Phoenix PC Users Group

apcug

NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory for your PC !

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side………………...Tue, March 16

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side……………..Wed, March 17

University of Advancing Technologies
2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills……....Thu, March 18

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,
Fountain Hills

THIS MONTH DAVID AND LO DISCUSS THE PROGRAMS THEY ARE USING
Check our Website at www.PhoenixPCUG.org to verify subject matter and time changes .

Inside this Issue...

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

This month we will be discussing ideas to improve our meetings.. We have a variety of ideas among them streaming the meetings by internet for those who can not make it there in person. Another idea put forward is to ,if we have an outside speaker, have all three groups meet on the same day and connect all three groups interactively. This one time only would be a "Go to Meetings" type of operation.

Another idea is to make some meetings hands on workshops.

This of course brings up the question of what type of meetings are most meaningful . What do you want? Let us all think about this and bring our ideas to this months meetings.

Another item we should discuss is how we can increase our membership. We can print and make available copies of the Newsletter for any member to distribute with the objective of interesting an outsider in becoming a member.

Lo Hardman and myself are planning to do demonstrations at the meetings of possibly including of remote demonstrations and voice recognition.

I am using the voice recognition program that comes with Vista to dictate this column.

For myself, voice recognition went fairly fast through the training tutorial under half an hour, and the results that you see on these paragraphs are the result from voice recognition. Pretty nifty huh?

David Yamamoto

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I still wish we had more articles from members but thanks to our APCUG associates we have a lot of good information this month.

If you like free material, and who doesn't, we include sources of free commercial software (see page 4) , thousand of free online books (see page 12) and thousand of free Firefox add-ins (see page 7).

If you have a new 64 Bit computer and wish to try a different Operating System —- safely —- read about the Ubuntu installer (page 18) and the Ubuntu operating system (page 15).

As David points out this year we are making a big push to find new members. If you want additional copies of the Newsletter to acquaint your friends and associates with our group please inform me at
bill@aulepp.com
or at the meetings. I try to get to all 3 meetings each month. See you there.

Bill Aulepp

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 17)
- Tuesday, Mar 16, 2010
- 6:00 PM Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 17)
- Wednesday, Mar 17, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 17)
- Thursday, Mar 18, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

SIG MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 17)
- Digital Photography Sig
- Followed by: Digital Video Sig
   On hiatus.

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Library (see map page 17)
- General Sig Meeting is also on hiatus.

FREE COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE

**COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE
AVAILABLE FOR FREE**
By Ira Wilsker

APCUG Director
iwilsker (at) sbcglobal.net

Computer users often seem to be in the market for additional software. Many users even seem to have an addiction tonew software, seeming to have an insatiable urge to try something new. There are manyonline resources that have enormous libraries of free software to download, such as download.com, Major Geek, and TUCOWS, but other than some pirate and hacker sites, there are only a few sites where commercial software can legitimately be downloaded free.

One of my personal favorites is dottech.org:

http://dottech.org

which has proven to be an excellent resource when it comes to legitimately getting free copies of commercial software. New titles appear on an almost daily basis under the "freebies" category, www.dottech.org/category/freebies, and are usually available for a very limited time or a limited number of downloads. The "freebies" page has an editorial comment at the top that was posted by the founder of dotTech, "Ashraf" says, "I gave up my 'illegal' activities long ago – but I still like freebies. Here you will see posts about how to attain commercial software for free – 100%legit!" Currently, there are 52commercial software titles available as a free download, but this number is dynamic and changes frequently as old offers expire, and new titles are added.

As with bargains anywhere else, the rule is that if you see something you like, get it now, because it may not be there later. Ashraf and the editors of dot-Tech.org review each software title, and I have found the reviews to be reliable and accurate. There is also an open blog on each listing where users who have downloaded and installed the software have left comments as to the functionality of the software, a feature that I have found useful.

DotTech's selection of software is varied, but seems to favor performance utilities. While many of the software publishers listed on dotTech may not befamiliar to Americans, they are mostly European in origin, and generally have a very good to excellent reputation. These lesser known publishers will typi-

cally allow their commercial software to be promoted on dot-Tech in order to become better known, and to sometimes get leads to sell their other software products. Mostly, the titles available are the latest versions, but in a few cases the free downloads were of a previous but recent version.

There are two very good commercial products that I use regularly thanks to dotTech, andI do periodically receive emailed promotions from the publishers about their other wares. These promotions are more sporadic than regular, and not so frequent as to be irritating. Both have unsubscribe links on their promotions, but I have found them often interesting, as their products that they promote are often offered at deep discounts.

One recent example was the German software publisher, Ashampoo that sent an email that offered almost all of its products for a flat price of only $10 each. It should be noted that Ashampoo is not some little software publisher, as it is very popular in Europe, and claims to have over 10 million registered users of its software, with 97 million copies installed. This is precisely the type of company that promotes its software on dotTech.org.

Some of the commercial software that has recently been offered free on dotTech include Ashampoo Office 2008, Ashampoo Internet Accelerator 2, USB Safely Remove 4.1, Comfort Keys Lite, Ashampoo Burning Studio 2010, O&O CleverCache6 Professional, WinX DVD Ripper Platinum, CyberLink Power-Director 7 Ultra, Paragon Drive Backup 9.0 Professional, EVEREST Ultimate Edition 4.6,EASEUS Partition Master Pro, and dozens of other titles. The full list can be found online at dottech.org/category/freebies.

I subscribe to dotTech's RSSfeed (dottech.org/feed) and email alerts (dottech.org/email-reminders) so I can keep up with the latest software giveaways. I routinely download I do periodically receive emailed promotions from the publishers about their other wares. These promotions are more sporadic than regular, and not so frequent as to be irritating. Both have unsubscribe links on their promotions, but I have found them often interesting, as their products that they promote are often offered at deep discounts. One recent example was the German software publisher, Ashampoo that sent an email that offered almost all of its products for a flat price of only$10 each. It should be noted that Ashampoo is

FREE COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE

not some little software publisher, as it is very popular in Europe, and claims tohave over 10 million registeredusers of its software, with 97 million copies installed. This is precisely the type of company that promotes its software ondotTech.org. Some of the commercial software that has recently been offered free on dotTech include Ashampoo Office 2008, Ashampoo Internet Accelerator 2, USB Safely Remove 4.1, ComfortKeys Lite, Ashampoo BurningStudio 2010, O&O CleverCache6 Professional, WinX DVD RipperPlatinum, CyberLink Power-Director 7 Ultra, Paragon DriveBackup 9.0 Professional, EVEREST Ultimate Edition 4.6,EASEUS Partition Master Pro, and dozens of other titles. The full list can be found online atdottech.org/category/freebies. I subscribe to dotTech's RSSfeed (dottech.org/feed) and email alerts (dottech.org/email-reminders) so I can keep up with the latest software giveaways. I routinely download and install the new offerings to satiate my desire to try new software; generally, I have been very satisfied with the offerings and have found them to be generally excellent. For those that I no longer want, they have been easy to uninstall with their integral uninstall function or from Add/Remove Programs. In addition to commercial software, dotTech also has some good software tips and hints, as well as reviews of other software products.

Speaking of giveaways, what may arguably be the most popular software giveaway website is "Give Away of the Day":

www.giveawayoftheday.com

The software on that website must be downloaded and installed by midnight Pacific time(2am Central time), or the install feature will fail, but if it is installed by the deadline, a fully registered copy of the software is yours to keep.

Every 24 hours, at midnight Pacific Time, a new software title becomes available. Software available on Give Away of theDay has been of all types, including utilities, video and audio editors, security software, and other genres, and is oftenfrom major software publishers. It needs to be noted that the software downloaded and registered through Give Away of the Day is not eligible for support, and does not qualify for free upgrades. It should also be noted that during the registration process, which must be done while online, some other utilities may appear on the

registration popup that may be installed, and by my choice, I never select them for installation.

Give Away of the Day often has dozens of comments and reviews of that day's software by the time dawn breaks in the U.S., these comments being posted by users mostly in Asia and Europe, where the software has been available for download for several hours. If the software looks interesting, I click on the icon to go to the download page, and review the comments prior to downloading.

The reviews are summarized with a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" rating; if the majority of reviewers likes the software, I will seriously consider downloading it; if the "thumbs down" are in the majority, then I will usually not download it. I also read the reviews and comments to corroborate that the software will install and function on my operating system. I also find references in the review to competing, often free, competitors to be generally helpful, and a source of other software to try.

It is interesting that often the first, and usually the most comprehensive review posted is from Ashraf, the same personthat runs dotTech. These reviews list the good and bad features of the program offered, as well as a link to afull review on dotTech.

Give Away of the Day has a sister site, Game Give Awayof the Day:

http:P//www.game.giveawayoftheday.com

which has commercial computer games available for download. Unlike the parent site, new games are not typically available everyday, but it is still a worthwhile website for gamers to visit on a frequent basis just to see if something new has been posted. Both Give Away of the Day and Game Give Away of the Day offer RSS feeds and email alerts tonotify those interested of any new offerings.

I subscribe to both in order to be informed of those offerings. These websites have had some great commercial software available at a great price (free), which I use on a regular basis. They are most worthy of a regular visit in order to take advantage of the offerings.

Be sure to hear Ira's RadioShow, Monday, 6-7 pm Central time, hlvi.com. Ira is the APCUG Representative for the Golden Triangle PC Club and is a columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, Texas.

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In Plain English

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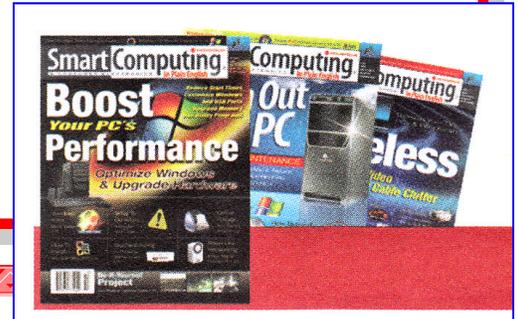
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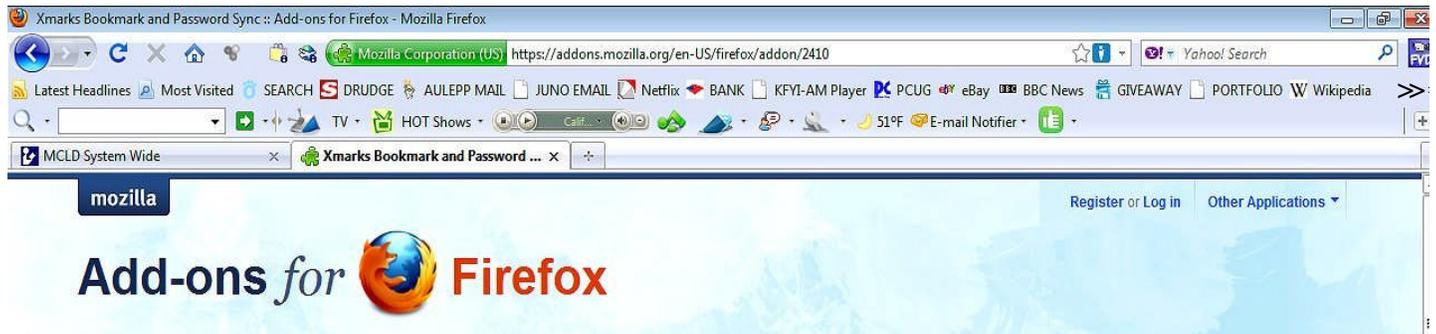
WebTour is a monthly article where we travel the internet to find interesting sites and programs. Please note that all the WebTour sites are listed on our Website at www.PhoenixPCUG.org Here you will not have to type out the site. Just click on the site line you want and you are there. Try it.

Many use the browser Firefox but not all are aware that there are over 150,000 add-ons, extensions and themes to help you customize your browser? Above is the what I see when I go to the internet on my PC. If you look at the illustration you will see that I can click on anything from Latest Headlines to Drudge, my e-mails, my bank account and on to Wikipedia but it does not end there. If I click on an ">> " sign to the right of Wikipedia a column appears with many more sites. These sites are put on as a function of saving sites via bookmarks.

That isn't the end of the story. I use the add-on "X-Marks".

http://www.xmarks.com/

It stores the sites (but not the passwords) to an uploaded site and will automatically download the same information to any other computer I have set it up on. If I make a change on any computer that I have set X-Mark up on it will synch that change to all my other computers. All of my PC browsers will then have the same look and information.

You will note I have many other Firefox add-ons which appear as icons.

So let's go to some of the "add-on" web sites where you can customize your Firefox browser the way you wish.

The Mozilla "add-on" site
https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/
Customize **Firefox**, Thunderbird, and other Mozilla products with thousands of free extensions and themes.

PC Magazine reviews best Mozilla add-ons
http://www.pcmag.com/
article2/0,2817,2353223,00.asp
Sep 24, 2009 ... There are thousands of add-ons available for **Firefox** that let you change the way it looks and what it can do.

Firefox Add-ons Installation Guide
http://www.accessfirefox.org/
Addons_Installation_Guide.php
Installing **Firefox Add-ons** is quite easy. Simply follow the steps shown and in no time you'll be using your new extensions and themes.

More Firefox Add-ons and Personas
http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/personal.html
Firefox has more than 6,000 add-ons to help you customize it to your exact needs, plus thousands of Personas to instantly change the way it looks.

The above sites give one plenty of areas to draw ideas from and a way to convert them into the browser you desire.

Bill Aulepp

BRING A FRIEND TO OUR NEXT MEETING
HELP OUR MEMBERSHIP TO GROW

USE DUAL MONITORS

USE DUAL MONITORS

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The movie buffs, video editors, and gamers among us tend to buy the bigger displays they can afford. Those 24- and 30-inch screens maximize their enjoyment of their favorite computing activities.

That said, the rest of us would appreciate some extra screen space, too. We may not necessarily need one monolithic display the way video and game junkies do, so our options are more open.

Fortunately, Windows makes it easy to hook up a second monitor for an instant Desktop expansion, assuming that your computer has enough video outputs. Dual monitors let you multitask more easily. You can offload windows you prefer to keep open all the time—social networking sites, email inboxes, music player controls—to a secondary display while you concentrate your attention on the tasks on your primary monitor.

Windows XP

Most users still have WinXP, so we'll detail this process most fully for the venerable OS (operating system).

1 Connect the new monitor to one of your computer's video outputs with a DVI (Digital Video Interactive) or other appropriate video cable, such as VGA (Video Graphics Array), HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface), DisplayPort, or even USB (DisplayLink). On a desktop PC, the output might be on the mother-board or a graphics card. A notebook might have an output along its rear or side edge.

2 Plug the new display into a surge-protected AC power outlet. Turn it on.

By default, Windows XP sends a video signal with a low resolution and color depth to the secondary display for compatibility reasons. Use Display Properties to adjust these to the new monitor's native capabilities.

3 Right-click a blank part of the Desktop and select Properties. This will bring up the Display Properties panel. Click the Settings tab. The number 2 screen represents your new monitor; click it to highlight it.

4 By default, WinXP assumes that the second display is physically sitting to the right of your primary screen. If it's not, click and drag the number 2 screen to match the location of the new monitor.
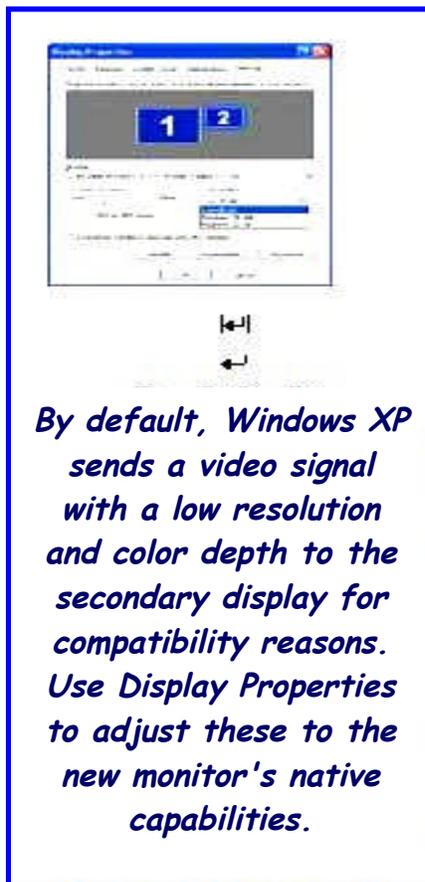
5 With screen 2 highlighted, click Extend My Windows Desktop Onto This Monitor and Apply. If your new display doesn't automatically show your PC's Desktop wallpaper, press its Input Select button a time or two. Don't worry if the wallpaper appears with an extremely low resolution and a very limited number of colors; WinXP is simply using low settings for compatibility with as many unknown monitors as possible.

6 If the new monitor still doesn't display anything, you may need to enable your PC's video output port in its BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) Setup. Restart your computer and keep an eye out for a brief message, such as Press F2 To Enter Setup or similar. Quickly press the indicated key; if Windows' Desktop appears, reboot and try again. In Setup, use the indicated keys to move through the menus and enable the video port. Save your changes and exit Setup.

7 Next, you should install the latest driver for your monitor. It's best to download it from the manufacturer's site and follow the related instructions. However, if the display came with an installation CD, you can get by with the driver version on the disc. Windows might also provide a good driver, too; press WIN (the Windows logo key) and the PAUSE key simultaneously and then click the Hardware tab. Click Device Manager and then double-click Monitors. Right-click the new display and click Update Driver.

USE DUAL MONITORS

Let Windows connect to Windows Update to find a suitable driver and finish the wizard.

8 It's time to adjust the new monitor's video properties. Drag the Screen Resolution slider to the native pixel count for the secondary display, such as 1,920 x 1,200 or 1,400 x 1,050. Next, change the Color Quality drop-down menu to Highest (32-bit) and then click Apply. If everything looks fine on the new monitor, click Yes.

9 Next, click Advanced. Under the Monitor tab, select the secondary display, if it's listed under Monitor Type. Set the Screen Refresh Rate to the maximum provided by the manufacturer, such as 72Hz, for the resolution you set. The reason you should use the highest refresh rate you can is to cut down on screen flicker. Never exceed the manufacturer's recom mended maximum, however, or you could hurt your display or graphics card. (Enable the Hide Modes That This Monitor Cannot Display checkbox, if you can, to keep yourself out of trouble.) Note that many LCD monitors are limited to 60Hz as their top resolution, unlike old CRT (cathode-ray tube) displays. Fortunately, most LCDs don't seem to cause as much eye strain at this refresh rate as the older tube monitors. Click Apply and OK twice, and you're done.

10 Move the mouse pointer off the edge of your primary screen toward your new monitor. It should seamlessly appear on the secondary display. If not, repeat the click-and-drag monitor location setting in Step 4.

Windows Vista
The procedure in Vista is similar to WinXP's but with a few minor differences.
Right-click an unoccupied area of the Desktop and then select Personalize and Display Settings. Click screen 2; if necessary, drag it to your new display's physical location in regard to screen I (your main monitor).

Finally, click Extend The Desktop Onto This Monitor, Apply, and Yes. You may need to press your new display's Input Select button to enable it to "see" your Windows Desktop. If the screen remains blank, follow Step 6 in the WinXP directions above.
Install your new display's driver according to WinXP's Step 7. Your best option is to install the manufacturer's newest driver for your specific monitor model and OS. Vista's generic driver might be fine in most cases, but if you want to look for a more recent driver from Microsoft, you can click Device Manager immediately after pressing WIN-PAUSE.

Next, adjust the Resolution slider to your new display's native resolution as directed above. Set the Colors menu to the best color palette available, such as Highest (32-bit). Now, click Apply and Yes.
Finally, click the Advanced Settings button and the Monitor tab. Choose the highest Screen Refresh Rate listed in the new monitor's manufacturer's specifications for the resolution you're using and click Apply and OK twice.

Windows 7
Here's a refreshing turn of events: Win7 did all the work for us. After we plugged in our second monitor, Win7 detected it, installed a driver (for our specific make and model, we might add), extended our Windows Desktop to it, and optimized its screen resolution. It's hardly worth writing about; everything just worked.
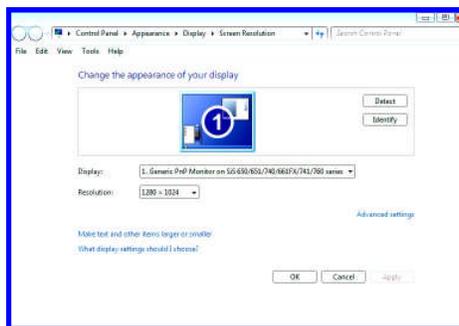
If you're so inclined, of course, you can tweak Win7's display properties as we detailed above for WinXP and Vista. Right-click an empty patch of Desktop and then select Screen Resolution. You will be able to adjust most of the properties we've already talked about. Explore the drop-down menus and you'll find interesting options such as setting the two monitors to show the same image, turning a rotatable display to portrait mode instead of landscape, and so on.

Wide-Open Spaces
Now that you've doubled your screen real estate (or more), watch out: It's easy to become spoiled. The next time you use someone else's computer with only a single monitor, you'll immediately start to miss all that wonderful elbow room. by Marty Sems

BUSINESS CARDS

How to Submit Commercial Advertisements

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For questions please contact David Yamamoto 602 418-1249 or write to above.

Submission deadlines are the 25th of each month prior to month of publication. Prices subject to change without notice.

A DIFFERENT SHORTCUT

A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT
KIND OF SHORTCUT
Vinny La Bash
vlabash (at) Comcast.net
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Whenever you select a menu item or activate an icon on your desktop, you are most likely opening a file called a shortcut. This is a great time saver for the average person who uses computers on a regular basis. A computer shortcut is a file similar to any other file that resides on your computer, with one big difference. It's only function is to direct the operating system to the location of another file so you don't have to go exploring through layers of folders to find it, assuming you even know its location. As mentioned above. it's a great time saver.

Wouldn't it be handy to have a desktop shortcut icon that would bring you to your favorite website without having to go through all the intermediate steps to get there? First you need to open your browser. Then it's a matter of getting the URL into the address bar. There is more than one way to do this. You can use the mouse to select an item from the Favorites bar or Command bar. You can also type in the address manually, which is prone to error and can be cumbersome if the URL is long and complex. Suffice to say that Microsoft has provided the ability to create many paths to the same destination. No matter which path you take, the first time you visit a web site is the most time consuming. Only once do you need to take the longest journey. Subsequent visits can be made via a desktop shortcut. Let's take the path ofleast resistance.
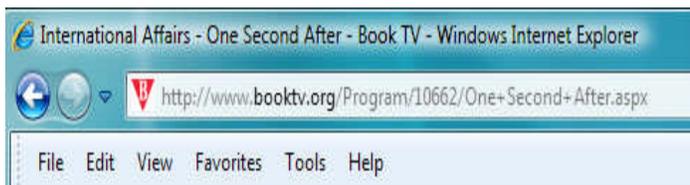
The illustration above shows the web address (URL) of a web sitewe'll presume you visit frequently. The

easiest way tocreate a desktop shortcut to thislocation is to:- Right click the icon immediately to the left of the web site address. In this example, it's the red down-pointing triangle with the white B inside.- Minimize any open windows blocking access to the desktop.- While holding the right mouse button, drag the icon to an empty portion of your desktop.– Release the right mouse button and a dialog box will appear prompting you to create a shortcut on the desktop.- Click on the Create Shortcuts Here option.

Your desktop icon will resemble the above illustration. Customizing the icon is easy. Right-clickon the icon, and select Properties from the popup menu. Activate the Web Document tab. From here you can change the icon by clicking on the Change Icon button and choosing from a large selection provided by Microsoft If you don't care for any of these, you can browse through folders on your computer until you find one you prefer

.The Security tab allows you to grant or deny access to anyone who also shares your computer. Information on the Details tab will vary with the web site. The General tab, (which should be the Details tab), is where you get the detailed information about the icon.

Change whatever you think needs changing or leave everything alone. The choice is yours.

As always, the devil is in the details. If the website you wish to access through the shortcut requires authorization, the shortcut may not work. If a user ID and password are needed you will most likely get a message telling you that you're not getting in until you provide proper identification.

THOUSAND OF FREE BOOKS

**THOUSANDS OF FREE
BOOKS AVAILABLE
ONLINE**
By Ira Wilsker
Director, APCUG
Iwilsker(at)apcug.net

I enjoy reading. I find that readingis intellectually stimulating, broadens my horizons, and provides vicarious experiences. My daughters grew up in ahome full of books where they all became avid readers; this substantially contributed to their academic and professional achievements.

My students at LIT should be reading more, but the cost of books is a deterrent, and a trip to the college or public libraries often an inconvenience. Many of today's students have grownup in the era of online information, email, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo!, and Google and to them "online" is their primary information resource. Now there are internet resources where anyone can read literature of any genre', including hundreds ofcurrent textbooks, for free. Depending on the rules of the respective websites, these complete books can be read online in a browser window, or downloaded in a variety of formats, often including the popular and universal PDF format.

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historically significant recordings from no less than the likes of Thomas Edison. Project Gutenberg has books available in many languages with the largest number being in English, and even some written in Mayan or Yiddish. I know people who download the audio books in MP3 format, burn them to CD, and play them in the car. I know of one individual who has downloaded several of the Edgar Allen Poe audio books, and plays them from an MP3 player as spooky stories for the kids around the campfire.

I teach economics every semester at LIT and try to instill in my students some of the history, culture, and philosophy that created our economic system. While he is briefly recognized in our economics books, Adam Smith is believed by many to be the father of classical economic philosophy. The full unabridged version of his most recognized tome "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations", better known as the "Wealth of Nations" is on my recommended reading list. In the past the students had to compete for the limited number of copies available in the library or purchase a copy, an often difficult task for a cash strapped college student. Today's college student, or anyone for that matter, can simply go online and read it on his monitor, or download a copy for future reference. This is but one example of how technology can be positively used to expand the minds of society, and provoke inspired thought and discussion. The book "Wealth of Nations" is but one of many thousands available for free online at Project Gutenberg.

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with the common ZIP format in order to make the download a smaller file, but modern versions of Windows will open and uncompress the files, or third party utilities can "unzip" the files for play.

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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.

BUYING A WIRELESS ROUTER

BUYING A WIRELESS
ROUTER
By Jim McKnight, Los Angeles Computer Society
www.jimopi.net

I recently went Router shopping.As do most people, I wanted a router that would extend my wireless throughout the entire house if possible. If necessary, I was willing to play with various external antennas and antenna hacks to directionally enhance the signal, but I wanted a quality router signal to start with. Here is what I learned:

1) First of all, I was unable to find any reviews or comparisons on the web regarding router performance over distance (long-range) or (radio) signal strength. Yes, Wireless uses a radio signal and the radio's signal strength is shown by the little bars or the "%"value in your PC's Wireless Utility when it detects a nearby router.

2) I found that a higher price on a router does not insure better signal strength. My cheapy old Netgear Router (WGR614 v5)has much better signal strength across my house than the newer higher priced Models that I tested. (Netgear, D-Link, Linksys, and others).

3) Without good radio signal strength, all the digital technology in the world will not make a router perform at a distance, no matter what it says on the box. You need a good signal to connect. After that, better technology can improve speed and performance. The better speed promised by 802.11n is only good if there's a decent signal level reaching your PC to begin with.

4) The signal on the new 5.0GHz band that is added to many new high-end "Dual-band" Routers does not travel as far through walls as does the signal of the regular 2.4 GHz band that 802.11g/n currently uses. Even though the 5.0 GHz band is less prone to interference, I would not choose it for long range. A waste of money.

5) Some routers come with their antennas mounted either internally or permanently affixed to the outside of the router so there is no way to connect an external antenna. Netgear for example, does not seem to have even one model that has a removable antenna. If a router does have a removable antenna, then you can connect an aftermarket antenna to improve signal strength. Some antennas are directional and some have along cable so you can mount it high.

6) If you do buy an external high gain antenna to extend the range of your router, be aware that the connector may not fit on your router. There are several different antenna connector types. RP-SMA, RP-TNC, MMCX, and MC-Card. See the following link for photos to help identify most of these connectors:

http://tinyurl.com/34l2xg

Routers usually use either the RP-SMA or RP-TNC style connector. The antenna's connector must exactly match your router's. I found that some antennas do come with an adapter that will allow it to work with the two most common router antenna connectors.

7) As an old radio technician, I suspect that most of the external Wi-Fi antennas currently available on the market are optimized for the 2.4 GHz band and not the 5.0 GHz band, even though the specs may say they will work on both, another reason to stay on the 2.4 GHz band.

8) If you have a wireless router that does not quite give a strong enough signal, try the trick at these links:http://tinyurl.com/2fga7p,and,http://tinyurl.com/2lflc.

9) Personally, I ended up buying a Hawking Technology Hi-Gain Wireless-300N Router that has the availability of several Hi-Gain external antenna solutions. It is the only router that gave me better signal strength than my old Netgear. Note: While shopping, I returned both a D-LinkDIR-825and a Netgear WGT624, before finding the Hawking unit. Both had terrible signal strength across my house. **Always check for the latest version of this document at:

www.jimopi.net.

UBUNTU 64-BIT OPERATING SYSTEM

Ubuntu 64-bit Operating System
By Brian K. Lewis, PhD, Regular Columnist
 Sarasota PCUG, Florida
www.spcug.org
bwsail at yahoo.com

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As I mentioned in my previous Monitor (August 2009) article, I was interested in installing a 64-bit operating system (OS) on my laptop. Since I have a relatively new system that is 64-bit capable, it seemed to be time to try it out. I had downloaded the .iso file for the latest version of Ubuntu, version 9.04 or "Jaunty Jackalope". This is the latest regular release. Another one is due in Canonical's six month release cycle about the time this article is published. The next long-term release is due in the spring of 2010. For more information on the Ubuntu release cycle see   http://www.ubuntu.com/products/ubuntu/release-cycle.

I used the Brasero Disk Burner software that was provided with Ubuntu version 8.10 to burn the .iso file to disk. Burning the .iso file produced a bootable "Live" CD that could be used for the installation. I already had two operating systems on my computer and I wanted to add the 64-bit OS as the third rather than remove one. The hard drive had Vista in one 160 GB partition and the 32-bit Ubuntu in another 160 MB partition. I thought I would be able to divide that latter partition to use half for the 32-bit and half for the 64-bit version of Ubuntu. At least that was the plan.

I booted the computer using the installation CD. With a Live CD, the first menu allows you to run Ubuntu directly from the CD, install Ubuntu, do a check on the CD or boot from the hard drive instead. To do a few checks of the compatibility of the 64-bit system with my hardware, I ran Ubuntu from the CD. Everything seemed to work properly, except for the printer. That I had expected as the Brother printer I use requires drivers to be downloaded from the Brother web site. At this point everything was looking good, so I clicked on the Install Icon on the desktop.

After a short delay as the software loaded, I was greeted with the opening screen to select the language. English was highlighted, so I just clicked on "Continue". The next screen was to select the keyboard and US was highlighted. Again, just click on "Continue". Next came the screen for the time zone. Since I was doing this in the Central Time Zone, I clicked in that area and Chicago came up as the location. Next click on "Continue" again.

Now I got down to the real business of the installation. The software loaded the drive partitioner. The current partitions were identified as Windows Vista, Ubuntu 8.10 and the Linux swap partition. There were two different bars showing the current partitions in different colors. My choices here were (1) use the entire drive for Ubuntu 9.04; (2) install 9.04 side by side with the current OS's; or (3) do a custom partition. On selecting the second option and clicking on the Ubuntu partition, there was a slider that I could use to alter the size of the current Ubuntu partition on the second bar. So I used that to reduce the 8.1 partition and the software then added the 9.04 partition to the graphic. Once I was satisfied with the size of the new partition, I again clicked on "Continue". After a few seconds an error message popped up telling me that the process had failed. Oh well, back to the beginning. After trying the process twice, I canceled the installation and restarted the computer with Ubuntu 8.10.

I suspected the partitioning problem was caused by one of two possibilities. One that the partition I was working with was 32 bit and I wanted to install a 64 bit OS which didn't fit the disk formatting. Or two, all the partitions were on the boot drive and so were locked. I needed to try a different tactic. Next, I downloaded an .iso file for the graphic version of Gparted. This is a free partitioning program that works with many different file systems. It can also resize and move partitions without loss of data. Since I had already backed up my Ubuntu 8.10 to an external hard drive, I felt it was safe to use Gparted to create an empty partition on the drive. After booting from this CD, Gparted identified all the partitions in use on the drive. I highlighted the Ubuntu 8.10 partition and clicked on Move/Resize. After entering the new size for the partition, I clicked on Apply. It took about 10 minutes to complete the process. This left an unallocated partition of about 75 GB. Next I exited Gparted, removed the CD, replaced it with the Ubuntu install CD and restarted the system.

After getting back to the partitioning section of the install, it offered me an additional choice to install Ubuntu 9.04 in the largest unallocated partition. That was exactly what I wanted. Selecting that and clicking on Continue allowed the installation to go forward. In about 25 minutes the installation was complete. After the computer was rebooted, I logged into Vista just to be certain it was working. Then I exited and booted into Ubuntu 9.04.

My first impressions of this 64-bit version of Ubuntu are very positive. It loads from the boot menu in about 10-15 seconds. This is noticeably faster than the earlier 32-bit version. It also makes Vista look like a snail. Turning off the computer results in complete shutdown in less than 10 seconds. Try to get Vista to do that!

Ubuntu comes with most of the software that I use on a regular basis: OpenOffice 3.0, Firefox 3.0, Gimp (Photoshop equivalent), XSane (scanning software), Brasero Disc Burner, and Tomboy notes. There are four

UBUNTU 64-BIT OPERATING SYSTEM

other packages that I downloaded using the Add/Remove function on the Applications menu. These are: Jpilot (Contact manager), Gramps (genealogy), GnuCash (finances) and Firestarter (a firewall). All of these applications are maintained by the Ubuntu developer community and are free under the GNU license. The download and install process took about 30 minutes, primarily due to the slowness of my Internet connection at that time.

Once all my software was installed, I copied the data files from the old 32-bit partition to the new 64-bit partition and I was off and running. All the data was immediately accessible and it was apparent I had lost nothing in the transition to 64-bit. I am also very pleased with the responsiveness of all the 64-bit applications. I can't say that there is a tremendous increase in speed, but the time required to load applications does seem to be reduced. OpenOffice for one, opens in about half the time that was required in the 32-bit system. The opening logo appears with little or no delay after clicking on the shortcut icon on the desktop. That alone is a real improvement.

The last item I needed to install was the multifunction printer. As I mentioned earlier it is a Brother MFC machine and the printer/scanner drivers are not provided by Ubuntu. Brother has a web site devoted to the Linux drivers for its products. They also provide installation information for both 32-bit and 64-bit systems. To get the printer drivers to work with my 64-bit system I had to download and install a specific library file. That was available through the Synaptic Package Manager under the System menu. All I needed to do was select the file and click on Apply. The Package Manager downloaded and installed the file. Then I used the command line function in a terminal window to install the printer drivers and the scanner drivers. This was simplified by the fact that Brother had the complete command in their installation instructions. It was very simple to copy it into the command line in the terminal window. Testing both the printer and the scanner indicated that the overall process was successful.

All of the software applications that came with Ubuntu 9.04 were 64-bit as it does not work with 32-bit software. Also, I didn't need to specify what I need for any of the applications I downloaded, with the exception of the Brother scanner software. Both the Add/Remove software function and the Synaptic Package Manager select only the 64-bit applications from the various repositories. When it comes to using a 64-bit Windows OS, it won't be this easy. Although 64-bit Windows can also run some 32-bit applications, this doesn't apply to all software. So in going 64-bit with Windows will require replacement with 64-bit applications. This is especially true of anti-virus software, firewalls and any other utilities that phork directly with the hard drive. This means that more time, and money, will be involved in going from 32-bit to 64-bit Windows.

I have been using this new Ubuntu installation for just about a month. Everything I have tried has worked without complaint. I have used both the broadband wireless connection as well as the WiFi in a couple of hotspots. Both have worked without the need for any additional setup. The wireless connection menu comes up with a single click on the wireless icon on the top of the desktop page. Then one click connects the broadband. Once I turn on the WiFi the same menu shows me any available WiFi connections. It also indicates whether or not a password is required for access. My broadband connection has shown download speeds ranging from 1 Kb/S to 3100 Kb/S (kilobits per second). That of course was in different locations. The speed really depends on how close I am to a cell phone tower. Both wireless operations are quite simple and provide me with alternate means of getting to the Internet.

One thing I had not anticipated was the size of the update that needed to be installed after I had my system up and running. I knew there would be some updates since this version had been released several months earlier. The Update Manager notified me that there was a total of 132 megabytes of files that needed to be downloaded and installed. These were various updates including some security updates. There was also an update to the Ubuntu kernel. This is the heart of the OS. So I clicked on OK and waited for the download and installation to be completed. This was one of the few times that I had to reboot the system after an installation. Unlike Microsoft, Ubuntu notifies you of new updates as they are available and the update rarely requires rebooting of the system.

After using this 64-bit version of Ubuntu , I wonder why I bothered t my hard drive. There is no doubt in my mind that this 64-bit Ubuntu dows 7.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.

HOW TO GET THERE

West Side Meeting

College America Room 2

6533 N Black Canyon Hwy Phoenix

Turn right (east) on McLellan Blvd.

Immediately turn right (south) into parking lot..
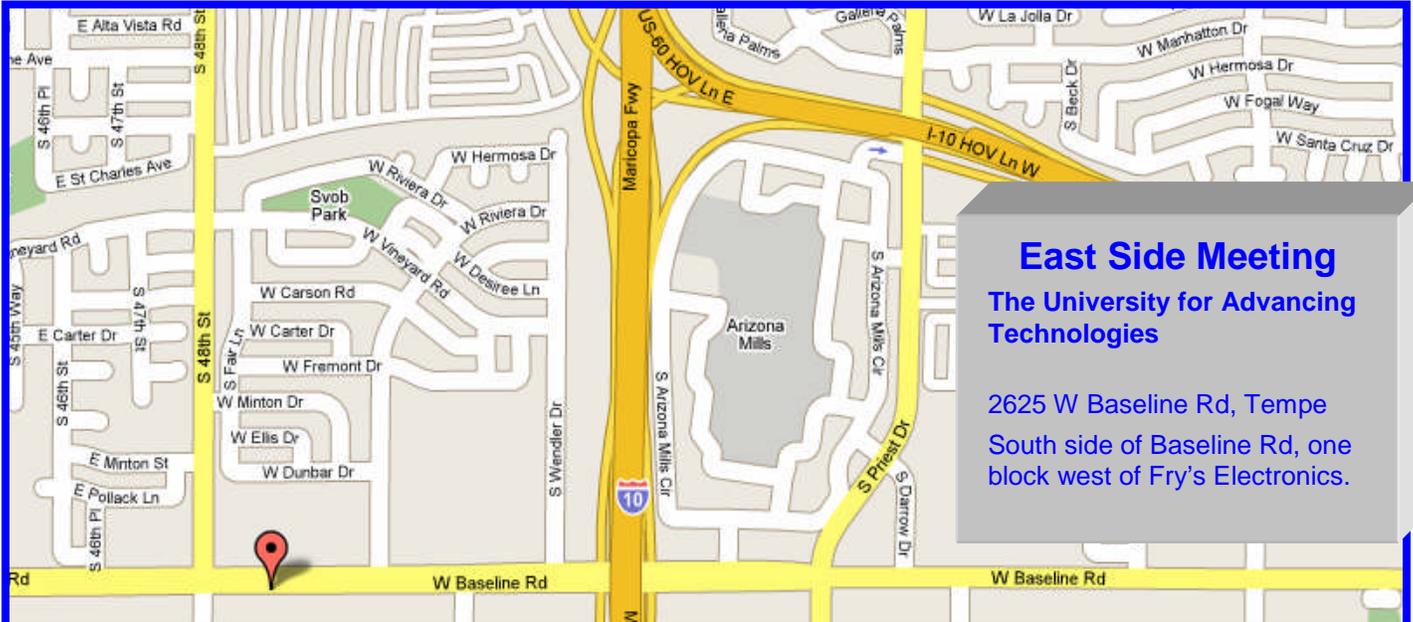
East Side Meeting

The University for Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

South side of Baseline Rd, one block west of Fry's Electronics.
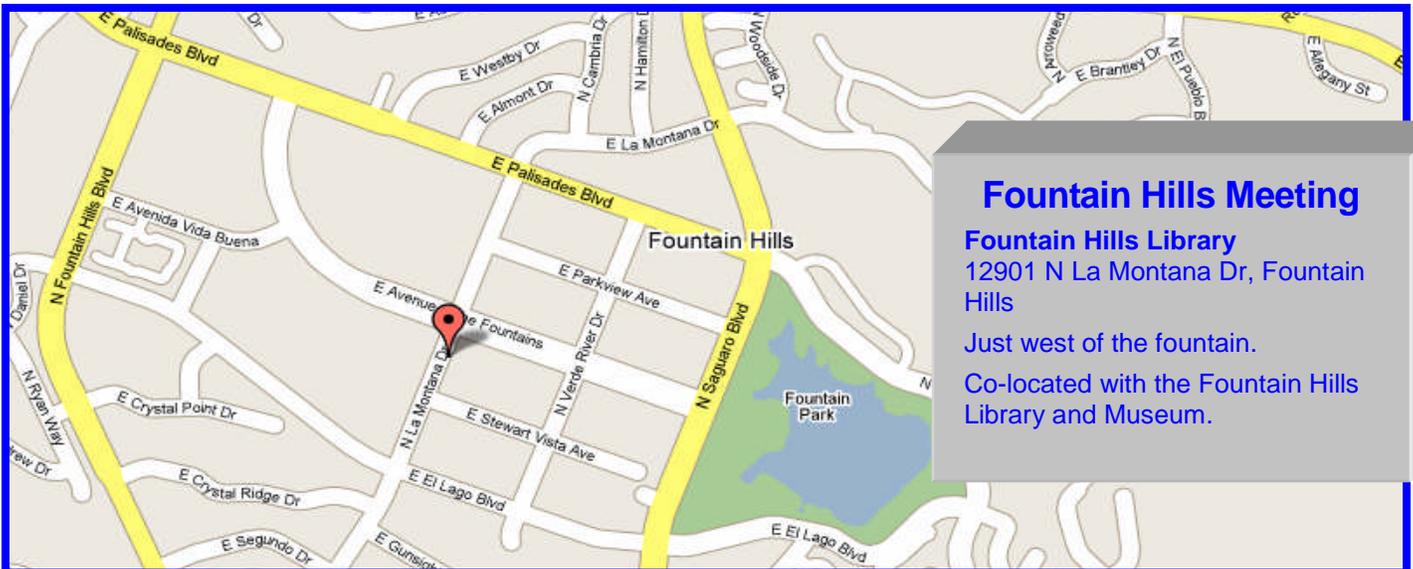
Fountain Hills Meeting

Fountain Hills Library
12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills

Just west of the fountain.

Co-located with the Fountain Hills Library and Museum.

UBUNTU INSTALLER   TIPS YOU CAN USE

WUBI?

What The Heck Is A WUBI?
The Windows-based Ubuntu Installer
Jim McKnight, Los Angeles Computer Society
www.jimopi.net

(WUBI) is a program that allows you to install and remove Ubuntu-Linux from within Microsoft Windows (98, 2000, XP, Vista, or Windows 7). WUBI automatically creates a dual boot option that lets a Microsoft Windows user try Ubuntu without risking any data loss due to disk formatting or partitioning. Normally, installing Ubuntu or any version of Linux on a system that is also running Windows is intimidating and very risky. Total failure to boot Windows is a common result. WUBI to the rescue: The WUBI installer is now included on every Ubuntu Live CD and easily installs Ubuntu INSIDE of windows (all versions), and in the same partition (drive letter) as Windows if you like. The install process is like any other program installed in Windows. Installing this way is sooooo easy. Also, when you want to remove Ubuntu, you just go to Add/Remove Programs and remove it like any other program running under Windows. Dual-boot: After the installation, a new (dual) boot option screen appears right after power up, allowing you to select whether you want to run either Windows standalone or Ubuntu standalone. Wow, what a great way to play with Linux/Ubuntu without the hassle of partitioning the hard drive and dealing with those messy dual-boot managers like GRUB or GAG. Yuck (Yes, those are real acronyms. Not the Yuck. It just means yuck). To start the process, you need an Ubuntu Live (Install) CD that you or a friend has downloaded and burned. You can also go to the Ubuntu website and have them mail you a free CD (10weeks).To install Ubuntu using WUBI, just insert the "Ubuntu Install CD" while Windows is running. Do not boot the CD. The CD should start. If not, go to My Computer, open the CD and click on wubi.exe. When you see the opening window, simply select "Install Inside Windows" .After that, you answer a few questions about what drive letter, and how much drive space you want to allow for Ubuntu. That's it! I have tried this under XP andWindows 7 and it is flawless.
NOTES:- Hibernation is not supported when installing Ubuntu via WUBI (for either Windows or Ubuntu).- Follow these links for detailed WUBI operating instructions:http://wiki.ubuntu.com/ Wubi-Guide and here: http://help.ubuntu.com/community/Wubi- Ubuntu 32 bit can run underWindows 32 bit or Windows 64bit.

TIPS FROM SMART COMPUTING

A Handy Keyboard Shortcut: For many computer users, multitasking is a must. Between that Web browser, word processing document, and photo-editing program, your screen can fill up pretty quickly. Sometimes you need to clear the clutter and get straight to the Windows Desktop. To quickly minimize all open windows on-screen, press WIN (the Windows Logo key)-D. Press the combination again to bring the windows back up.

Snip It Good: When you want to clip out a piece of your Desktop and send it to someone, forget the hassle of Print Screen and cropping in an image editor. The Snipping Tool built into Window 7 and Windows Vista offers this time-saving functionality straight from the OS (operating system). Click Start, select All Programs, Accessories, and Snipping Tool. The Snipping Tool comes up as a small window you can just drop into a corner of your screen. The pull-down menu alongside the New button lets you pick from creating snips from a free-form pen, rectangular mouse drag, the active window, or the entire screen. Once you make the snip, the graphic comes up in the Snipping Tool editor, where you can add pen and highlighter markups. Finally, you can save snips in JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group), GIF (Graphics Interchange Format), PNG (Portable Network Graphics), or HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) formats, or copy and paste them out of the editor into whatever application you like.

Stickier Notes: In Windows 7, you'll find Sticky Notes, a revamped version of the old Notes gadget now built into the operating system. (Open the Start menu, click All Programs, and select Accessories to find Sticky Notes.) Sticky Notes lets you place virtual Post-Its anywhere on your Desktop. You can also stack notes. Right-clicking a note brings up a menu that will let you pick from any of six note colors. There's seemingly no way to change the font or format a note, but this is less of a concern than the fact that there's no "always on top" option for notes so you can't bury them out of sight. Still, Sticky Notes can definitely help with productivity and are less likely to get swept up by housekeeping than their paper counterparts.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Official Policy of the Phoenix PC Users Group is that we do not condone software piracy in any form.

DUES $30 FOR MAR 2010
THROUGH
DEC 31, 2010

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

First: (Print Legibly) _____Initial: ____Last:_____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code:_____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Ext: _____
Please note: We DO-NOT share phone numbers outside the club, and will generally only use your phone information, if we cannot contact you in timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club web-site

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

E-mail address: _____(Print Legibly)

Signature _____Date____/____/____

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

May the club share your e-mail address
with other members only?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
With club approved vendors?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
Please do not share my e-mail address   ☐

Mail this completed form with payment to:
Phoenix PC Users Group
5555 N. 7th Street, Suite 5
PMB101
Phoenix, AZ 85014

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

March 2010

The Newsletter of the Phoenix Personal Computer Users Group
"Users helping users to understand computers"