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Competitive Siblings of Thirteen Things

Bob Hawes, ACGNJ

True competitive siblings wouldn't bother with opening anecdotes. They'd immediately get right down to business. However, I've got some explaining to do, so I'd better get right down to **that**. Last month, after going more than four years without a single, solitary dual boot installation (since *Dual Boot Revisited, Part 3* in our May 2007 issue), I planned to install XP/Ubuntu dual boot systems in two different computers; but I was only able to get to one. This month, instead of having only one more dual boot computer to go, I've got **three**; because two fresh candidates have presented themselves.

The first new PC we'll be looking at is actually the oldest of the bunch, but it's "new" to me. Like the machine we looked at last month, it also belongs to my cousin and his wife. Here's some history: About fifteen years ago, I set up two computers for them, one upstairs, one downstairs; and I networked them together, to transfer files and to share a single printer. At the time, they **didn't** want Internet access. Now they do, and **neither** of their original computers is up to that task anymore. This one they've just acquired **might** not be up to that task either. Being an Intel Celeron, it's ancient; but it's got a shot, so we'll give it a try. (I'll supply details about the other two computers and the *Thirteen Things* list as we get to them below. I know. I know. That's what I promised last month. This time **for sure**). Finally, a note about timing. When this article is published, it'll be November of 2011, and Ubuntu 11.10 will already have been released; but as I'm writing this, it's still September. So the latest **non-beta** Ubuntu release is 11.04. Maybe I'll be able to work 11.10 into my December article; but for here and now, 11.04 is what we've got. Either way, though, XP will have to be installed **first**.



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Before continuing, however, maybe I should explain why there's a need for **any** dual boot systems at all. The answer is because, of course, it's **hard** to make a clean break from Microsoft. Not because they're better than Linux (because they're **definitely not!!!**); but because they've got so many "vendor lock-in" schemes that are purposely incompatible with anything non-Windows. There will be times, especially at the beginning, when you just **have** to run Windows. Personally, on both my main and auxiliary computers, I have removable drawers, each containing its own hard disk. If I must switch between Ubuntu and Windows (which I hardly ever have to do anymore), I just change drawers. That way, I'm using a completely different hard disk for my operating system, and there's **absolutely** no trace of the other operating system anywhere. (My data files, residing on their own separate hard disk, are equally accessible either way). Therefore, I myself have no need for a dual boot system. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, removable drawers and three separate hard disks are **not** possible for any of our subject computers. Thus, for them, dual booting is the way to go. Having said this, it occurs to me that these days **many** people don't even own desktop or tower PCs anymore, only laptops. Maybe someday, I can write a detailed step by step guide explaining how to convert a single hard disk computer (laptop or otherwise) into a dual boot system; but that's enough digression. Let's get back to our current subject.

I started by creating a standalone XP system, using an original install CD, with the network cable **not** connected. (Just like I did last month). Unfortunately, the 6 GB hard disk that came with this computer was just **too small**. Fortunately, I was able to dig up an unused 40 GB drive. (Its true size was 37.25 GB. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Hard disk manufacturers constantly **lie** about the size of their equipment). I ran Spinrite (my hard disk testing utility) on those disks, and each one tested good. So I used them both, delegating the 40 GB drive to my two operating

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ACGNJ News

Editor

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

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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
Jim Cooper	jim@thecoopers.org
Barbara DeGroot	bdegroot@ptd.net
Mark Douches	pcproblems@pobox.com
David Eisen	ultradave@gmail.com
Bill Farrell	wfarr18124@aol.com
Manuel Goyenechea	Goya@acgnjdotnetsig.org
Bob Hawes	bob.hawes@acgnj.org
Sol Libes	sol@libes.com
Malthi Masurekar	malthirm@verizon.net
Don McBride	don@mcbride.name
Gregg McCarthy	greggmajestic@gmail.com
David McRitchie	dmcritchie@hotmail.com
Andreas Meyer	lunics@acgnj.org
Arnold Milstein	mrflark@yahoo.com
John Raff	john@jr Raff.com
Mike Redlich	mike@redlich.net
Matt Skoda	som359@aol.com
Keith Sproul	ksproul@noc.rutgers.edu
Paul Syers	paul.syers@acgnj.org
Lenny Thomas	lenny.thomas@acgnj.org
Scott Vincent	scottvin@optonline.net
Frank Warren	kb4cyc@webwarren.com
Evan Williams	ewilliams@collaboron.com

systems, and the 6 GB drive to data. (Nowadays, a 6 GB hard disk is **way** too small for data, too. If this computer proves to be usable, we'll have to get it a bigger data drive; but that's an expense for another day). Although the Great God Gates has commanded that all Windows computers shall contain a single NTFS partition that takes up the entire hard disk, you **don't** have to do it that way. Instead, I created a 21 GB FAT32 partition for XP, and left the rest of the disk empty. My initial installation took 46 minutes. Immediately afterwards, I made a just-in-case Clonezilla backup. Earlier, I'd downloaded eleven drivers for this PC from the Intel website, but I only needed to install one of them (Multimedia Audio Controller). So I did. Then, I installed the free version of Grisoft's AVG (Anti Virus Grisoft), and updated it over the Internet. After that, I made another Clonezilla backup. (Clonezilla boots and runs from its own Linux live-CD. So keep in mind that each time I mention making a Clonezilla backup, the computer had to be rebooted both beforehand **and** afterwards).

Next, I ran the initial AVG virus scan. (It took 18 minutes), When it finished, I installed two "oldies but goodies", *Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0* and *Winzip 8.0*, plus the newest Windows version of the *Firefox* web browser; and I did a third Clonezilla backup. Following that, I installed *MD5summer.exe* (one of my most vital "must have" programs), the *Java Runtime Environment*, *Ghostscript* (a

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and created a backup image of my XP partition. (Ghost stored that image on the data hard disk. I don't have time to actually make my "blow-out" disk right now; but maybe it can become the basis for a whole new article someday). After that, I ran Partition Magic and created a 259 MB NTFS partition at the **very end** of the 40 GB hard disk. That left **exactly** 16 GB of empty space for Ubuntu. (That NTFS partition was just a place holder. You'll see why I made it shortly).

Now it was time to install Ubuntu. So I booted the computer from the Ubuntu 11.04 CD, told it to install itself in that 16 GB of unallocated space, and told it to dual boot with XP. The initial installation took 36 minutes. After the computer rebooted, I used Synaptic Package Manager to download two programs that Ubuntu **hadn't** initially added by default: GParted (the Gnome Partition Editor) and StartUp-Manager. First, I ran GParted. It displayed a completely filled hard disk, containing the 21 GB XP FAT32 partition, a new 14 GB Linux Ext4 partition, a new 2 GB Linux Swap partition, and the 259 MB NTFS partition that I'd created just a few minutes earlier. Using GParted, I **deleted** that NTFS partition, thus giving me some unallocated "slop" at the end of my hard disk layout. (Just in case Clonezilla might need it someday). Next, I ran StartUp-Manager, changing its "Timeout in seconds" from 10 to 15; and changing its "Display Resolution" and "Bootloader menu resolution" settings from 640x480 to 800x600. Then, I made a sixth Clonezilla backup.

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PostScript interpreter), and my two "biggies": the Windows versions of *LibreOffice* and *Scribus*. Then, I made a fourth Clonezilla backup. After that, I deleted 234 MB of left over LibreOffice install files from the hard disk. Because of that mass erasure, I used XP's built-in "Tools" to check the hard disk for errors, and then to defragment it. Finally, I tweaked a few Control Panel settings, then made a fifth Clonezilla backup. Except for the times (an older computer takes longer), this XP installation pretty much paralleled the XP system that I described in *Second Cousin Twice Removed of Thirteen Things* (last month in our October 2011 issue). If you've been having *deja vu*, this is probably why.

Here's some more *deja vu*: Last month, I brought up the concept of a "blow-out" disk. (That's a self-booting CD or DVD with only one function: to **completely** replace the entire contents of a hard disk by overwriting it with a previous backup of a "known good" system). I also mentioned the temporary CD-RW disk that I created as "proof of concept", using my Ghost for DOS floppy as the CD boot image; and copying the files from my Partition Magic floppy onto the CD itself. Since I hadn't yet erased that CD-RW disk, I decided to use it again. After the CD booted, Ghost and its associated files were on the A: drive (which was virtual, not physical); and Partition Magic and its associated files were on the S: drive. (Traditionally, S: is the drive letter that I assign to the CD). Then I ran Ghost

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After alternately booting XP and Ubuntu (to make sure they both worked), I started Ubuntu's Update Manager, and installed the 227 updates I found there. That took 28 minutes. Then, I made a seventh Clonezilla backup. Next (**finally!**) was the *Thirteen Things* list. For copyright acknowledgement, and for people who might want to see the original, I've included the following link to *13 Things to do immediately after installing Ubuntu*, the article that started it all. (Written by Ambuj Varshney for Linux On Desktop in 2006, and last updated in February of 2007).

<http://linuxondesktop.blogspot.com/2007/02/13-things-to-do-immediately-after.html>

Anyway, I repeated the Steps that I described in my original *Thirteen Things?* article (in our May 2009 newsletter). Because I decided **not** to do Steps 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 then, I won't be mentioning them now, either. First, following *Step 1: Enable Additional Repositories*, I opened Synaptic Package Manager, went to Settings > Repositories, and made sure that all the check boxes were selected **except** for Source code and CD. (They were, so I didn't have to make any changes). Then, I closed Synaptic. (This is **important**. If you **don't** shut down Symantic Package Manager, this next step will **bomb**). Opening a Terminal window, I added the medibuntu repositories by entering the following commands:

```
echo "deb http://packages.medibuntu.org/ gutsy free non-free" | sudo tee -a /etc/apt/sources.list  
and
```



```
wget -q http://packages.medibuntu.org/medibuntu-key.gpg  
-O- | sudo apt-key add - && sudo apt-get update
```

(In the original article, the author did everything from the command line **except** for the first part of *Step 1*. Now, I do everything from Synaptic, except for this **second** part of *Step 1*). After that, I did *Step 3: Install Audio/Video Codecs*. Because of licensing or other issues, Ubuntu does **not** automatically install support for a lot of multimedia formats. Thus, I re-opened Synaptic Package Manager and manually added *gstreamer0.10-ffmpeg*, *gstreamer0.10-plugins-bad*, *gstreamer0.10-plugins-ugly*, *mpg123* and *VLC Player*. (Ubuntu had **already** installed *gstreamer0.10-plugins-good* by default). Next came *Step 5: Install Macromedia Flash support and Sun Java JRE*. This step can no longer be followed as written, since both programs now come from different manufacturers. So I installed the Adobe version of *flashplugin-nonfree*, and the *OpenJDK* version of the *Java 6 Runtime Environment*. For *Step 6: Install Scribus*. I installed *Scribus*, my fun, fabulous and free desktop publisher. As I mentioned in *Son of Thirteen Things* (my September 2011 article), I ran into problems when I tried to do *Step 7: Install Downloader For X*. It seems to have been expunged from existence. It's no longer listed in Synaptic Package Manager, or in the Ubuntu Software Center; and the terminal command given in the original article doesn't work any more, either. You **can** find old references to it by doing a Google search, but none of those links contain in-

structions that still actually work. It's as if some implacable enemy has thoroughly erased *Downloader For X* from the universe. I guess we'll just have to do without it from now on. Last up was *Step 12: Install MPlayer with all codecs and DVD playing support*, which installed both *Mplayer* (one of the most popular Linux media players), and the *Quod Libet* music player as well. Then I made an eighth Clonezilla backup.

Now we come to my own personal additions to the list. I installed *Okular* (my favorite PDF reader), *K3b* (my favorite CD/DVD burner), *Abiword* (which **used to** be bundled by default with each release of Ubuntu, but not any more. In the past, it came in handy quite a few times as an alternative word processor, so I still install it manually), *the GIMP* (GNU Image Manipulation Program), *Wine* (the Windows emulator/compatibility layer), *Fonty Python* (a font manager), *AcetoneISO* (which mounts various disk image formats as if they were drives), *Gnumeric* (a spreadsheet, added as a just-in-case alternative), *FileZilla* (a File Transfer Protocol program), *KompoZer* (a web page authoring system), and *OggConvert* (which converts media files to the patent-free Ogg Vorbis/Ogg Theora formats). Then I made a ninth Clonezilla backup.

OK. That's one down, two to go. Our second "new" computer is actually almost as old as the Celeron. It's an AMD Athlon PC; and it might be familiar to some of you. It's the cute little "Aberdeen" computer that I used to carry to club

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meetings whenever I gave a presentation. Here's some history: Fifteen or more years ago, I made a computer for my brother. Seven or eight years ago, I replaced it with a newer one. Now, suddenly (and conveniently, just as I was finishing up the Celeron), it had to be replaced again. Immediately; and this Athlon was the only "spare" computer I had available. Since I'd been using it, its hard disk only booted Ubuntu. Ideally, I'd like to move my brother completely into the glorious land of Linux; but practically, since he'd previously been a Windows-only user, he needed a dual boot system. So I converted this one for him. Of course, his install times and partition sizes were different; but otherwise his installation went pretty much the same as I described for the Celeron above. So I really don't need to add any new details here. (After all, we don't want to cause any more attacks of *deja vu*, do we?) Except for two glitches. The motherboard was from an obscure manufacturer, and in the short time I had available, I **couldn't** find two XP drivers: "Multimedia Audio Controller" and "Video Controller (VGA Compatible)". I can probably track down these two missing drivers eventually; but until I do, the XP side will have **no** sound and only "plain vanilla" video. The Ubuntu side, on the other hand, will have perfect sound and full video, because Linux is **so** much better than Windows in almost every way. So if my brother wants sound, he'll have to work in Ubuntu. (Insert a sinister chuckle here).

That's two down, and one to go. Our third computer was supposed to have been the second computer done **last** month, but it had to be postponed. It should also be familiar, because it's the ACGNJ club computer (a Pentium 4). Several months ago, it developed hard disk access problems. John Raff (the one who used this machine most often) told me that when it was first turned on, it wouldn't recognize its hard disks. If he opened its case, then removed and re-attached its drive cables and started it again, **then** it would work right. He found this aberrant behavior to be a big pain in the (insert your favorite body part here). I'd also run into this annoying phenomenon before, professionally, in the mid to late Nineties. My employer's policy in this situation was to recommend that our customer buy a replacement. (Of course, he wanted to sell them a new PC; but on the other hand, in a business environment you really can't afford to trust your livelihood to a piece of flaky equipment). Due to that policy, I didn't get much experience actually fixing such machines; but I **did** develop a few tricks that sometimes helped. So I took the club computer home, intending to work on it as time permitted. Now, at last, its time has finally come.

It had two hard disks, one 80 GB, the other 160 GB. On the 80 GB drive, a 28.32 GB FAT32 partition came first, with 11.56 GB used. Next came a 28.32 GB NTFS partition, with 21.61 GB used. Then a 200 **MB** Ext4 partition; and finally a 17.69 GB LVM (Logical Volume Management)

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partition. On the 160 GB drive, a 59.57 GB NTFS partition came first, with 32.51 GB used. Then a 48.63 GB NTFS partition, with only 3 GB used. The remaining space (40.63 GB) was unallocated. On **both** hard disks, the first partition looked like it might be a bootable XP system, while the second partition definitely **wasn't**. On the 80 GB disk, the third **and** fourth partitions contained the Linux installation (Fedora, which uses LVM by default). I really, **really** don't like LVM. When encountering it, my firm policy has always been to turn tail and run away screaming as fast as I can. So obviously, I didn't intend to reinstall Fedora. In actual fact, I didn't intend to change anything on **either** hard disk. At least not right now, anyway. Instead, I backed up the first partition on each one, using Ghost. Or I tried to, anyway.

While Clonezilla (even with its size changing deficiencies) has become my "go-to guy" for backing up entire hard disks, Ghost for DOS is still my preferred program when I need to extract just one partition from a multi-partition drive. It's much more versatile. Ghost backed up the FAT32 partition from the 80 GB drive just fine, and restored it to a spare hard disk with no problems. What's more, that spare disk booted into an XP SP3 system. It had three users ("Admin", "Power" and "User", none of which had passwords), it had **no** drivers flagged as bad or missing under Device Manager, it had 41 programs listed under Add or Remove Programs, and its virus definitions had been updated in the relatively recent past. What's more, the Admin desktop was clogged with dozens of shortcuts. Obviously,

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going to boot for me now. So we'll have to go with the first one.

I copied my FAT32 XP boot partition to a spare 60 GB hard disk (real size 57.2 GB), and used Partition Magic to shrink that partition from 28.32 GB to 20 GB. Then I added an empty 20 GB FAT32 partition after it (for data). After that, I created a 274 MB partition at the very **end** of the hard disk (a placeholder, as before). That left exactly 17 GB for a new Ubuntu 11.04 installation, which went just fine, as above. Since I really don't want to be responsible for a

this particular XP installation had been well used. Hopefully, it's the **right** well used XP system. Because I had **no** luck with my other contender, that first NTFS partition from the 160 GB drive.

Now, Ghost for DOS and NTFS just don't get along, so I wasn't too surprised when I couldn't make a successful Ghost backup. It's happened before. Previously, I was able to use Partition Magic to make a direct hard disk to hard disk copy of my subject partition. Not this time. Partition Magic threw up a couple of completely **uninformative** error messages, and then quit. So I had no choice but to fall back on Clonezilla. First, I tried making a single partition backup image. No good. Then, I tried making a direct hard disk to hard disk copy of just that one partition. To my surprise, it worked. Technically, anyway. However, instead of booting into XP, I got the following message: "Windows could not start because of a computer disk hardware configuration problem. Could not read from the selected boot disk. Check boot path and disk hardware. Please check the Windows documentation about hardware disk configuration and your hardware reference manuals for additional information". Now, that message obviously came from the hard disk, so that "Could not read" part was definitely a crock. This message **had** to have been contained in the original partition on the 160 GB hard disk. So if I could see it now, my copy operation **must** have been successful; but my source partition itself had probably already been corrupted in some way. (Those Partition Magic error messages would seem to support this theory). Whatever the case, that partition isn't

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nationwide epidemic of *deja vu*, I won't say anything more about it. Eventually, **after** I've carefully extracted any and all club data from them, I plan to wipe the 80 and 160 GB hard disks clean, then use the 80 GB hard disk as the operating-system-**only** part of an XP/Linux dual boot system (maybe Ubuntu, maybe Fedora, maybe some other Linux variant), and the 160 GB hard disk as a data-only storage disk. For now, though, my temporary 60 GB drive will let me put the club computer back into service.

See you next month. ☐

Microsoft vs. OpenOffice.org Office Suite Standoff

Nancy DeMarte (ndemarte (at) Verizon.net), Sarasota PCUG, Inc., <http://www.spcug.org>

An office suite is a software product that includes a group of programs which perform typical office functions; that is, creating and working with documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and databases. Some suites include specialized programs like email or calendars. There are many office suites available, such as Corel's WordPerfect Office, Lotus Symphony Suite by IBM, and ThinkFree3. Among the best known suites are Microsoft Office and OpenOffice.org.

My original intention this month was just to compare features and compatibility between Microsoft Office and

OpenOffice.org. I installed OpenOffice.org on my computer and have been testing it against my familiar MS Office for several months. In researching the history of the two suites, however, I stumbled across a story that I felt needed to be part of this article. Let's start with that.

History

Microsoft introduced its Office suite in 1992 with Office 3.0. It included Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Mail (later to become Outlook). Since that time, the suite has expanded to

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MS Office 2007, which comes in eight versions that include from 3 to 13 programs and runs on both Windows and Mac platforms. MS Office 2010, its newest suite, has reduced the versions to three, including 4 - 7 programs. Because it is a commercial product with a profit goal, MS Office is expensive, although non-profits can get substantial discounts through websites like TechSoup, and businesses can get deals on volume licensing. Office 2007 and 2010 are full-featured suites with frequent updates and great customer support and security.

OpenOffice.org has a different kind of history. The origins of OpenOffice.org (OOo) began in Germany in the mid-1980's with a suite called Star Office, created by the Star Division Company. It ran on several platforms, including Windows 98 and NT, Solaris, Java!, and Linux. In 1998, Star Office version 5.0 was offered free to users. The next year Sun Microsystems purchased Star Division, mainly to get free software for its thousands of employees and to compete with Microsoft.

In 2000 Sun first offered the source code for Star Office 5.2 free over the Internet. In October, the new OpenOffice.org website went online both as a free downloadable office suite product and a collaborative project. Anyone could participate in improving the suite by submitting ideas or code. OpenOffice.org immediately became popular; the open philosophy was embraced by software developers around the

world. By 2005, the free suite had reached 20 million downloads and over 150,000 registered members. It was a David and Goliath situation: big corporation versus the little guys.

All this time Sun had also continued to market its commercial office suite, Star Office, for a nominal cost to businesses, but free to educators. In January 2010, the large company Oracle bought Sun Microsystems and acquired the OpenOffice.org brand. Before that year was over, Oracle had stopped making Star Office free to educators and had introduced a new commercial product, Oracle Open Office (standard version for \$49.95 for 5 users or and enterprise version for \$90.00 for 25 users). Oracle is planning to offer its own office suite soon, an online product called Cloud Office, using Java FX and open document format, but not based on OOo code. It will be competing against the new rash of "cloud" office suites, such as Google Docs and Microsoft's Web Docs on SkyDrive.

As 2010 ends, the OpenOffice.org website remains intact; the suite is still a free download. But some Sun developers and many OpenOffice.org contributors are unhappy about changes that Oracle has made and worried that the company will soon remove "free" and "collaborative" from the OpenOffice.org vocabulary. Late in 2010 a new organization, this group formed the Document Foundation (TDF), to keep the open philosophy alive. They are working on a new

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office suite, LibreOffice, which is now offered for free download in beta. Its final version, based on the OOo code, is scheduled to come out in early 2011 with sponsorship from Novell, Red Hat, and IBM. How all of this drama will impact OpenOffice.org as a product is unclear. But the little guys are again making a stand against another Goliath.

Feature Comparison

MS Office clearly beats OpenOffice.org in features and formatting options, especially those introduced with Office 2007, such as themes, Quick Parts, picture styles, Word Art, macros, and content controls. Office 2007 offers encryption, more templates and an extensive Help system. It also has the new ribbon interface, whereas OpenOffice.org uses menus like MS Office 2003.

OpenOffice.org includes the common programs found in an office suite plus some interesting features such as font effects, backgrounds, and sounds. It is a solid office suite, especially for home and small business. Its advantages over Microsoft Office are cost (It is free with an unlimited number of installations.), its ability to work with Linux and many other operating systems besides Windows, and its open philosophy. OOo runs a bit slower than MS Office, but takes up less disc space. Because it is a collaborative, it issues fewer updates and has fewer support options, but it

also is less frequently attacked by malware. Even if you have never used an office suite, you can download this efficient little suite at <http://www.OpenOffice.org> and use it without much instruction.

Compatibility

As a Microsoft Office user, I was interested in how easy it would be to save files between the two suites since I have hundreds of Word documents and Excel spreadsheets. When I created a feature-filled Word 2007 document (.docx) and saved it as an OpenOffice.org file (.odt), it did save, but there were changes in margins and line spacing, and I lost all the Word 2007 features. When I created a document in OpenOffice.org (.odt), it would not save as a Word 2007 document (docx). I had to save it as a Word 2003 document (.doc), and then open it with Word 2007 in compatibility mode.

I concluded that it's best to choose one office suite and stick with it. In short, if you are a current MS Office 2007 or 2010 user, you will probably be happier staying where you are. If you are new to office suites, by all means give OpenOffice.org a try. ☐

File Types: What are they? And why should we care?

Phil Sorrentino (president (at) spcug.org), Sarasota PCUG (www.spcug.org)

Understanding File Types is the key to successfully organizing and using your computer files and folders. The File Type is the extension, the characters after the period. Unfortunately, File Types are hidden when you first startup your computer Operating System. I've always thought this was odd because knowing the type of a file can help explain what is going on, or at least what can be done with that particular file. (Because the file type can be changed using the Rename option, I suspect this was done to prevent a user from renaming the file type and possibly making that file un-useable.) Without a file type, confusion can arise.

Hiding the file type leads to the appearance that there are multiple files in a folder with the same file name. Actually, the file names are different because they have different file types. Only the file type shows them as distinctly different files. File Types can be shown along with the first part of the file name. In XP and Windows 7, this is accomplished in the View tab of the Control Panel's Folder Options Applet. Just uncheck "Hide extensions for known file types".

Let's start with some very basic File Management concepts. Every file in a folder has to have a unique name. (Two files may have the same name, but they must reside in different folders.) The name has two parts, separated by a period. The part after the period is called the file type or file extension.

ilar to the way "/" is used to separate the components of an address on the internet.) The path to every file must be unique, so that the file can be unambiguously found. This also explains why we can have two files, with the same name and extension, in different folders. The path would be different, not by the file name and extension, but by one of the folder components. So, when all is said and done, the file type is part of a file's name that makes that file unique.

But that is only part of the story. The file type is really a definition of all of the data that is held within the file. (It defines in great detail just what every bit and byte in the file means.) And this is where Files and Applications come together, or where they become "associated". File Association links a file type with an Application. An Application knows how to handle a particular file type because of the file type definition. Fortunately, we, the users, don't have to know anything about the details of the file type, only that a particular file type can be used with a particular Application. So if a correct association is made, the Application will handle the file in the expected fashion. If an incorrect association is made, the results will be undetermined.

Many applications can handle many different file types. For example, Windows Media Player can use a whole host of audio and video file types, such as wma, mp3, m3u, aiff, wmv, avi, mpg, mpeg, mpv2. Sometimes when you install a new application, the application will automatically associate with the file types that it knows how to use. This may not be the associations that you originally wanted. Some

Typically the file type is three or four characters, but it can be longer. The limit is tied into the overall size of the path of the file in question, but practically you will see file types of around three or four or five characters. If you Google "file types," you will be amazed at how many file types have been defined and you will also see some pretty long file types, like the following 8 character file type, ".debuglog." In these lists you will see all the familiar file types like .doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf, .xls, .jpg, .bmp, .gif, .mp3, .wav, .m3u, .wma, .avi, .mov, .mp4, .wmv, and so on.

A few sentences ago I mentioned "path." The path is a unique description of where the file in question is located. Typically we think of a file's location as being in a particular folder, but the path is more general. The path starts out with the computer followed by the drive, then the folders in hierarchical order, leading down to the particular file. So the path to a picture of a group of cousins taken on July 4th, 2009, might look like: \\Desktop2\D:Photos\Family\2009\FourthOfJulyPicnic\Cousins.jpg where "Cousins.jpg" is a picture (or at least a .jpg file) in the "FourthOfJulyPicnic" folder, which is in the "2009" folder, which is in the "Family" folder, which is in the "Photos" folder on the "D:" drive of the "Desktop2" computer. (Note that the "\" is used to separate components of the path. Sim-

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Applications are much more polite, and ask if you want them to associate with certain file types. If associations happen automatically, you can end up with different applications being used to handle a particular file type. For example, you could end up with "Real Player" playing your music that you originally had Windows Media Player associated with.

The Operating System provides a capability to review and establish the associations. Each operating System is a little different. In XP it is provided in the File Types tab of the

Associations can easily be changed, but be very careful. Only use the Recommended Programs. If another program is used, the results may be undetermined and may even damage the file in question. But this is the way you can get things back to the way you want. You can get your music back to being played by your player of choice, or your videos back to being played by Windows Media Player, or your .bmp graphics files back to being displayed with the Paint application.

So, we care about File Types because they help to uniquely define a file's name and location, and their definitions enable applications to determine how to handle the contents of the file. These are two very big jobs for a seemingly very small (and often hidden) aspect of the Windows Operating System. ☐

Cloud Computing

Dick Maybach (n2nd (at) charter.net)

Although you can hardly pick up a computer publication without being assaulted by references to *cloud computing*, the term has been abducted by marketing organizations to the extent that it means almost nothing. Today, “cloud” is to computing as “natural” is to food. Although the term means little, the concept is very valuable, and is something that most computer owners use every day. I define cloud computing as using storage or processing resources on the Internet. Most of us already use cloud computing far more than we realize; for example, every e-mail we receive sits on our ISP’s disk until we download it to our PCs, and when we use Google Maps, much the processing and all of the storage occurs on Google’s hardware. In the extreme, cloud computing could evolve to the point where our computer would consist of only a keyboard, mouse, display, and perhaps a printer, with just enough processing power and software to support a Web browser. Google foresaw this as the future of home computing and began developing their Chrome operating system to support it.

A simple example of cloud computing is a backup service, which continually backs up all your data whenever you are connected to the Internet. You don’t have to think about it, and because your backups are stored at a different location, they are safe even in case of a local catastrophe. A similar use is synchronizing data among several computers, where

the data might be files, contacts, and your favorite Web sites and (with care) their passwords. Many people also use the cloud to share information with others, for example by using Facebook for personal information, Flickr for photos, or Google Docs for documents. Cloud storage is both convenient and inexpensive; indeed, many vendors offer up to two gigabytes free.

All the above examples are data storage ones, but there are also cloud processing services, such as Google Docs. Google Docs supports the common office tasks such as word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations, which means you can perform these without purchasing an office suite and having to keep it updated. It also allows on-line collaboration (where, for example, several people edit the same document), although few home users are likely to need this feature. Like cloud storage, cloud processing is inexpensive or even free.

By now, you may be thinking, “What’s the Catch?” Somebody has to pay for these services, as providing them requires non-trivial costs for computer hardware, support staff, and communications. In some cases, the free service is a limited sample to entice you to purchase a more versatile one. In others, you are the product being sold. Your habits and preferences are valuable commodities that advertisers will pay to learn about. For many of us this is a fair

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trade; in return for the convenience of Google’s search engine, we tolerate the ads in the sidebar and being directed to sites that want to sell to us.

However, there are some security and safety caveats involved. Security is complex for a cloud vendor; your data are stored on the same disks, the same memory, and pass through the same processors as everybody else’s. The process is much like what happens in a commercial laundry or dry cleaner, where everybody’s clothes are tagged and thrown together into a large machine. Afterwards, somebody looks at the tags to get them back to their proper owners. Contrast this to a bank deposit vault, where only your key can open the box where you place your documents. Even at such competent vendors as Google, there have been instances of data leaking from one customer to another, and many cloud vendors are start-ups who have much less expertise than Google. This means that you should take responsibility for safeguarding your data. For example, if you back up your disk in the cloud, encrypt any files (such as those containing passwords or on-line banking data) that present security risks. I store my passwords using KeePassX, <http://www.KEEPASSX.org/>. Its file is always en-

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rypted on your PC’s disk, and you can safely back it up anywhere. I also use Gnu Privacy Guard (gpg), <http://www.gnupg.org/>, to encrypt files and e-mail. (Both of these programs are available for the Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms.) By the way, when you encrypt a file, be sure that only the encrypted version is ever placed in a directory that is backed up in the cloud.

Safety also is not trivial. Vendors do go out of business and, even if they keep operating, they may find that providing cloud services isn’t profitable. Not all of them back up their storage, which means that their hardware failures and software bugs can destroy your data. If you use the service for back-up or synchronization, this isn’t a problem because the chances of simultaneous failures in the cloud and on your PC is negligible. However, if you store your only copy of your photograph or music collection in the cloud, you are risking disaster. In the case of cloud processing, you should also be concerned about the format in which your data is stored. It does little good to download the file containing your novel if it’s stored in a format that only the (now out of business cloud vendor) could read.

Finally, cloud computing is new, so you should expect some glitches. ☹

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TrueCrypt

Free open-source data encryption for Windows 7/Vista/XP, Mac OS X, and Linux

John Langill (jlangill (at) stny.rr.com), Southern Tier Personal Computing Club, NY

In an article by Dick Maybach titled “Cloud Computing” (see previous page), he pointed out the necessity of securing your data via encryption when it “...is stored on the same disks, uses the same memory, and passes through the same processors as everybody else’s.” And I recall Dave Bilcik voicing a similar warning at the May meeting and also mentioning the program TrueCrypt. It just so happens that I am currently using TrueCrypt and I believe it to be very satisfactory solution whether you need relatively modest security or very tight and sophisticated protection.

TrueCrypt is software for establishing and maintaining an on-the-fly-encrypted volume (data storage device). “On-the-fly” encryption means data is automatically encrypted or decrypted right before it is loaded or saved, without user intervention. The entire file system is encrypted; e.g., filenames, folder-names, contents of every file, free space, meta-data, etc. No data stored on an encrypted volume can be read (decrypted) without using the password and/or key file(s), or encryption keys.

I’m not sure how unique TrueCrypt’s approach is but I was nevertheless intrigued by it. The first step is to create a “container;” otherwise known as a TrueCrypt “encrypted volume.” To my mind, this is somewhat like obtaining a safety-deposit box at a bank.

TrueCrypt provides a “wizard” to assist with the task. As at a bank where safety-deposit boxes of various sizes can be rented, the encrypted volume can be created to have as much capacity as you need. For example, it can be a specific portion of a hard-disk, or an entire flash drive or other storage device. Unlike a safety-deposit box, however, you hold the only key... so you need to remember and protect it. And, into the container (the volume) you can store any number of files. If the capacity of the volume is exceeded, you simply create a bigger container.

One of the interesting facets of a TrueCrypt volume is that it has most of the characteristics of an ordinary file. That is, the volume can be moved or copied within the storage areas of a given PC, or to a different PC. The name of the volume can be changed; and the volume can be included in routine backups. It can be transmitted across the Internet; and even into the wild-blue yonder, if you’re so inclined. And, even if you have no intention of salting “the cloud” with your personal data, what about that minuscule 8- or 32GB flash-drive you carry around in your pocket. The smaller they get, the easier they are to lose. Wouldn’t it be reassuring to have made it an encrypted volume so that whoever finds it won’t have an easy time of it when they try to discover the contents of your personal data?

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The downside of the file-like characteristics is that, like any file, an encrypted volume can also be deleted and all its content lost (...thank goodness for the Recycle Bin). That would be very bad if done unwittingly. But that’s why we do back-ups! Yes? Once a TrueCrypt volume is mounted, the data files it contains can be copied to and from the volume just like they are copied to or from any normal disk; for example, by simple drag-and-drop operations.

Files are automatically decrypted on-the-fly in RAM (Random Access Memory) while they are being read or copied from an encrypted TrueCrypt volume. Similarly, files that are being written or copied to a TrueCrypt volume are automatically encrypted on-the-fly in RAM right before they are written to the volume. Note, however, this does not mean the whole file that is to be encrypted/decrypted must reside in RAM before it can be encrypted/decrypted. That is, there are no extra RAM requirements for TrueCrypt. The following paragraph explains how this is accomplished.

Let’s suppose that there is an .avi video file stored on a TrueCrypt volume; that is, the entire video file is encrypted. The user provides the correct password and/or key file and mounts (opens) the TrueCrypt volume. When the user double-clicks the icon of the video file, the operating system launches the application associated with the file type — typically a media player. The media player then begins loading a small initial portion of the video file from the

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TrueCrypt-encrypted volume to RAM in order to play it. While the portion is being loaded, TrueCrypt is automatically decrypting it in RAM. The decrypted portion of the video in RAM is then played by the media player. While this portion is being played, the media player begins loading next small portion of the video file from the TrueCrypt-encrypted volume to RAM and the process repeats. This process is called “on-the-fly” encryption / decryption and it works for all file types, not just for video files. The process also ensures minimal impact on processing performance.

Note that TrueCrypt never saves any decrypted data to a disk — it only stores it temporarily in RAM. Even when the volume is mounted, data stored in the volume remains encrypted. When you restart Windows or turn off your computer, the volume will be automatically dismounted and files stored in it will be inaccessible and encrypted. Even when power is suddenly interrupted (i.e., without a proper system shut-down), files stored in the volume are inaccessible and encrypted. To make them accessible again, you have to mount the volume by providing the correct password and/or key file.

Of course, as with any unintended power interruption or shut-down, unsaved changes to files are lost because re-encryption of changes occurs only when files are saved to the volume in a normal fashion.

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I've only touched on a few of the main facets of TrueCrypt. In addition, TrueCrypt offers a choice of encryption algorithms from which you can select one that will give the degree of security you feel you need. This and other aspects of TrueCrypt are fully documented in an excellent User Guide. The latest version of the free software, Release 7.0a, can be downloaded from the product's home Website at <http://www.truecrypt.org>, as well as from CNET's

<http://www.download.com>, and other sites on the Web. The User Guide PDF and a more detailed description of TrueCrypt can be found at the product's home web-site.

TrueCrypt is one free program that is, in my opinion, an exception to my general perception of the breed. Of course, the developers gratefully accept donations. In this case, I think they are well deserved. ☺

History of Open Source Software

Cal Esneault (ccnewsletter (at) cox.net), Cajun Clickers Computer Club (www.clickers.org)

In the 1960's, computers were large ("main frames") and each manufacturer had a unique operating system (OS). Attempts to develop a more universal OS failed, but Bell Lab developers used these efforts to make a new OS (Unix) that ran on smaller "mini" computers (size of a refrigerator versus size of a kitchen). Since there was little commercial interest in smaller "personal computers" in the early 70's, they were allowed to offer source code to universities. Unix became a key tool to develop computer professionals since results could be openly published in contrast to proprietary systems.

In 1984, AT&T was broken-up into the "baby Bells," and they took the opportunity to ask for return of rights to Unix since PC's were now a big commercial item. However, a lot of additional code had been written since 1975 by others on which AT&T had no claim.

Developers set about to write missing pieces taken back by Bell Labs and to further develop robust operating systems that would be freely available to all users. On the US east coast, Richard Stallman launched the GNU Project and developed the GNU Public License (GPL) as a legal tool to ensure future software would continue to be free. On the west coast, a group at the University of California at Berkeley worked on and improved the Unix system and built applications for their Berkeley Software Distribution (BSDUnix).

It was not until the early 1990's that Unix versions unencumbered by any AT&T license requirement were available. Bill Jolitz developed 386BSD for PC's which spawned a family of operating systems – NetBSD, FreeBSD, and OpenBSD). Linus Torvalds implemented a new kernel (Linux) and used utilities from the GNU pro-

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ject to inspire a family of GNU/Linux systems – Red Hat, Debian, Slackware, etc.)

Given the essential software base and necessary legal standing, software developers pushed to create programs for these new systems. Initial programs were limited, however, to using a Command Line Interface (CLI) which was different from the Graphics User Interface (GUI) used by proprietary systems at that time. To address this, GUI desktop" front-ends were developed. The two most popular desktops were GNOME and KDE. In addition, "package management" software was developed to aid the normal user in finding and installing software free from the Internet.

With a wide variety of freely similar options, groups had to bundle selected software into an infrastructure of operating system and applications that worked well together. These sets of programs are called distributions ("distro's"), and over 300 distro's are available today.

In 1997 the term "open source" became popular to define these non-proprietary works. "Source" code is a set of computer instructions written in a type of computer language that can be read by humans. It is later "compiled" into a machine-code readable by computers. With source code "openly" available, programmers can make modifications and additions to the original program with little effort. Thus, once the original work is done by dedicated volun-

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teers, incremental improvements require very little time and programs can be offered without cost to users.

There are now many sophisticated open source programs available for major PC operating systems (Windows, Mac OS, Linux, and BSD). Some examples are:

1. OpenOffice.org (personal productivity)
2. Firefox (Internet browser)
3. Thunderbird (e-mail client)
4. GIMP (photo editor)
5. Inkscape (vector graphics program)
6. Audacity (audio editor)
7. Avidemux (video editor)

Due to slower development of open source programs in general and momentum of established proprietary systems, open source OS has only a small share in the PC arena. The situation is different in the mobile market, however, where the open source Android OS for smart phones is currently the most popular platform. Android development is being led by Google, and over two dozen handset and tablet manufacturers have implemented it on their equipment.

From humble beginnings, open source software has grown to be a key factor in modern technology. ☺

Dick's Clicks

Dick Ramette (Rwramette (at) mindspring.com), Computer Club of Green Valley AZ (<http://ccgv.apcug.org>)

"Sam" likes being technophobic. He grew up happily without PCs, cell phones, and credit cards, and is amused by those who flaunt their myriad electronic devices. He quotes Clifford Stoll: "Why is it drug addicts and computer aficionados are both called users?" But, in reality, there is no such thing as a "nonuser," because of how computers permeate most aspects of modern society.

Sam's not impressed with how stores use computers to scan price codes, manage inventories, and arrange for shipping. He's uninformed about how modern medicine is highly digitized, from storing personal records to advanced diagnostic tools, as are all bank accounts, newspapers, magazine subscriptions, telephones and public library accounts. Travel relies on the computers of hotels, restaurants, cruise ships and airlines, and all newer cars are governed by built-in computers. The USPS and the phone system could not function well without computers, nor could law enforcement and fire fighters. Even the aerobics machines in GVR fitness rooms are computerized.

At the other extreme from Sam are the true technophiles, like the few elites in CCGV, whose computer expertise dwarfs that of the typical user. Nothing will do except the latest version of hardware and software. Some golfers are even using GPS devices to plot strategy during a round.

I'm more in the common mainstream, I guess. My two computers do enrich my life on a daily basis. My son in

Wisconsin sent me an email with a video of wild turkeys near his property, and I was able to inform him, thanks to Google, that a group of turkeys is called a gang, a posse, or a rafter. See:

<http://www.thealmightyguru.com/Pointless/AnimalGroups.html>.

I enjoy the Astronomy Picture of the Day, my favorite comics (those not included in the AZ Star, like Judge Parker), opinions on NYTimes and Huffington Post, and I sample the thousands of reader comments. I play Wordscraper with a daughter and a grandson, but do nothing else with Facebook. I download the NYT crossword, check movie reviews on <http://www.imdb.com>, look at political cartoons on <http://www.washingtonpost.com>, and note obituaries on <http://www.gvnews.com>. All my Pima Library reserves are by computer. I have links to the menus of my favorite restaurants.

I use Open Office spreadsheet to keep statistics for the GVR Shuffleboard Club, and I manage my photo collection with Windows Explorer and Photoshop Elements. I'd hate to do without email.

I'm content with Wordpad for writing things, including this column. I still write useful little programs using the antiquated QBasic. I measure my walks by GPS. But I ignore Skype, Picasa, Windows 7 and online banking, though I do order stuff from <http://www.amazon.com>.

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With my new BFF, the iPod touch, I play the Scramble word game, listen to music, take photos and go online. I marvel that such technology can be bundled in such a small package: it holds my lifetime music collection and my lifetime photo collection. And, as we heard at the CCGV meeting in January, the Apple iPad is even more amazing, now with 300,000 apps.

This month I bought a Blu-Ray DVD player and a 50" plasma TV, and I'm astonished by all the functions that were not available on my 22-year-old Sony, including wireless access to all the photos on my computer, and free streaming of Netflix movies. The old Sony still works, so make an offer.

And yet—and yet—I know that many among us, like Sam, are living happy and rich, productive lives at a more leisurely pace, without the comfort of a personal computer. Recently an AP story told of a NY mother who "unplugged" her kids for six months, with clearly beneficial effects on grades and use of spare time. Kinda like the way we all were three or four decades ago. I imagine them having coffee with friends, hanging out at the library, reading books, writing hand-written letters, enjoying family phone calls, pursuing all sorts of personal hobbies, blissfully unaware of all the richness of living in a computer-dominated world. And they don't send \$600/year to an ISP. Should I pity them in their technical austerity? Or should they pity me, for embracing the Church of Google?

Quotes of the month:

"Computers make it easier to do a lot of things, but most of the things they make it easier to do don't need to be done."

Andy Rooney

"There is a computer disease that anybody who works with computers knows about. It's a very serious disease and it interferes completely with the work. The trouble with computers is that you 'play' with them!"

Richard P. Feynman

"No one ever said on their deathbed, 'Gee, I wish I had spent more time alone with my computer'."

Danielle Berry ☐



Turn Volume Down Quickly

Sandy Berger

If you like to listen to music while you are working on the computer or browsing the Web, this free program is for you. It lets you control the volume with your mouse. Get a phone call or a summons for attention from your spouse? You can quickly and easily turn down the volume.

Volumouse (<http://www.nirsoft.net/utills/volumouse.html>) is a small program that lets you control the volume of your computer with your mouse. It turns your mouse's click wheel into a volume dial. Just hold down the Alt key and move the mouse wheel to increase or decrease the volume. It is quick and easy. No window to open. No menu to scroll through.

You can also set up other keys to activate Volumouse, if you like. And you can use it to control the volume when you are using Windows Media Player.

System Requirements

Windows operating system: Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Server 2003, or Windows Vista. (Windows 95 is not supported), Wheel mouse, Sound card.

Check for other neat stuff at <http://www.nirsoft.net/> ☞

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Back Issues Still Needed

Our collection remains incomplete. Below is a list of missing newsletters. Anyone who lends us one of these (or supplies a good clear copy) will receive the next CD as our thanks.

1975: #2 and #3 (dates uncertain)

1976: January

1984: August

1985: June, July, August, September. ☞

SIG News

C/C++ Programming

Bruce Arnold (barnold@blast.net)

<http://acgnj.barnold.us/index.html>

This is a forum for discussion of programming in general, beginning and intermediate level C, C++, C-Win programming, hardware, algorithms, and operating systems. We demonstrate real programming in a non-intimidating way, presenting complete code for working programs in 3-5 sheets of paper.

October: Since many were still on vacation last month, this is a repeat of the September topic. The subject was an extremely simple version of the Travelling Salesman Problem. The program uses a "Command Box" which is similar to a "Dos Box" and does not use any Windows Graphic libraries. It is easy to understand. The code uses the C++ compiler in Microsoft's Visual Studio 2008 and may also be compiled using free C++ Express compiler.

The algorithm takes as input a list of town names and their corresponding coordinates in latitude and longitude. Where do you get the numbers? Enter a location in Google Maps (maps.google.com) then right-click on the balloon marker to select "what's here?", Google puts the numbers in the search bar. They can then be pasted into this program. For example: Fanwood, NJ = 40.641638,-74.383407 degrees.

For details and sample code, visit our Website. **Our next meeting November 15.** ☞

Mobile Devices

Brenda Bell (mobdevsig@acgnj.org)

The Mobile Devices SIG meets the second Wednesday of alternate months, 7:30PM at SPRS in Scotch Plains, NJ.

The Mobile Devices SIG focuses largely on current-generation cellphones and smartphones (such as Blackberry, Android, iPhone) which bridge the gap between basic cell phones and traditional computers, and how they can help you manage and organize your life.

Our membership ranges from those who have recently acquired their first, basic cellphone to those who develop applications for today's modern smartphones, iPods, and ultraportable computers.

While we expect to spend much of our time investigating the built-in features and specialized applications available to modern smartphones, if you bring your basic (or multi-media) cell phone, iPod, or other mobile device with questions on how to use it, where to find applications, or what features they have, we are always happy to help! Meet and greet and plan where this event goes. Bring all your ideas, PDAs, fancy phones, etc. **Our next meeting December 14.** ☞

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. ☐

Firefox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is an open forum for **all** Firefox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All browsers will be considered and examined. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion. **Next meeting, November 21.** ☐

Java

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

<http://www.redlich.net/javasig/javasig.html>

October: "Gradle". Project automation is essential to the success of software projects. It should be straight-forward, easy, fun to implement. There is no one-size-fits-all process for builds. Therefore, Gradle does not impose a rigid process over people. Finding and describing YOUR process is very important. Gradle has the very best support for describing it. No tools that save people from themselves. Gradle gives you all the freedom you need. **Next meeting November 8.** ☐

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmajestic@gmail.com)

<http://www.NJGamers.com>www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be November 11, 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! ☐

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

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

Intended to provide members with Windows oriented discussions, Microsoft and Linux style. Directed to more technological level of attendee, but newbies are welcomed.

November 18: Brenda Bell will present on Electronic Health Records, Personal Health Records and Information Online. ☐

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

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

November 4: Brenda Bell will present on Social Networks, exploring Ning and others. ☐

Web Dev

Evan Williams (ewilliams@collaboron.com)

Meeting on alternate months, this SIG is an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but 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 November 9.** ☐

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 as well. We meet on the first Monday of the month at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information.

Our next meeting November 7. ☐

Hardware Activity

Mike Reagan (hardware@acgnj.org)

This group is dedicated to repairing, refurbishing and/or recycling older computers. Ten people attended the first meeting, so there is still a market for this type of event. Although we looked at some of the older equipment stored in the back room, most of our time was spent in talking about past experiences and planning for the future. Hopefully, we can establish a viable long-term schedule of projects, and keep the interest of those who attended this inaugural meeting. If you have a hardware problem, bring it in and we can all help fix or demolish it. (No guarantees either way.)

Next meeting November 14 ☐

Investment Software

Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org)

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

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

Our next meeting: November 10. ☐

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@prod-igy.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	Dues	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	\$25		\$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 MAS Rm 100, Lincroft NJ. (732)-739-9633. www.bcug.com	NJ Macintosh User Group: 8 pm, 3rd Tuesday, Allwood Branch Library, Lyall Rd, Clifton NJ. (201) 893-5274 http://www.njmug.org .
PC User Group of So. Jersey: 2nd Mon., 7 pm, Trinity Presb. Church, 499 Rt 70 E, Cherry Hill, NJ. L. Horn, (856) 983-5360 http://www.pcugsj.org	Hunterdon Computer Club: 8:30 am, 3rd Sat, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington NJ. www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org , (908) 995-4042.	NY Amateur Computer Group: 2nd Thurs, 7 pm, Rm 806 Silver Bldg, NYU, 32 Waverly Pl, NYC. http://www.nyacc.org
Morris Micro Computer Club: 7 pm 2nd Thurs., Morris County Library, Hanover Ave, Morristown NJ, (973) 267-0871. http://www.morrismicro.com	Central Jersey Computer Club: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, College of NJ. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	NJ PC User Group: 2nd Thurs, Monroe Rm at Wyckoff Public Library, 7 pm. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432, www.njpcug.org
Philadelphia Area Computer Society: 3rd Sat, 12 noon Main Meeting, groups 8 am-3 pm. Upper Moreland Middle School, Hatboro PA. (215) 764-6338. www.pacsnet.org	NJ Computer Club: 6:15 pm, 2nd Wednesday except Jul & Aug, North Branch Reformed Church, 203 Rt 28, Bridgewater NJ. http://www.njcc.org	Princeton PC Users Group: 2nd Monday, Lawrenceville Library, Alt Rt 1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 218-0778, http://www.ppcug-nj.org

Classified

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

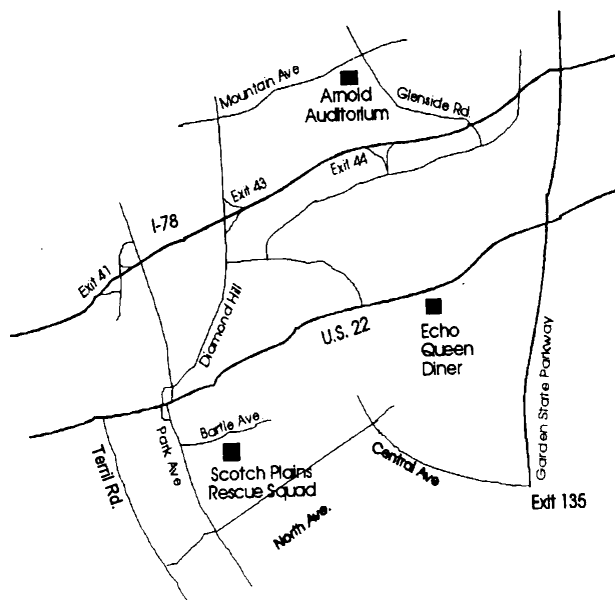
Radio and TV Programs

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>.



<http://www.apcug.net>

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. ☺

A Happier, Longer Life? Volunteer!

Sr. Dorothy Robinson (newsletter (at) olymug.org), Olympia Microcomputer Users Group (www.oly mug.org)

Although there may be some situations where volunteering would not necessarily get you a longer, happier life (any veteran could fill you in on that), there are now studies showing that people who volunteer at least two hours a week do in fact receive health benefits from volunteering.

According to an article by Adam Voiland at <http://health.usnews.com> a 2007 report which drew on the results of 30 studies said volunteering can indeed be good for your health. Voiland says the report indicates that “people who volunteer enjoy longer lives, higher functional ability, and lower rates of depression and heart disease.”

Volunteering keeps a person active and interested, as well as helping stay connected with other people.

Voiland quoted Steven Post, director of a research group at Case Western Reserve University that focuses on the “scientific study of altruism, compassion, and service,” as saying, “The helping impulse is very fundamental. When it is locked off we do not flourish.”

If we look around, there are friends, neighbors, and family who could use a helping hand now and then. There are also nonprofit organizations whose mission is to help people. You may belong to one. In fact, if you’re reading this newsletter, chances are you belong to The Amateur Computer Group of NJ..

Any group needs leadership, and ACGNJ is no exception. All our officers and key members are volunteers, and if you talk to any of them, my guess is that you’ll find they enjoy taking an active part in our computer users group, keeping it alive to fulfill its mission.

ACGNJ’s purpose, according to our Bylaws, “shall be to provide a non-profit, educational, self-help organization for personal computer users; to cultivate cooperative relationships among computer users in our community; and to promote knowledgeable use of personal computer hardware and software.”

Think about why you joined ACGNJ, and why you keep renewing your membership each year. Maybe you have computer expertise to offer and you enjoy helping others. Maybe you don’t know a lot about computers and are looking for help. Whatever your reason, computer expertise, or lack of it, is irrelevant to participating in leadership of our group. People with many different lives, leisure and work experiences have served as ACGNJ officers. You can, too.

Elections are coming next month — why not begin to serve instead of being served? ☐

ACGNJ MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, November 1

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, November 4

8 P.M. - Main Meeting (paul.syers@acgnj.org).

Monday, November 7

8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

Tuesday, November 8

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

Wednesday, November 9

7:30 P.M. - WebDev, (webdev@acgnj.org)

Thursday, November 10

8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org).

Friday, November 11

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

Monday, November 14

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

Monday, November 14

8 P.M. - Hardware, Mike Reagan (hardware@acgnj.org)

Tuesday, November 15

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

Friday, November 18

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

Monday, November 21

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

Tuesday, November 29

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, December 2

8 P.M. - Main Meeting (paul.syers@acgnj.org).

Monday, December 5

8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

Wednesday, December 14

7:30 P.M. - Mobile Devices, Brenda Bell (mobdevsig@acgnj.org)
☐

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