in his outstanding Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter Plus Edition — I extensively described the Xerox DocuMate 152 scanner that costs about \$500 with bundled software. This, of course, was the one Mr. Eastman had obtained and on which he based his fine article.

Well, for me at least and for many others, the roughly \$500 for the DocuMate 152 was a little bit on the pricey side and also it is more of a work group scanner with office document scanning as its primary design criteria.

One of the alternative scanners I found in my research for the presentation and also mentioned in my presentation was the Xerox DocuMate 510, flatbed scanner with an Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) rated at 10 pages per minute.

About a month ago I decided to obtain the DocuMate 510!

PC World has a very nice review of the Xerox 510 at <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,114941-page,1/article.html> — two paragraphs were extracted in the text below.

“If you need to turn a stack of paper documents into editable electronic text, using a scanner with optical character recognition software and an automatic document feeder attachment — like Xerox's new \$350 DocuMate 510 — is a speedy alternative to typing.”

“While the DocuMate 510 is a flatbed model — and therefore takes up more desk space than slimmer sheet-fed scanners — its removable lid allows you to scan pages from books or other bound volumes, including oversize originals. For any business or workgroup that needs an affordable document scanner, the DocuMate 510 is a solid choice.” End Quote

I was able to find the 510 on the internet from a low of \$298 to a high of \$359. I paid \$312 from Buy.com; however, I found that the local Office Depot (Mount Dora, FL) has the DocuMate 510 for \$299, complete with bundled software.

And of special note, through June 30, 2007, Xerox is offering a \$50 mail in rebate.

So far I am totally pleased with my DocuMate 510!

Scanner assembly went effortlessly with the aid of a very well illustrated assembly schematic manual. Installation requires that the software be installed before connecting the 510 to your computer via the USB port.

The 510 came with ScanSoft PaperPort 9.0 which controls the scanner, TextBridge Pro 9.0 for Optical Character Recognition, and ArcSoft Photo Impressions editing software all on one CD-ROM. It also came with a 58-page installation and scanning manual done quite nicely in slick paper, and a 12-month warranty.

After the software was installed, the scanner components were connected to power and then I connected it to the computer with the USB cable. When I attempted to scan a document, however, I received an error message. By entering the error code into Google I was quickly able to determine that I had failed to unlock the shipping lock slider switch.

After sliding the switch, the scanner worked perfectly. The sheet feeder works very well and even handles quite thin papers although hearing those go through the feeder may give one cause to worry a bit.

The ADF handles variable length paper from about 6 inches to up to 14-inch legal length papers — all in the same stack in the ADF. And the fact that the scanner's cover may be easily removed to copy from books is also a plus for genealogists and for general home applications.

Mr. Eastman, and others, speaks at length on what these scanners and their software, collectively known as a Document Management System, will mean — reducing the number of filing cabinets, safer storage and more rapid and complete retrieval. All of these are, of course, quite true, but you should be aware that to convert all of your existing file cabinet's contents to digital information is not something you will be able to achieve quickly! Scanning all of your existing documents, whether your genealogy documentation or your credit card, banking or utility records, will take an appreciable amount of time and effort regardless of the scanner you employ.

At present I am scanning my bank statements, utility bills, Medicare and supplemental insurance statements, medical reports and lab analyses, credit cards and the like.

I have not yet begun to scan my Genealogy documents, but intend to — this will be a daunting task; not the scanning but the organizing and assembling of the documents that I have to get ready for scanning.

When you convert records to a document management system as I am doing with the 510, you need to decide what conversion scenario you will follow: scan all the documents that exist in your files or scan from the day you begin scanning forward. I have decided to convert most of my documents starting from today forward (except of course for genealogy records). This is simply because it is easier to do this than to “empty the file cabinet first.”

Unlike the DocuMate 152, which is a duplex scanner meaning that both the front and rear of a page are scanned simultaneously with the same pass of the paper through the scanner, the 510 is a simplex meaning that only one side is scanned at a time. However, the PaperPort Deluxe 9 scanning software packaged with the scanner handles this situation very well. Simply load the stack of papers and scan the front side of all pages. PaperPort will then ask “scan the other side?” and if you wish to you simply turn the stack over and scan the reverse side. The software handles the pagination automatically.

The 510 is very simple to use; one of the more difficult aspects of using it is to remember to load the paper with the face up!

Continued

TUT, The Ultimate Troubleshooter

Ira Wilsker (Iwilsker@apcug.net), APCUG Director

According to a British website, “Answers That Work” (www.answersthatwork.com), 65% of problems on PCs, such as lockups, crashes, blue screens of death, and poor performance are due to causes other than the commonly suspected culprits. Many people erroneously blame malware such as viruses or spyware for the problems on their computers, and some go to extreme measures to attempt to resolve these problems. Unbeknownst to the users of computers with the symptoms above, the problems they are experiencing are not due to the possible presence of malware, but to background tasks that are loaded and running mostly from the software the users have installed on their computers. A solution to improve performance by giving the user easy and informed control over the tasks running on the computer is a \$29 program called “The Ultimate Troubleshooter”, commonly known in industry circles by its acronym, “TUT”. TUT is a compilation of solutions learned based on over 20 years experience trouble shooting computers.

For the past four years I have diagnosed my computers using TUT, and have been able to tweak them and maximize performance based on the recommendations made possible by the software. One of the functions integral in TUT is its “PC Tuning” service which uses its extensive database of tasks that may be running on a PC, and the degree of necessity of that task. As I type this, I have 45 tasks running on my computer, and TUT displays each of the tasks running and explains the functionality in understandable terms. Each task can be managed by the user such that only necessary tasks are running, which will free up system resources resulting in

improved performance. Each of the running tasks is labeled by status (unknown, user’s choice, multiple possibilities, OK, and Not OK), task name, CPU usage of each task, memory being used, manufacturers’ description, and other technical information is displayed. Right clicking on a task will allow the user to terminate the task, suspend the task, or get additional information about the task.

Many users are plagued with slow booting of their machines when turned on and subsequent impaired performance. The primary cause of this malady is too many or unnecessary programs loaded when the computer is booted. The startup sequence becomes bloated as software is installed, as many programs want to be automatically loaded every time the computer is started, and this can degrade performance. TUT contains one of the most comprehensive startup managers available. The “Startups” function of TUT displays each program that is loaded when booted, regardless of whether the program is loaded from the startup file, registry or other source. Each program is labeled by status, startup name, launch command, manufacturer, description, and startup source. The status indicator shows if the programs are necessary and OK (green), user’s choice (yellow), dangerous or otherwise unnecessary (red), or unknown (no color tag). By removing any red tagged startup items (which may also be viruses or spyware) dangerous and otherwise useless items will not be loaded at the next boot. The user’s choice (yellow) items can be reviewed and selected or deselected by the user by simply utilizing a checkbox. Unchecking an item will prevent it from loading at next boot. Stopping unnecessary items

continued

Going 100% Digital, *continued*

The PaperPort 9.0 software, originally offered by ScanSoft and now by Nuance, works very effectively. One item I would like improved is the default file name, which is “Day of week, Month, Day and Year.pdf.” Other options are available but it appears that all use the current date in one form or another.

So far I have not extensively used the OCR capability as that is a slower scanning process.

Another very useful feature of the PaperPort software is that it is a printer and may be used to print any document directly to a pdf, including documents from the web.

Managing the scanned documents effectively can also be challenging. I created a file folder structure similar to my physical filing cabinet and that seems to work very well so far. I scan a document or set of documents and then merely drag these and drop them in the appropriate folder. I then rename the file to usually “YYMMDD Plus a Few Descriptive Words” in front of the default file name.pdf. A medical record, for example, would contain the year, month and day of the medical service, the physician’s name and procedure, followed by the default scan date. I find that using YYMMDD format for my records allows me to sort or otherwise keep a

logical file and folder order sequence by date; to use the standard MMDDYY format will not sort logically.

If you are going to scan older records then you should spend some time in document preparation before beginning scanning. Ensuring that documents are in proper order, staples removed, corners straightened, etc., will speed up the scanning process.

And you must verify your copy before discarding the paper document! I am discarding most of the documents I have scanned so far.

All of my scanning to date has been black and white and at 300 dots per inch resolution, which in most cases has been adequate. This will result in a pdf file of perhaps 35KB per page.

If you decide to convert your paper files to 100% digital records, then you simply must practice excellent and very frequent backup procedures. Otherwise you will lose everything! I make a copy on an external drive after every session.

The choice is yours of course, but my advise is: “Go 100% Digital, and do it now!”

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Software Review: Avery DesignPro

Ronnie Ugulano ([priswell\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:priswell(at)comcast.net)), Fresno PC User Group (www.fresnocomputerusers.org)

Last month when I walked in for the FPCUG meeting, I was met by an old friend, a very familiar piece of software - Avery DesignPro, the software that is specially designed to be used with Avery cardstock and labels. A stack of the software was sitting on the table as I entered and was given to members as long as the stack lasted.

Over the years, I have used this software many times for a long list of printing projects. As a homeschooling parent, I've used the software to design student and teacher identification cards, bookmarks, T-shirts and certificates. As a housewife, I've created distinct address labels and business cards for each family member, get-together invitations, thank you and other occasion cards, and wish-you-were-here postcards to send to friends and family. As a soapmaker hobbyist, I make labels for the lotions, soaps, and bath salts I make for myself and others. As a computer geek, I fire up Avery DesignPro to create labels for the CDs I burn, and the occasional floppy.

So, you might say, I use Avery DesignPro a lot. Over the years, I've collected enough cardstock, artwork and cute sayings that I can whip up something for nearly every occasion that comes along. Who needs Hallmark?

But I wouldn't be able to be so glib with the printer unless DesignPro was easy and dependable. It's one thing to cheer-

fully tinker with computer hardware or software-gone-wrong for fun. It's another thing to need a really nice card to go with a baby shower gift at the last minute, only to find that the software doesn't do what you need it to do.

Once you learn your way around DesignPro's simple interface, it's no trouble at all to whip up what you need, when you need it. When you open the program, you have the option of making something new, or opening a project you have previously used. If you are creating a new project, the tools for placing text and pictures is easy and intuitive. You can choose whether to make many copies of one design, or unique designs for each item. Fonts can be scaled as small as 8 or as large as 72, and graphics can be sized up or down to the size of the cardstock, or limit of the resolution of the graphic. There are even options for text direction, serial numbers and UPC codes — all push-button easy, using similar conventions as you'd find in Microsoft Word, only with much more in the way of options and flexibility for this specific series of jobs.

Oh, and did I mention that it's **free**? Yep, some Avery labels come with a disk enclosed (see specially marked packages) or, you can download the software from Avery's website (<http://avery.com/us/Main?action=software.AverySoftwareDetail&catalogcode=WEB01&softwarecode=3200>). If you choose to

Continued

TUT, continued

from loading at boot will improve performance and speed the boot performance.

The "Services" tab shows internal workings of the operating system and other programs that are running at the moment. Right clicking on a running service allows the user to control the service by stopping it, and control loading and execution of the service item at startup. The traditional red - yellow - green indicator on each service clearly indicates degree of functionality, necessity, and safety of each running service.

The "Housekeeping" function of TUT allows the user to selectively clean junk files from the hard drive, freeing up disk space. Housekeeping also runs a PC health check to determine the operating condition of the computer. Freeing up drive space and ceasing unnecessary tasks contributes to stability, another key ingredient of overall system performance.

For both informational and maintenance purposes, it is often useful to know precisely what hardware and software is in and on the computer. "System Info" displays comprehensive information about the machine and its software. The "System Summary" displays detailed information about the motherboard, BIOS, CPU, graphics card, operating system, memory, disc drives, and other information. Detailed information about components is often necessary for maintenance and update purposes, and TUT provides that information. Details are also provided about the cache memory, comm ports, drives, environmental variables, graphics card and settings, and many other computer components. Installed software is also listed in detail, along with a very helpful adjunct; TUT also displays an internet "Help Link" for more information

from the software publisher, and as a resource for updates and upgrades. Other hardware and software information is listed as well. One helpful feature is a complete listing of Windows updates that shows the date of the update, a simple description of the update, and the Microsoft Knowledge Base ("KB") number for additional information from the original source.

For those who want to know about websites and other internet information, TUT offers several utilities, including the identification and display of the computers IP address (TCP/IP configuration, MAC address, etc.), name server lookup, ping, trace route (shows the path that internet connections follow over the internet) and "whois" (displays the registered owner of a website).

One nice service provided by TUT is the frequent updates of its database, as well as periodic updates of the software itself. As I type this, I am using TUT version 4.21, which is an update from the recently released version 4.0.

TUT version 4 works on Windows 2000, XP, Win2003, and 32 bit versions of Vista. For the bargain price of \$29, I found that TUT is an indispensable utility for diagnosing computer problems and improving PC performance. Its full name, "The Ultimate Troubleshooter" is a well earned moniker, and I strongly recommend it. A free demo version is available to download from www.answerthatwork.com so users can examine the product prior to purchase.

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Thoughts on Upgrading PC Hardware and Software

Dick Maybach (n2nd@att.net), Brookdale Computer User Group (www.bcug.org)

I can think of three valid reasons for upgrading a PC: (1) to try something new, (2) to improve performance, and (3) to solve a problem. Trying something new means you are treating your PC as a hobby — you don't really need to upgrade, but you want to. Bear in mind there are risks — you may get more adventure than you planned on. Improving performance is difficult to justify unless your system is very old. Almost any system will do fine surfing the net, word processing, balancing your checkbook, etc. Upgrading your hardware will often provide no discernable speed-up, because speed is really limited by your typing speed or Internet connection. Upgrading software may slow things down, because new software has more features and requires more resources. This leaves problem solving. Your hard disk may be full; your motherboard may have only old, slow version 1 USB ports; or your bank may require a recent version of Quicken for on-line banking.

You shouldn't upgrade to Windows Vista unless you replace the PC, and even then you may have problems. A friend of mine bought a new Dell PC with Vista and found his old printer wouldn't work and he could no longer access the Internet. Operating system designers can't possibly test every combination of hardware and software. They concentrate on new components, since most operating system sales are for new computers, and there may be problems with older peripherals and software.

You should back up all your files before you make any system change, no matter how trivial. And any time you open your system case, you should use a grounding strap to avoid damaging components with static electricity. This is especially important during the approaching winter months, when the humidity in your house is low.

Let's look at the easy upgrades first. Adding RAM is usually not difficult; just plug it in and look at your CMOS screen to be sure the PC has recognized it. (Of course you must use the correct chips. Check your PC manual.) You can usually add new peripherals, such a CD-ROM, DVD, or a second hard disk drive without problems, although if you have already filled all of the available ATA slots, you will have to add a second disk controller. Take your system to a reliable shop if you have doubts about your abilities. Replacing a hard disk is somewhat more difficult, because you must transfer all your software to the new unit, which requires disk copying software. You can't just copy your files with Windows Explorer.

More adventuresome is installing a new motherboard. Upgrading your motherboard may not result in a noticeable performance improvement unless you also upgrade your hard disk and/or your video controller. If your current motherboard is very old, you must also upgrade its case and power supply. Changing the video controller or monitor is also not too hard. Most monitors are plug-and-play so Windows should automatically recognize your new monitor.

When you buy new peripherals, be sure you get any drivers they need. Many PC manufacturers don't include a complete Windows, but strip off all the drivers except for the equipment they sell you. Download any missing drivers from the Internet before you change your hardware.

An alternative to an upgrade is a complete new system, and the vendor will insure that all the software and hardware plays well together. This leaves your old system intact so you can transfer your files without risk of losing anything.

Regardless of your approach, you must also choose where and what to buy. *Where* is a choice between mail order and a local dealer. *What* is a choice between name brand and commodity hardware. The choice between mail order and local dealer depends on how much experience and time you have. Low profit margins in PC hardware mean that component manufacturers and system assemblers spend little time on testing. Dead-on-arrival hardware and infant mortalities are common. When this happens you are entirely dependent on the company that sold it to you. If you purchase mail-order, you must either trouble-shoot any problems yourself or ship the entire system back to the seller, while a good local dealer can often make repairs in a few hours. You are trading off convenience for cost, because using mail order can often save you a few dollars.

Name brand hardware costs more than its commodity equivalent. The difference is between Sound Blaster and "Sound Blaster equivalent". I favor name brands. You can be sure that every vendor of software that uses sound has tested its products with Sound Blaster cards, but it is impossible for a small manufacturer to test its sound card with every program.

The less you pay for a system, the more likely it is to contain commodity parts. System manufacturers and assemblers usually purchase components on an Original Equipment Manufacturer basis, and most parts sold at computer shows are OEM. The cost is less because the dealer relieves the manufacturer from all customer support, so the component manufacturer often won't even talk to the end purchaser. Your only warranty is from the seller, and you must select him/her with care.

Finally, schedule any upgrade when you have some time. Plan on taking a weekend for simple jobs and more for complex ones. I've found that I need a couple weeks (not full time of course) to get my PC fully functional after reinstalling an operating system for example.

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Avery DesignPro, *continued*

download, I recommend that you select the stand-alone version, the one that does **not** integrate into Microsoft Word. It's leaner, cleaner and less clunky.

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McAfee SiteAdvisor

Sandy Berger (Sandy@compukiss.com), CompuKISS

Anyone who has been on the Internet for a while realizes that even websites that look benign can generate viruses, adware, spyware, spam, and scams. Until now, it was difficult to determine which websites to avoid. Now, however, safe surfing just got easier. Now there is a wonderful free program that warns you about dangerous websites.

The McAfee SiteAdvisor is a small piece of software that works with your Internet Browser (either Internet Explorer or Firefox). It tells you in an easy graphical format which websites are safe and which harbor spyware, viruses, excessive pop-ups, or online scams.

McAfee has a system of automated spiders that patrol the Web constantly checking out websites. They assess the safety of each website including how much spam is generated from signing up for information at that site and how much spyware, adware, and other nasties might be attached to downloads from that site. The SiteAdvisor will also alert you to sites with excessive pop-ups and those that are possible phishing sites. Besides the automated testing, McAfee has a team of individuals who assess the sites. They use a detailed analysis as well as feedback from individual users.

To use the SiteAdvisor, you simply download the free program. The program is very small, so it downloads and installs quickly and it doesn't slow down your Web surfing.

After installation, a small SiteAdvisor rectangle will appear either on the top (Internet Explorer) or the bottom (Firefox) of the screen. When you visit a site that SiteAdvisor considers safe the rectangle turns green. Sites that have serious security problems will turn the rectangle red. A yellow rectangle means that the website may have some problems or issues. You can click on the SiteAdvisor symbol to get more informa-

tion about the website that you are visiting and why it is considered safe or unsafe.

This information is invaluable when surfing the Web. With SiteAdvisor installed you don't have to be fearful that signing up for more information or a newsletter will set you up for spam. You don't have to worry that downloading software will install spyware. In fact, SiteAdvisor takes much of the fear out of investigating and trying new things on the Internet.

Another great feature of the SiteAdvisor program is that when you do a search on Google, Yahoo! or MSN, SiteAdvisor's safety ratings appear as a red, green, or yellow circle next to the search results. You can easily see if a website is safe before you visit!! What a pleasant and useful service. If you want more information before you click on the search engine listing, just hover your mouse over the SiteAdvisor icon and a window will pop-up giving your details on the site's ratings.

Everything that I just described about the SiteAdvisor is available in the free version. McAfee also offers a Plus version that is available for \$19.99 per single user or as a 3-user family pack for \$39.99. The Plus version offers even more peace of mind by alerting you to dangerous links in email and instant messaging programs. The Plus version also has a password protected mode that can actively protect your computer against dangerous websites. This version is perfect for anyone who wants a little extra protection. It is also great for shared computers and computers that children or grandchildren use. Click here to download the SiteAdvisor.

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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. ☐

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Three Strikes and You're Out!

Robert Hawes (r.d.hawes@hotmail.com), ACGNJ

We'll tie back into the theme of our title later on, I promise; but first, something completely different: Imagine you're in a theatre. The house lights dim and the curtain rises, revealing the Forum of Ancient Rome. A toga-clad figure approaches from stage right, wearing horn-rim glasses and carrying a late model laptop abacus. He speaks:

"Friends, ROM-ans, computer men and women, lend me your Wi-Fi connections. I come to bury Microsoft, not to praise it. The evil that this company does has lived long enough; let it now be interred with its bones. I tell you, the time has come for all knowledgeable computer users to rise up in righteous indignation and put Microsoft into the ground; as wrathfully, and as deeply, as possible."

That's enough ripping-off of Shakespeare. On the other hand, there can never be too much bashing of Microsoft; and unlike Mark Antony (that's right, no h) in *Julius Caesar*, I'm not being ironic. I **most definitely** mean what I say. Do you think I'm being too harsh? Here's part of a memo written by then Microsoft employee Jim Allchin (now retired), about how to deal with a competitor; "We need to slaughter Novell before they get stronger...If you're going to kill someone, there isn't much reason to get all worked up about it and angry. You just pull the trigger. Any discussions beforehand are a waste of time. We need to smile at Novell while we pull the trigger." (Quoted from the Plaintiffs' opening statement in the *Comes v. Microsoft* lawsuit, courtesy of www.groklaw.net).

In the same vein, here's a **really** short synopsis of the BeOS story, and then two more quotes, all excerpted from www.groklaw.net (copyright 2003-2007 Pamela Jones):

The Be Operating System was fully multi-threaded and multi-tasking with memory protection, built from the ground up to do advanced audio visual editing. Microsoft refused to allow OEM's to pre-load BeOS, or to put an icon on the desktop or load the boot manager to permit switching between OS's. Even with strong support from Intel, BeOS failed to break the lock Microsoft has on OEMs. In 2001, the company dissolved.

"I once preached peaceful coexistence with Windows. You may laugh at my expense — I deserve it." (Jean-Louis Gassée, former CEO, BeOS).

"So again, the evidence will be that a product that some consumers would have chosen is gone from the marketplace. A product that offered unique capabilities still not present, still not present on Windows, never really had a chance. And the evidence will be that consumers are deprived of choice and innovation because Microsoft breaks Iowa's Competition Law."

Regarding BeOS; copied *as-is* from the opening statement to the jury of Roxanne Conlin, Co-counsel for the Plaintiffs in the (recently settled) *Comes v. Microsoft, Inc* lawsuit.

There'll be even more such good, clean fun later on. It's my contention that Microsoft isn't actually in the software business. It's in the dominance business. (Let's pause for a vision of Bill Gates dressed in a black leather transsexual dominatrix

costume, a la Dr. Frank-N-Furter from "The Rocky Horror Picture Show". That's enough to give us all nightmares for years). Now, some opening remarks of my own:

I like silly wordplay. When I first came up with the ROM/Rome idea, I wanted to use "Friends, ROM-ans, Computer Users" as the title for this article. Then I'd start the first sentence with "Lend me your, etc." However, that didn't really telegraph my main topic; and at only four words, it might have been too short for some readers to recognize the source. Continuing the ancient Roman rip-off motif, I thought of "Microsofto Delenda Est", a twist on Cato the Elder's catch phrase from the Third Punic War; "Carthago delenda est" (Carthage must be destroyed). I really liked that one; but ultimately had to reject it as also too obscure. Next, I dropped the historical part, but continued the military theme with "A Call to Arms". Usually, I'm happy to use a clichéd title; but somehow that particular cliché just didn't feel right in this case. So, considering the season, and the coincidence that my "indictment" of Microsoft has three major counts, I went with the baseball metaphor instead. Not perfect, but good enough.

This article is my seasonal wrap-up, the last one prior to our summer hiatus. Before we get to the main event, I've got several loose ends from previous articles to tie up. First, I got some **really** fast feedback from last month's "Let's Lie to the World" article. A reader (who prefers to remain anonymous, possibly from embarrassment) sent me the following:

"As I think I might possibly recall, the Sixty Minutes special last year, (or was it in 2005?), said that Bill Gates was definitely at JICBU '82 because there is a picture of him posing with one of the singers. However, they said that his whereabouts during the evening of the "incident" could not be established, since the police reports have conflicting and missing records and can't establish his actual location until about a half hour after the trouble occurred, when it was noted that he was identified by a security guard who saw him fleeing the scene in a large chauffeured vehicle. The rumor is that his lawyers managed to have a large portion of a state police hard drive erased by paying off the town hall clerk. But that clerk resigned a week after JICBU '82 and no one could be found at the time of the Sixty Minutes special who worked in that office in 1982. So the mystery remains unsolved to this day. I hope that helped to clear things up."

Needless to say, I'm **thrilled** that my tongue-in-cheek flight of fancy stimulated someone else's funny bone. And I'm amazed at how quickly it happened, too. As I write this, our May, 2007 issue was posted to the Web just a few days ago and our embryonic urban legend has more than doubled in size already. (That paragraph above is fifty-one words **longer** than my original "imaginary quote"). If it can sustain even a fraction of this phenomenal growth rate, we've got a **winner!**

Second, someone else has finally shared my vision of a completely read-only operating system (first advanced in May of 2005, last mentioned in my "The Future?" article in our April, 2007 issue). It's a Linux distribution called cl33n. (clEEen — get it?) Based on Debian Linux, cl33n is a live CD with a sin-

Continued

gle purpose: it boots and launches the Firefox browser; offering (they say) a virus-free, spyware-free, personal environment for Internet banking, emailing, social networking and anything else you normally do online. Unlike my dream OS, it's designed to ignore the hard drive and use **only** web-based applications; of which there are getting to be quite a lot. Here are just a few:

- Google Docs & Spreadsheets
- gOffice (Free Web Office Suite)
- ThinkFree (Free online alternative to Microsoft Office)
- Google mail (Gmail)
- Yahoo! mail
- Hotmail
- Fastmail (webmail with professional features)
- Blogger
- TypePad
- Yahoo! web hosting with WordPress
- Flickr (photo hosting & sharing)
- Preloadr (edit images in your Flickr account)
- Pixenate
- Snipshot
- Meebo (instant messaging with AIM, Yahoo, MSN, GTalk)
- eBuddy (instant messaging with AIM, Yahoo, MSN)

There are even complete operating systems that can be run from inside the browser, such as *YouOS*, *Deskoptwo* and *goowy*. Inspired by real-world experience at a virus and spyware plagued internet cafe, *cl33n* is designed to be minimalist, simple, fast and **compatible**. It just does web browsing — that's all. For more about this welcome new development, go to <http://cl33n.com> (that's right, no www).

Third, I discovered something new about Partition Magic 8 for DOS (PM8). In the (unfortunately decreasing) areas where it can still be used, PM8 remains my favorite partitioning utility. I have a prolonged tirade about why I consider it to be the height of **absurdity** to install a low level utility like PM8 under a high level operating system like Windows, and then use PM8 to work on the same hard disk that both of them are already running from; but I'll spare you from that ordeal **this** time. Unfortunately for me, I had to repeat that folly again myself, hopefully for the last time, to satisfy completeness. In my first series of 2007 tests (see "Is Perfection Accurate?" in our January issue), I determined that while PM8 can manipulate NTFS version 3.0 (Windows 2000) and NTFS version 3.1 (Windows XP) partitions, GParted (Gnome Partition Editor) version 0.3.1-1 (GP31) could **only** manipulate (or create) NTFS version 3.1 partitions. I further determined that PM8 for DOS (**and** PM8 for Windows running under Windows 95/98) created NTFS version 3.0 partitions. What I **didn't** determine was what PM8 for Windows would do under Windows XP. I just **assumed** that it would create NTFS version 3.1 partitions and let it go at that. I pretty much didn't even raise the subject. How unscientific! I finally broke down and installed PM8 for Windows on an XP system, and that is indeed what it did. Furthermore, GP31 could recognize and manipulate those partitions just fine. So my assumption

turned out to be correct, but I still should have actually checked it out before writing up my test results.

However, one further anomaly remained: The PDF manual on the PM8 distribution CD clearly stated that PM8 for DOS could create NTFS version 3.1 partitions. Now, that could be a misprint (it wouldn't have been the first), but it was something that should be investigated further. So I did, and I found that if you drill down deep enough, PM8 for DOS actually **can** be adjusted to create NTFS version 1.2 (NT4), 3.0 or 3.1 partitions (but it **can't** convert one to another). Version 3.0 is just the default setting. This is probably also true for Windows PM8 (since it switched defaults depending on the Windows version it was loaded under), but I don't **ever** intend to re-install it again and find out. While welcome (learning something new is **always** good), this discovery doesn't affect the GP31 deficiency that I uncovered above. It's been reported, so hopefully they're working on it. Much as I love PM8 for DOS, GP31 *is* the wave of the future.

Fourth, Ubuntu confounded me once again. I performed my just-completed second series of dual-boot tests (see our February, March and May, 2007 issues) using a Western Digital "80" GB hard disk. For the first series (see our May and June, 2005 issues), I used a Maxtor "80" GB hard disk. (As you should expect by now, **neither** disk actually contains 80 **real** GB). In 2005, all but two of the partitions that PM8 found to be bad got partition table error #108. The two exceptions, created by Ubuntu 4.10 in its "standalone" and "XP-in-front" installations, got partition table error #110. Error #108 means that the value recorded in the partition table for the end of a partition doesn't correspond to a valid cylinder boundary in that hard disk's physical and/or logical geometry. Error #110 means that the partition table contains inconsistent size/sector information about one or more partitions, and/or about the **entire** disk. This is a broader error than #108. Indeed, there might be an error #108 hiding under that error #110. PM8 was designed to do absolutely **nothing** more if it encountered either. In 2005, since I could get no further information from PM8, I looked to DOS FDISK. Both times, FDISK reported the individual partition sizes correctly, but it reported a total disk size of only 13,655 MB (instead of the 78,160 MB it **should** have seen). When I repeated those Ubuntu 4.10 tests (see "Dual-Boot Revisited (Part 1)" in our February, 2007 issue), I got an error #108 both times, and FDISK displayed the WD hard disk's proper size of 76,317 MB both times.

From previous experience, I already knew that GP31 could fix an error #108. I became obsessed with the need to duplicate that error #110; to see if GP31 would fix it, too. So I went to the Maxtor disk's current user. I begged, pleaded, whined, whimpered, and groveled most abjectly. I made such a sniveling nuisance of myself that he finally gave in and lent it to me for a few days. Once again, I used the **exact** same Ubuntu 4.10 install CD that I'd used in 2005. I even removed a recently added extra 256 MB memory module from the test computer. I swear to you, **all** the test equipment was **exactly** the same as it was in 2005. Yet I couldn't repeat either error #110 now, no matter how I tried.

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In 2005, I performed all the standalone installations first, then all the XP-in-front installations, then all the XP-at-end installations. (Because Ubuntu messed up the drive so badly the first two times, I didn't even bother to give it the XP-at-end test). Thus, those two error #110 results didn't come one right after the other. Between them, I got two good results (simplyMEPIS 3.3 and Mandrake 10.1), two "iffy" results (Fedora Core 3 and SUSE 9.2), and one complete installation failure (Slackware 10.1). As we saw with GP31 in the 2007 repeat tests, both of those "iffy" results were actually good, just out of PM8's league.

However, there was one thing I didn't notice until I was going over my 2005 notes just now. I had performed those original tests in two stages. The first stage (written up in our May, 2005 issue) tested six Linux distributions. Not all of them passed, but the **only** partition table errors reported by PM8 at that time were those two #110 errors. The second stage (written up in our June, 2005 issue) tested twelve more distributions of Linux, plus one of BSD. Then, the only partition table errors reported by PM8 were six #108 errors: One each from Minislack 1.0.1, PCLinuxOS 0.81a, and Yoper 2.1 which, this year, GP31 confirmed to be real errors; and three from PC-BSD 0.6 which turned out to have been good, but beyond the abilities of **both** GP31 and PM8. After the first stage, I had taken the test computer apart. Then, when I decided to do more tests, I put it back together. The fact that each error type appeared exclusively on just one side of that disassembly/re-assembly event is very suspicious; but again, I swear to you, I used **only** the same parts. It would be unfair of me to blame Ubuntu for not repeating those #110 errors now; but I feel like being petty and vindictive, so I **will!**

Fifth (and final), I won a raffle at a Christmas party last year. The prize was an old Pentium 166 laptop computer with 32 MB of memory, running Windows 98 SE. What a difference a decade makes. In 1997, I was the all-around network and computer guy for a small wholesale/retail company. I had a Pentium 200 and a Pentium 90. (I won't go into details, but my job(s) definitely required both of them). The boss and his assistant each had a Pentium 166. Everybody else had various flavors of 486. Any one of those machines (even the lowliest 486) contained more computing power than existed in the **entire world** when I was born (and probably for a considerable number of years thereafter). Nowadays, none of them are even worth talking about.

At the very least, I could set my new laptop next to another computer that I'm working on, and use it to display PDF repair manuals (which the other computer can't display because **it's broken**). To see if I could get used to the smaller keyboard, I actually wrote two of this year's earlier articles on that machine; but I'd like to get it to do more. Having stated loudly and clearly in last month's "Dual-Boot Revisited (Part 3)" article that the partition layouts used there were **not** my own designs, and did **not** represent my own ideas about how dual-booting should work, I perversely decided to try to use one of those layouts to make the laptop dual-boot Linux. I'd like to report success here, but I can't. The bad news is that so far, I've tried four Linux variants supposedly designed for

older computers (Deli Linux, Damn Small Linux, Basic Linux, and Blueflops), but I had problems with all of them. Two others I couldn't even try. To run my new discovery c133n (above), you need at least a Pentium II with 128 MB of RAM. Then there's Xubuntu, an Ubuntu-based Linux distribution that claims to be optimized for lower-end machines; but not, apparently, as low as my Christmas laptop. Its **absolute** minimum requirement is 64 MB of RAM. The good news is that (at long last) I'm learning some Linux basics. Maybe this summer I'll finally do *Linux From Scratch* and become an expert. That could supply material for a lot of newsletter articles; or maybe even an e-book (tentative title: "How to Become a Linux Guru in Several Thousand Painfully Difficult Lessons"). I'll let you know what really happens next September.

We now return you to our regularly scheduled anti-Microsoft rant: Three recent events have convinced me that Microsoft has transformed from an eight hundred pound gorilla into a vicious rabid dog, attacking both competitors and users with equal ferocity. It **has** to be put down.

Strike One (The XP Rootkit):

Do you remember how, after the Sony Rootkit Scandal broke in 2005, Microsoft waited a **long** time before issuing any negative comments? Ever wonder why *Microsoft AntiSpyware* changed its name to *Windows Defender*? Could it be that the answer to both those questions is because, also in 2005, Microsoft released a spyware rootkit of its own?

Consider this definition, paraphrased from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.org):

A **rootkit** (also written as "**root kit**") is a set of software tools intended to conceal running processes, files or system data from a computer's users. Rootkits often modify parts of the operating system or install themselves as drivers or kernel modules. In recent years, rootkits have been used increasingly by malware to help intruders maintain access to systems while avoiding detection. Today, most known rootkits are written for Microsoft's *Windows* operating systems, but the term originally came from the UNIX world; referring to a set of recompiled command line utilities that would carefully hide any traces of the intruder (which those commands would normally display), thus allowing said intruder to maintain "root" access (highest privilege) on the system without the system administrator ever knowing about it.

As an old DOS guy, I thought that rootkits had something to do with the root directory. Only when I looked up the above definition for this article did I realize that I was wrong. (That's what I get for making an assumption based on incomplete data). These days, many computer users don't even know that there's such a thing as the command line (or **any** kind of directory, for that matter), so they probably wouldn't know what a root directory **or** a root user is, anyway.

The rootkit in question is Microsoft's WGA (Windows Genuine Advantage) tool, which they've called a "critical security update". As far as consumers are concerned, there's nothing "critical" or "secure" about it, since it does **absolutely nothing at all** to help the computer user. Microsoft put

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Three Strikes, *continued*

out a statement asserting that (among other things) the WGA tool is not spyware because it doesn't really collect all that much information, and they get consent before they install it. As usual, that statement is quite a bit less than the truth.

WGA transmits data to Microsoft's central computer every time a PC is booted, and (for an always-on computer) at regular intervals thereafter. During installation, Microsoft *never* advised users of these "phone home" capabilities. Several times, Microsoft has released a list of the data items being collected. Then, someone has asked about an item **not** on the current list. In reply, Microsoft has said; "Oh yeah, that too" (or words to that affect), and released a new list. What they **haven't** said is what they're going to do with all that information. Plus (minus?), there's the additional danger that **non**-Microsoft hackers could easily hijack the WGA tool, thus using it to collect and send data to **them** as well.

As far as consent goes, a ZDNet journalist named David Berlind noticed that there are actually two parts to the WGA tool. The Validation program (that's what calls home) is installed first. *After* that, a consent message is displayed before the Notification program (which controls the pop-up message you get if you're found to be "not genuine") is installed. Is there *anyone* out there who believes that the Validation program will be un-installed if the computer owner says "No" at this point? Certainly not me!

Much of the information above was excerpted from www.groklaw.net (copyright 2003-2007 by Pamela Jones). There's a lot more I could say on this subject, but if I go on, I might never stop. I've covered my basic points. Anyone who wants to learn more can check out these three Groklaw articles:

Microsoft's Calling Home Problem: It's a Matter of Informed Consent (June 11, 2006), at:

<http://www.groklaw.net/article.php?story=20060608002958907>

Microsoft Sued Over WGA (June 29, 2006), at:

<http://www.groklaw.net/article.php?story=20060629160018237>

The Second Class Action Lawsuit over Microsoft's WGA (July 5, 2006), at:

<http://www.groklaw.net/article.php?story=20060705042741949>

The first article was my primary source, and also has links to the David Berlind postings that Pamela Jones used as some of *her* sources. To satisfy copyright requirements (since I've quoted Pamela quoting David), here are the two hyperlinks she referenced (to a ZDNet blog called *Between the Lines*, copyright 2006 by CNET Networks, Inc.):

MS anti-piracy tools phone home, raising consent, disclosure and security questions (June 8, 2006), at:

<http://blogs.zdnet.com/BTL/?p=3168>

Images: Microsoft's shoddy Windows Genuine Advantage Installation Process (June 8, 2006), at:

http://blogs.zdnet.com/BTL/?page_id=3170

Strike Two (The Open XML Debacle):

Just this April, a funny (although it's really more like tragic) thing took place. A team of lobbyists employed by Microsoft descended upon Florida and totally perverted the legislative

process. Having made such an alarming statement, it's really not fair that I now digress into some background details; but I will anyway.

Last year, while working on my submission for our January, 2007 issue, I had a funny thought. It really had nothing to do with the subject of that article, so I tacked it on the end as "Appendix I: Let's Lie to the Public", and sent the whole thing in just before that issue's December 25 deadline. Only a day or two later, while cleaning up the ACGNJ directory on my hard drive, I found a file containing five paragraphs that I'd written the previous year, but never used. Since they had a definite "new year" flavor, I turned them into "Appendix I: What Might Have Been", which I sent in with my submission for our February, 2007 issue. However, as sometimes happens, **both** those appendices wound up being cut due to space considerations. Even though it was stretching the "new year" theme a bit, I re-used the second appendix with my submission for our March issue; and it finally got in. Since our April issue (which gets printed out on real paper as a handout for the Trenton Computer Festival) was limited to exactly sixteen pages, there was *absolutely* no chance for the first appendix to get in there. So I saved it for May.

Then Florida happened, and suddenly my little "humorous" appendix had the potential to comment (in a possibly unique way) on an important current event. With only the first paragraph changed (expanded into two mostly new ones), it became *much* too good to waste as an appendix. So, as "Let's Lie to the World", it got the front page headline of our May, 2007 issue, and it might actually be good enough to be picked up by some other publications. Before I go further into the blatant perversion of governance, here's the center section that I cut out of my original first paragraph (I hate to waste anything):

Recently, Microsoft released their answer to OpenDocument, and they had the nerve to call it Open XML. Talk about chutzpah! Just as I (and a lot of other, much better writers) predicted, they've released it under a license that purports to allow anyone to implement it for their own purposes. In fact, as in the past, their lawyers have worded the license in such a way that **nobody** in the real world can qualify for it. It's like if I told you; "Sure, you can use my car **any** time you want. All you have to do is drink this cup of cyanide first". A license that can't actually be met isn't a license at all, and certainly shouldn't be allowed to carry the word "open" in it.

(Now back to new stuff). On reflection, and having re-read the license several more times, I might have indulged in a little bit of overkill there. On the other hand, there are several potential "gotchas" in that license, so I probably wasn't *too* far off. In my new version, I replaced that text above with a copy of the actual language that Microsoft succeeded in killing, plus a short description of what the lobbyists did to kill it. Unfortunately, I don't have space here to repeat details that I already recounted there. So if you want to see the actual text, you can download our May issue from the ACGNJ Website. Or, you can follow the new link below to a Linux.com article

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(Copyright 2007 – Open Source Technology Group) by Robin ‘Roblimo’ Miller (and others):

Microsoft’s ‘Men in Black’ kill Florida open standards legislation (April 17, 2007), at:

<http://enterprise.linux.com/article.pl?sid=07/04/16/2019244>

It’s got just about everything I was able to find last month, plus a lot more; including some accounts from people who were actually there. Here are two:

A legislative staff employee who would lose his job if he were quoted here by name said, “By the time those lobbyists were done talking, it sounded like ODF (Open Document Format, the free and open format used by OpenOffice.org and other free software) was proprietary and the Microsoft format was the open and free one.”

Two other legislative employees (who must also remain anonymous) told Linux.com that the Microsoft lobbyists implied that elected representatives who voted against Microsoft’s interests might have a little more trouble raising campaign funds than they would if they helped the IT giant achieve its Florida goals.

Now, there are *so* many ways that Open XML is inferior, and *so* many sleazy tricks that Microsoft is pulling to advance it. It’s hard to pick just *one* reason to oppose it. However, that last statement sure sounds like a threat to me. When does the use of extortion to influence the votes of local, state, or national government officials escalate from *politics-as-usual* to *terrorism*? Perhaps someone should consult Homeland Security about this. Maybe we can ship Gates and Ballmer off to the Guantanamo Gulag. Wouldn’t **that** be fun?

Strike Three (The Vista Trojan Horse):

Let’s lighten the mood a bit by ripping off another poet (this time, Elizabeth Barrett Browning):

How is Vista vile and evil?

Let me write a DO loop that will count the ways.

Oh, No! The program went into an infinite loop,

Consuming all available processor cycles;

And since its operating system still uses cooperative (rather than preemptive) multitasking,

My whole system has become unresponsive.

Well, maybe not an infinite number, but there are definitely a *lot* of ways to hate Windows Vista. If you read my “The Future?” article in our April, 2007 newsletter, you know I consider that the “tilt bits” feature (which, if activated, cause it to directly attack the user) makes Vista classifiable as an actual Trojan horse program (of the *logic bomb* sub-category). I’ve got some more to say on that subject, but I’m saving it for last. We’ll start with a new discovery (another Groklaw link, copyright 2003-2007 by Pamela Jones).

Burning Issues With Vista, by Richard Rasker (May 6, 2007) at: <http://www.groklaw.net/article.php?story=20070422083715451>

Richard Rasker runs a translation agency in the Netherlands, specializing in computer books. He heard an unsettling (but not, as it turned out, all that surprising) rumor about one of Vista’s built-in programs, and he decided to investigate. I

only have room to quote his opening and closing remarks. I highly recommend that you read the entire article, if you care at all about yet another sinister booby trap that Microsoft has set for the unwary.

He started out; “Having heard that Vista’s CD/DVD burn utility by default uses a nonstandard format, possibly as a result of yet another one of Microsoft’s lock-in schemes, I decided to check things out for myself. That would also give me a nice chance to see what Vista was all about.”

He finished with; “In my view, the final conclusion is quite clear. In several ways, users are pushed towards the Live File System (LFS) format, which is only compatible with Vista and XP. LFS is the format which is selected by default, and there appears to be no way to change this that I could find. In many cases, the user doesn’t even get to see this selection, and following the easiest way to burn a CD or DVD will almost certainly result in an LFS format disk. Contrarily, in order to use the universally readable Mastered format, users have to select it consciously every single time, and still confirm this choice every single time. As far as I could see, LFS is some kind of unfinalized type of UDF — with UDF standing for Universal Disk Format. Even if UDF is a universal format, LFS most certainly is not. I tried reading LFS format media on my Linux systems but failed, even though I installed udftools. Yes, K3b (a great Linux burning tool) could tell me that there was data on the disks, but it was unable to show the actual data itself. All other tools failed with the error message that the disk couldn’t be mounted.

“As for why Microsoft pushes LFS, I can’t think of any good reasons. The only advantage of LFS over the Mastered format is the option to add files to an already burned disk later on. But there is already such a thing as multi-session, so this argument is largely moot, and besides, people actually expect to burn a CD or DVD in one go.

“For all the rest, LFS has only drawbacks. First, it’s confusing to the user, with no less than four versions, aimed at distinct Windows and Mac versions. Second, and most importantly, it will create compatibility problems in the world of creating CD’s and DVD’s — a world that at the moment features a near universal support and compatibility of available formats.

“The only true reason I can think of for pushing LFS is that Microsoft attempts to lock its users once more into its products. Innocent users who use Vista’s tool to save their photos, MP3 collection or back-ups in general may find that all of a sudden, they have no access to their own data any more, especially when abandoning Microsoft products. So far, I haven’t been able to find any technical specifications with regard to LFS; and it is to be expected that Microsoft will consider it their Intellectual Property, the use and support of which is licensed under its terms to users. I think this is Not Good at all.

“And as for the general quality of Vista and my personal “Vista experience”? I think the story speaks for itself.”

Now back to me. In April’s “The Future?” article, I quoted *Peter Gutmann* quite a lot; but not nearly as much as I had originally intended. (My first draft was *way* too long for an

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April issue). So I'm going to take the bits I had to cut out there and print them here. Before anything else, though, I have to cite his link. I've said it before and I'll say it again: **Everybody** who cares about the future of computers should read this document:

A Cost Analysis of Windows Vista Content Protection (updated April 3, 2007) at:

http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~pgut001/pubs/vista_cost.html

The first thing I had to eliminate from my article was this complete copy of his Executive Summary:

Windows Vista includes an extensive reworking of core OS elements in order to provide content protection for so-called "premium content", typically HD data from Blu-Ray and HD-DVD sources. Providing this protection incurs considerable costs in terms of system performance, system stability, technical support overhead, and hardware and software cost. These issues affect not only users of Vista but the entire PC industry, since the effects of the protection measures extend to cover all hardware and software that will ever come into contact with Vista, even if it's not used directly with Vista (for example hardware in a Macintosh computer or on a Linux server). This document analyses the cost involved in Vista's content protection, and the collateral damage that this incurs throughout the computer industry.

The second thing to go was this paraphrased paragraph, referring back to a remark I made in paragraph two of "The Future?"; about how **my** dream computer system wouldn't require any changes in computer hardware design:

Vista's content-protection paranoia mandates **internal** data encryption. For **all** video, this means that after performing its usual task of decompressing the input signals, the CPU has to encrypt the resulting uncompressed data stream before it can send it to the video card. (Heaven forbid that some unauthorized peripheral device might be able to intercept and read anything that's being sent across the device bus). However, there currently isn't enough CPU power available for both decoding **and** encryption. (For PC video, "decode" and "decompress" are synonymous. They're the "dec" part of "codec"). Taking pity on the overworked CPU, Microsoft has kindly decreed that video decompression shall be removed from the software and transferred to new hardware that must be added to any and all video cards, if they want to stick the word "Vista" on their packaging. (You think Microsoft can't swing this drastic re-design? Take a look at those three almost-completely-useless keys they stuck on every ATX-style keyboard). This action has two detrimental results (with possibly more to be discovered later). First, the video chip and video card manufacturers must change their designs to add this new complexity. Who do you think will wind up paying for that? Second, there are a lot of video compression schemes out there, both proprietary and open source. Including and updating them as software was relatively easy. For this new type of graphics hardware, it **can't** be. Any codecs that wind up not being supported will just be out of luck. (I can see a lot of potential for anti-competitive "sweetheart" deals here). Plus, some of the most promising new HD video formats are still under development. This re-design will result in no playback

at all until PC hardware support for them appears, at some indeterminate point in the future. Can **any** of them hold out? Compare this to the situation with MPEG video, where early software codecs like the XingMPEG en/decoder practically created the market for PC video. Today, thanks to Vista's content protection, the opening up of new markets in this manner would be impossible. It's an unnecessary re-design, and a **bad** re-design, but it's what Microsoft needs to accomplish its self-centered ends.

At last, back to "tilt bits". All I know about them, I got from Gutmann. When I went Web searching for alternate sources, I didn't have much luck. Oh, I got a lot of hits, but most led directly or indirectly back to him. Microsoft's multiple Web sites yielded exactly **one** result: Someone had posted a complete copy of Gutmann's document to Microsoft's TechNet. Fortunately, I eventually found "tilt bits" mentioned in a report about the April, 2005 Windows Hardware Engineering Conference (WinHEC), on a Digital Rights Management company Website; so I actually did find some independent confirmation that they really exist. Finally, at an unaffiliated site, I found a quote from the section of Microsoft's own document covering tilt bits (Section 2.3.3, page 13):

"Tilt bits are provided in the DDI as the driver's mechanism for reporting that a hacker is suspected. If at any time the graphics driver determines that something improper has happened, then it can set the appropriate tilt bit — for example, if the hash of an output status message doesn't match the message. If any tilt bit gets set, then Windows Vista will initiate a full reset of the graphics subsystem, so everything will restart, including re-authentication". (FYI: DDI means Device Driver Interface).

Since tilt bits are (supposedly) set only by drivers, you might think that if you used a pre-Vista video card with its matching pre-Vista driver, you'd be safe. Dream on. This last excerpt (from Gutmann's "Denial-of-Service via Driver/Device Revocation" section) puts paid to **that** idea; describing a **second** way in which Vista can attack its users: All drivers will have signatures, which can be remotely revoked by Microsoft at any time, for any reason. Quoting the content-protection specs; "Vista will [...] revoke any driver that is found to be leaking premium content [...] if the same driver is used for all the manufacturer's chip designs, then a revocation would cause all that company's products to need a new driver". In the fast-moving hardware market, most devices enter "legacy" status within a year or two of their replacement models becoming available. Many vendors probably won't be interested in rewriting their older drivers. An example of this might be nVidia TNT2 video cards, which are still very widely deployed in business environments, where they're all that's needed to run Word, Outlook or Excel (or, for that matter, pretty much any non-gaming application). The drivers for these cards haven't been updated for quite some time for exactly that reason: You don't need the latest drivers for them because they're not useful with current games any more. (If you go to the nVidia site and try to install any recent drivers, the installer will tell you to go back and download much older drivers instead as soon as it detects that you're using a TNT2).

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Memorials and Memories

Charlie Sickels (wsickels@sbcglobal.net), Chicago Computer Society (www.ccs.org)

In the US, the end of May is a national time for remembering people and events, a time to recall and to honor. Some of it is public; some is personal; it is all profound and deeply felt. It is well and good that we should engage in this process. It is affirming and appropriate that we honor what is worthwhile and often bought at heavy cost. Our lives and society have been affected for good or ill by what has gone before. Some will come again and it is up to us to learn from the past and keep watch on the future.

No less profound, but with less emotional content, is the march of technological progress. This journal is concerned with many aspects of personal computing, what it does and can do, what we believe it will do if properly managed, where it will go. But this may also be a time to consider where it has been, not necessarily how it got here, just what it was like in an earlier era.

Those of us with a certain maturity and extended contact at whatever level with the world of computing can surely recall many steps along the way, glimpses both trivial and meaningful on the decades-long path we have trod. Let us try a hasty and hazy recollection of those steps and share some here. We refer to the earlier and later days of what has become both common in our lives and essential to them. We speak not of the Cray and Lord knows what other supercomputers are now extant, whether acknowledged or secret, but of the early surge in size and power, names like Burroughs, RCA, Honeywell, and the prince destined to be king, IBM.

We may all remember the Big Iron years of heavily air conditioned big rooms of big machines with rows of tape drives the size of refrigerators, all color matched in IBM Blue, IBM Red, or IBM Gray. Spinning inch-wide tape reels were the size of huge dinner plates and gave way in time to the real and early floppy disks. The machines were handled by skillful computer operators and used information digitally coded by intense computer programmers, the new elite career of the time which sheltered nerds and geniuses alike from the world of the commonplace.

Changes came. Evolution brought “distributed processing”, which evolved into microcomputers still with linkage to the

heavy hardware and equipped with the arcane language of DOS. Then massive increases in memory capacity enabled the Graphical User Interface, GUI, and the dam began to give way. GUI and Windows fostered independent personal computers, growing from ever increasing memory, speed, and what vendors loved to proclaim, “increased productivity”. Then, being linked to the wondrous Internet made having a home computer as reasonable as having a car. Or two. Fame and fortune has shifted to the little machines spread throughout the land, their developers, their makers, and their users. In our marvels of expanded access to information and communication, this can be a time to pause and honor those who made it all possible by many years of work and logical choices. Most of them are not famous and I do not know their names, but no less do them honor. Those who are famous already have what they deserve, or more.

In honoring ingenuity, I’d like to relate a lesser-known incident from the early days of Big Iron’s reign. IBM was establishing new information hubs at major international cities. The Paris center was having mysterious problems with new information tapes and periodic updates. Emergency calls for replacements brought new tapes and similar though slightly different problems. They were undamaged but still faulty. Poughkeepsie sent an international systems engineering team to Paris to discover the problem’s cause and find a solution. They carried a fresh set of calibrated tapes proven functional. They watched them disappear into and re-emerge from French Customs, whereupon they too proved faulty.

Careful inspection revealed that the tapes were a bit shorter. Sure enough, the suspicious French Customs officials were routinely clipping several meters from the start of every tape for later analysis. With this deduction, IBM simply moved the initialization instructions some fifty feet deeper preceded by sacrificial random data. Success was immediate. No protestations needed; no excuses received; no announcements made. We also honor enterprise.

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Three Strikes, *continued*

If such a device were found to be leaking content, it seems unlikely that nVidia would be interested in reviving discontinued drivers that it hasn’t touched for several years, creating instant orphanware of the installed user base.

That’s **two** different ways that Vista can attack you at any time, without any warning. (And what guarantee do we have

that there aren’t even more waiting in the wings?) There’s only one sensible course of action: ***Don’t ever use Vista.***

You’re Out (In Yet Another Pop Culture Motif):

So let’s (metaphorically, at least) form up into an angry mob, light our torches, and storm the mad scientist’s castle. His hideous creations shall run amok no more.

See you in September. ☐

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.

May: Safer Browser. Since there have been so many changes in the Browser program that I started in March, we discussed the features in Microsoft Visual Studio 2005 which enabled the creation of this program. In addition to its test capability, the browser is also quite useful as a normal Internet Browser. The application program demonstrates the ability of the Visual Studio software to include an Internet browser window inside a standard C++ program. It allows creating a custom browser with special features.

During the meeting we discussed the techniques in programming that allow the creation of a vast number of "Event Handlers" that do not appear in the development environment editor (IDE). This methodology allows using virtually all of the internal and hidden functions and methods of the new .NET Microsoft classes

This application is designed to partially duplicate the functioning of a standard Internet browser. It may be used whenever diagnostics and/or extra safety is required. In order to go to a web site, just type the name in the Address bar at the top. A shortcut with that name as an argument may also be used. The Back Arrow (upper left) allows stepping backwards to sites already visited. Standard Hot Keys are provided: Ctrl-P for printing, Ctrl-C for copying, Ctrl-A for selecting all, and Ctrl-F for finding.

Whenever a new address is provided, or the site code tries to jump to another site, a prompt message appears which allows the user to decide whether to proceed or not. The parachute logo represents the fact that you have much more control over your browsing.

Our next meeting June 19. ☞

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.

June: Using Design Patterns in Java Applications Development. Design patterns are recurring solutions to software design problems that are repeatedly found in real-world application development. Design patterns are about design and interaction of objects, as well as providing a communication platform concerning elegant, reusable solutions to commonly encountered programming challenges.

Our next meeting June 12 ☞

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 June 13.** ☞

DotNet

Jim Wong

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

Meetings are postponed until further notice. ☞

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. ☞

Online Auction

Bill Brown (onlineauction@acgnj.org)

Due to overwhelming response to a seminar held on April 7, the membership decided to form a permanent group. The group will meet on the **first and third Wednesdays of the month.**

These are the eight topics for discussion. We will cover all types of online auctions, as members chose. The general format of the meetings will be from 7:30 to 10 PM. The first 45 minutes will be to discuss the topic for the evening. A short break will be taken, the remainder of the time will be for specific questions to the topic followed by general questions and bull session. During the entire time, online presence will be established and examples will be given on screen.

1. Getting Started: Different Auctions Registering. Buyer account, sellers account Navigating websites.
2. Buying and selling. An overview of searching, sniping, snuffing.
3. Finding things to sell Gnoming, Clearance, Bargain Bins, Flea Markets, Garage Sales, Solicitation
4. Listing an item. Choosing a category, Setting a Price. Buy it now strategies
5. Maintaining your sales. Revising and re-listing.
6. Collection and payment follow ups.
7. Packaging, shipping, Inventory management.
8. Going further. Ebay express, stores ☞

PHP?

Anyone interested in a new PHP SIG (Interpreted Script Programming Language), please get in touch with John Raff (jraff@comcast.net). PHP is a widely-used general-purpose scripting language that is especially suited for Web development and can be embedded into HTML. If you are new to PHP and want to get some idea of how it works, try the introductory tutorial (<http://us2.php.net/tut.phpv>). ☞

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?* ☞

Due to work schedule conflicts, the SIG Leader cannot make the meetings. If anyone else would like to pick up the baton, carry the banner, help the SIG along, please let us know. ☞

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be June 8, 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! ☞

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. *Meeting third Monday of the month at 7 PM. Next meeting June 18.*

The first meeting of the FireFox Activity was led by David McRitchie to discuss, argue and kick around many concepts and ideas. Web2 is definitely in the mix. 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. ☞

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: June 14.* ☞

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. *Next meeting June 4.* ☞

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. ☞

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.

June 15: MS Word and MS Excel Macros, Paul Natanson ☞

Main Meeting

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

Evan Williams (tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com)

June 1: PC Magazine's Bill Machrone

No meetings in July or August ☞

A Word of Thanks

The TCF Recreation Center traffic control crew wishes to send a special "Thank You" to Emil Haverick for the loan of his two walkie-talkies. Those were the only communication devices they had on Saturday morning, and really helped to reduce the 6 am vendor unloading chaos. ☞

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.

	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	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) 842-9600. 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. Deadline: 1st of preceding month. (For example, April 1 for May issue.)



<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

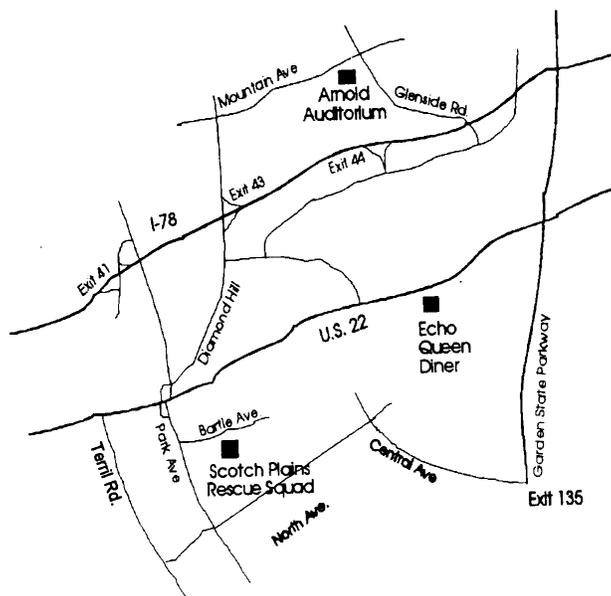
<http://www.marketpro.com/>

May 12: Parsippany Hilton, Parsippany

May 19-20: Raritan Center, Edison

May 26-27: Meadowlands Expo Center, Secaucus

June 30-Jul 1, 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. ☐

The Tornado – A Review

Sharon Walbran (SQWalbran@yahoo.com), Twin Cities PCUG (www.tpcug.org)

Transferring files to a new computer is a task that's become common with people replacing their computers every few years or so. A product that can make the transfer of files and settings less painful is "The Tornado" from Data Drive Thru, available online at www.datadrivethru.com.

The lightweight device which fits in the palm of your hand houses two USB cables. One cable is connected to the old computer; the other USB cable is connected to the new computer. No software needs to be installed if the computer running the software has Windows XP installed. When the USB cables are connected, built-in software automatically starts up, displaying a split screen with the folders and files on the old computer in one half of the screen and the folders and files from the other computer in the other half of the screen. Copying files from one computer to the other involves dragging the files from one half of the screen to the destination folder in the other half. The computer you are using for the transfer is identified as "This Computer"; the other as "Other Computer."

Transfer of files can be made from computers running versions of Windows back to Windows 98. If both computers are running Windows 98, the company provides drivers for Windows 98. What makes this device particularly attractive is the speed of transfer. The company claims a transfer rate of 25 MB per second and my experience confirms the speed.

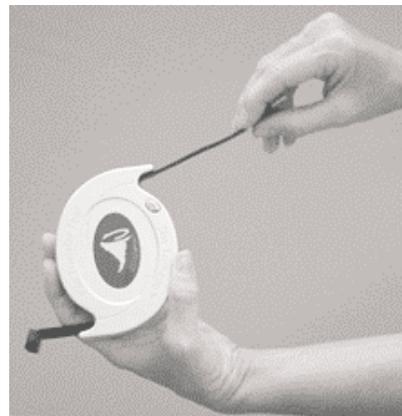
The span when the USB cables are fully extended is just 4 feet, but that can be expanded by using a USB extension cable. However, as a result of the limited range, the device

works best when computers are placed in close proximity to each other.

No mention is made on Data Drive Thru's website as to whether this is one of the transfer devices approved by Microsoft for transfer of files and settings from Windows XP computers to computers running Microsoft Vista.

The current price is about \$60 but discounts have sometimes been offered to user groups. The company also offers the Eraser product which is touted as removing all data from a hard drive

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Friday, June 1, 2007

8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Evan Williams (tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com).

Monday, June 4

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

Wednesday, June 6

7:30 P.M. - Online Auction, Bill Brown (onlineauction@acgnj.org)

Friday, June 8

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

Monday, June 11

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

Tuesday, June 12

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

Wednesday, June 13

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

Thursday, June 14

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

Friday, June 15

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

Monday, June 18

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

Tuesday, June 19

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

Wednesday, June 20

7:30 P.M. - Online Auction, Bill Brown (onlineauction@acgnj.org)

Thursday, June 28

8 P.M. - Genealogy SIG, Frank Warren, **no 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.