



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS



West Side.....Tuesday, Aug 18

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side .Wednesday, Aug 19

University of Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills ..Thurs, Aug 20

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,

Fountain Hills

Phoenix PC Users Group Officers

President: Dean Botchuck
Vice President: David Yamamoto
Secretary: Chuck Lewis
Treasurer: Lo Hardman

Staff Members

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Webmaster: Hank Pearson
Fountain Hills Coordinator: Tj
East Side Coordinator: Marion Smith
West Side Coordinator: Bill Aulepp
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Newsletter Publisher: Steve Semon
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Bill Aulepp: Editor@PhoenixPCUG.org
Hank Pearson: Webmaster@PhoenixPCUG.org

Steering Committee:

**Officers and Members who are present
at the 6:00 P.M. West Side meeting.**

**This month's presentation is on Open Office.org
Lo Hardman is the presenter.**

**Check our Website at www.PhoenixPCUG.org
to verify subject matter and time changes .
ALL meetings!**

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

For those of us that seldom use office software, the Open Office suite is great. Let me rephrase that. Open Office is great for everyone! Did I mention it's open source and free? Again this month, we will benefit from Lo Hardman's presentation. Thanks Lo!

Brad Montroy reports an interesting video about Windows 7 on the Cnet website. It is a nice overview of new features. Either Google <cnet video windows 7 rtm review> or here is the link:

http://reviews.cnet.com/windows/microsoft-windows-7-professional/4505-3672_7-33704140.html?tag=smallCarouselArea.0

Microsoft Technet is reporting that Windows 7 has been released to manufacture. Manufacturers are putting it on new machines. On October 22nd you will be able to get the final shipping product. Start looking for special offers and launch-related news and events.

Executive Board meeting news:

PC related magazines are a great information resource for our Newsletter. Do you subscribe to one of those magazines? If so, please start looking for articles that you think members would like to read in our Newsletter. Please contact Bill Aulepp or a board member. Take a few minutes each month and help Bill find great articles. You might even want to write an article in your own words!

We are reorganizing our Special Interest Groups (SIG) this fall. Now is the time to give us your input concerning the type of groups you want and how they will be structured.

The "Startup" project is well under way. Our thanks to Lo Hardman for pointing us to a great application for that purpose. We will still need some additional information and/or procedures to fill in the gaps. This looks interesting!

We are assembling a history archive for this group. Steve Semon, as many of you know, was President and Editor of this group for many years. He has electronic copies of old Newsletters going way back. Our many thanks, to Steve, for keeping all those old records for so many years.

It is my opinion that this group must put forth a concerted effort to recruit new members. You may have noticed, attendance has been falling. With that in mind the Board is considering publishing a special addition Newsletter especially designed for public distribution. Maybe just a single page, printed both sides? There will be some cost attached to this publication. It is, therefore, critical that we find ways to distribute these Newsletters with maximum effectiveness. Your help is greatly appreciated. Where can we put them? Who will distribute them? Do you want to keep this group going? Help!

Dean

FROM YOUR EDITOR

This month's edition is a better example of what the Newsletter should be. Most of the material has originated from our membership. On page five we have an update on e-book readers compiled by your editor. Next Dean shows us how to display multiple clocks on page 4. John Curth supplied the legal advice article on page 11. Identity theft is important to anyone who has ever bought anything on the internet. Finally we thank Joe Shipley for his column on page 15 "Computer Corner."

Our appreciation to Lo Hardman' for his service to our group as our treasurer but also in doing the presentations for our summer meetings. Thanks Lo. Thanks also to David Yamamoto for proof reading the Newsletter each month.

Bill Aulepp

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

For room and time changes,
check your website: phoenixpcug.org .

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map - page 18)

- Tuesday, August 18, 2009
- 6:00 PM Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation on Open Office.org.

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map - page 18)

- Wednesday, August 19, 2009
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation on Open Office.org.

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map - page 18)

- Thursday, August 20, 2009
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation on Open Office.org.

SIG MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map - page 18)

- Digital Photography Sig
 - Followed by: Digital Video Sig
- On hiatus for summer*

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Library (see map—page 18)

- *General Sig Meeting is also on hiatus*

MEMBERS ASK

Question:

How to display multiple clocks?

You may want to display more than one clock on your desktop. I like to have both Phoenix time and Coordinated Universal time (UTC) or GMT/Zulu for a shortwave radio broadcast listening aid. This works in Vista. I have not tried it in XP. Here is how to do it.

1. Click on the clock notification area. (Right side of taskbar)
2. The clock and calendar appear. click the date and time settings.
3. The settings windows appears. Click the additional clocks tab.
4. Put a check in the show this clock box.
5. Select the time zone desired.
6. Give the clock a new name.
7. Click on the apply button at the bottom of the window.
8. Clicking on the Internet time tab will allow you to update the current time. The automatic update schedule is set here. Your clocks will be automatically updated on the schedule you set.
9. Click the OK button when finished.

You may also add a third clock, if desired. Only the local clock will be displayed in the taskbar but, if the mouse hovers over the clock in the taskbar, soon all clocks will be displayed.

Dean

PPCUG's Ride Sharing Program

Bill Aulepp, long time group member has volunteered to coordinate member communication for those who need rides and those who can provide them.

To join the program for either side, email Bill at bill@aulepp.com Provide your name, your address, a way to contact you, and whether you can give or need a ride. Please do not wait until the last minute to request a ride, Bill will gather the information from everyone who responds and connect up drivers with riders. It will be the responsibility of the individual members to organize the actual rides, dates, and pick up information.

Able to Provide a Ride?

Are you willing to pick up, transport and drive another member to one meeting a month? As an added bonus, any driver participating will receive one extra raffle ticket each time they drive a member to a meeting.

E-BOOK READERS

Many areas of our PC world are changing. This month we look at e-book readers. They have been around for long time but now with the help of Amazon's Kindle, Sony, and some smaller companies the digital publishing area is coming of age.

As e-book readers are now in competition, we can expect new products and changes of specifications as the norm. For example the Kindle 2 was originally priced at \$359.00 and several months later it was dropped to \$299.00.

This article will present some of the e-book readers that you could buy right now or in the near future but may not want to. More on that later. The five commercial e-book readers below are listed with their statistics.

Kindle 2

Price \$299.00
 Screen Size 6 Inches (diagonal)
 Color support 4-bit (16 gray levels)
 Tilt Landscape Feature No
 Touch Screen No
 Wireless Capability Yes
 Internal Storage 2GB.
 SD Card slot No
 Removable Storage No
 Keyboard Yes
 Touch-Screen Interface No
 Native PDF Support No

Kindle DX

Price \$489.00
 Screen Size 9.7 Inches (diagonal)
 Color support 4-bit (16 gray levels)
 Max resolution 800 X 600
 Tilt Landscape Feature Yes
 Touch Screen No
 Wireless Capability Yes
 Internal Storage 4GB.
 SD Card slot No
 Removable Storage No

Keyboard Yes
 Touch-Screen Interface No
 Native PDF Support Yes without zooming
 Built-in dictionary, Text-to-Speech

Foxit E-Slick

Price \$259.00
 Screen Size 6 Inches (diagonal)
 Max resolution 800 X 600
 Tilt Landscape Feature
 Touch Screen No
 Wireless Capability No
 Internal Storage 128 MB.
 SD Card slot Yes
 Removeable Storage Yes
 Keyboard No
 Touch-Screen Interface No
 Native PDF Support Yes with zooming

Sony Reader Book

Price \$399.00
 Screen Size 6 Inches (diagonal)
 Max resolution 1200 x 824
 Color support 4-bit (16 gray levels)
 Max resolution 800 X 600
 Tilt Landscape Feature
 Touch Screen Yes
 Wireless Capability No
 Internal Storage 512 MB.
 SD Card slot Yes
 Removable Storage Yes (memory stick)
 Keyboard On Screen
 Touch-Screen Interface Yes
 Native PDF Support Yes without zooming

Interead Cool-er

Price \$249.00
 Screen Size 6 Inches (diagonal)
 Touch Screen No
 Tilt Landscape Feature No
 Wireless Capability No
 Internal Storage 1GB.

(Continued on page 6)

E-BOOK READERS

(Continued from page 5)

SD Card slot Yes
 Removable Storage No
 Keyboard No
 Touch-Screen Interface No
 Native PDF Support Yes without zooming

Now that we have the stats, let us determine how they will be usable to us as users. The first is size. Obviously, larger is better. Not only for readability but also one would have to turn less pages which conserves on battery power. None of the present e-book readers approximates a real book or text book in size. This along with the present price structure would discourage me from buying at present.

We all know that new items are always priced high to offset the R&D costs. We also have observed that PC product prices take a free fall once competition takes hold. So for most waiting will pay off. But suppose we are going on a long business trip or vacation and want to take along a dozen or more books with us. The airline weight surcharges, alone, would certainly offset some of the cost of a reader.

Let us look at the stats and determine how they are useful or not. Price and screen size we have discussed.

First we will discuss e-book reader control. Control is accomplished in three ways. A built in keyboard, built-in buttons and slide controls, and through connection to a computer.

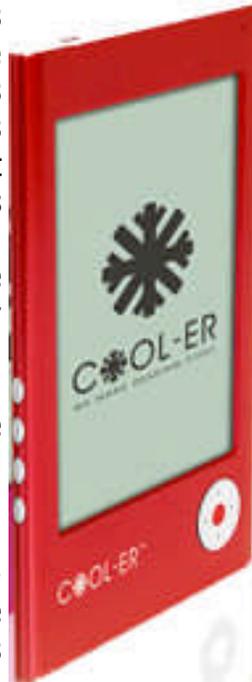
Next is a tilt landscape feature. Simply put, for the Kindle DX, if you turn the reader 90 degrees the written lines show up in the landscape format automatically. Great if the portrait form cuts up an illustration or diagram. Only the Kindle has this feature at present. This feature

must be programmed, if available, by the other e-books.

Reading time is dependant on what state the e-book reader is at the moment. Is it wireless? Is it downloading or doing other internal house-keeping? Are all factors dependant on how long the batteries will stay charged. I have read of time spreads from 3 hours to 36 hours.

Text to speech is a great idea, but if you vision your e-book reading you a bedtime story, forget it, the text to speech is very artificial and jerky, however, if you have a problem reading this is a must.

Only Kindle e-readers have access to download over 300,000 books, periodicals' etc. wirelessly, via Sprint's cellular data network, however, you must be in an area that has the Sprint Network available.



Finally, if you are actually thinking of buying an e-book reader if possible get hold of the model you plan to buy and give it a trial run. Check with local stores and friends. The written reports and blogs are often subjective and might not reflect your feelings at all. An example is the Interead Cool-er. I've seen it described as having a cheap plastic look and in another review the writer said it's the only e-reader I want because it is not a clunky box I would be ashamed to be seen using.

If we can find a member who would like to write an article on how we can get e-books on our laptops please contact Dean, Steve Semon or me. The laptop is where most of us would probably go for the present.

Bill Aulepp

PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Computer Performance Considerations

Written by Gary Bentley, editor, SouthWest International Personal Computer Club (TX) *Throughput*, April 2009

www.swipcc.org

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When I evaluate what might be done to maximize the performance of a computer system, whether that be a system already in use or one I might be specifying for order (i.e., specifying the hardware with a particular level of performance in mind for the intended application) I look at several key factors.

The most critical factor is how much system RAM is available (if you are ordering a new system then you can also order faster RAM and be cognizant of addressing issues). I will state flatly that, all factors being equal, the more RAM available, the faster your computer system will operate. In the same vein, if you want to make full use of that system RAM, get an external graphics card with its own RAM so you don't force your system to share RAM with the video display. If you are specifying a new computer, get the fastest FSB (front side bus) speed you can afford with the microprocessor and then match the RAM bus speed to take advantage of that high bus speed. Don't let a computer maker fool you with a low system price while handing off old slow RAM to you when the motherboard and processor would support faster bus speed RAM. New systems will always use DDR RAM, so that should not be a consideration (and older systems will not be able to use it). Don't be confused by discussions of virtual memory and page files. If you have a large amount of RAM (1 GB or more with Windows XP—3 or 4 GB with Vista, the OS memory hog of all time), your system will rarely need to page out process memory onto the hard drive paging file. You can check that in Task Manager (hit CTRL SHIFT ESC or CTRL ALT DEL or right click the Task Bar and select Task Manager) by looking at the Performance tab and the Physical Memory Total in conjunction with the Commit Charge. The Physical Memory Total is the amount of RAM you have in your system. The Commit Charge is the total memory allocated to programs and the operating system. If the Commit Charge (Total or Peak) doesn't exceed the amount of RAM, then the hard drive

pagefile is rarely if ever being used and your system should be running at full RAM speed without hard drive performance issues (except when loading the OS and starting an application, etc.). You can also use Performance Monitor (Start, Administrative Tools, Performance) and look at the Memory, Pages Output/Sec parameter. Even if the amount of committed memory exceeds available RAM, if the actual Pages Output/ Sec is low or zero most of the time (quoting Microsoft) there is no significant performance problem related to available RAM. I doubt there would be any reason for the typical home user to require a 64 bit computer in order to utilize sufficient RAM.

The second most critical factor is the performance of the hard drive, i.e., the amount of utilization of your hard drive (present or anticipated for the application), the speed at which the drive platters rotate, and the speed of the interface to your hard drive. You never want to reach 50% of capacity of your hard drive. The more data you have on a hard drive the farther the disk drive read/write head has to move inward on the spinning platter to get to the data (on the average). This increases the seek time, the time required for the read/write head to position itself over the desired concentric data track on the spinning disk platter. So, use a hard drive with sufficient storage that you do not exceed 40% or so of the storage capacity (high performance server hard drives often are destroyed or short stroked, i.e., limited to 40% or less so as to keep the data on the outer edge of the platters where it can be quickly reached). Once the read/write head reaches a track then the rotational speed of the platter comes into play, introducing latency, the time required for the desired sector of the track to rotate into position beneath the head. How do you reduce latency? Get a hard drive that spins as fast as you can afford. Most desktop hard drives now spin at 7200 RPM (don't let them slip you a 5400 RPM drive on your desktop or your laptop!). If your drive has a slower RPM, you can increase performance by purchasing a 7200 RPM drive. Note that high performance server drives spin at 10,000 and 15,000 RPM, but those drives are expensive. If you are evaluating a replacement drive (or specifying the hard drive in anew system), look at the access time parameter for the drive. This will generally be around 11 milliseconds for 7200 RPM desktop PC ATA/SATA drives. The access time will

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SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT



There is a way you can support your user group. Smart Computing Magazine will give a gift subscription to the Phoenix PC Users Group to be used as a door prize, raffle, etc., for each five subscriptions received from our group. Subscriptions can be applied for with the subscription coupon below or by phone as long as you use our group's unique source code number (8305) when beginning the subscription.

For each paid subscription using the source code 8305, our user group will be credited one credit. Results are calculated each quarter, and credits will accumulate until the group reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time they will contact the PPCUG.

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WEB TOUR

Free PC Utilities from Comodo

Written by Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director;

Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX;

Radio Talk Show Host

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WEBSITE:

http://www.comodo.com/products/free_products.html

Last year I wrote in this column about a free suite of excellent security products from a little known company called Comodo (www.comodo.com). Comodo is one of those sleeper companies that quietly provides very good products and services, but just seems to dwell in the background while it adds paying customers and clients.

Comodo is an international company with offices in the U.S., the U.K., the Ukraine, and in India. While not visible to the ordinary internet user, Comodo is the exclusive provider of digital security services to the top level internet domain name registrants. Comodo has over 200,000 commercial customers in over 100 countries, and protects over a half-million businesses and private individuals. As is common in the field, Comodo offers some excellent free products available to all users that Comodo hopes will spread its reputation and services, and eventually attract paying clients to its more sophisticated commercial products.

In my earlier column on Comodo, I discussed the individual free Comodo security products, including its antivirus, firewall, antispam, and other security products, all of which can still be downloaded individually, but work together as do many of the competitive commercial security suites. To ease the download process, and even better integrate the

protective functions, Comodo has introduced its free Comodo Internet Security, a fully functional, but basic antivirus, firewall, and proactive security suite.

This free suite has been recognized by the media for its quality, by being awarded CNET's highest 5 star rating, and was selected by PC Magazine as its "Editors' Choice". Comodo hopes that users of the free security suite will want to eventually upgrade to its commercial big brother (\$40) that offers additional and enhanced features along with free 24/7 online chat support.

Comodo offers a somewhat unique free product in its "Comodo Memory Firewall Version 2.0". This is an unusual utility in that unlike a conventional firewall (which is also required to maximize security), this Memory Firewall monitors the memory of the computer and the running applications. It is on the lookout for attacks on running programs such as bufferoverflow attacks, a common and damaging threat to our computing security. Attacks such as these, which can be prevented with this Memory Firewall, can cause system crashes or steal confidential information from the targeted computer.

An extremely common threat faced by all web surfers is a form of identity theft through the use of "phishing" or otherwise fraudulent websites. Comodo offers its "Free Forever" Comodo Verification Engine, which notifies the user if a website is legitimate or fraudulent. If a website is known to be legitimate, simply placing the mouse over the website logo will display a green border. This is an excellent tool to prevent some of the more common online forms of identity theft.

Many thousands of computers are lost or stolen each year. It is a known fact that thousands of laptop or notebook computers are stolen in airports and other places annually. One major concern of the owner of a lost or stolen computer is the potential disclosure and abuse of the personal data on the hard drive. Comodo offers a solution to this vexing problem, its

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WEB TOUR

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free Disk Encryption Software, which can be used to encode the data on a hard drive, preventing its use by unauthorized individuals. This provides continuous protection of the data on the drive, and includes two levels of data authentication. This protects sensitive data without disrupting the ability to legitimately utilize the data, but makes the same data useless to an unauthorized user, such as a thief. You may have heard commercials on radio and TV about a "VPN" or Virtual Private Network, where selected computers can be connected together over the internet, just as if they would be connected over a wired in-house network. For those who may need to connect distant computers, Comodo offers its free "Comodo EasyVPN". This VPN provides secure encrypted communications over the internet, and allows for the safe transmission and reception of sensitive communications. It also allows for remote access to connected computers, including a "remote desktop" feature that allows one user to access control over another distant computer. For family use, EasyVPN allows for the quick and easy internet exchange of music or photos, and even allows connected users to play multi-user games. This is like having a remote office, where the office computer can be securely accessed from anywhere there is an internet connection. This may be a very useful utility.

I hate spam, that unwanted junk email. Comodo offers a free anti-spam utility that can stop spam, phishing (identity theft), and other fraudulent email from getting into your inbox. The software can import the address book from most popular email clients to create a safe senders' list, and provides for a challenge and response system to verify unknown senders, and adds verified senders to a safe "white list". Using Comodo's Anti Spam utility can significantly reduce the unwanted mail in your inbox.

Sometimes we must send and receive sensitive information via email that we would not want others to be able to access or read. Comodo has a free solution to this problem, its SecureEmail utility. This utility encrypts and digitally signs email such that it cannot be read by anyone except the intended recipient.

This utility seamlessly integrates with all major email clients, and has a wizard to help setup the program.

While Comodo offers many other utilities, it is best known for its security products. One such free product offered is its BoClean, which can detect and remove rootkits, hijackers, keyloggers, and Trojans, as it continuously monitors the system for attack. BoClean offers real time protection against online identity theft caused by malware, as well as protection from file damage caused by other varieties of malware.

Regular readers of this column have read the three most important words in computing, "Backup, Backup, and Backup!" Comodo offers a full featured and free backup utility that can automatically backup critical data files to almost any form of media or storage system. Backups may be scheduled automatically, or run at will, and allow for the easy recovery of files in the event of system crash, natural disaster, theft, or other loss of data. With software such as this, and a secure place to store the backed up data, there is no reason why any important data should ever be lost.

Comodo offers its System Cleaner utility to clean computers of useless and wasteful files and registry entries that can adversely impact computer performance, thus improving performance. Comodo System Cleaner is among the fastest and most efficient system cleaner tested, including several of the popular competitors. System Cleaner includes both disk cleaner and registry cleaner tools, as well as other powerful diagnostic tools. System Cleaner claims "100% Safe Cleaning" as it implements proprietary "Registry Protection" and "Safe Delete" features which can automatically restore any files that may have been deleted in error. Comodo offers an impressive collection of free utilities, and should be commended for offering them. Comodo explicitly states that many of these utilities are free for both personal and business users, making them most cost effective at "free".

For this price, they are most worthy of a try.

ATTORNEY'S ADVICE-NO CHARGE

ATTORNEY'S ADVICE - NO CHARGE

Read this and make a copy for your files in case you need to refer to it someday. Maybe we should all take some of his advice! A corporate attorney sent the following out to the employees in his company.

1. Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, put "PHOTO ID REQUIRED" in the signature space.

2. When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, do not put the complete account number on the 'For' line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.

3. Put your work phone # on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a PO Box use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a PO Box, use your work address. Never have your SS# printed on your checks. (DUH!) You can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed on the check anyone can get it.

4. Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine. Do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place.

I also carry a photocopy of my passport when I travel either here or abroad. We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in stealing a Name, address, Social Security number, credit cards.

Unfortunately, I, an attorney, have firsthand knowledge because my wallet was stolen last month. Within a week, the thieves ordered an expensive monthly cell phone package, applied for a VISA credit card, had a credit line approved to buy a Gateway computer, received a PIN number from DMV to change my driving record information online, and more. But here's some critical information to limit

the damage in case this happens to you or someone you know.

5. We have been told we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them.

6. File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one). But here's what is perhaps most important of all (I never even thought to do this).

7. Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number. I had never heard of doing that until advised by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit was made over the internet in my name. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

By the time I was advised to do this, almost two weeks after the theft, all the damage had been done.

There are records of all the credit checks initiated by the thieves' purchases, none of which I knew about before placing the alert. Since then, no additional damage has been done and the thieves threw my wallet away this weekend (someone turned it in). It seems to have stopped them dead in their tracks. Now, here are the numbers you always need to contact about your wallet/purse if it has been stolen.

1.) Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

2.) Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742

3.) Trans Union: 1-800-680 7289

4.) Social Security Administration (fraud line): 1-800 269-0271

O'REILLY E-BOOKS

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Edited by Elsie Smith, PC Community, CA, UG Rep to O'Reilly Media

www.pcc.org

[lcms\(at\)pacbell.net](mailto:lcms(at)pacbell.net)

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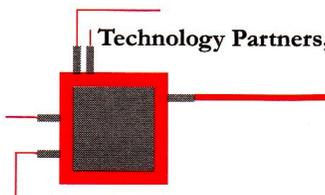
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include seek time and rotational latency. As for the type of interface, ATA drives (which peaked at around 133 MB/sec interface performance, setting aside internal data rate of around 60 MB/s and PCI bus rate considerations) are no longer offered, so you will see SATA (serial ATA) drives in a new computer. I wouldn't bother attempting to replace an ATA drive in an old PC with a SATA drive. You would need a SATA controller card as well as SATA drive and you might as well just purchase a new computer. The current SATA interface rate is 3 Gbps (the initial SATA interface was 1.5 Gbps), i.e., 3 gigabits per second. That translates to approximately 300 MB/sec. However, the actual rate that the read head can read the data off the spinning platter of the drive is closer to 100 MB/sec (the internal data rate). You therefore can benefit by having a drive with a large cache memory, where a large amount of data has been read internally by the hard drive before the interface is accessed, at which time the interface can burst perform at the full interface speed of 3 Gbps/300 MB/sec. I note that even the expensive server grade SCSI and SAS drives have about that same external interface transfer rate, i.e., 300 – 320 MB/sec, so their increased performance is coming directly from the high rotational speeds (10 – 15 K) and fast seeks, giving access times of 3 – 5 ms vs. 11 ms or so for desktop SATA drives. Defragmenting your drive regularly will help keep the drive operating at peak efficiency.

A less critical factor is the speed of the microprocessor itself (FSB considerations aside as they relate to RAM access speed). A faster microprocessor or a dual or quad core processor will allow applications, their processes and threads to execute faster (to actually run the microprocessor instructions of which a program is composed) once the instructions and data reach the microprocessor.

So, if you have processing intensive applications like video or music (studio) production and editing (or scientific number crunching), faster and more core processors will speed things up considerably, but only if you have plenty of RAM and a high performance hard drive.

COMPUTER CORNER

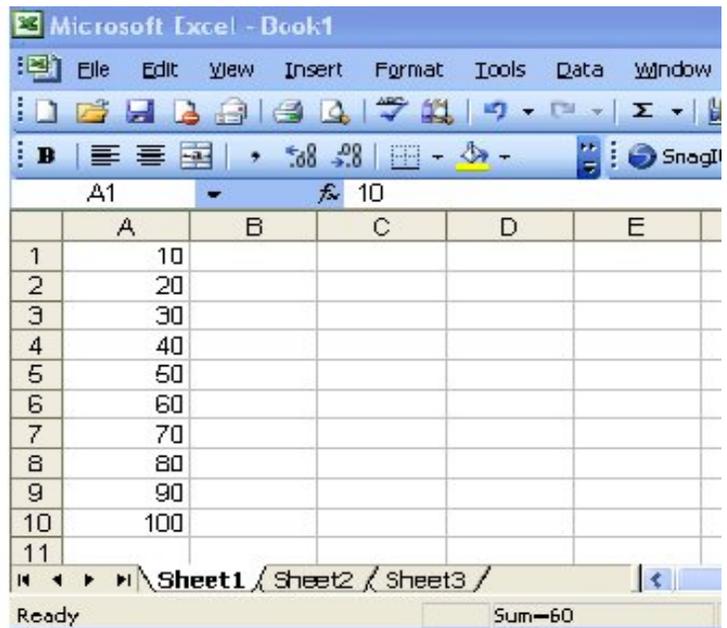
Computer Corner by Joe Shipley

Excel Spreadsheet Tips

Where does one start? Excel is such a robust and powerful program, complete books have been written about it. That's not what I want to do here. I would like to mention a few things that I use regularly in Excel that just might make your Excel experience easier and more enjoyable. My comments apply to Excel 2003, although many of the things I mention may also apply to the 2007 version as well.

AutoSum Feature

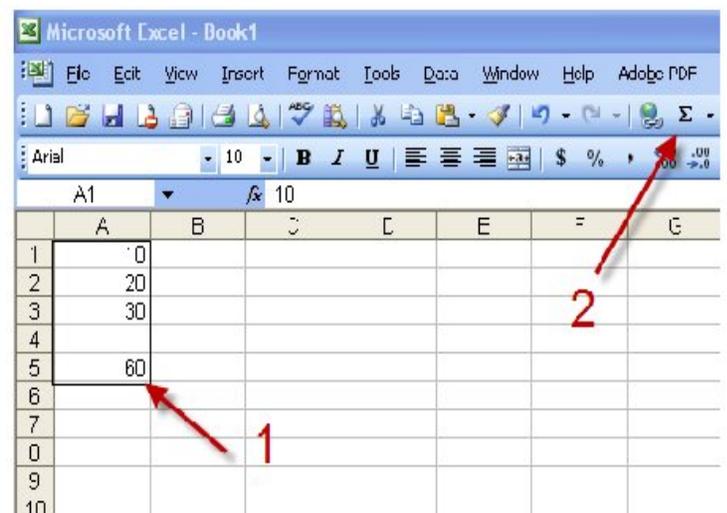
In the figure to the right note the display "Sum=60" to the right of the line that begins with "Ready." This display automatically shows you the sum of a selected range of numbers. When I took the screen shot, I had cells A1 through A3 selected. When you select a column of numbers by holding down the Left mouse button (for righties), the sum will automatically be displayed as you continue to select cells. There's no need to write a formula or use the Sum function if all you need is a quick answer. Caution: If your selection includes more than just one column, the Autosum will include all the numbers in the selection in the displayed sum. It does not include text items in its total, however.



Using the Sum Feature

In the figure to the right I have entered the numbers 10, 20 and 30 in cells A1..A3. I then highlighted the cells starting in A1 and including A5 (See #1). From above we know that the Autosum showed the sum to be 60. But I wanted to permanently insert a formula for the sum of A1 through A3.

Looking at #2 in the figure, by clicking on the Sigma character (the math symbol for summation), the



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COMPUTER CORNER

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	A	B	C	D
1	10	20		
2	20	30	50	
3	30	40		
4	40	50		
5	60	60		
6				
7				

sum function is automatically inserted in the cell A5. This process also works for summation in rows. See the next figure below.

To the left you can see the formula that sums A2..B2.

So to review, if you want to sum a column or row of numbers, simply highlight the range and go at least one (or more) cells past your data, then click on the Sigma on the menu bar and the summation formula is automatically inserted.

	A	B
1	1	2
2	2	3
3	3	4
4	4	5
5	5	6
6	6	7
7	7	8
8	8	9
9	9	10
10	10	

AutoFill

Another neat feature that saves lots of time is AutoFill.

In the figure on the right, I inserted the numbers 1 and 2 in cells A1 and A2 respectively. When both cells are selected, note the separated square in the lower right hand corner. This is important. When you move your cursor over the square, it will change to a "+" (This is called the AutoFill handle). If you left click on the plus and drag down, Excel will automatically fill in the range you have highlighted with numbers. If you highlight only *one* cell and "drag the plus," the range will be filled with whatever is in the cell you have highlighted. This works for both text and numbers. (Try typing in Week 1, then "drag the plus" and see what happens). However if you highlight *two* cells and "drag the plus," the range will be filled in by adding the difference between the numbers in the two cells to each subsequent cell. To make it easy: if the first cell contains the number 1 and the second cell contains the number 2, each cell thereafter will contain in sequence 3, 4, 5, 6 etc. until you stop dragging.

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COMPUTER CORNER

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Look at the columns at the right. In column B we've started with 10 in Row 1 and 20 in Row 2. By "dragging the plus" we can increment each additional cell by 10, the difference between the two original cells we selected. You can also check out how we can count by threes: put a 3 in the first cell, a 6 in the next, highlight the two cells, and "drag the plus" to have as many cells in the series as you want. So where would this come in handy? If you have monthly reports that summarize activity on a daily or weekly basis, you can make labels using 1 and 2 and then "drag the plus" until you reach the number of days in the month. Done! Easy! Need to count by twos? Odd or Even? No problem.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	1	10	Mon	Jan	January	3	
2	2	20	Tue	Feb	February	6	
3	3	30	Wed	Mar	March	9	
4	4	40	Thu	Apr	April	12	
5	5	50	Fri	May	May	15	
6	6	60	Sat	Jun	June	18	
7	7	70	Sun	Jul	July	21	
8	8	80	Mon	Aug	August	24	
9	9	90	Tue	Sep	September	27	
10	10	100	Wed	Oct	October	30	
11				Nov	November	33	
12				Dec	December	36	
13							
14							
15							

But Excel is much smarter than just this. In Column C above I just typed in "Mon" in cell C1. Then I highlighted the cell, "dragged the plus" until I was done and Excel did the rest. When I typed "Jan" in, Excel filled the range with the 3 letter abbreviation of the month. When I typed the full name in, Excel filled the cells with the full names of the months. Try typing "Qtr 1" in a cell and see what you get.

At the right is what Microsoft has to say when you query Help for AutoFill with respect to dates.

I have found the features described above to be very helpful in saving time when using Excel. If you play around with these I'm sure they'll come in handy for you as well.

Create a consecutive list of dates

1. Type the first day or date in the list, for example Monday or 6/13/08, in a cell.
2. Select the cell and use the fill handle  to fill a list of consecutive days.

Note If your fill handle is not displayed, click **options** on the **Tools** menu. On the **Edit** tab, select **Allow cell drag and drop** check box.

3. If you want only week days in your list or if you want to display dates with

monthly or yearly intervals, click **Auto Fill Options**  and then select **Fill Week days**, **Fill Months** or, **Fill Years**

Tip You can sort dates like any other data. By default dates are sorted from the earliest date to the latest date.

Joe Shipley, Owner of SMART IDEAS!, is a computer consultant, independent network administrator, builds custom computers, trains users on software, and sells software and hardware in Mesa, AZ. You can reach Joe at joeship@cox.net.

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Release my address to vendors ? Yes No Note: Phone numbers **will not** be listed.

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