

COMPUTER NEWS



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Inside This Issue

- 2 NVPCUG SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS
- 2 NVPCUG CALENDAR
- 2 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
- 3 OFFICERS LIST
- 4 THE QWERTY KEYBOARD AND MICROSOFT OFFICE 2007
- 5 WEIRD WINDOWS BEHAVIOR
- 6 THE NEW, THE BEST, AND THE WORST
- 8 WINDOWS XP POWER MANAGEMENT
- 9 USING IMAGING SOFTWARE FOR BACKUP
- 11 DVD INSIDER – DRM
- 15 USING A RESTORE POINT

Happy
New
Year

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group has served novice and experienced computer users since 1983. Through its monthly meetings, newsletters, online forum, special interest groups, mentor program and community involvement, it has helped educate people of all ages. The NVPCUG provides opportunities for people to find friends who share common interests and experiences. From January 2003 to October 2007 the NVPCUG provided 752 computers and 139 printers to local schools. Additional equipment has been given to charitable nonprofit organizations and to disadvantaged individuals.

At the January Meeting, Calvin Ross is the Presenter

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, January 16, 7:00-9:00 P.M., at the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California

The meeting begins with Random Access, an open-floor question-and-answer period during which attendees can ask questions about computers and computer-related problems and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees. Questions may be submitted before the meeting by emailing them to Random Access moderator **Jerry Brown** at Questions@nvpcug.org.



During the Computer Tutor session which will follow, Jeff Solomon, our Computer Tutor, will be discussing various FREE software programs offered by GOOGLE at the January meeting. Any additional questions or comments should be sent to the Computer Tutor, **Jeff Solomon** at tutor@nvpcug.org.

The first speaker of 2008 year will be **Calvin Ross**. He will talk about the assault on privacy in the maturing - or degrading - Information Age and what we can do about it.

Members, Cal asks us bring our own ideas to the January meeting.



MEMBER OF THE YEAR 2007, Ron Dack was presented a gift basket and certificate by the 2007 Membership Director, **Dianne Prior**. Photo taken at the Holiday Party at Peterson's Christmas Tree Farm.

Could you use some practical information that would help you make better use of your computer? Come to this meeting! Guests are always welcome. Admission is always free.

*Interested in becoming a member?
See page 14 for application information.*

NVPCUG Special Interest Groups



President's Message

By Ron Dack, president, <http://www.nvpcug.org/>,
President@nvpcug.org

In SIG meetings you can learn about a subject in greater detail than is feasible at NVPCUG general meetings. SIG meetings are open to everyone. Meeting times and locations occasionally change, so for current meeting information, see our Web site, www.nvpcug.org, or contact the SIG leaders.

Investors SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Monday
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Jerry Brown's home,
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa

Leader: Jerry Brown
(707) 254-9607

bqandjbb@sbcglobal.net

Digital Photography SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Wednesday
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Piner's Nursing Home,
Conference Room
1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa

Leader: Susy Ball
(707) 337-3998

susyball@aol.com

Macintosh SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Thursday
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Napa Senior Activity Center
1500 Jefferson St., Napa

Leader: Jim Gillespie
(707) 252-1665

napanerd@pacbell.net

I hope each of you had a very merry Christmas and will have a happy 2008. As I look back over the year that has just past I realize that even with all the work and controversy it was a good year. I renewed many friendships and made new ones. I survived a heart attack. I had the opportunity to work with some exceptional people as we guided the NVPCUG through some interesting events and changes. I certainly want to thank all those who put in so much time discussing and resolving issues. I know that most of you would have rather been home or someplace with a little less stress. I want to point out some of those who put in overtime on some if not all the issues that the 2007 Board of Directors faced last year. Thanks **Roy Wagner** for the challenging job you did filing our tax forms and helping me with the filing requirements we needed to get our IRC 501(c)(3) Final Ruling. Thanks **Ken Manfree** for your research into recycling and e-waste. I also want to thank each and every one of the board members for all the effort they put in this last year but I know that I don't have room in the newsletter to cover the contribution that each made to the group. I will just name them in this article and tell them, "Thank you for your dedication and hard work". The 2007 Board of Directors were: **Susy Ball, Jerry Brown, Ron Dack, Jim Gillespie, Bernhard Krevet, Ken Manfree, Dick Peterson, Dianne Prior, Bob Simmerman, Kathy Slavens, Jeff Solomon, Dean Unruh, Marcia Waddell, Roy Wagner**, and for part of the year **Jim Stirling**.

Some of these fine people are continuing to work with me on the 2008 Board of Directors and some who decided not to serve on the board this year are continuing in the positions they held last year. I look forward to continuing to work with all of them. A list of the 2008 Board of Directors and Officers can be found later in this newsletter.

I am expecting a much quieter year for 2008 and there are only a few issues that we know we will need to resolve in the near future. One of those issues is our cost to provide the members with a meaningful experience. Those expenses include but are not limited to the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter (NVPCUG's largest expense), renting the Senior Center, maintaining the projector, providing speaker gifts for our guest speakers, office supplies, owning our domain name, CA State fees, P.O. Box rental, required insurance, picnic, and holiday party expenses. We have in the past several years been able to fall back on our small surplus to cover the amount expenses that exceed our income but

[President's Message cont. on page 4](#)

NVPCUG General Meetings

Held the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

NVPCUG Calendar

Jan 16	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
Feb 6	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Feb 11	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting, Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Feb 13	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Feb 14	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Macintosh SIG meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Feb 29	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
Mar 5	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Mar 10	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting, Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Mar 12	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Mar 13	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Macintosh SIG meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Mar 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group Contact Information

(Please note the changes. Many names and position titles have changed for the 2008 listings.)

Officers for 2007

Board of Directors

President	Ron Dack	unlisted	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Dick Peterson	738-1812	VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org
Other Directors:	Susy Ball, Ron Dack, Jim Gray, Dick Peterson, Bob Simmerman, Kathy Slavens, Dean Unruh, Marcia Waddell, and Roy Wagner.		
Director	Jim Gray	255-6789	Director_Gray@nvpcug.org

Appointed Officers

Computer Tutor Coordinator	Jeff Solomon	553-2114	Tutor@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Kathy Slavens	251-9193	Greeter@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter2@nvpcug.org
Librarian	Dean Unruh	226-9164	Librarian@nvpcug.org
Membership Director	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Membership@nvpcug.org
Mentor Program Coordinator	Dick Peterson	738-1812	Mentors@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Circulator	Jim Hearn	224-2540	Circulation@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Editor	Susy Ball	337-3998	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Susy Ball	337-3998	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews2@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	Susy Ball	337-3998	Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	Ron Dack	unlisted	Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	Jeff Solomon	553-2114	Projects@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack	unlisted	Webmaster@nvpcug.org
Sales Coordinator	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	N/A	sales@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	N/A	Projects@nvpcug.org

• All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

NVPCUG Computer News

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Editor: **Susy Ball**,
Editor@nvpcug.org.

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The QWERTY Keyboard and Microsoft Office 2007

By Bob Schneider, Editor, The PC Keyboard, Spring Hill Teaching Computer Club, FL,

www.shtcc.net, drbob1012.new@hotmail.com

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Back in the mid 1800's, when the first practical typewriter was built, inventor C.L. Sholes arranged the keys in the QWERTY layout for a practical reason. He had to separate the most common letters to prevent the hammers from jamming. So many people knew that layout that although it was no longer necessary, it was maintained with the advent of electric typewriters. A much better (in terms of ease-of-learning and speed-of-typing) is the Dvorak keyboard layout developed in the 1920's. It puts the most commonly used keys under your eight "home" fingers. Once millions of people started with computers using the old QWERTY layout, better alternatives were doomed. Changing to a new keyboard layout involves the most difficult of human learning tasks. The technical term from memory researchers is "proactive interference." That means an old memory (such as an old cell phone number you used before) interferes with your ability to learn a new memory (your new cell number). In layman's terms the most difficult task is to unlearn something you know well in order to learn something new. That is why we standardize some procedures, such as operating a standard transmission in a car. You will never find a car with the brake on the left pedal and the clutch on the right pedal, and you already know the gear-shift sequence and location. Airplane pilots will always find the altimeter in the middle of their visual field.

I've been a fan of and using Microsoft Windows for some time, starting with Windows 2.0 in 1989. There are surely many people who have been using it longer than I have, although I have not yet met one. For most of those years, Microsoft advertised the strength and beauty of following the Windows format. Using its standard Graphical User Interface (GUI), all programs would have the same look and feel. Learn one program and you could quickly learn to navigate around in any similar software. Microsoft required that look and feel, with common menu items, before it allowed a program to have the Windows logo. That was a giant advance from the haphazard layout and menu systems of early DOS programs. As a college professor and software teacher, the advantages for student learning and computer novices were quite obvious.

Now we have Office 2007. I suspect that if Corel (Word Perfect) had released that office suite, Microsoft would have denied them the right to use the Windows

logo. The common Windows GUI was thrown out in Word and Excel. Traditional menu items were removed, unfamiliar icons and menus appeared, and familiar processes were moved to obscure places. The better you were at using earlier versions, the more you will have to first unlearn to use Office 2007. The brake pedal is on the left, first gear is on the right, and the altimeter is hidden behind the co-pilot. I am a power user of Microsoft Office. Actually, I used to be a power user.

Now I must constantly go to the help menu (sorry, it is not a menu any more) to find the location of even the most basic procedures. I know how to do them; I just don't know where they are. It is time consuming and frustrating. There are some really nice features in Office 2007. One of them, unfortunately, is not "make it like the earlier versions." ■

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President's Message cont. from page 2

we cannot continue this and keep the group financially sound. The 2008 Budgeted items for these expenses is considerably more than we are collecting in dues/donations. It is highly unlikely that we will find any outside source of income so the 2008 Board of Directors will have to cut some expenses if we want to continue as a group.

Most computer users groups have discontinued printed newsletters and only have an online version. This is something we are considering. We can do this in several ways. We can send each paid-up member an e-mailed PDF copy of the newsletter. We can, as we have done the last couple months, post it in a **members only** folder on the website and send the link to members so they can view, read, copy, or print it. Discontinuing a printed newsletter would stave off the need for any dues increase for the foreseeable future. We will all have to wait to see how this situation is resolved but I know it has to be and will be.

I believe I have more than used my allotted space so I will see you at the meeting on January 16. ■

Take care and have a Happy New Year,
Ron

Weird Windows Behavior

By Sandy Berger of compukiss.com, Sandy@compukiss.com, www.compukiss.com

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

Have you ever been completely dismayed by your computer? Does it seem to do unusual things that you can't trace back to any of your actions? Well, you are not alone. This happens to all computer users. In the computer world, unusual things sometimes happen. Here is a list of some weird computer behavior and how to combat it.

Icons disappear

Right-click on any open area of the computer desktop, then chose Arrange Icons By. If your icons have accidentally become hidden there will be no checkmark in front of Show Desktop Icons. Just click that option and your icons will reappear.

Unusual windows appear

Windows has a lot of keyboard shortcuts that can be accidentally accessed. For instance, when I started this column, I wanted to hit the Shift key and the letter "h" for the word Have. However, my finger slipped and I hit the Ctrl key and the letter "h" instead. A window popped up asking what I wanted to Find and Replace, which is not at all what I intended. If this ever happens you to you can usually just close the pop up window, but occasionally you have to look a little further into what happened. For instance, when working in Microsoft Word, if you accidentally hit Ctrl+N, a new window will appear making it look like you just lost your entire document. If you look closely you will be able to figure out that all you have to do is close the new window and the document you were working on will reappear.

If you can't figure out what happened or you get caught in a loop, restarting your computer will usually bring you back to normal.

Lost toolbars

As noted before, an errant key press can cause a problem. This time the culprit is one of the F keys. Accidentally pressing the F11 key can make the toolbars disappear. This is often used as a feature when you want to show something in what they call "full screen mode". If this happens to you, just press F11 again to make the toolbars return.

The toolbar moves

Have you ever had the toolbar that usually appears on the bottom of the screen show up on the side or top of the screen? There is an easy way to get it back where it belongs. Just place your cursor right next to, but not on,

the Start button. Then hold the mouse button down and drag the toolbar back where it belongs.

Dramatic slowdown

A dramatic slowdown can mean that your hard disk is filling up. The computer uses the hard disk as sort of a scratch pad when it computes, so when your hard drive starts to fill up, it can slow the computer down significantly. Click on My Computer and highlight the drive called Local Disk (C:). Look at the Details area to see how much space is free. You should have at least 10% of your hard drive free. If you don't, a hard drive cleanup is in order. Delete unnecessary programs and backup old files and photos to an external drive or CD so you can delete them from the hard disk. You can use the Disk Cleanup utility to empty the recycle bin and delete unnecessary temporary files. To access it, click on Start, choose All Programs, then click on System Tools where you will find Disk Cleanup listed. It will walk you through the cleanup. Once your hard disk has more free space, your computer will perk up considerably. You might also consider defragging your computer to speed it up. The Disk Defragmenter utility is in the System Tools area. Remember there are other things like viruses and spyware that can also slow down your computer.

No sound

Sometimes the sound gets muted by mistake. Look at the taskbar at bottom of the screen. In the right hand side you will see a small icon that looks like a speaker. If it has a **red X** on it, the sound has been muted. Click on the icon, then click to remove the checkmark in front of the word Mute. If you don't see this icon, go to the Control Panel and choose Sounds or Sounds and Audio Devices where you will find a place to uncheck the Mute option. Many laptops and some desktops also have a volume button on the keyboard which you can use to mute and unmute the speaker.

Mouse shutters

If your mouse is hard to control or acting erratic, it may need a cleaning. An optical mouse with a flat bottom just needs a cleaning with a damp cloth. If your mouse has a roller ball on the bottom, remove the ball and clean the rollers inside the mouse with a Q-tip soaked with isopropyl alcohol.

Hope this gets you through some of those weird Windows moments in your life. ■

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The New, the Best, and the Worst

First Appeared in the October 2007 Issue of the P-SEE Urgent Newsletter for the Southwestern Indiana Personal Computer User Group

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., <http://swipcug.apcug.org/>, Swipcug@gmail.com

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Mobile Supercomputers



Ever since Compaq designed a "portable" version of the old IBM PC there has been a trend to make computers easier to carry around. Soon

there were laptops, then notebooks, and by now some are cellphone add-ins. But what if you need more computer power than a desktop can provide?

Large enterprises depend on computerized data centers that support the various administrative aspects of the business and support a network of desktop computers. Those data centers are typically arranged in bulky stacks of servers and memory banks, located in air conditioned rooms to keep them from overheating. Such expensive data centers are typically custom-built, take months to construct, occupy expensive real estate in office buildings, and are as immobile as the Empire State Building.

Sun Microsystems has come up with a (more) mobile version of the typical database center by putting all the hardware in a standard 20-foot shipping container. It has up to 250 servers with seven terabytes of active memory (what we usually call RAM I guess) and up to 2 petabytes (2 million gigabytes) of storage. It can support 10,000 desktop users. The individual servers use Sun's proprietary 8-core Niagara chips that are not only fast but also at 70 W per chip use a lot less power than common server chips.

Because of the standard construction, such a center can be much more quickly built and delivered at a fraction of the cost of a custom data center. It can be parked in a parking lot or basement of an office building or moved to a disaster zone, battlefield or third world aid center. Rumors have it that Google is interested for their ever-expanding data storage needs.

Of course, there are still some minor problems. Air blown across the electronics boxes has to be cooled with heat exchangers requiring 60 gallons of water per minute that may have to be recycled through external coolers. It will take a sizable, dedicated fiber optics cable for data input and output, and a big wall outlet with a super extension cord to power it all. And don't forget the nerdy teenager to program it all.

The Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) will be

the first end-user to get a Project Blackbox portable data center from Sun Microsystems. The 20-foot shipping container (which will be painted white, not black) will sit on a concrete pad behind the computer building with hookups to power, a 10-gigabit network connection and a chiller located on an adjacent pad. It will allow the SLAC to expand its computing capacity even though its existing data center has maxed out its power and cooling." (From Scientific American, with additional details from the Internet)

Super Jigsaws



If you like jigsaw puzzles as well as computers you may have tried some computer versions of jigsaw puzzles. In my limited experience they were primitive and unsatisfactory, but I may not have looked long enough.

Bertram Nicolay of the Fraunhofer Institute for Production Systems and Design Technology and his colleagues have greatly improved the state of the art. When the Berlin Wall came down and East Germany was to be reunited with the West, the East's State Security Service was in a panic to destroy mounds of secret, incriminating documents in a hurry. Available shredding machines weren't up to the task, so they tore up some 45 million documents by hand. The resulting 600 million pieces of paper are stored in 16,250 bags. To piece the fragments back together would take 30 persons an estimated 600-800 years. Computers to the rescue!

First all the pieces have to be scanned, on both sides, a gigantic task, made possible by technology developed by a daughter company of Bertelsmann, AG. Then the pieces are presorted, based on color and texture of the paper and ink. The scientists have developed algorithms to speed up the matching of edges, and the original documents are reconstituted one piece at a time.

Subsequent work now makes it also possible to reconstitute documents that have been shredded by machine. That task is much more difficult, since all the edges are identical. But already, for Germany's Tax Authority, a bag full of shredded documents has been successfully reconstructed. (From The Economist, 9/8/07, with thanks to Louis Ritz. See also <http://www.ipk.fraunhofer.de/pr/pressekonferenz>)

Amazon

amazon.com

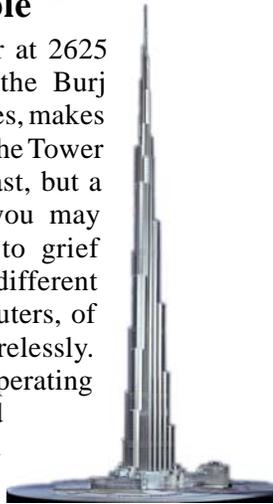
Recently I was called upon to edit this newsletter, a seemingly simple task since it only consists of 8 Xeroxed pages, mostly text in a 2-column format. Using OpenOffice Writer, but with no experience in page layout, I found the task harder than expected. The formatting clearly had a mind of its own, the help files did not help, and it is a wonder that I finally cobbled something together that looked OK.

In order to be prepared for the next time this might happen, I visited Amazon to look for a helpful book. Surprisingly, there was not a great deal to choose from, but one book stood out as the best-looking choice. The OpenOffice.org 2 Guidebook by Solveig Haugland received rave reviews from 9 reviewers. It was also pricey, at \$59⁹⁹, but at the bottom of the listing Amazon provided a link to “2 used & new available from \$36⁰⁰.” Clicking on that link led to an offer of the book, in new condition, for \$36⁰⁰. The choice was easy and I ordered the “used” book.

Amazon sent me the usual confirmation, but the following morning I received another note, from the author, Solveig Haugland, thanking me for my order and she was shipping the book the same day. Because the book is self-published, the author is free to sell her books directly at lower cost than the advertised store price. Anyway, a great way to save \$24! More about the merits of the book in a forthcoming newsletter.

Burj Dubai Babel Babble

Reading about the tallest tower at 2625 feet now under construction, the Burj Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, makes me think of that earlier venture, the Tower of Babel, also in the Middle East, but a few thousand years ago. As you may remember, that project came to grief because the contractors spoke different languages. Now we have computers, of course, who keep in touch wirelessly. Let's hope they all use the same operating system, regularly updated and patched, with protection against viruses and rootkits!



Google

Google generates personal profiles of its users, based on the many ways they use its services. It uses the profiles to target ads based on individual preferences and interests. The ads are unobtrusive so you may hardly notice them. But if you are reading a message in Google mail it is interesting to pay attention to the ads shown on the side, clearly related to keywords in the message that Google is reading over your shoulder.

After Google-mailing the comment about the Dubai



tower (above) to myself, including BCC to some correspondents, the message came back with the following “sponsored links” in the margin (hypertext links omitted):

- Ocean Front Condos \$118k, 2 - bedrooms or 3-bedrooms Ocean Front, 55 mins fm Panama City
- Charlotte NC new condos. The place to live in Charlotte... All the amenities. Reserve today.
- San Jose Luxury Living. Downtown Residential Tower Dramatic Views. Historic City Park
- Macintosh Computers \$199. Refurbished G4 G5 Macs from \$199 Powermacs iMacs eMacs at Low Prices Teksale.com
- Trump Tower Chicago. View all available Trump Tower Chicago condos with full details.

Makes you wonder about privacy, doesn't it? I often use Google to find answers to crossword puzzle clues. I wonder what conclusions Google draws about me, based on those off-the-wall questions?

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Clean A Keyboard

The only possible fix to a keyboard full of spilled coffee or pop takes some time and work. If you act quickly, you might be able to rescue the keyboard. Power down the PC, detach the keyboard cable, and flip the keyboard upside down to let the liquid drain out. Dismantle the keyboard. Drain any residual fluid and wipe the plastic pieces with ordinary dish soap and water. Wash off the electronics by flushing the keys and printed circuit board with a mix of demineralized water and isopropyl alcohol. Allow everything to dry; then, reassemble the keyboard, reattach it to the PC, and see if it works. If trouble develops with your keys, simply replace the keyboard. Of course, if you don't want to tinker with your keyboard, new keyboards cost less than \$30.

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Windows XP Power Management

By Lynn Page, Editor, Crystal River Users Group, Florida, www.crug.com,
newsletter@crug.com

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If you use a laptop you know the problem of running down the battery before you finish up. But configuring power management can also reduce electrical usage on your desktop computer.

Power Options

By using Power Options, you can reduce the power consumption of your computer devices or the entire system. Choose a Windows power scheme or create your own. You can even adjust the individual settings in a power scheme.

Turn off your monitor and hard disks automatically to save power.

Put the computer on standby when idle. While on standby, the system switches to a low-power state where devices, like the monitor and hard disks, turn off and the computer uses less power. When you use the computer again, it comes out of standby quickly, and your desktop is restored exactly as you left it. Standby doesn't save to disk, so a power failure while on Standby can cause loss of unsaved data.

Put your computer in hibernation. The hibernate feature saves everything in memory on disk, turns off the monitor and hard disk, and then turns off the computer. When restarted the computer restores the desktop as you left it. It takes longer for the computer to come out of hibernation than out of standby.

Configure Power Management

To configure power management log on as an administrator, open Control Panel from the Start menu and click Performance and Maintenance. Then click Power Options in the Performance and Maintenance box.

In the Power Options Properties dialog box, select the Power Schemes tab. A power **Power Options Properties Graphic** scheme is a predefined collection of power options. Select the power scheme that most closely matches how you use your computer in the Power schemes drop down menu. The power settings change depending on the power scheme chosen.

The power options available depend on the specific hardware in your computer system. Preset time settings

appear in the Turn off monitor and Turn off hard disks lists on the Power Schemes tab. Change these settings by clicking the arrow and clicking the desired time.

After tailoring a power scheme click Save As and type a name to save your personal scheme.

Standby

To automatically put the computer on standby set the time settings displayed in System standby. To turn off your monitor before your computer goes on standby, select a time in Turn off monitor. To turn off your hard disk before your computer goes on standby, select a time in Turn off hard disks.

If you're using a laptop computer, you can specify one setting for battery power and a different one for AC power.

On the Advanced tab, you can adjust how the power buttons function. With a laptop/notebook computer, you have settings for closing the lid of the computer and pressing the sleep button. To manually put your computer on standby on the Advanced tab, under When I press the power button on my computer, click Standby. If you are using a portable computer, click Standby under When I close the lid of my portable computer.

Hibernation

Hibernation is a state in which the computer shuts down to save power but first saves everything in memory on the hard disk. When restarted computer, the desktop is restored.

To automatically put your computer into hibernation select the Hibernate tab, select the Enable hibernate support check box, and click Apply. Then on the Power Schemes tab select a time period in System hibernates.

To manually put your computer into hibernation on the Hibernate tab select the Enable hibernate support check box. Click Start, and then Turn Off Computer. In the Turn Off Computer dialog box, click Hibernate.

Laptop Low Battery Warning

Set Power Options to for a warning alarm when the level of battery reserve power falls below the levels defined as low



Control Panel Graphic - Performance and Maintenance Graphics

Using Imaging Software For Backup

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL,

www.spcug.org, bwsail@yahoo.com

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There are many hard drive backup programs on the market that tell you that they can make an "image" of your hard drive. This allows you to restore your programs and data in case of a hard drive crash. They also will transfer everything on your hard drive to a new drive. Among these backup programs are well-known names such as Symantec Ghost, Acronis True Image, R-Drive Image, Image for Windows, Paragon Drive Backup and a host of free imaging applications. In terms of making a complete backup of your hard drive (operating system, applications and data), they are very successful. However, what happens when your hard drive crashes or you decide you want a new computer? Will these applications solve the problem of restoring your applications and data quickly and easily? Let's look at the generic methods they use for these situations.

Basically each of these programs makes a "bit-map" copy of your hard drive that is usually compressed and may be encrypted. This, I'm sure, is a statement that needs some explanation. First, the words "bit-map." Everything stored on your hard drive is encoded in the binary computer language. This language is composed of 1's and 0's only. This limitation is imposed by the electromagnetic character of hard drives as well as the "pits and hills" of optical media. So a "bit" is one character, a one or a zero. A computer word is a "byte" which is composed of eight "bits." The imaging software is examining every bit on your hard drive and copying it to the backup media. In order to save space, the bit-map is compressed before it is written to the backup site. The method of compression varies with the software used. Sometimes, the compressed file may be written in a proprietary format that can be read only by the specific application that originated the backup. In other words, Ghost's image file can't be read by any program other than Ghost.

So now we have a bit-map image of our hard drive on whatever we chose for the backup media. In my case I use external hard drives. If I were to store the backup on a partition of my original drive and that drive failed - I would lose the backup. So store it somewhere else if you ever expect to need it.

What does this image file contain? It has the entire contents of your hard drive. That means operating system files, including the Windows Registry, all of your software applications and all of your data. It also has all of the hardware driver information that Windows needs that relates to your hardware. That includes drivers for your motherboard and processor, network card, USB ports, printers, scanners, video cams, etc. This is a very

important point, especially if you want to clone your drive to a new computer. More about that later.

Since an image file contains a complete copy of your hard drive it can be very useful in restoring individual files. It can also be used to restore an entire hard drive in case of a drive failure. There are several methods available for this process. Some image file programs allow you to create a bootable disk (floppy or CD-ROM). When the computer is booted from this disk, it will install the image file program and can then be used to restore all the files on the backup. This includes the operating system files. In other cases you have to first install the operating system and then the image file program before you can restore the rest of the files. In both cases, it is not necessary to reactivate Windows as changing the hard drive is not enough of a change to cause Windows to demand that you go through reactivation.

Microsoft instituted a copy protection process called "activation" with the release of Windows XP. This has been continued with Vista. The activation of Windows plays a very important role in any situation where hardware changes are made to your computer.

If you have a brand name system that you did not have to activate it only means that the manufacturer pre-activated it for you. In the activation process, a small file is placed on your hard drive, and sent to Microsoft, that contains the information related to these ten items:

- Display Adapter
- SCSI Adapter
- IDE Adapter (effectively the motherboard)
- Network Adapter (NIC) and its MAC Address
- RAM Amount Range (i.e., 0-64mb, 64-128mb, etc.)
- Processor Type
- Processor Serial Number
- Hard Drive Device
- Hard Drive Volume Serial Number (VSN)
- CD-ROM / CD-RW / DVD-ROM

This file contains a number based on the identification of the first item in every category. The file also contains the complete product key for your Windows installation. Every time your computer boots, this hardware is checked to determine if any changes have occurred. You can make changes to your hardware. However, "substantial" changes will result in a notice that you have to reactivate Windows.

The XPinfo software, whose name is shown at the top of Figure 1, can read your activation file and compare it to

[Imaging Software for Backups cont. on page 10](#)

the reported hardware. The report for my computer shows that none of the hardware has changed since the last activation. Also, in the figure you will notice that there are eight checked items out of ten. Should the figure drop below seven unchanged or never installed items, Windows would have to be reactivated. The interesting point is that the NIC or internet card carries three votes. Changing this card to a motherboard with a built-in NIC might put you on the way to reactivating Windows.

Suppose that you decide to move your hard drive to a new computer or you want to “clone” your old drive to a new drive in a new computer. Your hardware will have made a substantial change and it will be necessary for you reactivate Windows. But that is not the only catch in this situation. If you restore the entire image file to the new computer or simply clone the hard drive, the Windows Registry from your old computer will not have the correct hardware information. It may or may not boot. If it does boot you will receive warning after warning that files are missing. There will also be requests for driver disks for the new hardware. So when you move to a new computer, the only files in your image backup that can be used without difficulty are the data files. Even the applications that were running successfully on your old computer will really have to be reinstalled on the new computer. This is because the Registry not only stores hardware information, it also has all the information on the location of all files required to run your applications. Although you might think that the .exe file is all that is needed to run an application, you would be surprised at the number of subsidiary files that are required. Sometime, do a search of your computer for files with a .dll suffix. These are the library files that are required by applications running under Windows. These files are also shared by many different applications at the same time. There are hundreds of library files on any Windows computer. They make up a large part of the more than 2 GB of files in the Windows folder.

As long as you use the image file backup to restore files or hard drives in your original computer, it will work beautifully. The problems arise when you want to upgrade to a new system. Then, the image file is less useful. ■

•Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years.

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or critical. You can easily change the battery level at which the alarm or message is activated.

To set a warning alarm select the Alarms tab in Power Options. Specify the settings in Low battery alarm and Critical battery alarm by dragging the sliders. Then click Alarm Action to select the type of alarm notification. ■

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Power Options Graphics

Practice Your Burning With Rewritable Discs

No question, CD- and DVD-rewritables are more expensive than the write-once variety. But a package of three or five can help you avoid making unusable CDs (known as coasters). Write the data or music files from the CD or DVD to the rewritable disc, test it, and then write it to the write-once disc.

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DVD Insider – DRM

Sometimes the Bad Guys Win for All the Wrong Reasons

By Andy Marken, Marken Communications, www.markencom.com, andy@markencom.com

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“On the one hand information wants to be expensive, because it's valuable. The right information in the right place just changes your life. On the other hand, information wants to be free, because the cost of getting it out is getting lower and lower all the time. So you have these two fighting each other.”
— Steward Brand, 1st Hackers' Conference, 1984

Hollywood loves sequels.

They love proving they know what the consumer/viewer wants.

But they really had to reach when they heard some Doom9er yahoos had not only hacked their precious AACS DRM (Digital Rights Management) code.

The audacity!

Nothing to do but reach into the archives and take a page from one of the immortals...Mack Sennett.

Yep...nothing to do but call in the Keystone Cops...that'll teach them.

Had they hacked it, passed it around amongst themselves the industry wouldn't consider a change.

But what good is it to hack something that is hack-proof if no one knows about it?

They had to share their bragging rights.

And they did with postings at Digs, on t-shirts and everywhere they could find the opportunity to expose themselves.

You know that wasn't going to sit well with Tollywood's guardians !

Take It Down Dude

They sent in their best armed with cease & desist letters to anyone, everyone who posted the elegant 32 digit code.



Figure 1 - Calling All Cops – The minute the AACS lawyers got the word that their DRM had been not only cracked but posted, they sprang into efficient action...they sued everyone! Source – Keystone Studios Archives

Great...another riot on the Web !

We need to note that creative people need to be paid for their work...writers, artists, animators, actors, makeup artists, best boys, post production folks, underwriters and yes even studio execs.

No pay...no play !

The problem is the world doesn't want content protection. Consumers don't want content protection.

Hell...they aren't too happy people are buying each other off to keep two blue formats alive!

All they want to do is watch the content when they want...where they want...how they want.

AACS had a better idea.

You want a copy to watch on your TV...buy it.

Want a copy to take to your cabin...buy it.

Want a copy to shut the kids while you drive to visit grandma...buy it.

Want a copy in the family room and bedroom...buy it.

Tollywood knew a gentler,

kinder security solution wasn't the answer.

Tried that with CSS (Content Scrambling System).

Sucker was busted before the ink was dry!

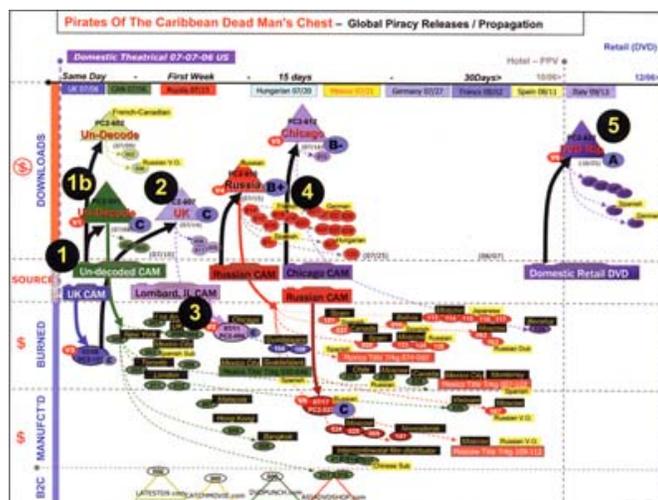


Figure 2 - The Fine Art of Pirate Tracking – Hollywood has spared no time or expense in tracking their loss of content. They know precisely how quickly ripped off copies will be in the hands of the buying public. True most of it comes from India and China but still there are those pesky hackers who have to learn a lesson...the hard way! Source – Walt Disney

Slow Acceptance of New

So what if DVD took off like a rocket!

The technology shot past every PC/CE technology in consumer sales...ever.

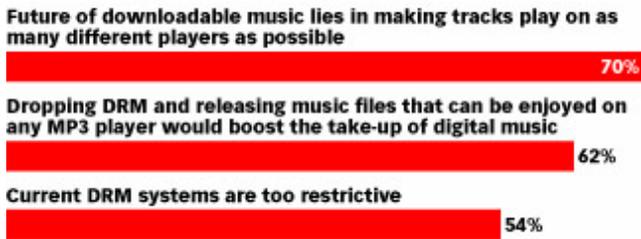
Even with multiple formats, people snapped up players and burners.

Discs flew onto the shelves and out the doors like crazy.

And a huge underground pirate industry grew...trust us, these guys know pirates!

DVD Insider-DRM cont.on page 12

European Music Executives' Opinions Regarding Digital Rights Management (DRM), December 2006-January 2007 (% of respondents)



Source: JupiterResearch, February 2007; BBC, February 2007

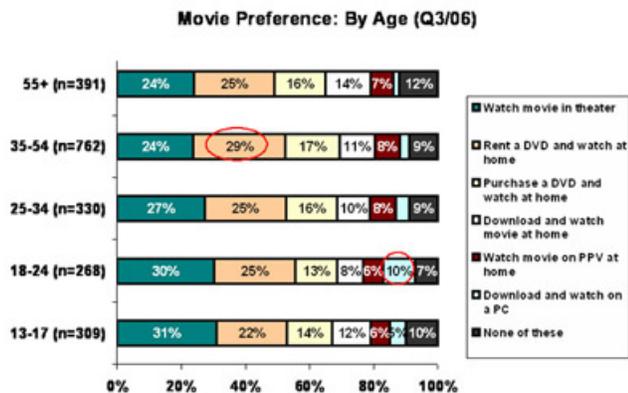
Figure 3 - Yeah But – The music and motion picture industries speak in whispers about the fact that DRM isn't working. Problem is they haven't figured out a way to simplify the process, procedure and still ensure they are properly compensated. That's still a work in progress. Source – JupiterResearch, BBC

HighDef was their opportunity to get back in control. The new DRM was impressive... Ok so maybe industry officials – music, theater – knew it was a bad idea but still... Ok so the real pirates weren't worried after all they go to the source to get their content...keep their mouths shut...keep a low profile...make money.

Doom 9ers? They have no lives. They want bragging rights. The fact that the 32-character sequence is useless is of no consequence.

After all you need to write a complete program around it to start copying HD movie discs. The key only unlocks movies made before April. So who benefits? Aaahhh... AACSS lawyers. Oh yeah and the bragging rights folks.

Download Practicality



Source: Digital Media Habits © 2006 Parks Associates

Figure 5 - Entertain Me – The entertainment options are out there but regardless of age more than 50% of consumers will either go to the theater or pick up a disc to watch at home. Downloads? All in due time. Source – Parks Associates

They could also post the movies on the Web instead of making us rip our own copies but...

A 2-hour HDDVD download over DSL takes about 3 days. Cable 18-19 hours. Fiber about 2.5 hours.

Maybe that's why video downloads are still "a work in progress"

Will it happen?

Sure.

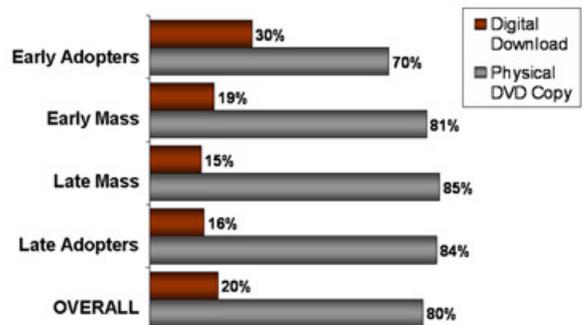
But most consumers don't want the hassle.

All folks want to do is watch their real world escape movies...or their educational shows...or their documentaries.

They don't want to jump around these beautiful new discs to watch all the outtakes...director's comments...interactive games...online updates!

They want to ... watch the movie !!!

Video Download vs. Physical DVD



Source: CEA Survey Online, '06

Figure 4 - Consumer Preference – While digital downloads of movies gets a lot of attention as the solution for entertainment of tomorrow, consumers just haven't bought into the idea yet...even early adopters. It will probably be one of the viable options in a couple of years but until then people still want their discs. Source – CEA

People don't really want to be technology troubleshooters on top of their regular job...even if their regular job is IT.

So what was so great about the Doom9ers efforts and the AACSS Keystone Cops response?

The kids showed the industry – content creators, hardware/software folks – that the money-making AACSS DRM was little better than CSS.

Fortunately the blue technology hasn't taken off like the proverbial rocket ship so the industry can make a course correction without ticking off millions of folks who laid out big bucks for their players and movie libraries.

Won't as long as there are super-cheap DVD players and a gazillion of decent quality movies on DVD to buy...rent...rip !

Better Solutions

One of the best – and most expensive – solutions is watermarking (see Wikipedia).

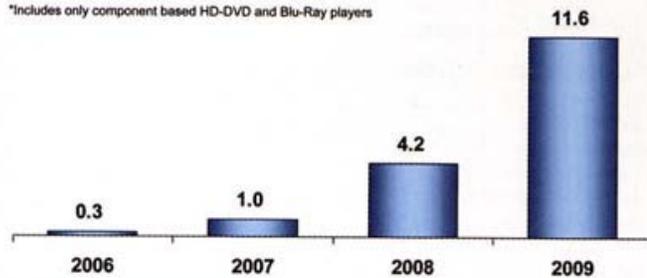
When you buy or rent the content it is coded to you.

If it finds it's way "into the channels"...busted!

Next Generation DVD Forecast*

Millions of Units

*Includes only component based HD-DVD and Blu-Ray players



Source: CEA Sales and Forecasts, 12/06

Figure 6 - Thanks Doom9ers – While hackers show their prowess by cracking the new AACCS DRM, consumers are still content to watch their movies on current DVDs. Despite the hype and noise, it will take years for HD DVD and BD to become the viewing solution of choice. Source – CEA

There are a lot of technical and cost issues involved so it will probably never emerge from the lab.

Shades of Valenti

Since the DVD CCA (Copy Control Assn) lost in court they figured what the H*** they'll do what governments' do...legislate !

Cute little amendment for "their" license would say your stuff – movie or game – wouldn't work unless there was a disc in the system...sheess !!!

We were so certain Jack Valenti had been put to rest. We now believe in unholy spirits...exorcism anyone?

The best solution and the one Sennett and his people should ultimately agree is good is Mandatory Managed Copy.

Don't get your undies in a bunch...it only sounds restrictive.

With Managed Copy you buy the disc and watch it.

Want to play it on your TV top player...done.

Send it around the house to watch everywhere...done.



Figure 7 - Protecting The Flight – By developing an efficient, effective and consumer-friendly DRM solution, Hollywood will be able to turn their attention to more important things like keeping pirates from boarding early.

Need a copy to take with you in the car to shut the kids up or to take with you on your business flight...done.

There is even a formula for secure copy electronic distribution when the pipes beef up or you become a lot more patient.

Gee...it works for the consumer...and the content folks !

Consumers Aren't Evil

Of course the AACCS will say that all of those devious consumers are going to knock-off copies and give them to their friends...neighbors...family members...

Some might.

But my gawd most folks never made a copy of their VHS tapes or DVDs.

You may like them but take the time, trouble, expense to rip 2-3 copies?

Nope!

Oh sure Doom9ers and a few acne-infected kids might to make a few bucks.

But have you looked at the cost of the burners?

The media?

Expensive at least for another year!

Doom9ers will still say it's restrictive. Remember...consumer content wants to be free!

But they don't care a monkey's armpit about the consumer.

Or the content owner.

All they want to do is brag about something...anything! Consumers?

All they want to do is buy, rent their movies and watch them where they want...how they want...when they want.

Doom9 Benefit

By muddying the waters with their hacking expertise before a gazillion HighDef players and discs were in the market, Doom9ers made Tellywood and the PC/CE industry rethink their solution.

Managed Copy suddenly looks very appealing.

A helluva lot more appealing than having to carry your **one** disc with you everywhere!

If and when the gentler, kinder solution is implemented, will the AACCS lawyers still have a job?

They can turn on the pirates who quietly follow content producers who make the big bucks selling bootleg discs on the sidewalks, street corners and thru the mail.

They can tighten up their internal security and make it more difficult to get to the content.

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Remove A Startup Program In Vista

If a program starts when Windows boots and you can't figure out how to stop it, open Control Panel and double-click Windows Defender. Next, open the Tools menu, select Software Explorer, click the name of the rogue program, and click Remove to remove the program from the startup queue.

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Using a Restore Point

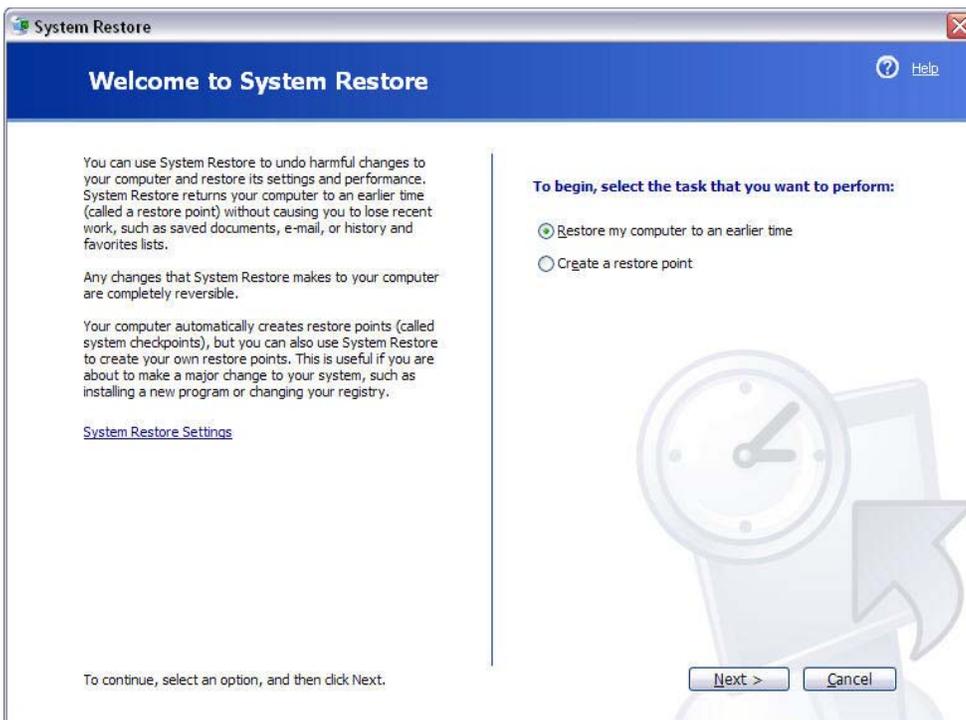
By Larry Bothe, an honorary member of the Fox Valley PC Association, IL and an associate member of CAEUG, IL, www.fvpc.org, www.caeug.net, deanholste@sbcglobal.net

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Recently, while in a big hurry to get a lot of work done before leaving on vacation, my computer started up with a blank screen. No mouse, no images, no text, no error message, no nothing. I had no choice but to just shut it down using the on/off switch. I then tried to start it again, this time watching very carefully to see what happened (I was getting coffee the first time). It went through the BIOS start (black & white screens with text) OK; then gave a brief color flash of the Windows XP logo, then nothing. The hard drive activity light was flashing so I knew the machine was trying. I was encouraged by the Windows startup sounds, but never got an image.

I recalled that the evening before I had received a warning from my computer security software that some program was trying to make a change to something it thought was a danger. I was in a hurry and I OK'd it without reading it thoroughly. Thinking back I decided that perhaps I had OK'd a bad thing that resulted in changing some setting in the operating system (Windows XP Home). I then crossed my fingers and tried starting the machine in Safe Mode. You do that by turning on the machine and then repeatedly pushing the F8 key until you get the black & white screen that lets you select the startup mode. Using the arrow keys I selected Safe Mode and pressed Enter. I lucked out and it started in Safe Mode.

Once in Safe Mode I decided to restore the system settings to an earlier point in time when everything worked correctly. In Windows XP every time you shut down your computer it takes a snapshot of your operating system settings and saves them into what is called a restore point. If you later install a program or get attacked by a virus that alters your system settings such that the machine no longer runs right you can in theory go back to some prior point in time when the machine ran correctly and restore the settings to what they were then. That's called a restore point. Note that you have to uninstall the offending program or get rid



of the virus before you attempt a restore. Otherwise the program or virus will just alter your settings once again. Also note that going back to some prior restore point will not delete any files you created and saved after the restore point you select. You won't lose any data. However, I had never tried this before so didn't quite know what to expect.

In order to get into the routine you do Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore. After clicking System Restore you select Restore my computer to an earlier time, and then follow the prompts. The routine lets you choose a date you want to restore to. I had to think about that. It ran well the previous day, but that was the day the settings were changed. I chose to go back 2 days to be sure I was well before the bad thing occurred. I finished the restore procedure and the machine restarted perfectly. It turned out to be a really good use of the restore point feature in XP.

I mentioned above that you must first get rid of whatever changed your settings in the first place before you do the restore. If you don't then you risk that it will simply alter your settings once again and you'll be right back where you were with a sick machine. In my haste to fix my computer I didn't take that corrective action, so when it restarted the malware once again tried to

Restore Point cont. on page 16

Restore Point cont. from page 15

alter my settings. And once again my security software caught it and presented a warning. Being a bit smarter this time I clicked on Deny instead of Allow (OK). After the machine came up running properly I used my security software (Zone Alarm Security Suite) to do a full system scan for any malicious software. It did indeed find one bad thing (in addition to several spyware items), which I told it to remove. I guess that was it because I have had no more trouble. No, I can't tell you exactly what the offending malicious software was because I didn't write it down, and I have slept since then.

I learned several lessons from this little episode. A good suite of computer security programs is worth every penny you pay for it. Even cautious computer users like me can get caught up in a virus problem.



When your security software presents a warning you need to pay attention; I won't be so quick to click on Allow in the future. Finally, the System Restore feature in Windows XP is worth its weight in owl feathers. It is easy to use and very effective under the right circumstances. ■

Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an honorary member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a time back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. Larry presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from the plastics industry and currently teaches people to fly airplanes. He also performs pilot examinations for the FAA.

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Discover Your Driver Status

When you encounter difficulty with a device, one of the first things you should do is confirm that you have the most recent driver installed. You can do this by comparing the driver version on your system with the most recent driver version available from the manufacturer's Web site. The most recent drivers are usually available for download under the Support, Drivers, or Downloads section of a company's site. Most companies will list the version number with the download so you can easily see which version the company offers. You may also want to check the company's News and Support pages for any notices about bugs in the company's drivers. Occasionally, a driver may conflict with certain computer components or installed software. When this happens, a manufacturer usually provides a workaround on its Web site or offers an earlier driver for download so you can revert to an earlier driver that works with your system. The company should provide installation instructions for such anomalies. Windows 9x/Me. To check a driver in Win9x/Me, you'll use the Device Manager. Click the Start menu, Settings, and Control Panel. In the Control Panel window, double-click the System icon. This will open the System Properties dialog box. Click the Device Manager tab. Make sure the View Devices By Type radio button is selected and then browse the list of device types for the type of device you want to check. Click the plus sign (+) next to the device type and then double-click the device you want to check. For example, if you want to check the installed driver for your mouse, click the plus sign next to Mouse to expand the view. Then double-

click your mouse from the list under Mouse. This will open a Properties window for the device. Click the Driver tab. You can check the version and the issue date for the driver by looking for the Driver Date and Driver Version. Windows 2000/XP. It is fairly straightforward to identify a driver in Win2000/XP. Click the Start menu, Settings, and Control Panel. WinXP offers two views of the Control Panel. The default is Category View, and Classic View is also available. If you use Win2000 or WinXP in Classic View, double-click System. If you use WinXP in Category View, click Printers And Other Hardware and then click System under the See Also section on the left side of the screen. In the System Properties dialog box, click the Hardware tab and the Device Manager button. You'll notice that there is one extra step compared to opening the Device Manager in Win9x/Me. In Win2000/XP, the Device Manager doesn't have its own tab but is instead accessible through a button on the Hardware tab. In the resulting Device Manager window, click the View menu and make sure that Devices By Type is selected. If not, click Devices By Type to switch to the proper view. Click the plus sign next to one of the listed device types to view an expanded list of devices. Then double-click the device for which you'd like to check the driver. In the resulting Properties dialog box for the device, click the Driver tab. You'll see the Driver Date and Driver Version listed.

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