

Eastside Coordinator Needed - See Page Three



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Sat, Sept 11

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, Sept 15

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

Fountain Hills.....Thu, Sept 16

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

Presentation this month:

Allen Hunt has provided a presentation
by the SAYWIRE group.
(see David's column on page 2)

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

**REMEMBER THE BOD MEETS OCT 6TH
SEE WEBSITE FOR TIME AND PLACE**

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Vice President: Allen Hunt
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Treasurer: Lo Hardman

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Webmaster: Hank Pearson
Fountain Hills Coordinator: Nancy Ogden
East Side Coordinator: *Open Position*
West Side Coordinator: Bill Aulepp
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Michael Bishop: Editor@PhoenixPCUG.org
Hank Pearson: Webmaster@PhoenixPCUG.org

Steering Committee:

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

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hi All,

Summer is on its way out and we look forward to a busy and productive Fall season. Vice President Allen Hunt has planned a presentation by the SAYWARE people for our September meetings. I will not go into detail about SAYWARE but the presentation will show us how to use their secured network system and I quote from information I have received:

"The SAYWIRE experience is designed to make our lives easier, to provide a wide host of experience and content, right at our fingertips, and to make it possible for us to meet anywhere, at any time, and make it possible for all Group/Club members to participate - either in person or at some other location".

The BOD Meeting is scheduled for October 6th assuming it is convenient for all BOD members. See our Website for further information and changes. We hope many other members will attend as at this meeting we will be planning our Programs for the next 12 months and would appreciate everyone's input.

I want all members to welcome Michael Bishop as our new Newsletter Editor. Please give him feedback on what you think of the present Newsletter and your wishes for issues in the future.

In closing we all want to thank CollegeAmerica and its staff for hosting our Westside Meetings. The number of classes and students has outgrown their present space and there is no longer space available for our Tuesday PM Meetings. Starting now through Dec 2010 we will be meeting at noon on Saturdays. We will return to meeting Tues nights in Jan. 2011. This will be at CollegeAmerica's new location at the former Circuit City Metro Center building near Castles and Coasters.

I hope to see you at one of our next meetings.

David

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Granted that the Personal Computer User Groups are by their very nature dedicated to the widespread dissemination of information and usability resulting from advances in electronic hardware and software technology, sometimes it appears that we are "running as fast as we can just to stay in place" just as Alice did in *Through the Looking Glass*.

For instance, our new High Definition Television has an installation book containing 102 full-size, 8.5 x 11 pages. An attached DVD recorder had 48 additional pages for hookup, and even that was inadequate. It required a really lengthy tech representative telephone call, even though it was the same brand, all because the two devices were introduced on different dates. But our cell phone tops them both with its 212 pocket-size (!) pages. And none of these devices have anywhere near the full array of add-on capabilities, much less the actual attachable pieces of hardware. What ever happened to "plug and play", and "user friendly"?

Furthermore, my modest laptop computer, upon which I write these notes, requires 48 programs to load before I can check my e-mail. Do I really need all of them to load every time I turn on the unit? Still, the laptop works pretty well until I encounter the already overstuffed browsers that swallow 90+ percent of my virtual memory while it still keeps asking if I want to upgrade to a fancier version that has a barrel load of more features that I do not really need or even want to read about.

Don't get me wrong, I do not regret having the really convenient capabilities that allow this newsletter to be compiled with a lot less turmoil that was required in the "good old days". But whatever happened to the old tube style electronic devices, like a television set, or even a radio, that came on merely with the push of a button or flip of a switch? I really miss that immediate response.

Michael

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

PRESENTATION:

Allen Hunt has provided a presentation
by the SAYWIRE group
(see David's column on page 2)

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 18)

- Saturday, September 11, 2010
- 12:00 Noon Steering Committee
- 12:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

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

- Wednesday, September 15, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

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

- Thursday, September 16, 2010
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation.

Eastside Coordinator Needed

The eastside meeting will continue but we need a new coordinator.
Our coordinator Marion Smith's work schedule has changed.
If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Lo Hardman.

(treasurer@phoenixpcug.org)

Thank you

WEB TOUR - THE FREEDOM PC

THE FREEDOM PC

By Bill Aulepp

Publisher@PhoenixPCUG.org

Last month we did not have a Web Tour as our new Editor Michael Bishop and I were busy working out the transfer protocol we would use to divide the work we do on the Newsletter. Michael now has full responsibility for the content of the Newsletter and I will continue to format, print and mail it as I have been doing for the last couple of years.

I will also continue to do a Web Tour article when I have material that merits printing but probably not every month.

Today we list the programs on my PC as an example of A Freedom PC using the free applications we have covered in previous web tours.

Many commercial applications set the standard, but if you do not have a business to subsidize the cost, these free applications are reliable and sometimes even better.

So here is my Freedom PC from A to Z. If you use other applications and they work for you stay with them. If you are a beginner setting up a new PC this list is a good starting point. If you are a pro hopefully this list will introduce you to some new programs.

BROWSER – GATEWAY TO THE INTERNET

Microsoft includes their Explorer browser as part of their operating system; however, I prefer to use Mozilla's Firefox. Of course you will have to use Explorer to begin your downloading process so you can obtain Firefox.

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>

Get the latest security and stability release

SECURITY – KEEP THE DOORS AND WINDOWS LOCKED

The next step after a Browser is to secure your PC from intruders. Believe me the bad people are out there just waiting to get in. Protect your PC against the latest viruses and spyware

Firewall

When I used XP I used ZoneAlarm as a firewall.

<http://www.zonealarm.com/security/en-us/free-upgrade-security-suite-zonealarm-firewall-search.htm?cid=W200002&source=Google-US-Brand&medium=Firewall&content=COPYAVnotenough-LPfreefirewall&term=zone%20alarm%20free&campaign=Brand+FreeFirewall>

Wow, better go to our website:

<http://www.phoenixpcug.org/> to download this one.

With Win7 and probably Vista the included firewall appears to work well.

Antivirus

Avast Home Edition - Free Antivirus version.

<http://www.avast.com/index>

I know this isn't the best known antivirus but for me it works best

SYSTEM CLEANER – THROW OUT THE TRASH AND PUT EVERYTHING IN ITS PROPER PLACE

We now have a Gateway to the Internet and we have secured our PC from most intruders. Even with this security nasty things happen to your PC along the way. The first thing I do each day when I boot up my PC is to run Advanced System Care

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

I have tried many system cleaners. I even bought two of them, but I prefer this one, and use it daily. You will be amazed at the trash your computer accumulates. It has a one-click approach to help protect, repair, clean, and optimize your PC.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE - PDF READER - SEARCH TOOL - ZIP TOOL – NOTEPAD PLUS

There are some must have tools and these are my favorites.

PDF Reader

<http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/>

The universal standard, free from Adobe.

Search Tool

Dogpile

<http://dogpile.com/>

A search engine that uses the other search engines for a combined search.

Zip Tool

7-Zip Zip Compression Tool

<http://www.7zip.com/>

7-Zip is fast, efficient, and free

Notepad Plus

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/notepad-plus/>

Lightweight, fast and full featured. It also boasts an impressive collection of plugins.

OFFICE SUITE – OPEN A HOME OFFICE

(Continued on page 5)

WEB TOUR - WEB TOUR - THE FREEDOM PC

(Continued from page 4)

OpenOffice.org Office Suite

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

This complete all-in-one office suite contains all that is needed for a productive day in the home office, featuring word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases, and more

DISK BURNER – YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH YOUR FRIENDS, DON'T YOU?

StarBurn

Does it all when it comes to burning disks.

http://download.cnet.com/3001-2646_4-10761014.html?spi=4fb1901c5332fce5cacb21bbad1b3eb1

A powerful tool for grabbing, burning and mastering CD, DVD, Blu-Ray and HD-DVD media. StarBurn supports all types of optical storage media.

PAINT TOOL – LEARN THE MAGIC OF IMAGE MANIPULATION

Paint Net Photo Program

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

Easily competes with the expensive programs and it is free.

MEDIA PLAYER - PLAY IT AGAIN SAM FROM MOOVIES TO YOUR OWN MASTERPIECES

Media Player

VideoLAN - VLC Media Player

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

This is a highly portable multimedia player for various audio and video formats (MPEG-1, MPEG-2, MPEG-4, DivX, mp3, ogg, ...) as well as DVDs, VCDs, and various streaming

PC TV – ENJOY TV VIDEO – ITS ALL OUT THERE JUST GRAB IT

Streaming TV Programs

<http://www.chooseandwatch.com/?channel.php?channelId=694&catId=312#>

Warning will not work well on slower PCs.

SPECIAL SITUATION PROGRAMS

Belarc

<http://belarc.com/>

Belarc does an "audit" of your PC's hardware, software, installation key codes (for example MS Office, Windows XP and Vista.) Save and print these out as you add and re-

move programs, devices, etc. Even finds your motherboard's manufacturer and serial number. Very helpful when you call tech support.

Audacity

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Powerful audio recorder, editor, amplifier, noise reduction. Great for recording support calls, doing audio note taking, music editing, etc.

LogMeIn

<https://secure.logmein.com/>

Access and back up your home or work computer from anywhere with an Internet connection.

Electronic Manuals

<http://retrevo.com/>

If you have ever lost the manual that came with one of your consumer electronic items, this is the place to find it. Try it out now! This site also gives street prices for the manual's item.

Driver Max

<http://drivermax.com/>

Download the latest driver updates for free. This applies to Windows 7, Windows Vista, or Windows XP. Driver Max lists all of your current drivers in a separate folder. The free version allows only two driver downloads per day. Vista and Win 7, however, are good at keeping your drivers up to date, so if your OS misses an update Driver Max will come to the rescue.

FreewareUpdater

<http://freewareupdater.com>

From this site you can find many, many free download applications. The Web Site describes itself as follows: FreewareUpdater is a small, yet powerful, software management tool to help you keep track of the most popular Freeware and Open Source applications. It is provided to you absolutely free.

Comodo Free Products

http://www.comodo.com/products/free_pro...

An assortment of free products featured in the August 2009 Web Tour

Remember our website: <http://www.phoenixpcug.org/>

All of the Web Tour sites in the newsletter are archived and instantly available on our website. Don't waste time-consuming typing of the site address. You can get there with a simple click via our website.



THE CONTROL PANEL - AN EXTREMELY USEFUL TOOL

Author—Sandy Berger
www.compukiss.com

Just as you can use a car without manipulating anything under the hood, you can also use a computer without changing any settings. However, at a certain point you will want to correct a setting, uninstall a program, change the way your mouse works, or add another user to your computer. All of these functions and many more are found in the Windows Control Panel. Don't worry though; the Control Panel is much easier to navigate than the cables, wires, and mechanisms that you find under the hood of a car....and you can use the tools in the Control Panel without getting your hands dirty.

In geek-speak, the Control Panel is the central location for all of the Windows operating system configuration needs. In everyday terms, it the place where you can work with the many tools that Windows offers to change and customize all of the settings. The Control Panel is part of the Window's operating system's graphical interface. As such, you will find that it consists of easy-to-understand icons that are each labeled as to their function.

The Control Panel has been around since the first version of Windows. Over the years, it has morphed into a very useful set of management tools for your computer. In a car you need to know where the hood release lever is, in Windows, you need to know how to access the Control Panel.

Windows Vista and Windows 7, you can access the Control Panel by clicking on the Start button and choosing Control Panel from the right column of choices. In Windows XP, you will click Start, then choose Control Panel from the left column. If you don't see the Control Panel listed, click on Settings from the left column, then click on Control Panel.

The Control Panel is a little different in Windows XP than it is in Vista and Windows 7. So let's talk about XP first. By default, the Windows XP Control Panel appears in what is called "Category View". This means that various functions have been put into Categories. Previous versions of Windows showed a list of icons, one for each function, in Windows XP, this is called the "Classic View". When you open the Control Panel in Windows XP if you see several categories listed you are in "Category View". If you see a window full of individual icons, you are in "Classic View". You can change the view by clicking

on the words "Switch to Classic View" or "Switch to Category View" which is on the left side of the screen. Check out these two options and see which one you like. You can switch between them quite easily at any time.

In Windows Vista, you have the same choices, but you may have to click on "Control Panel Home" on the left side of the screen before you can click on "Classic View" or "Category View".

Microsoft made some changes in the Control Panel in Windows 7. They have eliminated the name Classic View. In Windows 7 you will see the words "View by" on the upper right side of the screen. Click on the down arrow next to those words and you will have three views to choose from: Category, Large Icons, or Small Icons. This Icon view is really the same as the Classic View. I prefer to use the Classic or Icon view, but again, you can check out all the views and see which one you like best.

There are 45 icons in the icon view in Windows 7 and about the same number in previous versions. If you look at the Classic or Icon view, you will see that the icons have labels, like Display, Sound, Power Options, Mouse, Keyboard, User Accounts, Folder Options, and Devices and Printers. You can click on any of these icons to open a window that will allow you to adjust, correct, and/or customize the settings of these areas. Take a look around. Check out Mouse area first. When you click on the mouse icon a windows with options will appear. It will have tabs at the top. You can click on each tab to see even more options. If you have never looked at these before you will be amazed at the number of things that you can do to customize your mouse. You can switch the buttons if you are left-handed. You can speed up and/or slow down the double-click speed. You can change the looks of the pointer. If you are using a mouse with a scroll wheel, you can even change how the wheel behaves.

Try a few things. The only caveat here is to document the changes that you are making so you can change them back if you want to.

Each of the items in the Control Panel allows you to change the settings in your computer. Look through and open up a few of them. There are hundreds of things that you can change and/or customize in the Windows operating system. Some of the Control Panel items are very useful for everyday tasks in Windows. Be sure to take a look. 

SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT



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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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TECH SUPPORT-- YOUR COMPUTER LIFEBOAT

Tech Support

August 2010 • Vol.21 Issue 8

Page(s) 58-59 in print issue

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Welcome To The Tech Support Center

Your Computer Lifeboat When Seas Get Stormy .



Smart Computing is much more than simply a magazine (although we like to think it's a very good one). Along with the monthly product reviews, hints and tips, how-to articles, and technical in-

formation that the magazine gives you, Smart Computing is also your online tech support partner. In fact, the Tech Support section of the Web site is a popular destination for readers experiencing problems or seeking info on a variety of topics (and also some who are simply curious). If you haven't spent much time at the Smart Computing Tech Support Center, you're in for a treat; the next time you're in trouble, confused, and getting frustrated, relax. Just use the Tech Support Center's many handy tools to help get you back on track. We'll show you how.

The Tech Support Center Home Page

You can get to the Tech Support Center by clicking the Tech Support Center link or image on the main Smart Computing Web site page, www.smartcomputing.com, or by visiting www.smartcomputing.com/techsupport.

The main page of the Tech Support Center is your gateway to a wealth of helpful info, and right off the bat, it lists three convenient ways to get started on solving your problem.

Search

First, you can search the entire Tech Support Center (and our article archive) by entering a keyword or phrase in the Enter A Subject To Search By text box. The system will display a list of useful results, all of it organized by the categories in which those results occur. For example, there may be error messages

and explanations listed in the Solutions Knowledge-base section, troubleshooting info listed under Basic Troubleshooting Articles, more articles noted under How To Install...Just About Anything!, and additional information available from the editorial archives.

Post On The Smart Computing Q&A Board

If you have a question about computer technology, it's a safe bet that you're not the only one. Someone else—perhaps many others—has had the same question. Better yet, that person may have already found an answer to your question, and that answer may be posted on the Q&A Board. To find out, click the Q&A Board link on the main Tech Support Center page. From there you can browse through the postings or home in on your exact question by searching the Q&A Board itself. (Just click the Click Here link near the top of the page, next to Has Your Question Already Been Asked And Answered?) And if you have information that someone else needs, remember that subscribers are more than welcome to help each other out by answering questions that others have posted.

Contact SmartPeople Computer Support

Smart Computing offers live SmartPeople tech support, with phones staffed by friendly, knowledgeable experts in Lincoln, Neb.

Yes, Smart Computing offers "live" tech support. Our knowledgeable team will answer your telephone calls or emails Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Central Time. Just call (800) 368-8304 or click the SmartPeople Computer Support link on the main page of the Tech Support Center site and then click Click Here To Send An Online Request. Print subscribers get one free solution and pay \$29 per solution after that. (And you pay only if we solve your problem.) Non-subscribers also pay \$29 per solution. Our team uses the same plain-English approach that you see in the magazine.

More Useful Support Tools

The online Tech Support Center has something for everyone, including a categorized collection of tips and articles to help you deal with specific situations.

(Continued on page 9)

TECH SUPPORT-YOUR COMPUTER LIFEBOAT

(Continued from page 8)

There are several categories, and one way to find solutions to problems is to go directly to the appropriate category. If you're trying to install something, decipher an error message, set up a network, find or install a driver, or just about anything else, you can link right to the information you need.

Error Messages. Computers misbehave, and when they do, they sometimes generate error messages. Unfortunately, those messages tend to be confusing and frustrating much more often than they're straightforward and useful. We can help you with that. Smart Computing has compiled thousands of error messages and explained each one in plain English. So, when your Windows XP computer spits out, *"Error loading C:\PROGRAM FILES\ WILDAGENT\APPS\CDA\Cdaengine0440.dll. The specified module could not be found,"* you can do more than just scratch your head and pound your fist on your desk in frustration. (In this particular case, the program may be suffering a problem and the error message database goes on to explain how to remove it.)

Just click the Error Messages link to browse through the collection or search for a specific error message.

Basic Troubleshooting Articles. When we say "basic," we mean it. These are simple, straightforward, bare bones explanations of how to handle problems with printers, external hard drives, laser printers, and dozens of other devices. If you're having issues with your iPod or you're worried about your Web cam, come here first. There's even an entire section of "What To Do When. . ." articles.

How To Get Rid Of. These days, computer users are swamped by spyware, viruses, and worms—all kinds of nasty malware. It's irritating at best and seriously dangerous at worst. You can relax. Smart Computing's Tech Support Center provides an entire database of articles designed to help you get rid of the nasty little visitors. Whether it's a browser hijacker, an emailed phishing expedition, or a worm, we can help you clean up your computer.

Preventive & Regular Maintenance. Like your car, your furnace, or your marriage, things in your life hum along much more smoothly when you pay regu-

lar attention to them. In this section of the Tech Support Center, we've collected all the articles that deal with maintaining your system before disaster strikes. From cleaning out your computer case to cleaning off your hard drive, and from changing your inkjet cartridge to charging your camera battery, it's all there. Go here to head off minor problems before they become major crises.

Networking & Communications. Let's face it, networks are complicated. Newer Oses (operating systems) hide that complexity from us, taking much of the drudgery out of setting up a wired or wireless network: Click a few buttons, answer a couple of questions, a few more clicks, and we're finished. Piece of cake. Well, unless it didn't work. In that case, we're in trouble.

The answer is simple: Now you go to the Networking & Communications section of Smart Computing's Technical Support Center. There you'll find general background articles on networking, articles on how to set up various types of networks, and information about how to troubleshoot your network when it stops . . . well, networking.

Articles On How To Install . . . Just About Anything. Whether you've already brought that new router home or whether you're just wondering what would be involved in installing it, we've got you covered. This section can help you install . . . well, just about anything. From printers to scanners and from Blu-ray drives to complete operating systems, we can show you how it's done. So when your geeky nephew tells you that you need to drop in a new CMOS (complementary metal-oxide semiconductor) battery and offers to come over and help, you can just say . . . well, actually, you know what? You might as well let the kid help. It'll make him feel useful. But if he hadn't offered to help, you could have handled it—with our help.

But Wait, There's More

We're not finished yet. In addition to the sections noted so far, the folks at Smart Computing have also put together an additional series of helpful tools, including lists of browser and email tips, a computing dictionary and encyclopedia, a compilation of file ex-

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DEFINE YOUR ONLINE PERSONA

Define Your Online Persona With A Customizable Home Page

Quick Studies

August 2010 • Vol.21 Issue 8

Page(s) 40 in print issue

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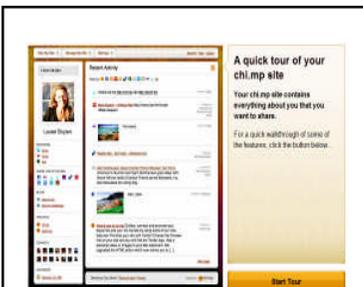
Flavors.me

Beginner

Chi.mp

If you have pieces of your online persona strewn about various photo and social networking sites, it can be nice to tie everything together in one gateway page. For some people, that means creating a blog. Maybe you just want a basic page to call your own, a place where others can find you, either for professional or social reasons.

A couple of sites make setting up your customized front door on the Web terrifically simple. Aside from



With Chi.mp, you can pull together your various online personality strands to create one go-to site address to give out to friends and colleagues.

making pages that look nice, these sites also automatically include the content you've posted around the Web through services such as Twitter or Facebook. Visitors will find everything at one convenient spot, and all you or anyone else needs to remember is a single URL. Flavors.me

One of our favorites, Flavors.me

(www.flavors.me), provides customizable, simple, and potentially stylish home pages that usually contain a large graphical element with links to your various online outlets. The basic version, which can include links to up to four services, is free. To build in additional services or take advantage of the full layout library, you'll need to pay \$20 a year for the premium version.

The Flavors.me community is clearly one that pays attention to design. Many of the site's users have set up bold pages with large pictures or fonts front and center. Links to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and other accounts typically line one side of the page. Click one of these links to another site, and a version of that content appears right on the Flavors.me page.

It's not hard to create a home on Flavors.me—just sign up for a free account to check it out. Once you register, your page address will be flavors.me/<your ID>. For example, if your Flavors.me ID is BobSmith, your page address would be flavors.me/bobsmith. (If you want something a little catchier, upgrade to the premium version and tie your Flavors.me page to a domain name that you already own.)

Your page starts out blank. The Design Panel controls the layout, text content, fonts, and other elements. Enter your name and a short bio and then click the Design link. This is where you can customize the look of your page. Finally, click services to set up the different photo and social networking sites, blogs, and other sites you want to link up to your new personal page. If you're stuck for ideas, head back to the main Flavors.me page and look for the link to the Flavors.me directory.

With Chi.mp, you can pull together your various online personality strands to create one go-to site address to give out to friends and colleagues.

Chi.mp

Flavors.me is definitely about style, but our other favorite, Chi.mp (www.chi.mp), is more about substance. The layouts, while pleasant, aren't quite as flashy as the designs from Flavors.me. The functionality of Chi.mp, however, is more expansive. Basic, free accounts offer users the ability to add more than 20 different services to personal pages, including RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. Viewers can see your activity stream from all of those sites at once or filter by service.

(Continued on page 11)

DEFINE YOUR
ONLINE PERSONATECH SUPPORT-YOUR
COMPUTER LIFEBOAT

(Continued from page 10)

The first step in creating an account is to choose a username that also becomes your domain name. For instance, if your user ID is BobSmith, your page address will be BobSmith.mp.

After you enter a domain name and set up your account, the site takes you through adding different sites and other content. You can also choose a layout, colors, and other settings to make your new .mp home your own. Most pages end up with biographical information in one column, and a second, larger column displays your recent activity around the Web.

After you've set up everything, you can start logging in directly from your personalized page to make changes. Chi.mp says that the domain name is "yours," although to use it outside the Chi.mp framework, you'll need to pay \$20 per year to buy the address.

A personalized home page such as those you can build at Flavors.me or Chi.mp isn't something everyone needs, but if you're looking for one place you can send business prospects or new friends, both sites make good first impressions.

by Alan Phelps



(Continued from page 9)

tensions, and a manufacturer's tech support index. Just look at the final entry on the right-hand panel menu or scroll down to the very bottom of the main Tech Support Center page and look for the Other Helpful Tech Support Tools heading.

If you'd like a fast way to access all of these tools, take a look at the menu on the right-hand side of the main Tech Support Center page. This menu contains links designed to take you right to collections of information in each of the major support categories. By clicking a link in this panel, you can go directly to each section of the Tech Support Center.

More Help, Still "In Plain English"

You've always trusted Smart Computing magazine, and for good reason: It's the publication that gives you straightforward computer advice and tech support help "in plain English," and has done so for more than 20 years. The online Tech Support Center is another way we at Smart Computing can make sure you get the most out of your hardware and software. When in doubt, in trouble, or just inquisitive, be sure to check out the Smart Computing Tech Support Center. We're here to help, in print and online.

by Rod Scher



**DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN GET YOUR NEWSLETTER
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MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL

STEALTH SPYWARE

Stealth Spyware

By Kristofer Simon
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For most of us, the word spyware is not an unfamiliar term anymore. It can mean cookies that track your movements on web pages or other little programs that put garbage applications on your machine. While spyware intentions have not changed much over the past few years, their infection practices appear to be doing so. The newest kind of spyware, which I personally came in contact with a few months ago, should be referred to as "stealth" spyware. What I mean by that is that this spyware installs on your machine without you even knowing about it. You do not become aware of the spyware infection on your machine generally until the next time you reboot and the spyware program activates. In this short article, I will describe my experience with a piece of this spyware and what I had to do to get rid of it so that, hopefully, none of you have the same experience that I did.

The piece of spyware that infected my machine was called "XP Police Antivirus." I became infected, I believe, after visiting a third party website that provided updated information and screen shots for Nintendo Wii games that were about to hit the market and that were in development. As I said earlier, this program was a piece of "stealth" spyware and installed on my machine without my knowledge. It did not slow down the performance of my machine at all (at least not that I was able to notice), nor did any installation screens pop up during the install. The next time I booted up my machine, an icon appeared on the lower right hand part of my screen that looked like the XP Security Center shield. When I put my cursor over it to see what it was, it said "XP Police Antivirus." For just a split second, I wondered if maybe Microsoft had tried to install a new version of an antivirus program they created on my machine, but I quickly realized that this was a piece of spyware that had infected my machine without my knowledge. The program tried to fool me into thinking that anonymous users from the Internet (it would put public IP addresses in the warning dialog

boxes) were attempting to access my computer maliciously and it recommended that I install the full program to prevent these attacks. I wasn't going to do this because I had the full and up-to-date version of McAfee Security Center so I knew this was bogus. When I tried to remove the program through the Add/Remove Programs option in the Control Panel, I was able to wipe out the program temporarily but the next time I rebooted my machine, the application icon was in my system tray again and I was getting the same bogus dialog boxes about people trying to access my computer.

This spyware also put another program on my machine called Security Center 2009 that also was made to look as realistic as possible. Finally, I went on my Motorola Q Smart Phone and searched on the XP Police Antivirus program. Immediately, I got a link to a page that told me that this was a piece of stealth spyware and told me how to get rid of it. I actually had to go into the computer's registry (kind of like the computer's brain) and delete the entry that the spyware had made there, as well as delete a number of files the program had put on my machine. Once I did that, the spyware programs (both XP Police Antivirus and Security Center 2009) were finally gone but I still had one more hurdle to overcome from this program. The spyware also installed a software program known as a "browser hijacker."

For those of you who don't know what this is, let me explain. Let's say you launch a web browser and you want to go to www.cnn.com to see the latest news. You type www.cnn.com into the address bar of your browser and either hit "go" or hit return. The browser initially begins to go to that page, but suddenly the browser gets "redirected" to another page. This happens every time you try to access a web page. These programs are EXTREMELY hard to get rid of but I was able to get rid of the one on my machine using a third party program that found the program and removed it.

While this may sound like a dire situation, the most important thing you can do as an end user in these situations is to remain calm and scrutinize every program that you see on your machine, that you haven't specifically downloaded (e.g., a game, a
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CAN YOU REALLY WATCH FREE TV?

Can You Really Watch Free TV on Your PC?

by Ira Wilsker

iwilsker at sbcglobal.net.

AFFILIATION APCUG Director

Ira is a Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX

A Radio &Talk Show Host.

You may have seen ads on the internet or on TV that tell you that you can watch free TV on the internet, and that you do not need cable or satellite to watch thousands of TV channels. Some even go as far as to say that you should cancel your cable or satellite, and use the free services, rather than paying for expensive TV service. Several others advertise software or hardware devices (for a fee) that allow you to watch hundreds of TV channels online for free. There are even websites that allow you watch TV in your browser or on your desktop, either for free, or for a subscription fee. While these offers are generally real, they should not be confused with the selection of channels available on your local cable system or satellite service as they generally do not offer the major commercial channels, and rarely offer the major local channels. Some services, generally located overseas, offer illegally pirated feeds for a fee, and should always be avoided. Other services, such as the well respected Hulu (hulu.com) legitimately offer thousands of already broadcast and older TV shows and movies provided by the networks and movie studios that are either advertiser supported (for free), or without commercials (by subscription, sometimes for a fee).

One service that I frequently use is TV-Fox, or its sister product, LIVE TV. The selection of channels on LIVE TV is virtually identical to those on TV-Fox. Alternatively, for those who do not want to download a toolbar or plug-in, these same channels can be viewed directly online at watch-live-online.tv. It may be necessary to have Windows Media Player (or some similar compatible player) installed to view these stations. Most of the stations can either be viewed in a small window, or opened to full screen by double clicking on the video.

TV-Fox is a free plug-in for the Firefox browser (toolbar.tv-fox.com), and currently offers "2780 Live TV Channels sorted by country & category, the TV-FOX allows you to watch thousands of TV channels freely available on the internet." It is installed as a short toolbar, and includes a pair of directories that display the available channels. The first icon (purple) opens a directory containing a listing of about 100 countries; moving the mouse cursor over the country

displays the currently available TV stations that stream online. If the selected station has a circle icon with a right arrow (triangle), that indicates that the selected station is always online; if the icon is a small clock, that means that the station is only available for specific hours. The viewer should be aware of the time differences around the world, as what is prime time in the mid-east, for example, may be the early morning here. While I enjoy watching live foreign TV, I am not capable of understanding all of the languages, so I prefer the English language stations available in many of the countries listed. Under the listing for the United States is approximately 60 stations, all but a few being broadcast in English. These US based stations include such well known stations as Bloomberg Business, CBN, CNBC, Home Shopping Network (HSN), Fox News, MSNBC, NASA, NBC News, and several prominent local stations from a variety of cities.

The second icon (green) on the TV-Fox toolbar opens a directory based on genre'. Categories include sports, news, business, music, kids, lifestyle, government, religious, education, shopping and weather, as well as a listing of about 50 live webcams from around the world. Personally, I am a news and information junkie, and spend significant time on the news listing, which has live news feeds from about three dozen news sources from about 20 different countries, many of which are in English. Sports fanatics may enjoy the sports selection, consisting of 28 stations from about a dozen countries. While I may not understand the announcer on many of these sports stations, the live or recorded sports events are often quite understandable to the viewer. Music fans would appreciate the almost 50 TV stations that stream music. While many of the music stations are from France, Italy, Poland, and India, the viewer will almost always find music of interest. I have found that many of the foreign music stations which play their native music are very intriguing and entertaining.

Investing and business is of universal interest, and TV-Fox offers 19 business channels, including Bloomberg-UK, Bloomberg-Asia, and Bloomberg-USA. Those stations, along with CNBC and NBR can provide business and economic information for the majority of investors and others interested in business.

Sometimes we need content to entertain our children, or the child in us adults. The kids section contains a dozen channels, three of which are American,

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STEALTH SPYWARE

WATCH FREE TV?

(Continued from page 12)

patch from Microsoft, etc.). If you do get infected by stealth spyware and can't seem to get rid of it, go to a non-infected PC or web enabled cell phone and do a search on the program's name. You will almost always get a link telling you how to get rid of the program. Also, never send personal information over the Internet to any site that you cannot confirm is a legitimate site that you use (e. g., Amazon.com, Paypal, etc.). Using these steps you can help eliminate most of the problems caused by spyware, but you should always remain vigilant. You can get infected with a stealth spyware program from just about any website, so be careful out there!



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.

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two of which are cartoons. My favorite kids channel is the "Classical Cartoons" which shows old time cartoons, many of which are from the 30's and 40's, most of which today's children would not otherwise have an opportunity to view.

There are 22 movie channels listed, of which eight are from the US, and include sci-fi, comedy classics, thrillers, and WSTV (White Springs TV, also known as "The Golden Age of Movies Channel") which is a Florida and Oregon based network that streams old movies over satellite and on the air in about a dozen cities, as well as online. If I feel like watching a movie stream on my computer, I can usually find something of interest on one of these movie channels.

The two dozen religious TV channels that stream over the internet cover almost all of the world's major religions, in a variety of languages. There are 27 educational channels available, many from major universities around the world, including Texas A&M's KAMU-TV. Shoppers may like to see what the 22 shopping channels offer, including the six American shopping channels. Some of the products promoted on the foreign shopping channels are very interesting, despite the frequent language barrier; the foreign sales techniques are often very entertaining as well. The 14 weather channels, including nine American weather channels provide more weather information than most viewers can utilize.

Sometimes it is interesting just to see a live webcam from some notable location. The live webcams available on TV-Fox include such diverse places as Times Square (NYC), the Hogs Breath Saloon in Florida, France, Germany, Kathmandu (Nepal), Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and other US locations.

While not a complete substitute for local TV and the domestic cable and satellite services, there is enough free TV available online to entertain and inform almost everybody.

WEBSITES:

<http://toolbar.tv-fox.com>

<http://www.watch-live-online.tv> (Live TV)

<http://www.hulu.com>

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PRIVACY AND GOOGLE VOICE

Privacy and Google Voice

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This article has been inspired by an announcement that Google is making available a service that will expand our ability to manage our phone service, but, at the same time, will vastly increase Google's ability to know more about us. If true, when I choose to use all of the capabilities of Google Voice, Google can obtain a complete record of all of my phone calls, not merely who called me or whom I called, but also a recording of each and every one of those calls. Some would say that Google's collecting this much information about me goes far beyond merely recording my Google searches or my clicking on banner ads or on links to other sites. Google might be seriously infringing my "privacy." Of course, if I choose to use Google Voice, presumably I know what I am getting into. I can voluntarily give up some of my privacy in the interests of convenience. I am under no obligation whatsoever to use Google Voice. But what is privacy, and how much of it have I already lost in this technological age?

Most people, I think, would be surprised to know that the Constitution of the United States does not give anyone a right to privacy. The right to privacy was created by the courts, most particularly the United States Supreme Court, in such cases as *Roe v. Wade*, which gave a woman a limited right to an abortion based on her right to privacy. Privacy has several meanings, but, basically, it refers to a person's right to control his private property, including his own body, and the information publicly available about him. Immediately, then, we see that the right to privacy is not absolute.

My car is my private property, but I am not free to use it however I choose. I am not even free to use my body however I choose; for example, when my body is in the front seat of a car, I am obligated by law to restrain my body with a seatbelt. The balance to be struck between my right to restrict the information publicly available about me and a government/or public "need to know" is often controversial. If I am a public figure, such as a candidate for high office, I am expected to reveal more about myself so the public can better decide whether to vote for me. But even if I am the humblest of private citi-

zens, if I use a charge card, a record is made not only of my purchase, but of the time and place where I made the purchase. If I make a phone call, the phone company has a record of the number I called in its logs. If I sign on to a website, there is a presumption that I visited that site at the time and from the IP address indicated on the site's log.

Moreover, cell phones are easily tapped, and there is no expectation on privacy when using a cell phone. Even computers that are not properly shielded emit electromagnetic waves that can be picked up with the proper equipment, and the computer's activity can be duplicated exactly on another computer. There are, of course, other means of spying on my computer activity, such as packet sniffing for one. And though such sophisticated mechanisms to invade my "privacy" would hardly be justified in the case of an ordinary citizen, the mechanisms are out there. The only secure computer is one that is shielded against emitting radio waves and is totally isolated from the outside world. And, of course, those who truly want to know more about me, for reasons good or bad, are developing increasingly powerful means to do so.

Just as the notion of intellectual property has had to be rethought in the light of modern technology, so, too, does the notion of privacy. Just as there is the balance to be struck between my right to control what is mine, including information about me, based on the legitimate needs of society, I can often decide what personal balance I am willing to strike. I can pay cash for all my purchases so there will be no records from my charge cards. I can use a pay phone, if I can find one, so I cannot be traced to the numbers I called. I can forego use of the Internet so that not even cookies will find their way to my hard drive. And I can refuse to use Google Voice.

Where I draw the line concerning my privacy is one of the choices left to me, or is it? Access to the Internet is almost a necessity for much of our work and leisure. Cell phones are beginning to replace land lines, and many people already use VOIP for their phone service. Perhaps Google Voice is a bridge too far, or maybe it is simply just another milestone on a road we have been traveling for decades. Are we still controlling technology, or is technology controlling us?

The Rev. Dr. Michael Gemignani, an attorney and Episcopal priest, is also a former professor of computer science who has written extensively on legal issues related to computers



RECYCLING & INHERITING PCS

Recycling & Inheriting PCs

Stephen J. Bigelow

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Personal computers rarely have a single owner. A PC is often handed down to family members as newer equipment enters the household. Similarly, used equipment may be donated to charitable concerns, or corporations may sell older systems as new desktops displace their existing platforms. But the charity and goodwill associated with used equipment carries potential security risks. Systems infected with viruses or other malware, unpatched vulnerabilities, and sensitive data remaining on the system are just a few problems that can compromise the security of a used system. Whether you're inheriting a used system or passing your old PC to another user, this article highlights some ways to stay secure.

Giving Away A Computer

The brand-new shiny PC you ordered finally arrived, and you're thinking about what to do with your existing system. Before breaking down and boxing it in a corner or giving it away to a local organization, it's important to consider all of the valuable or sensitive data that might be on it. First, if you have applications on your existing system that you plan to run on the new system, such as Intuit Quicken or Microsoft Office, be sure to make a backup copy of your data files from the old system. It's a simple matter to copy files onto a USB flash drive or external hard drive. Take the time to decide which applications need to be installed on the new system (if they're not on the new system already). Locate the installation media for those applications and pay particular attention to the license numbers or registration keys; you'll need these to activate the applications once they are installed on the new PC. The product key is usually printed on the installation disc or included in the software box or with the users manual. At this point, you can uninstall the applications from the old PC and make sure that any data files associated with that application are deleted. This may seem like a bit of work, but most software licenses only cover installation on one machine, so it may be illegal to install the software on your new system without removing it from the old system. Install the applications on the new PC and copy over the data files at your leisure. Next, you don't need the new owner of your used system seeing where you've been browsing or checking into your favorite delete all of the temporary files and folders for your browser. Don't forget to empty the Recycle Bin because any sensitive files left in the

Recycle Bin can be opened or restored. Once you've removed applications, deleted data, cleared temporary content, and emptied the Recycle Bin, use a file shredding tool such as File Shredder (free; www.fileshredder.org) to thoroughly overwrite all of the hard drive space that you just cleared. Use a high-security algorithm to prevent any chance of the next user recovering any sensitive data with forensic data recovery tools. You should then be able to pass that old system to its new owner with a feeling of security.

Accepting A Used Computer

It's great to get another PC. But even if the system is coming from a friend or relative, you still don't know where that system has been. Before installing new applications or using the system at all, start an anti-malware program (if there isn't one already installed), update the anti-malware signatures to their latest version, and then perform a full scan of every drive on the system. It doesn't matter how long it takes. If there is any malware on the system, it's best to find and eradicate it before you trust sensitive data on the computer. Products such as Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www.malwarebytes.org) can do the job free. If you find one or more infections, be sure to remove the infected items and repeat the scan until the system checks completely clean. Remember that the system should have a full security suite installed, particularly if you intend to run the system with a full-time broadband Internet connection. There are numerous vendors, each providing well-tested products, but the security suite should include a firewall, anti-malware, and intrusion detection/prevention. Once you confirm that the hand-me-down system is malware free, run Windows Update (www.update.microsoft.com). This will examine the operating system and other installed Microsoft applications, such as Office, and identify any updates, service packs, security patches, and other content that will plug potential exploits and bring the system to a current security posture. Your last step as the recipient of a used computer should be to perform a complete backup of the system to a DVD or external hard drive. Although the PC probably shipped with a "system image" disc when it was new, the previous owner may not have passed on the original media to you—if the hard drive quits, you won't be able to restore the system. Performing a complete system backup to separate media is your best insurance against any problems that may arise later. Now, you can go ahead and use the inherited system with confidence.

Short Circuits...zzzt!

Diaz-ling?

Search strings containing actress Cameron Diaz' name have a ten percent chance of being directed to a website infected with, or spreading malware. A spokesman for the McAfee software development company has announced for the third year the names of prominent individuals in the public eye who have been caught most often by their SiteAdvisor software. Female movie stars have proven to be tagged the most, with actresses Julia Roberts and Jennifer Biel following Miss Diaz in this year's tabulation. The most frequently linked male actor, Brad Pitt, only managed to make tenth place.

Gregg Keizer, Computer World, August 10, 2010

Say "Cheese"?

A family visiting the State Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin paused to take their group picture in front of the State Capitol building. The father placed his camera bag behind the family and set up the camera on a tripod facing them. When the shot was taken, so was his camera bag. However, upon examining the picture that had just been created, the photo showed the thief caught in the act of stealing the camera bag. The State Capitol police were quickly notified, and the thief was recognized as a person seen often in that area. He was quickly spotted, chased, and caught. The bag was identified, and the father's wallet was found in his pocket. He pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor theft.

Associated Press, August 24, 2010



"You figured out how to use the phone all by yourself. Congratulations, that's a good start! Please hold for tech support."



Payback?

It was inevitable. Sufferers of "tennis elbow" popped up in emergency rooms when tennis became a politically important recreation, and stories about "carpal tunnel syndrome" appeared in the mainstream media when the personal computer revolution occurred. Now, with the advent of text messaging, the first case of "Blackberry Thumb" has been reported. A mortgage broker in Florida, who admitted to sending text messages at 40 words per minute for twelve hours a day, has been treated for inflamed tendons. She suffered pain, numbness, and tingling as a result of the excessive strain being placed on the relatively unused digit. But then, maybe it is justice being paid for being a civic nuisance. Now all we need is a similar malady for unsolicited telephone callers, especially as we are entering the biennial political campaigns.

Janie Porter, WTSP-TV, Tampa-St. Petersburg, August 26, 2010

Twittering?

The Animal Humane Society of Minnesota has gone to the birds, too many of them. Their cages for homeless avians are filled to the extent that AHS is willing to place them in new nests for a song,...or a whistle,...or a chirp. Many owners of pet cockatiels, parakeets, and finches have found themselves unable to care for them. So the five AHS locations in the State are offering adoptions for the chicken feed cost of \$1.00 to anyone who is willing to imitate a bird call, peep a song with a bird theme, or in any way give a hoot to show their wish to acquire a new feathered friend.

Brainerd, MN, August 8, 2010 Associated Press

These stories are based on articles from the noted sources and have been redone by our Editor.

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
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Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one: Yes No

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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

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