



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tue, July 20

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, July 21

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

Fountain Hills.....Thu, July 22

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

Presentation this month:

Tips from Smart Computing and
Using the Acronis Backup and Boot CD programs

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

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Steering Committee:

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

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hr everybody,

Hopefully everyone will survive our summer heat wave, and we will get some relief very soon from monsoon rains. Maybe viewing web cams and web sites of cool high country and other cooler locales will be helpful? Try it, you'll like it.

We have some exciting things planned for our July meeting – "Backing up a computer" Part 2 "Restoring the image to a new blank hard drive". I have actually tested this function on an HP laptop for a client, and it went exceedingly well. The client was very happy and his system was much faster than before. (The original drive was defective.)

I will also have a Power Point of an actual restoration using Acronis True Image. Since the restoration time can be rather lengthy, approaching an hour or more, I will describe the steps taken and you can see the result on the new hard drive.

As time permits, between Q&A and our presentation, we can at least announce some information on these topics: Microsoft Office 2010, (the beta can be downloaded from Microsoft), current developments in Smart Phones such as Android & iPhone, Internet Explorer 9, and the new version of Firefox.

We haven't had very much response from our Board of Directors for a July meeting, so, if an August meeting can be scheduled, the information will be posted on our website. In that regard, we want to make sure that all our members' names and emails are current, so please contact the bod@phoenixPCUG.org with this information so that we can keep you posted about upcoming events. *This list is private and is not to be given to any vendors or used for any other purpose. You may decline if you wish.*

David Yamamoto

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Example: (user group and the name and date of the publication).

FROM YOUR EDITOR

This publication is always thankful to pass along news and information received from our faithful readers.

In addition to the ever-changing kaleidoscope of developments in hardware and software, occasionally we receive a "heads-up" note dealing with other events occurring in the computer galaxy.

Such is the case with a reader's suggestion to pass along information about an article published in the prestigious New York Times concerning the recent revelation of a three-year-old lawsuit against the computer industry heavyweight, Dell Inc. - "In Faulty Computer Suit - Window to Dell Decline" by Ashlee Vance, June 28, 2010, Technology Section, page 29.

The suit was filed by Advanced Internet Technologies (AIT), an Internet services company, that claims Dell refused to take responsibility for two thousand faulty Dell computers that caused AIT to lose millions of dollars in business.

Other documents submitted in the suit refer to additional reports that suggest Dell sold millions of computers, primarily OptiPlex laptops, from 2003 to 2005 that were equipped with faulty electrical components, such as capacitors and batteries that leaked chemicals as a result of overheating.

Dell has long been trumpeted as a leader among the larger companies in the first rank of the fast-developing, high technology computer industry. Business schools throughout the world have used the Dell business model of low inventories, rapid model changes, and outsourced suppliers as a tutorial example.

However, in recent years, the macroview of the Dell reputation has been tarnished. The company was required by the Security Exchange Commission to restate the company's financial statements for the 2003-2007 time periods. In addition, the company founder, Michael Dell, having previously stepped down as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board, returned to these roles in 2008, presumably in response to continuing SEC investigations concerning fraud and misconduct.

Moreover, the microview of the company has, for many years on a individual level, left buyers of Dell computers dissatisfied with the lack of technical support, poor product quality, and inflexibility regarding exchange or replacement of "bundled" packages of software and hardware. The cavalier attitude displayed by the Customer Service department has caused many previous customers to swear off ever dealing with Dell again.

As a final note, given the airing of the technological, legal, and regulatory problems surrounding Dell, it should not be surprising that the New York Stock Exchange value of Dell shares dropped to a 52 week low in the days following the publication of the New York Times article.

Michael Bishop

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

PRESENTATION:

Tips from Smart Computing
Acronis Backup and Boot CD

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 18)

- Tuesday, July 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 18)

- Wednesday, July 21, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

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

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

SIG MEETINGS

None are scheduled for this month.

WEBTOUR

This Month David Yamamoto travels the web for us and leaves a trail of interesting Websites. Remember these sites are all on our Website

phoenixpcug.org

which allows you to travel with a single click. No laborious typing.

10 Technologies That Should Be Extinct (But Aren't) - PCWorld

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/200325>

Do not miss the above --- it really takes you down memory lane.

Android 2.2 outperforms iOS4 in JavaScript duel | TG Daily

<http://www.tgdaily.com/mobility-features/50551>

Are Privacy Problems Finally Killing Facebook? - PCWorld

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/200695>

Automotive Care, Home Improvement, Tools, DIY Tips - Popular Mechanics

<http://www.popularmechanics.com>

Borders Opens eBook Store -- Electronic Books -- InformationWeek

<http://www.informationweek.com/news/storage/portable/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=22570>

Can Internet Explorer 9 Put Microsoft in the Browser Lead?

<http://ostatic.com/blog/can-internet-explorer-9-put-microsoft-in-the-browser-lead>

Choosing the Best Pocket Megazoom Camera --PC World

http://www.pcworld.com/article/198057choosing_the_best_pocket_megazoom_camera.html

Computerworld - IT news, features, blogs, tech reviews, career advice

<http://www.computerworld.com>

Galaxy Beam Projector Phone Looks Worth the Wait - PCWorld Business Center

<http://www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/200816/>

How to Buy a Laptop -- PC World

http://www.pcworld.com/article/157134/how_to_buy_a_laptop.html

iOS 4.0 vs Android 2.2

http://www.knowyourcell.com/features/comparisons/506561/ios_40_vs_android_22.html

Photography - PopPhoto.com Offers Camera Reviews and Exclusive Photo Tips

<http://www.popphoto.com>

Popular Science | New Technology, Science News, The Future Now

<http://www.popsci.com>

Reviews and News on Tech Products, Software and Downloads -- PC World

<http://www.pcworld.com/#new>

Reviews, News, and Opinion About Personal Technology by Harry McCracken & Friends | Technologizer

<http://technologizer.com>

The Best Windows 7 Downloads

http://www.pcworld.com/article/199583/the_best_windows_7_downloads.html

Top 20 Windows 7 Tips - PCWorld

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/181926>

I use the two below all of the time.

Transfer Big Files Free - Email or Send Large Files

<https://www.transferbigfiles.com>

Speakeasy - Speed Test

<http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest>

Remember, I will say it again, these sites are all on our Website

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which allows you to travel with a single click. No laborious typing.

Bill Aulepp

HOW DO YOU CONNECT TO THE INTERNET?

How do you connect to the Internet?

by Constance Brown

Do you use dial-up, DSL, cable, satellite, mobile broadband, wireless or a combination of the above? Your answer likely reflects the availability of services in the area where you live and whether you use a laptop, personal computer, netbook or smart phone for email and Internet access. Let's take a look at some of these services.

Dial up service has been around for a long time. If you are running equipment using a 56K modem, theoretically you could have a download speed of 56K (56000 bits per second). Rarely do you achieve this speed. Many of the dial-up services are low-cost and overwhelmed with clients, resulting in slow connection speeds and dropped connections with no warning. Also the transfer rates usually are much below the theoretical speeds. Anyone using dial-up also has the frustration of not being able to take calls while on the Internet.

A few things can be done to maximize the connection speeds for dial-up. If you are using Windows 98, updating your software may help. Call your phone company and ask them to test for interference on your line. If it is within acceptable limits, you can request them to turn up the gain on your line. This is similar to turning up the volume on your CD player in the car when the noise of the rain striking the windshield makes it difficult to hear the music. You can also trouble shoot the devices plugged into your phone line. First, unplug all the devices—all your phones, fax machines and satellite TV. Then check your connection speed. If it has increased, you know that some device was interfering. Re-plug the devices one at a time and re-test your connection speed. When you find the troublesome device, leave it unplugged until you need to use it. You can also try adjusting flow settings using your modem software.

In some areas the telephone company offers DSL, a plan that splits your phone line in such a way that voice and data packets flow separately. This allows a

person to be on the phone while surfing the Internet and checking email. The speed is usually much faster than dial-up. In fact, it can outperform cable speeds if you are close to a repeating station. If you are distant, the speeds may not be significantly higher than dial-up. The costs are reasonable, considering the benefits.

Cable access is very popular. It does not in any way interfere with telephone use. In fact, speeds are high enough that many people have fired the phone company and now use voice over internet protocol (VOIP) to make phone calls. In many cases, this saves a significant amount of money each month. Cable speeds can slow dramatically, however, if all the neighbors decide to get it! When the youngsters get home from school, the information flow backs up and access slows down. It is almost like trying to flush a large amount of debris through a small pipe. The pipe doesn't change size. The person flushing the debris has to slow to a speed that the pipe can handle. When this problem becomes significant and enough people complain, the cable company may add additional lines to service the needs of the community.

Satellite access is costly and is mostly used in areas where no other high speed access is available. HughesNet and Wild Blue are two large providers and are available in many locations. Smaller companies may retail the HughesNet service in some areas. There may also be other providers. Costs can be hefty for installation and may run significantly higher than \$80 per month depending on the bandwidth you desire.

Wireless Internet and Hotspot services are ways the traveler can connect. Wireless service provided at no charge has become a sales tool McDonalds, Starbucks and other coffee shops, and many other business locations. Sometimes the connection is limited unless you are near a business that has decided to increase the signal for the area surrounding it. In addition, public libraries, airports, and other municipal locations offer free wireless access. You will want to safeguard your private information when using

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NEVER LOSE A MANUAL AGAIN

NEVER LOSE A MANUAL AGAIN

By Linda Gonse

I just found my old Sharp PDA, discovered it was still working, and decided to put it to use again. The downside was that the manual was gone. An Internet search showed the original manual available, but prices ranged from \$20 to \$39! The Sharp device began to look obsolete to me. Then, I discovered **retrevo**. It boasts a library of more than 100,000 downloadable manuals from more than 1,000 brands of consumer electronics for searchable by category

and brand at:

<http://www.retrevo.com/samples/index.html>.

My manual was there and it was free! In seconds, I downloaded it.

Another benefit of the site is that it also will store your manuals for you. Is that great or what?

There are more than 100 categories you can search for manuals:

2-way Radio	Dreamcast Game	Microwave	Router
Air Conditioner	Dryer	Mini Audio System	Satellite Radio
Amp	Fax Machine	Monitor	Satellite Receiver
Binocular	Film Camera	Mouse	Scanner
Blender	Food Processor	Multifunction Printer	Security Camera
Boombox	Freezer	Music Keyboard	Speaker
Bread Maker	GPS	NIC	Speaker System
CD Player	GPS Accessory	Network Adapter	Storage
CRT TV	Game Boy	Nintendo DS Lite	Subwoofer
Calculator	Game Console	Oven	Switch
Camcorders	Game Cube Game	PBX	TV
Car Amplifier	Gaming Accessory	PDA	Tablet
Car Receiver	Graphics & Publishing	PDA Accessory	Tape Deck
Car Video	Grill Guitar	PS2 Game	Telephone
Cell Phone	Headphone	Plasma TV	Telescope
Clock Radio	Headset	Portable DVD Player	Turntable
Coffee Maker	Heating Cooling/ Air	Portable TV	VCR
Controller	Home Theater	Printer	Vacuum
Copier	Hub	Projection TV	Voice Recorder
DVD Drive	Karaoke System	Projector	Washer
DVD Players	Keyboard	Radar Detector	Watch
DVR	LCD TV	Radio	Wii Game
Desktop	Labeling System	Range	Wireless Router
Digital Camera	Laptop	Receiver	Xbox Game
Digital Photo Frame	MP3 Accessory	Refrigerator	
Dishwasher	MP3 Player	Remote Control	(Continued on page 7)

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Over 4 million people visit the site every month to get help with decisions about the gadgets they buy. **Re-trevo** is NOT a retailer and does not sell consumer electronics, but it uses artificial intelligence to analyze and visually summarize more than 50 million real-time data points from across the web. This gives shoppers comprehensive, unbiased, up-to-date product information about what products to buy, as well as when and where to buy them.

AUTHOR Linda Gonse

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You will get a notice each month when the newsletter is available on the website.

Make sure you include your email address. At least one member who requested an electronic copy did not include the email address on the membership application.

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public Wi-Fi. Some businesses provide secure Wi-Fi to their customers. In order to use their service, you have to be provided with a password. Commercial Hotspots may direct the user to a login screen where access for a specific amount of time may be purchased for a fee.

Mobile broadband wireless has exploded in popularity in the last five years, although the compatibility of newer technologies and different providers is not guaranteed. Cell phones and netbooks with Internet and email access use this service. You can also access mobile broadband through a USB device that connects your laptop to the Internet. However, some services with broadband wireless plans run in the \$50-\$60 range monthly with limitations on the amount of usage. You do not want to use mobile broadband service to play games or watch videos. Some companies provide monitoring software that allows you to determine whether a hotspot is available that doesn't count against your mobile data flow allowance, or whether mobile broadband is your only choice. Mobile broadband is not always available in every place where your cell phone works, but coverage is available in all heavily populated areas. The overload of television advertising reflects the heavy competition for such services.

We have many more choices of services than used to be available. Periodically it is wise to review all of your communication services and see whether something is available that can save you money while decreasing frustration.

AUTHOR Constance Brown

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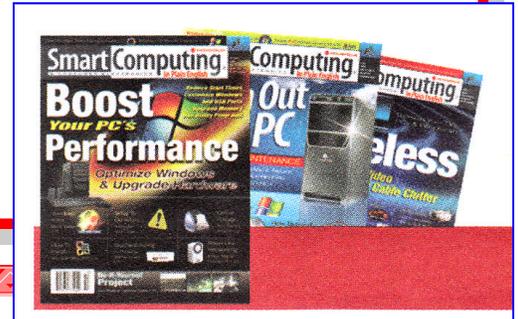
SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT



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.

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

In the event our group does not reach the five paid subscription mark by the end of the quarter, credits will be carried over into the following quarter until the amount reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time a free subscription will be issued.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL USERS OF MALWAREBYTES SOFTWARE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL USERS OF MALWAREBYTES SOFTWARE

by Ron Hirsch

Malwarebytes security software has been, and still is one of the best software programs available to help protect your system from the rash of malware and similar "bad stuff" out there in the computer under-world.

I have been using it in conjunction with Microsoft Security Essentials, starting with a Windows XP Pro 32 bit system, and now with Windows a 7 64 bit computer.

Malwarebytes comes in two versions, free and paid. The free version of Malwarebytes does not offer real time protection, but users can initiate a scan any time to search for malware. The paid version is a lifetime license, with real time protection.

If you are using the paid version, and have set it for real time protection, there can be conflicts with other security programs. But these conflicts can be stopped by listing the various Malwarebytes active files in the "exclusion" folder of your other antivirus/security software.

I discovered this by accident recently, when my copy of the paid Malwarebytes program notified me that a newer version had been downloaded. And, did I want to install it. Of course, I said OK, and that proceeded to close the program and then install the newer version. It then said I had to reboot, so I did.

After the machine had rebooted, everything was frozen solid, so I tried another reboot, but that also locked everything up tight. It seemed pretty obvious that Malwarebytes was the cause here, but what was the cure? I booted up using SAFE mode, and it booted OK. While in SAFE mode, I decided to just uninstall Malwarebytes, until I could find out the proper solution.

The next normal boot had everything working fine, no lockups - all was normal, confirming that Malwarebytes was the cause. So I sent an email off to Malwarebytes . Very quickly they gave me the link below to explain the problem and provide the solu-

tion to the freezeups.

[#entry167851">http://forums.malwarebytes.org/index.php?s=70b8be10374840dca65629a2162b6d60&showtopic=10138&st=0&p=167851](http://forums.malwarebytes.org/index.php?s=70b8be10374840dca65629a2162b6d60&showtopic=10138&st=0&p=167851)

If you are not running the paid version, with real time protection, then this fix may well not be needed. But for those using real time protection, it is mandatory.

This link is a thread on the Malwarebytes forum that has clearly presented all the fixes to solve the problem over a wide range of antivirus programs. The fixes are applicable to most versions of Windows, but I believe that the paths for the fixes listed here are primarily for Windows 32 bit systems. The information presented contains screen shots for those who have problems understanding the fixes.

If you have any trouble accessing this link, a PDF file and a link for this complete presentation, is available on the BRCS site, and is listed below.

The file locations for 64 bit Windows systems are different. Below are the respective locations for Windows 7 64 bit. I have no other 64 bit systems, so Vista locations are probably similar. Again, if you are using a 32 bit operating system, such as XP or Vista, you will probably find that the file locations are shown on the Internet page, as well as in the PDF file I have created from the site.

But, you must be familiar with copying files in Windows Explorer to a specified location, depending upon your software. If you cannot do this, get a friend to help you.

Once you have located the target area of your anti-virus software, you must then copy the files specified in the online (or PDF copy) of the instructions.

Where you see	C:\Windows\System32\drivers\
You should use	C:\Windows\SysWoW64\drivers\

Where you see	C:\Program Files
You should use	C:\Program Files (x86)

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Once I added to the exclusion window for Microsoft Security Essentials, all my problems were resolved. There were no freezeups at bootup, and the freezeups of various programs during operation disappeared completely. So I have confirmed that the fix works just fine.

If you would like to download a copy to read, or save, of the info presented on the Malwarebytes site, please go to

<http://brcs.org/hirsch.php> ,

which is our society's home page, and look for the file named Malwarebytes Info. You can read it online, and/or save it, as desired. And you can also download a PDF of this article, which is named "Malwarebytes article", if you'd like a copy for your records.

REMEMBER - Malwarebytes remains as one of the best security programs out there. I recommend it to all users. And for the small price of \$24.95 you will have lifetime free updates of the program and the malware database, and real time protection. If you will want to go with the free version, you will have free database update, and scans anytime you want.

Using this program, and Microsoft Security Essentials will afford you top notch protection.

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Choosing a security camera for your home

by Kim Komando

Installing cameras is a good step toward securing your home. You'll be able to check in on it. To do that, you need cameras that can be accessed over the Internet. Some Webcams have this feature. But they aren't really meant to be security cameras. Your best bet is network cameras (also known as IP cameras).

Network cameras come in wired and wireless varieties. Wired cameras are connected to a computer on your home network. Wireless cameras are more versatile. They don't need to be connected to a computer. You can put them almost anywhere in your home.

Several manufacturers make quality network cameras. Let's start with Logitech. Both [in-door](#) and [outdoor security systems](#) are available. Both come with a single camera for \$300. Additional cameras are \$230 each. These cameras can be set to record only when something moves. They can also send you text or e-mail alerts when activated. You'll know precisely when something's up. And you can jump online and see for yourself.

Next, check out D-Link. It offers the wired [DCS-1100](#) (\$180) and wireless [DCS-1130](#) (\$220). These aren't the most advanced cameras. But they're meant for less tech-savvy users. Included software makes them easy to set up. For more features, look at the [DCS-5300G](#) (\$390). It does video and audio. It also has motion detection. In addition, it can pan, tilt and zoom. All of this can be controlled over the Internet.

Panasonic also has a number of network cameras. They are sold as cameras for watching pets. But they'll work for any surveillance need. They are the [BL-C121A](#) (\$200) and [BL-C131A](#) (\$300). Both are wireless. Both do audio, video and motion detection. And each can send alerts when activated. The BL-

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MUSIC--CAPTURE IT, ORGANIZE IT AND ENJOY IT

Music-- Capture it, Organize it and Enjoy it by Phil Sorrentino

Music in the past was captured and made available on analog sources and played back on analog devices. Those analog sources were tubes (in Thomas Edison's times), record disks (78s, 45s and 33 1/3 vinyl), and finally tapes (reel-to-reel, 8 track, and cassette). And they were played on a phonograph (circa late 1870s), a turntable (spanning the 20th century) or a tape machine (spanning the late 20th century). All those devices were engineered to convert the analog music on the source media to sound that eventually hit our ears. Analog music was the capture of some sort of wiggle, like the wiggle of a turntable needle or stylus, or the wiggle of a magnetic field on a magnetic tape.

The quality of the music we experienced improved all along the time that analog music was available, finally culminating in High Fidelity, Stereophonic Sound. Stereophonic because there are two tracks, one for the right and one for the left, to match the hearing mechanisms on our head, one on the right and one on the left. High Fidelity is the property of reproducing all of the music frequencies that were originally produced by the original source, like a singer's voice, or a rock and roll band, or a symphony orchestra.

The frequency response of the human ear is about 20 Hz to around 16,000 Hz (although sometimes it is stated as 20 to 20k). These are general ranges and as we age, the lower limit tends to rise and the upper limit tends to be lowered. (By the way, if someone is exposed to very high intensity sounds or noises {measured in decibels}, their hearing range could be affected. In fact, sounds greater than somewhere around 100 decibels {db} can produce permanent damage to ones hearing range, as has happened to many rock musicians.)

So, High Fidelity Stereo was developed to deliver two channels, each with about a 20 to 16,000 Hz frequency range. What more could you ask for. (Well, actually now with digital reproduction you can have much more, like 5.1 surround sound, but that is a subject for another time.)

Enough of the past, now on to the digital music age. One of the differences between analog and digital sources of music is the fact that with an analog source, the music quality deteriorates with each play. Each time a record or tape is played, some of the

range of the music is lost. But with digital sources (digital files), the quality always remains the same. (Even though some vinyl purists argue that digital is never as good as analog.) Go ahead and play away. The reason for this is that the digital representation for music is just a series of ones and zeros (which is reproduced exactly with every copy). As long as that series is reproduced (and the process that interprets the ones and zeros doesn't change), then the results, the music, will always be the same. So, once we get the music, we have it at that quality, for good. But how is digital music created? What is the source? And what devices are used to reproduce it.

The recording process starts with (analog) microphones which produce a small analog signal. This signal is amplified and then digitized. From this point on everything is digital, therefore perfectly reproducible. Digitization produces a file that has been engineered to contain the complete audible frequency range. This is the .WAV file that is on the CD that is purchased. The CD becomes the source for the music. (Today, most music is distributed on CDs, although more and more music is being downloaded to computers for eventual listening.) Typically there are about 15 songs on a CD, but with the capacity of a CD (700 MB) and the average size of a song (35MB), you might get as many as 20 or 21 songs on a CD. So, if CDs are the source of the music, a CD player is the device that is used to reproduce the music. CD players come in two basic varieties, stereo cabinet type to be used with a home stereo system, and portables for use on the go. Some larger stereo cabinet models can hold as many as 400 CDs and provide a place to store all the CDs (without their cases).

Now that's how the digital music is produced, distributed, and played on CDs, but what about MP3s? Well, an MP3 file is the result of processing a .WAV file with an MP3 conversion program, the product of which is much smaller than the original. (WMA is another file type similar to MP3 that has been introduced and used by Microsoft.) MP3 files are typically one tenth the size of the corresponding WAV file. The resultant file size can vary because there are settings used by the MP3 conversion program. The MP3 conversion process is a "Lossy" conversion, that is, some of the quality can be lost in the conversion. The quality is selected by choosing a bit rate for the conversion. For music this rate typically goes from 128 kbps (considered near CD quality) up to around

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MUSIC—CAPTURE IT, ORGANIZE IT AND ENJOY IT

CHOOSING A SECURITY CAMERA FOR YOUR HOME

(Continued from page 11)

320 kbps (for those audiophiles that have very good hearing and reproduction systems). There are also lower qualities for low frequency range (voice only), files which are 32 kbps and 64 kbps. The lower the quality, the smaller the size of the MP3 file, and similarly, the higher the quality, the larger the file size. Some people might be able to detect the difference between a 128 kbps quality and a 320 kbps quality, but if you cannot then the smaller file would be a better choice. (If you're not sure if you can detect the difference, create an MP3 of one of your favorite CDs at two different bit rates and then play each one and see if you can tell the difference. If you can tell the difference, use the higher bit rate as your quality setting.)

So, with that bit of background, we are able to discuss the process of converting songs on a CD to MP3 files. This process is called Ripping a CD. (Don't blame me, I didn't name it.) The process does nothing like its name implies, it simply converts the WAV file on the CD to an MP3 file on the computer, at the chosen quality. Ripping can be done with many programs like Windows Media Player, Musicmatch Jukebox, Audacity, and Winamp. (Windows Media Player (WMP) which comes with all Windows Operating Systems will be used here in examples.)

To Rip a CD, place the CD in the CD/DVD reader/writer tray, start WMP, and click Rip on the top Selection Bar. It's that easy. A list of the files on the CD will be shown with a checked check box for each. If you don't want one of the songs, uncheck the box. When the conversion is finished you will have an MP3 file for each of the checked songs. Typically, the MP3 files will be in a Folder with the name of the CD Album, within a Folder for the Artist within the folder that was setup as the Rip Folder. From this folder, you can move or copy the songs to a library folder. Most people will probably use the Windows Music (or My Music) folder for this.

And don't forget: backup all that music regularly, so you don't have to go through that process again. :

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C131A adds pan and tilt control. And it has a handy privacy button. Pressing it blocks Internet access. And an indicator light quickly tells you when it's recording. There are also all-in-one solutions available. These come with multiple cameras and a specialized DVR. They're similar to [CCTV systems](#). All the cameras connect to the DVR. A built-in [hard drive](#) stores video. Or they can be accessed online. [Swann](#) and [Qsee](#) offer these systems. Expect to pay more than \$500 for the most basic packages. Prices rise steeply with additional cameras.

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Kim Komando hosts the nation's largest talk radio show about consumer electronics, computers and the Internet. To get the podcast or find the station nearest you, visit: <http://www.komando.com/listen>. To subscribe to Kim's free e-mail newsletters, sign-up at: <http://www.komando.com/newsletters>.



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?

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MICROSOFT FREE ONLINE OFFICE

Microsoft Offers Free Online Version of Office

by Ira Wilsker

In the over 10 years I have been writing this weekly column I have used the Microsoft Word installed on my desktop computer for all but a handful of the columns. There were a few columns I wrote while using Open Office as a topic of the column; one column was typed using Google Docs and saved as a Word file to send to my editor. Today I am using Microsoft's recently released Word Web App, which is one of the several Office utilities now available for free at www.live.com. (Click on "Office") Since these applications are online, they can be accessed from anywhere the user has internet access, and are utilized in a browser window.

From the live.com webpage, the office applications can be utilized by clicking on the "Office" link at the top of the page. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and One-Note are currently available. Registration is required in order to use the Microsoft Live utilities, but registration is fast and free. For those users who may need access to the primary components of Microsoft Office, but do not have it installed on their computers, this service from Live is a viable alternative.

I started by using Live's Word Web App to type this column. The "ribbon" or menu at the top of the browser window is reminiscent of the one in Word 2007, but does not have quite as many choices as the full version of Word 2007 on my computer. While all of the major functions are available, many of the enhancements and "bells and whistles" are not available on the web version. The top line menu choices are "File", "Home", "Insert", and "View". Above the ribbon are small icons to save and undo. Clicking on the "File" tab gives the user choices to open, save, share, close, properties, feedback, and privacy. As I am typing this, I am periodically saving the file in the default .docx (Word 2007) format to Microsoft's SkyDrive, which is Microsoft's server sometimes referred to as "in the cloud". Once saved to the SkyDrive, I can access this file from anywhere.

The default tab on the Word Web App is "Home" which displays the simplified Word 2007 ribbon (menu) with the ubiquitous copy, paste, fonts, formatting, spell check, and another feature which is not in the computer based version of Word, "Open in

Word". This "Open in Word" will connect to the Word installed on the computer, and open the document in the computer based Word, but only if a compatible browser is being used. I am using Firefox as my browser as I type this, and clicking on the "Open in Word" icon on the ribbon displays a message that my browser is not compatible. Another anomaly (browser incompatibility) occurred when I tried to copy some text by painting it, right clicking and going to "copy". A window opened that said, "Your browser does not allow access to the clipboard. Use the keyboard shortcuts for cut, copy, and paste instead." Using the keyboard commands CTRL-C allowed me to copy the text I wanted, and CTRL-V allowed me to paste it where I wanted it. This inability to work nicely with some browsers other than Microsoft's lowers my opinions of this product; while it is not a fatal defect, I do not like the idea of being compelled to use Internet Explorer in order to utilize all of the features of the Word Web App. The "Insert" tab on the ribbon allows the user to insert a table, picture, clip art or links. The "View" tab offers the user the choice of an "Editing View" and a "Reading View". One important item missing from the menu is a "Print" button; I could not find any easy way to print a document, other than using the browser print function.

While Word may be one of the most widely used applications, Excel and PowerPoint are also very widely used. The online version of Excel can be accessed by clicking on the Excel icon on the Live - Office web page. The Excel Web App looks much like a simplified version of the full computer based version of Excel, and uses the same interface and commands. By default, files are saved to the SkyDrive in the Excel 2007 .xlsx format. The first thing I noticed on the Excel Web App is that the formula bar (Fx) does not pull down to display the list of available formulae. I also found that the auto-fill functions where dates and cells could be auto-filled by clicking on the corner of a cell and dragging does not work, at least when used in Firefox. The ribbon bar on the Excel Web App looks much like a simplified Excel 2007 menu bar, but lacks some of the choices available on the computer installed version. As with the other Microsoft Web Apps, the spreadsheet can be shared as desired. Also as with the Word App, the icon "Open

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MICROSOFT FREE ONLINE OFFICE

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in Excel" will generate an error. According to the online help, none of the Web Apps will open the computer's Office if using Firefox and Office 2003 or Office 2007; Microsoft's recommended fix is to install Office 2010. The online help also says that the 64-bit version of Internet Explorer is not supported, and that browsers other than Internet Explorer and Firefox are not supported at all. That means that it may be difficult or impossible for the many users of Chrome, Safari, Opera, and other browsers to utilize these otherwise useful Web Apps.

I do a lot of PowerPoint presentations, and I was especially interested to try the PowerPoint Web App. As with the other apps, it saves in the Office 2007 formats, in this case .pptx. The screen looks familiar, but much simplified from the full version of PowerPoint. One item obviously missing from the ribbon (menu) is the "save" button; that is because the PowerPoint Web App automatically saves the presentation. Another feature that is missing is the ability to right click on an image or text box in a slide to add animations or special effects. I easily inserted an image into a slide, and was given a choice of eight picture styles or frames, but could not animate or otherwise add the special effects that I sometimes use in the full version. Other than using some of the more sophisticated features of the full version of PowerPoint, the Web App version is adequate for simple PowerPoint presentations.

I will admit that I do not use Microsoft's OneNote, but it is available as a Web App. Looking much like a Word document, with the addition of a calendar line, when shared, it also shows the other authors and page versions that were accessed and modified. OneNote also allows for images, clipart, links, and tables to be inserted, which can provide a richer user experience. Like Word, the ribbon (menu) in OneNote allows the user to implement traditional formatting and fonts as desired. I could see where OneNote would be useful for taking notes and sharing content. As with PowerPoint, there is no "save" button, as OneNote documents are automatically saved.

If the user desires to import a document or image on his computer in the appropriate Web App, the user

would click on the SkyDrive link at the top of the Office page, and then "Add Files". The user can then drag and drop files from his computer into the "Add Files" browser window, or files can be uploaded to SkyDrive by clicking on "Select documents from your computer". Documents and other files stored on SkyDrive can be downloaded individually in native format, or all of the files can be downloaded together as a single ZIP file from SkyDrive. I experimented with SkyDrive and the Web Apps and found that this may be a viable choice either as a primary or backup method of doing presentations or working on documents away from my home or office computer, providing there is good internet access. Clicking on the SkyDrive "More" link allows the user to view a file's properties, or delete it from SkyDrive.

One of the strengths of using web applications like these is the ability to work together or collaborate on projects. By clicking on FILE - SHARE others can be authorized to access the file. The share choices can be controlled with a slider that ranges from "Just me" to "Some friends", "Friends", "My friends and their friends", and "Everyone (public)". Specific people can be added to those eligible to share by name or by email address.

While not as feature rich as the full versions of Office, the free Web Apps versions at live.com do offer a viable alternative to those who do not have Office installed on their computers, or who need a portable version of those applications. Many users will find these Web Apps quite useful.

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ANTI-FRUSTRATION SOFTWARE

Soluto Anti-Frustration Software Improves Boot Time

by Ira Wilsker

In several past columns I have written about utilities that can speed up the computer boot process. As cluttered as it was, my old XP machine could take up to five minutes to boot; my newer Windows 7-64 machine boots in under two minutes, considering the multilayered security that is installed on it. Traditionally, the ways of speeding the boot process on a PC was to defrag the hard drive, and clean up the programs in the startup that load when the computer is first turned on. When someone tells me that his computer takes forever to boot, my typical responses are "is your hard drive defragged" (defragmented), and "how many little icons do you have on your task bar adjacent to your clock?".

There are several excellent startup managers available (including Windows 'msconfig' feature), both independent utilities and components of utility suites, that can easily control what programs load at boot. Simply unchecking unwanted and unnecessary programs at boot is an accepted way of improving boot time. Likewise, there are several excellent defragmentation utilities available, including the simple one built into Windows, that can do a credible job; by defragging the hard drive, it does not have to work as hard when reading files and data, thus providing some improvement in load times.

While these two methods are well accepted and proven to speed up the boot process, a new concept in utilities was recently released that goes an extra step in controlling the boot process using a software "genome" and community experiences to determine what is loading in the computer at boot, how long each item takes to load, displays what is required or optional to load at boot, and gives the user control of what loads and when it loads during the boot process. Wanted, but low priority items, can be set to load after the computer has fully booted, and is sitting idle, thus not degrading the boot process. Unwanted items can be stopped from automatically loading, but set to load upon demand. The process may sound complex, but it is very simple with the information provided by this new utility, "Soluto Anti-Frustration Software (beta)".

Available as a free download from www.soluto.com, this software is a "beta" or pre-release version, which by definition, is not a highly refined final "release" version. My 18 month old "new" computer booted very quickly when new, but now that I have

a lot of security software and other utilities loading at boot, it was taking between a minute and a half, and two minutes to boot. After I downloaded and installed Soluto, and rebooted the computer such that Soluto could measure and analyze my boot process, my first modification of my boot process improved my boot time by almost 25%! Subsequent refinements of my boot process with Soluto, and input from the "community" have helped me to shave off about another 10% of my boot time.

After being installed, Soluto monitors what loads at each boot. During the boot process, the bottom left corner of the desktop turns up like the corner of a page and displays each item as it is loading, while displaying the elapsed time to boot the computer.

Information is gathered during the boot process, and added to what has been gathered at previous boots, to provide the data that is analyzed by the program. The data that is collected is anonymously added to the Soluto PC Genome, where the community can input recommendations that will assist the user in determining what can be controlled at boot.

According to Soluto, " This anonymous technical data is gathered and sent to Soluto's PC Genome, a one of a kind knowledge base containing statistical insights about PC software and hardware behavior, as well as remedies to alleviate PC usage frustrations. By putting this information into the light, the PC Genome will help consumers and vendors alike. Soluto employs another set of innovative algorithms to determine which remedies will have a positive impact on each Soluto user's unique PC system. These remedies are then shared with other relevant Soluto users."

Soluto has found that by pausing when specific items load in the boot process, and reconfiguring some of the applications, boot time and overall behavior of the computer can improve dramatically. Soluto can also determine those programs that degrade computer performance, and provide the "frustrated" user with possible solutions to reduce or eliminate the source of frustration.

Soluto places a small icon on the task bar that looks somewhat like a smiley-face, and opens displaying the Soluto functions. By opening Soluto anytime after the computer has booted, the first screen called the "Boot Page" displays "Potentially Removable"

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ANTI-FRUSTRATION SOFTWARE

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items in an orange font, along with the boot time and sequence for each.

By moving the cursor over any of the "Potentially Removable" items, a brief description of the software is displayed (if it is in the Genome).

By moving over the "more" on the display, a recommendation may be shown, as well as a pie chart of what other users of that software have done.

The user is given the option to "Pause" or "Delay" the item in subsequent boots. "Pause" prevents the item from being loaded at boot, but the program can still be loaded upon demand; "Delay" postpones the selected program from automatically loading until the computer is otherwise idle, which means that it will not slow the initial boot process. Since Soluto (beta) has just been released, the genome is still in its infancy, and does not yet contain a comprehensive database of software.

The user can easily click on the pencil icon "edit" and open a Wiki which enables the user to "fill in the blanks" about an item, which will then be verified, and added to the Genome. As more users complete the Wiki, the Genome database will become more complete.

As the Genome improves through this community input, all of the users can benefit by the dissemination of the information.

The grey section of the main screen "Boot Page" in Soluto displays the "Required - cannot be removed" items that load at boot, in their boot sequence and with their boot time displayed.

While most of the items shown are valid Windows components, with an explanation of what each does along with its boot time, some of the items are non-Microsoft files, and lack detailed descriptions. When I first used Soluto, the components of my MagicJack VoIP service (internet based telephone service) were listed as "Required", and could not be paused or delayed; I opened the Wiki and explained what they were, and then commented that I thought that these particular components should be moved to the "Potentially removable" section where their boot process could be better managed. As the Genome grows and improves, items like this will be better sorted into the appropriate category.

The blue section on the "Boot Page" shows the items that were "Paused" or "Delayed" at boot, and how much time was saved by not loading those items. Clicking on any blue item gives the user the choice of changing the status to boot, "Pause" or "Delay", which will be implemented the next time the computer is booted.

An interesting choice on the Soluto icon is "My PC just frustrated me", which opens the Soluto window, and analyzes the running processes, and tries to determine which program is causing the slowdown.

Any information found during the "frustration" analysis is anonymously added to the Genome where it will be comingled with other data and potential solutions may be determined.

If a solution to the "frustration" exists, it looks like it will be displayed to the user. When I clicked on the "Frustration" menu item, Soluto identified the beta version of a new security product that I am testing as the potential source of "frustration" but could not yet show any remedy to my "frustration".

While Soluto is still in the "beta" stage of development, I found it a very useful and worthwhile utility to improve PC performance, particularly in the boot process, and for resolving potential "frustrations".

Users should give Soluto Anti-Frustration Software a try. In my limited experience with it, I would give it my recommendation, as well as a rating of "two thumbs up".

WEBSITES:

<http://www.soluto.com>

<http://blog.soluto.com>

<http://www.soluto.com/About/Media-Kit>

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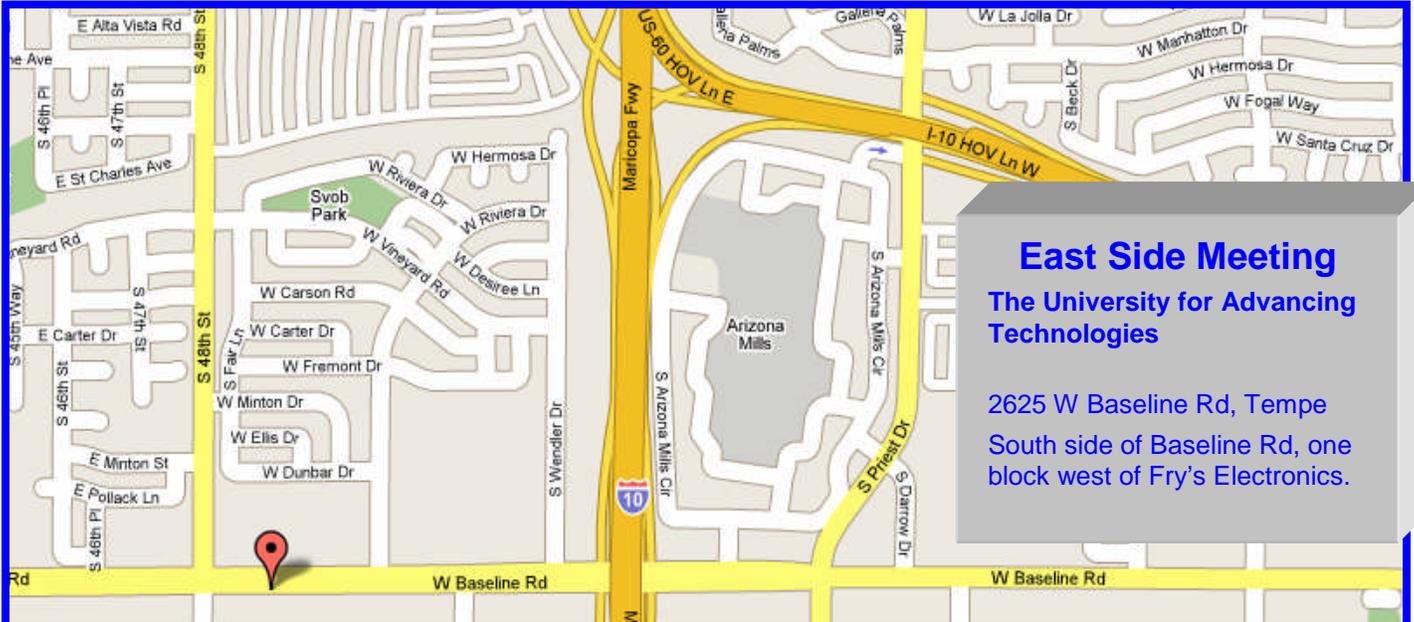
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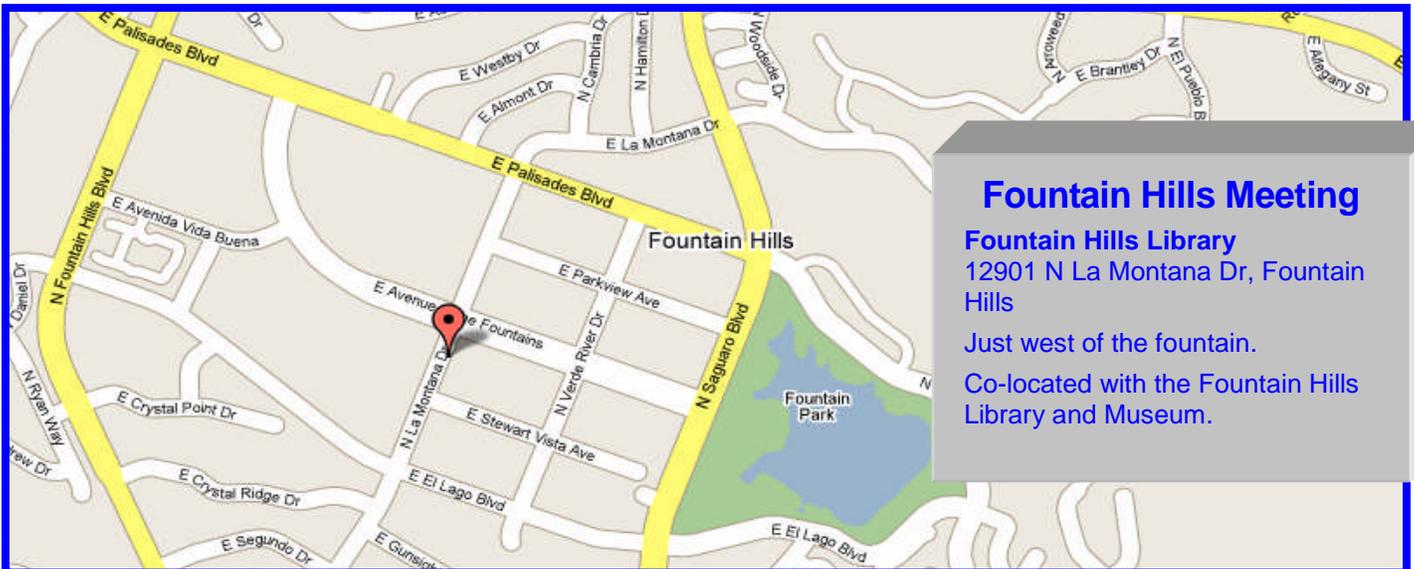
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