



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*



MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tue, April 20

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, April 21

University of Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills.....Thu, April 22

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

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Steering Committee:

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

If you made a cash payment for Club Dues in Feb or Mar of 2010, please contact Lo Hardman, the club Treasurer. I have, and have deposited, funds which I do not have any paperwork to go with. That means that some members are likely not going to receive a newsletter. My apologies for the issue. I don't know if I ever had paper and lost it, or never got it to begin with, or got it verbally and forgot it (highly likely).

I am implementing a policy / process to prevent a future occurrence.

From now on new membership and membership renewal must be accompanied with a current membership form. This form can be found on the back of the newsletter. The form will also be available from the meeting coordinator if you do not have a newsletter.

Having a current membership form allows the Club to keep current email, phone, street address, etc. on file. If your payment is a renewal all that is required on the form is your Name, e-mail address and any other information that has changed since you last filled out a form.

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Good morning everybody!

Or whenever you are reading this column. I hope you have been successful with getting your taxes done. I know mine has been quite a struggle this year.

Amazon Kindle and other e-book readers have become very popular items recently. Also, Apple iPad, Windows Vista & Windows 7 all have ebook software available for Kindle e-books and probably more over time. Currently most e-book readers are monochrome so color e-books as well as color magazines and newspapers are just not quite available but may be fairly soon. It remains however if a paid subscription model similar to the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, etc can become a viable revenue producing enterprise.

Speaking of iPads, a number of deficiencies have come to light such as the lack of a camera, retention of user creative content such as your own personal music, documents, only a very slow virtual keyboard, lack of USB ports, etc. Compare this to the latest HP Slate which has all these items and more. So my conclusion is unless you have an explicit need for Apple software that runs on the iPad and iPod only. Whereas Windows software is available from a multitude of sources as compared to the sole source Apple Store. But, there are excellent iPod/iPad applications such as foreign language training, eg. Japanese, including kanji.

In the upcoming months, we plan to feature Windows Vista and 7 little known but very useful functions. Last month was Speech / Voice Recognition which I have used to dictate this entire column. Very easy to train and use. This month I will feature at least one useful utility and if time permits a second one. Come to the meeting to find out what they are!

Also on an ongoing basis, we plan to cover topics for beginners, intermediate and advanced users and welcome audience participation, because this is your user group. Also please bring a friend - to share the knowledge and camaraderie.

Please think of topics you would like us to cover, we have been thinking about the security expert for personal identification security such as the expert that we had from the FBI a number of years ago.

Have a good month!

David Yamamoto

FROM YOUR EDITOR

This month I thank Allen Hunt for proof reading most of the articles you will be reading. Some stories were not ready so if you find a typo it's my fault not his.

John Curth did an article for us and it certainly rang true to the experiences I have encountered. While most programs accomplish what they were designed to do, some are hardly user friendly when it comes to setting them up. Read John's article and you will know what I am talking about. Thanks for the article John and come on Guys and Gals send me more articles. I am always looking for material.

Both David and I are using Microsoft's Speech Recognition program to do our columns so if we seem to wander a little blame it on Microsoft.

Web Tour has many solid programs that are free. In future Newsletters we will reveal them in detail.

Several people helped Lo collect dues in January and February. When he posted the results he found that he had more paid dues than names to go with the payments. Not good. Lo is taking responsibility for this but it may not be his fault at all. Read Lo's notice on page 1 and you will see that no matter who's fault it was it will not happen again. Please cooperate.

Due to some health problems Steve Semon is turning the Publisher's responsibilities over to me but will be our Historian. When ever we have a problem and require background information on what the group did before we were members we depend on Steve to fill us in. Thanks Steve.

Bill Anlepp

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MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 17)

- Tuesday, April 20, 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, April 21, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 17)

- Thursday, April 22, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

A continuation of Win 7 Speech Recognition and exploring some of the other Win 7 / Vista little known useful programs.

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WEBTOUR

Web Tour this month will encompass a project I have thought about for some time. Could you have a computer with all of the applications being free? Well here they are.

One caveat is while the apps are free they are sometimes littered with additional sponsored applications. For example you will encounter a box or boxes with check marks in them while you are downloading. At first you might think this was part of the application you wanted. Read carefully what that checked box includes. My rule of thumb is almost always left click on all boxes, clear the check mark, this keeps programs I do not want from being downloaded..

Another caveat is you should carefully read and search for the download that you want. Many apps. have a free version and several for pay versions on the same page. The objective is to get you to mistakenly download the for pay application and then hope you decide to keep it. When you get to a page that has all these unwanted downloads think of it as a treasure hunt. Some where on that page, sometimes in very small print, you will find the free application you want. Go for it, it's worth it.

One other point of order. This list is comprised of my favorite apps. I know there are many other versions and types but I picked these because they all work for me and work on Vista/ Win 7.

OFFICE SUITE

OPEN OFFICE

<http://download.openoffice.org/>

This is probably the best known of the freebie apps. It has most of the Office Suite programs such as word processing, a spreadsheet and so on.

PDF VIRTUAL PRINTER

PDF CREATOR

<http://www.pdf-creator.us/>

PDF Creator is a virtual printer so it's automatically integrated and ready for use in all of your favorite Windows® programs. Just think of it as another printer.

PDF READER

ADOBE 9 READER

www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html

Free from Adobe and the universal standard.

SYSTEM CLEANER

ADVANCED SYSTEM CARE

<http://www.iobit.com/ascdownload.html>

Here, again, I have tried many system cleaners. I have even bought two of them but this one I prefer and use at least once a week. You will be amazed at the crap your computer collects. It has a one-click approach to help protect, repair, clean, and optimize your PC.

DRIVER UPDATES

DRIVER MAX

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

Download the latest driver updates for Windows 7, Windows Vista or Windows XP for free. It also will list all of your current drivers in a separate folder.

The free version allows only two driver downloads per day, however, Vista and Win 7 are good at keeping your drivers up to date so that is not a burden..

SECURITY-ANTI VIRUS AND FIREWALL AVAST

<http://www.avast.com/free-antivirus-download>

It's effective, works in the background and is unobtrusive.

ZONE ALARM FREE

<http://www.zonealarm.com/security/en-us/anti-virus-spyware-free-download.htm>

Probably only required for XP. Vista and Win 7 have built in firewalls

MEDIA PLAYER

VLC PLAYER

<http://www.vlcmmediaplayer.org/>

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MAKING WINDOWS MORE LEGIBLE

**Making Windows More Legible by
Gary Bentley (g.bentley (at) att.net),
Southwest International Personal Computer Club (www.swipcc.org)**

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Have you noticed that each time you purchase a new computer with a higher resolution screen you find everything on the screen looks smaller than it did on the lower resolution monitor screen (if the diagonal size of your monitor was increased you might offset this phenomenon somewhat, but still be surprised that things looked about the same size in that case)?

This is because the Windows operating system assumes that the actual number of pixels per actual inch lighting up on your monitor screen is 96, i.e., 96 DPI ("dots" per physical inch) is assumed by the operating system.

Why would this assumption make things (icons, pictures, text, etc.) look smaller on a monitor that had higher native resolution (native resolution meaning the actual number of pixels lighting up per actual physical inch on your screen)?

Let us look at a real-world example. My Dell LatitudeD620 has a 14 inch diagonal LCD screen with 1440 (horizontal) by 900 (vertical) pixels (native resolution, i.e., actual LCD pixels). How many DPI, i.e., pixels per inch is my screen? Well, recalling the Scarecrow's recitation in the Wizard Of Oz when he received his "brain diploma" (or what he should have said, since he actually misstated the Pythagorean theorem — we can only assume that the Wizard did not want to damage Scarecrow's self-esteem by correcting him), we know that the 14 inch diagonal

on my screen is the hypotenuse of a right triangle, the sides of which are 1440 and 900 pixels. So we can take the squareroot of the sum of the squares of those two sides and that will give us the number of pixels along the 14 inch diagonal. The square root of 1440 squared plus 900 squared is, using Wolfram Alpha (use the basic arithmetic box there), 1698. Note that Wolfram uses standard means of entering mathematical operators. You might have to look those up and make adjustments, e.g., I asked for the square root by telling Wolfram to take the parenthetical operations to the 0.5 power since I knew how to enter the exponentiation operator ("^"), but not a square root sign (a radical sign).

So we have 1698 pixels along my 14 inch screen diagonal, or 1698 pixels/14 inches = 121 pixels per inch (121 DPI). How wide is one pixel? 1 inch/121 pixels = 0.008264 inch per pixel. Why would this make things smaller on my Windows desktop? Well, Windows assumes 96 pixels make an inch, so an inch on my screen is now 96 x 0.008264 or 0.79 inch. So everything on my Windows desktop is only 80% of the size it would be if there were actually 96 pixels per inch on my screen. I can verify that my calculations are correct by setting Microsoft Word to display an 8.5 x 11 inch standard document at 100% size. When I measure the width of that document on my screen I obtain 6 13/16 inches or 6.8125 inches. 6.8125/8.5 = 0.80, i.e., the 8.5 inch wide document is displayed at 80% of its actual size as we calculated would occur.

This means that text fonts are 80% of their intended size on my screen also. Fonts are defined in terms of points. A point is defined as 1/72 inch, i.e., 72 points per inch. Windows assumes there are 96 pixels per inch, so a Windows logical point is 96/72 = 1.333 device independent pixels. A 10 point font should be around 10 x 1.333 pixels or 13 pixels vertical (leaving

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MAKING WINDOWS MORE LEGIBLE

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aside details of leading, etc.). That would be $13/96 = 0.13$ inches high roughly on a 96 DPI monitor. On my 121 DPI monitor that 10 point font would only be $13/121 = 0.10$ inch high approximately, again about 80% smaller.

A Microsoft study indicates about 55% of people reduce the resolution of their monitors (configure Windows screen resolution in Display Properties for a lower value), presumably to make the text and other items on their computer screen larger. For example, if I changed my laptop screen resolution to 800 x 600 there would be fewer Windows pixels to cover the same area, so the "pixels" would be larger, making everything constructed with those fat pixels larger too. Fat pixels make fuzzy or pixilated images, though they are larger images. This is rather like purchasing a \$474 Canon EOS Rebel with 10 Megapixel resolution and then setting it to take 640 x 480 photos (when you have paid for a camera that can take 3648 x 2736 pixel photos roughly).

A better way to increase the size of text and other items on your screen is to use Windows DPI scaling. You can tell the operating system that you want an inch on your screen to be made up of more than 96 dots/pixels (if you don't have a monitor with more than 96 actual dots per inch this would not work as well, since the operating system would have to "fake" the additional pixel density using mathematical algorithms). In Windows XP you can right click on the Desktop, select Properties, then Settings, then Advanced, then DPI setting. Choose more dots per inch, say 120 DPI. Go higher if needed. Evaluate the effect in normal use of your system.

In Windows Vista, Open Personalization by clicking the Start button, clicking Control Panel, clicking Appearance and Personalization, and then

clicking Personalization. In the left pane, click Adjust font size (DPI). If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation. In the DPI Scaling dialog box, increase the size of text and other items on the screen by clicking Larger scale (120 DPI)—make text more readable, and then click OK. You can use higher DPI settings to obtain still larger fonts and objects.

If we chose to scale up to 120 DPI on my laptop, then an inch would be 120 dots/pixels and a Windows inch on my screen would indeed be an inch, restoring the size of items on my screen to that of a typical 96 DPI monitor. I should note that Internet Explorer 7 and 8 both have a zoom feature which will enlarge text and other items on a web page. This is a separate issue in some respects.

How big would that 10 point font be if you used a 64.5 inch diagonal HDTV with 1920 x 1080 native resolution with VGA input for your computer monitor? Calculate screen DPI: 34 DPI (calculate the number of pixels in the 64.5 inch diagonal for 1920 x 1080 pixel right triangle as we did above; divide that number of pixels by 64.5 inches). Simply looking at the ratio, the HDTV pixels would be $96/34$ or 2.82 times larger than a 96 DPI monitor. So, a 10 point font might be around $0.13 \text{ inch} \times 2.82 = 0.36$ inches high—over a third of an inch. And if you scaled up your Windows DPI setting to 200 DPI, you might get that 10 point font up to 0.8 inches high (over three quarters of an inch high) on that 64.5 inch \$4,000 dollar HDTV computer monitor.

I have barely scratched the surface on this topic, but I hope I have said enough to give you some ideas about making things more visible on your computer screen without throwing away the high resolution of your monitor.

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There is a way you can support your user group. Smart Computing Magazine will give a 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.

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BOOK REVIEW: WINDOWS 7 SECRETS

Book Review: Windows 7 Secrets

Reviewed by Ken Blake (ken (at) kjblake.com), Tucson Computer Society (www.aztcs.org)

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Authors: Paul Thurrott and Rafael Rivera, Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Before I begin to review this book, let me tell you a little about my experience with Windows 7. The Windows 7 Release Candidate 1 became available on April 23, 2009, and I ran it from then until August 6, when the Release to Manufacturing became available and I switched to it. I mention this just to make it clear that I already have six months of experience using this version of Windows and this book is not at all my first look at it. And before I begin to talk about the quality of its contents, let me address what the book is, and what it contains.

First its title, and in particular, the word "SECRETS" (in all upper-case): Despite that word, the book is not about secrets. It's a book trying to tell the reader almost everything about Windows 7, and is both an introduction to Windows 7 for those who are completely new to it, and a reference book for those who already know something about it.

There's nothing at all secret about the great majority of what it contains. However, some of the things discussed in the book are marked with an icon containing the word "secret" Are these secrets? No, not at all; they are meant to be, as it says in the preface, "little-known facts." Something isn't a secret just because it's little-known; moreover, not all of the items marked "secret" are little-known and worse, not all of them are 100% accurate. My view is that the word "secrets" is just exaggerated advertising, and completely inappropriate.

Emblazoned on the paperback front cover of the book, in all caps, is the sentence "DO WHAT YOU NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE WITH Windows 7!" Everybody may not agree with me, but that kind of advertising, especially overstated advertising, on the cover of the book is a major turnoff for me.

The book is enormous, containing 1009 pages of text in 26 chapters, and a large index that brings the total to 1054. Although I might have presented some of it in a slightly different order than what these authors did, the organization is generally well done. But some of these chapters have nothing to do with Windows 7, and as far as I'm concerned don't belong in this book at all.

For example, chapter 10 is about Windows Home Server. Windows Home Server is a completely different operating system that if you run at all will run on a different computer in your home network, and it's been around since well before Windows 7. It's an excellent product and I run it myself, but this book is not where a description of it and help in using it belongs. Chapter 14 is about Zune, another Microsoft product that has nothing to do with Windows 7. Chapter 18 is about the Windows Mobile Smartphone, a hardware product. Chapter 21 is about Windows Live Mail, a software product that doesn't come with Windows 7. Chapter 13, "Digital Videos and DVD Movies," also is largely about software products that are not part of Windows 7. Much the same is true of chapter 23, "Your Life in Sync—Windows and Live Services."

Are these topics important and worth talking about and including in the book, even though they are not part of Windows 7? Arguably, yes and apparently the authors think so. On the other hand, I think someone who buys a book should get what the title promises he will get, and not other things as well.

Some people may be glad these non-Windows 7 topics are included, but others (me, for example) (Continued on page 9)

BOOK REVIEW: WINDOWS 7 SECRETS

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ple) will feel that they just make the book more expensive as well as bigger, heavier, and containing more to read. My view is that this sort of stuff simply doesn't belong here—not unless the title of the book is dramatically changed, so purchasers get what they expect to get.

Oddly, in the font used for the text of the book the "7" of "Windows 7" is slashed, but in the fonts used for headings and other things, it's not. It's not a serious complaint, but slashing the "7" is unusual in the USA, and the inconsistency of its use is mildly annoying.

Throughout the book, whenever a particular feature is talked about, it's described as wonderful, and an improvement over what it was in previous versions of Windows. I'm a big fan of Windows 7, and I think that it's the best version of Windows ever, but I don't think that everything about it is wonderful. If I had my druthers, some things would be done differently.

Some of the things described may be good for some people, but not for others, depending on what other software they use, and upon their style of working. The tone of the authors in describing many things reads like unmitigated advertising, rather than honest description and evaluation.

Here's an example of the kind of sentence I'm talking about: "Microsoft has dramatically enhanced the capabilities of the taskbar." I know some people who like the Windows 7 changes to the task bar (Quick Launch icons are now on it together with the other icons, not on a separate toolbar) and others who hate it. Personally, I don't have strong feelings about it either way, and I certainly wouldn't describe it as "dramatically enhanced."

So, putting behind me the negative views I stated above, and turning to the quality of the book's contents, let me begin by stating that I generally like the book very much. It is thor-

ough, reasonably complete, and by and large accurate (but not perfect—such books are never perfect). It explains things very well.

And in several instances, it told me things about Windows 7 that, despite my experience with it, I didn't know. For example, it told me how, in Windows Explorer, to add folders to the Favorites list in the Navigation pane. This was to me a very useful tip and I was glad to have learned it.

The touch support for the screen is described in the book. This was new to me, primarily because my hardware doesn't support it, but it was interesting to read about it.

I was very glad to see that in the chapter on Windows security, the authors recommend against Norton and McAfee anti-virus (the two worst choices, in my view) and for ESET NOD32, the product I think is best. However, I was very disappointed to see they consider Windows Defender to be adequate anti-spyware protection, and do not recommend installing any third-party anti-spyware programs.

Unfortunately the book has its share of errors. Most of the errors are minor misstatements, rather than being terribly significant, but still they are errors. Here are few examples of things that are clearly wrong, and some things that are wrong in my opinion:

1. It says, "A full version of Windows 7...cannot be used to upgrade an existing version of Windows to Windows 7." That is not correct.

2. It says "Peek at Desktop is enabled by mousing over a new glass rectangular area found in the lower rightmost corner of the screen." The "new glass rectangular area" is at the end of the task bar, and will be at the lower right most corner of the screen only if the task bar is at the bottom of the screen. Since the task bar will be on whichever of the four sides of the screen you choose to have it on (just as in previous versions

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BOOK REVIEW: WINDOWS 7 SECRETS

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of Windows), what the book says about where it is not correct.

3. It says "Like a certain demonic creature, the notification area goes by many other names. If you see references to such things as 'the system tray' ...these are referring to... what's now simply called the notification area." The word "now" is a misstatement. It was actually always called the "notification area," even way back in Windows 95 "System Tray" wasn't its former name, just an informal name for it, both in the past and today.

4. Talking about Windows Explorer, the book says "So My Documents is replaced by the Documents library in Windows 7." Yes, it's true that what used to be called "My Documents" is now more simply (and better, in my view) called "Documents," but that didn't begin in Windows 7; it was also true in Windows Vista.

5. The book says "The Office 2007 ribbon has proven wildly popular with users..." I can't prove that that statement is wrong, but my experience with Office 2007 users is that the great majority don't like the ribbon interface at all.

6. It states "Throughout the years, all Windows versions have shared a common problem: they degrade in performance over time and boot more slowly the longer the computer is used." These authors are far from alone in having this opinion, but it's one with which I strongly disagree. I've run almost every Windows version since 2 0 and never experienced this. My view is that those who experience it do so because they used their computer poorly, not because of Windows slowing down on its own.

7. It states "boot-up speed, of course, is a primary concern." I strongly disagree with this statement. My personal view is that the attention many people pay to how long it takes to boot is unwarranted. Assuming that the computer's speed is otherwise satisfactory, it's hardly ever worth worrying about. Most people

start their computers once a day or even less frequently. In the overall scheme of things, even a few minutes to start up aren't very important. Personally I power on my computer when I get up in the morning, then go get my coffee. When I come back, it's done booting. I don't know how long it took to boot and I don't care.

So, having complained about a number of things, what's my overall view of this book and do I recommend it? Yes, I recommend it! Despite my list of its errors and points on which I disagree with the authors above, those points represent only a small portion of the book. Although I would have preferred it without the non-Windows 7 sections included, the book's description of Windows 7 is thorough and most of it is accurate and well-presented. Moreover the value of whatever information is in a book like this disappears if the information within it is hard to find, and that's not a problem here.

The book contains a very good and large (40 pages) index.

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HEARTBURN BIG TIME.

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John Curth
Phoenix PCUG

As I traveled the web, on more than one occasion I would come across a FREE program that would benefit my computer. All I had to do was download it.

Moreover, the deal was it would check my Registry and tell me if it contained any errors. Therefore, I did. The problem that I found was that the Registry checker would find over 200 errors in my Registry. So how do you fix that? The program tells me that I must now purchase the program to do the repair.

A few weeks back Fry's Electronics had a Registry Cleaner program on sale for \$25.00 but I would have to submit two different rebates and get my money back. No problem, I can do that and did.

Went home did the rebate thing by downloading the paperwork, filling it out and adding the necessary cut outs. I was somewhat surprised at the number of items that I had to include which were duplicated. OK, gone.

Now load the program and let it do its thing. The actual installation went really fast and I summarized that the program couldn't be all that large. I then asked it to scan my computer and here it found 249 errors. I hit the button to repair them and it came back and told me that I must first purchase the program. I could see behind that dialog box there was another box asking for the serial number for the program. Clicked on the registration dialog box and entered the number given on the paper sleeve that the CD came in. (**28 numbers/letters**)

From there it went to a web site telling me that I must purchase the program. So I closed that out and went back to entering the numbers again figuring that I must have not done it correctly. This was the second time that I entered the numbers/letters. This went on for 6 more times and each time I made

sure that, I entered the correct information. Now the HeartBurn was really getting to me.

I gave up and deleted the program and rebooted the computer into Safe Mode. I figured that I could install the program there and possibly get it to see its ways. Safe Mode didn't help either wouldn't even allow the CD to run. Back to square one and now contact Tech Support for the program.

I went to their web site and found their "contact us" tab and proceeded to tell them that what I had purchased wouldn't work on my computer. In fact, I asked them to contact me by phone to walk me through the installation.

The next day I received two emails from their tech support. The first one tells me that they received my email message and would get back to me. The second one from one of their support people telling me that I must delete the program and then download it from their web site and then install my serial number.

Since I had already deleted the program yesterday, the only thing that I needed to do was do the download. So I did just that.

Here again I noted that the program download lickity split and placed the executable file on my desktop. Upon opening the file and installing it, I told it to scan the Registry for "errors" which it did and again found 249. Now the test, fix them. This time I entered the 28 numbers/letters making sure I got them in correct order. (WITH NO MISTAKES) The program worked and corrected 243 of them. It told me that it couldn't repair the others since the programs were running in background.

BOTTOM LINE: I'm really surprised that a software manufacture could release a program in this fashion. I know everyone has heard and complains about Microsoft ® and all of its repairs but this one really got to me. **Heartburn big time.** One last item, on the packaging it says compatible with Windows Vista ®.

John Curth

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Introduction

About a year ago, I wrote about some of the excellent resources available that provide a wide selection of fulllength books as free downloads. Since writing that column I have become aware of some other websites that also offer a wide selection of free and inexpensive ebooks. For those who may not be aware, e-books are books of all genres that are available for download.

KINDLE

A large assortment of titles, are available for a fee that can be downloaded to Amazon's proprietary Kindle; Amazon claims that over 360,000 titles, including many current best sellers, are available for download.

NOOK

Barnes and Noble recently announced its own proprietary e-book reader, the Nook, which will be released in early 2010. Barnes and Noble has stated that it will have over a million titles available for download to the Nook.

While many new releases and bestsellers will be priced at about \$10 at both Amazon and Barnes and Noble, there is also a massive library of titles that can be downloaded for free from a variety of sources.

The Kindle and Nook are relatively expensive, retailing for \$259 each. For those not willing to spend that amount, there are thousands of titles that can be freely downloaded and displayed on computer in the universal PDF format.

New Resources

In the minutes before typing this column, I downloaded a few titles from two sources that I have not used in the past. Both required free registration, and both offer a selection of both free and paid content.

The paid content is usually reasonable in price, with one website offering unlimited downloads of paid content for about \$5 per month (free-ebooks.net, discounts available), and another offering unlimited downloads for \$9 per year (worldlibrary.net).

DOWNLOADFREEPDF.COM

The first "new" website for me was downloadfreepdf.com, where I found a book for one of my daughters who recently had her first child.

I downloaded for free "Baby's First Year - What Every New Parent Needs to Know!" as a PDF file for my daughter. I also found and downloaded two free ebooks for my wife, "10 Strategies to Improve Your Nursing Care", and "Student Nurse's Bible".

Even though they were all free, I had to go through a checkout process as if I was paying for them, being sure to check the button that indicated that they were free. As soon as I completed the checkout process, the books were instantly available for download as PDF files.

The default is to display the files in a browser window; in order to save the ebooks on the computer, be sure to click on the "save" icon in the browser window (often a floppy-disk icon), and not the File-Save command on the browser toolbar.

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DOWNLOAD FREE E-BOOKS

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EBOOKNETWORKING.COM

The website ebooknetworking.com has an impressive menu of topics, but many of the topics only offer a small selection of e-books.

I like interesting cookbooks, and this website has four titles available as free downloads, "300 Chicken Recipes", "Delicious Diabetic Recipes," "Great Sandwiches", and the "Big Book of Cookies".

EBOOKS.NET

The website free-ebooks.net offers a limited number of free e-books for download in PDF format (5 per month free), or unlimited downloads for \$5 per month or \$20 per year. There is no limit on the number of titles that can be viewed for free online in HTML (webpage) format.

The first category I looked at was "Business" which contained 166 titles available in PDF format, or viewable online in HTML format, which can be viewed in any browser.

[Free-ebooks.net](http://free-ebooks.net) also makes most of its titles available in the Mobipocket format which may be downloaded and read on Amazon's Kindle, mobile phones, Blackberry, Palm, and several other reader formats.

Another interesting category was the "Food and Recipes" section, which offered 66 cookbooks. One that attracted my attention was "Cajun Clark's Cookbook", which contains a free selection of about 80 Cajun recipes, and a link to purchase the entire cookbook of over 1000 recipes.

In the Humor category was a very cute (and clean) "Knock Knock... Who's Joking?" a collection of hundreds of short jokes and one-liners.

Being a history buff, I found a very interesting e-book in the History category on a subject that I had not seen before, "The Big Guns of the Boer War", by W. J. Havenga.

Considering that thousands of people are paying \$259 for a Kindle or a Nook, a \$20 annual subscription to freebooks.net, which provides unlimited downloads, is a relative bargain.

For computer users, finding just one good title a year justifies the expense.

E-BOOKS DIRECTORY

Another interesting website is ebooksdirectory.com, which lists 2807 free e-books in 399 categories.

The actual e-books are hosted on a variety of websites, including Project Gutenberg, and available in a variety of formats, including PDF, plain text, and a variety of formats compatible with the various ebook readers.

I found the listings comprehensive, and downloaded (for free) several titles on military history, religion, health, law, hunting & fishing, science, and travel. I found especially interesting "Mom's Home Cooking" volumes one and two, which had about 250 recipes each. There is something here for everyone at a price that can not be beat.

WWW.EBOOKSDOWNLOAD FREE.COM

For those looking for free e-books that are generally highly technical, ebooksdownloadfree.com has a wide assortment available. The major categories of books at EBooksdownloadfree.com include medical, computer, sciences, history, and management. These books are mostly recent publications and require a few mouse clicks to reach the download page, but the results are well worth it.

I downloaded several of the books and while the files were large, often over 10mb, they were the complete books in PDF format, including all of the pictures. Some of the downloads were in the RAR compression format, but there are several freeware utilities available that can uncompress the RAR format. Some of the downloads had an attached password text file which included a key to uncompress the files.

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FREE E-BOOKS

WEBTOUR

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A few of the download links opened up popup ads, which I quickly closed. This site, ebooks download-free.com had some of the best current titles available.

Conclusion

I like to read and have reference books available. Free or inexpensive e-books may be the way to go.

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.

(Continued from page 4)

This is a Multi-Platform Media player that supports most Audio & Video formats.

PHOTO PROGRAM

PAINT NET

<http://www.dotpdn.com/downloads/pdn.html>

Easily competes with the expensive programs.

COMPUTER PROFILER

BELARC ADVISER

http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html

A complete account of what is in your computer.

ZIP SERVICE

7 ZIP

<http://files.uberdownloads.com/7-zipe.html>

A must as many downloads are in the compressed form. Does most compressed forms.

SCREEN COPIER

CAM STUDIO

<http://camstudio.org/>

DISK BURNER

AVS DISK RECORDER

<http://avs4you.com/AVS-Disc-Creator.aspx>

Unlike the other apps in this Web Tour I have not used this program extensively. It is a trial before buying application but it does not list a cutoff time such as 21 days etc. for the trial period. I've used it for both DVD and CD burns and it worked well. If you require a free burner give it a try. I normally use Nero and this appears to have many of the Nero features.

This is a good start and there are many more free programs out there. We will cover some of them in future issues.

Remember All of the Web Tour sites in the newsletter are archived and instantly available on our website.

phoenixpcug.org

Don't waste time-consuming typing of the site address you want. On the website you can click on each web address and you are there.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

Cryptography

A big word that helps keep the internet secure.

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

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You may have asked yourself some of the following questions. How secure is the internet? What has been done to make the Internet secure? How safe is my private information during an internet transaction? If so, read on; if you are a very trusting individual and figure that "they" will keep the internet secure, jump to the next article. During this time when the Internet provides essential communication between tens of millions of people and is being increasingly used as a tool for commerce, security has become a very important issue.

When it comes to computers, "security" is of concern on many different levels. There is physical security that keeps your computer hardware from being stolen. There is software security that keeps people out of our private files. There is "malware" security, that keeps your computer software from being infected with viruses, spyware, worms and the like. And finally there is "network" security that keeps private data protected as it goes from one computer (or client) on the internet to another computer (or server) on the internet. This article deals with network security, which is ensured by applying cryptography to messages that are transmitted on the Internet.

Remember the "s" in "https://" and the little lock icon on the browser when you went to a "secure" website? Well, cryptography is behind all that security. Cryptography is used to secure

Internet and even telephone communications. Cryptography is nearly as old as written language itself. It was invented to address the age-old question: How can I communicate with my friend, so that no one else will know what was communicated? Cryptography becomes necessary whenever one is attempting to communicate private information over an "un-trusted" medium, such as the Internet. You can be sure that the message you send over the internet will get to its destination, but you cannot guarantee that intermediaries (computers along the way) will not be able to see and read your message, unless it is protected. With a collection of not-so-expensive equipment and a good deal of knowledge, a message on the internet can be intercepted (sniffed), and if it is "plain text", it can be read. For mundane e-mail messages, this is not much of a concern, but for messages that contain private information, such as passwords or bank account or social security numbers, this could be an invitation for Identity Theft.

Cryptography to the rescue. Cryptography (from the Greek for "hidden writing") is the ancient science of encoding messages so that only the sender and receiver can understand them. Cryptography can be defined as the conversion of data (plain-text) into a scrambled code (cipher-text) that can be sent across a network, and deciphered by the rightful receiver at the other end. There are two main techniques used to encrypt data, Symmetric and Asymmetric. Symmetric encryption uses the same key for encryption as it does for decryption. Symmetric encryption is also called Secret-key encryption because the key is kept a secret between the two cooperating parties. Asymmetric uses separate keys for encryption and decryption. Asymmetric encryption is also called Public-key encryption because one of the keys is allowed to circulate in the public (and one is kept private). Cryptography is now available to everyone thanks to the development of modern computers, which can

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CRYPTOGRAPHY

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perform more mathematical operations in a second than a human being could do in a lifetime. An ordinary PC, with the proper software, can produce codes of such complexity that the most powerful supercomputer using the best available software could not break them in thousands of years. Before modern times and the personal computer, cryptography was concerned solely with message confidentiality. Message confidentiality is conversion (encryption), of messages from a "plain-text" form into an incomprehensible one (cipher-text) for transmission and then back again to the original form, at the other end (decryption). This keeps the message unreadable by interceptors or eavesdroppers who do not have knowledge of the "key" needed for decryption of that message. (With the advent of the personal computer and the proliferation of digital information, the field of digital message protection has expanded beyond only confidentiality concerns to include techniques for message integrity checking, identity authentication, digital signatures, and password protection all of which we will leave for future discussions.)

As stated above, Secret key cryptography refers to encryption methods in which both the sender and receiver share the same key. Secret key cryptography is ideally suited to encrypting long messages, providing privacy and confidentiality for messages typically used in computer to computer transactions. Public Key Cryptography refers to methods in which two keys are owned by each participant, one for encryption (public key) and one for decryption (private key). Public Key cryptography is suited to short messages and is typically used to exchange "secret keys" between two computers. Public Key cryptography could, theoretically, also be used to encrypt messages but this is rarely done because Secret-key cryptography is about 1000 times faster than Public-key cryptography. ♦

So, just how do these schemes work in our typical computer to computer (network) communications? Secret-key and Public-key cryptography are used to setup and maintain a secure data path from a client (your computer browser) to a server (information or data storage system). Because Secret-key cryptography is best used for long messages, a secret key will be used to encode all messages during the transaction. But how do we get a secret key to be used by both computers for the transaction. In comes Public-Key cryptography. Public-key cryptography, which is best suited for short messages, is used to send the secret key (which is short) from one computer to the other, so that both will have the secret key for encoding the messages that follow.

The server has a public key for the client (your computer) and it encodes a "secret key" with that public key. It then sends the encoded message to the client and the client can then decode the message with its private key. The private key is used to decode the "secret key message" so that the client knows what to use as the secret key for subsequent message encoding (i.e., the decoded secret key). This all sounds very complicated, and it is, but all of this is controlled by the "secure software protocols" and you, the user, don't have to get involved at all. (I've actually simplified the operation a bit, but the essence of how cryptography is used is still pretty accurate.) So, with the use of Public-Key, and Secret-Key cryptography, you can rest assured that the messages you are sending over the Internet will not be of any value to anyone attempting to intercept such information. What more could you ask for - through the use of cryptography, the un-trusted Internet can now be used to send private messages, therefore providing secure communications, over the Internet, for everyone.

♦

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

*DUES \$36 FOR APR 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

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