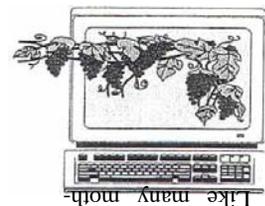


COMPUTER NEWS



Volume 23, No. 4

April, 2006

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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. Through its Computers-to-Schools program, members refurbish used computer equipment for donation to local schools. Since January 2003 the NVPCUG has donated 401 computers and 124 printers.

SnagIt Screen Presentation Program to Be Discussed at April 19 NVPCUG Meeting

By Susy Ball, Programs Coordinator

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, April 19, 2006, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California.

The main presentation of the evening will be a demonstration of *SnagIt 8*, a sophisticated screen capture program, by **Mike Moore**, NVPCUG computer tutor coordinator. Using a "Presentation in a Box" (PIAB) supplied by TechSmith Corporation, Moore will tell why *SnagIt* has been a long-time favorite program for authors of manuals and other documents illustrating computer screen shots, and how it can be useful to anyone who occasionally wants to capture something he or she sees on the monitor screen. Unlike the ordinary "Print Screen" command, which merely saves a screen image to the software "clipboard" tool, *SnagIt 8* allows a user to capture text and graphics, then save them to file, edit them, and if desired transmit them in PDF format.



Mike Moore

Preceding the main presentation, **Jerry Brown** will lead the **Random Access** portion of our meeting with an open-floor question-and-answer period, during which you can ask questions about specific computer-related issues and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees. Don't forget that you can also e-mail your questions before coming to the meeting (questions@nvpcug.org). If you have found a novel solution to a computer problem you faced, you might like to share it with the group during this session.

Following this, **Bernhard Krevet** will lead the **Computer Tutor** session, featuring the Microsoft service called "*FolderShare*," a leading service in the emerging area of file synchronization and remote-access technology. It helps customers access information across multiple devices, like a laptop and desktop in the home office, or even computers used in distributed business networks. The product was produced by a firm in Texas until Microsoft bought it recently.

Krevet will also answer questions that people have raised about the *Picasa* photo-organizing program he discussed in his March presentation on the topic.

Need practical information that will enable you to make better use of your computer? Come to this meeting! Guests are welcome; admission is free.

Coming May 17: Susy Ball will make a presentation on the program called "*Audacity*," which will enable you to enter the world of digital music, using your computer. It is a free, open-source, fully functional, multitasking audio editor that lets you record, play, and convert audio files. Don't miss it!

Help Wanted !

by Dianne Prior, President

NVPCUG Special Interest Groups

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.

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

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

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

According to Bill Wheadon, we will again be working with the Annual Electronics Recycling Event at Napa Valley College on June 9 and 10. It looks like there will be some improvements over the last few years (eg: the Reuse station will be at the start of the traffic snake instead of next to the Recycle station). Anyone interested in volunteering to help please contact Bill Wheadon at Recycler@nvpcug.org.



Dianne Prior

Our Users Group will be operating on deficit spending if we can't bring in some extra money. (We need about \$1,000). One fund-raiser that has been successful is a Computer Equipment Sale. Sales from previous years have netted an average of about \$2,000. We have some inventory for an Equipment Sale and lots of experienced people who will help with such a sale, but we need someone to coordinate the event.

We also need someone to coordinate and facilitate a Special Interest Group for those interested in learning how to use e-Bay.

If one or more people are willing to work on either of these areas, please contact me at president@nvpcug.org or 252-1506.

Based on the response at our March general meeting, the Board approved moving the meeting day to the first Wednesday, beginning in October. We already have presenters scheduled for the Third Wednesday meetings of August and September.

See you at the meeting on April 19.

Happy Easter

Dianne Prior

NVPCUG Calendar

Wednesdays	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
April 5	7:00-9:00 p.m.
April 10	5:30-7:30 p.m.
April 12	7:00-8:30 p.m.
April 13	6:30-8:30 p.m.
April 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.

Computers-to-Schools work parties. To volunteer, contact Orion Hill, (707) 252-0637.
Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Investors SIG meeting, Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Digital Photography SIG meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Macintosh SIG meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group

Officers for 2006

Board of Directors

President	Dianne Prior	252-1506*	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Ron Dack		VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Julie Jerome	224-6620	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org

Other Directors: Susy Ball, Orion E. Hill, Jim Gillespie, Bob Kulas, John Moore,
Dick Peterson, John Simcoe, James Stirling, Dean Unruh

Appointed Officers

Computer Equipment Sales Coordinator	(Volunteer Needed)		
Computer Recycling Coordinator	Bill Wheadon	224-3901	Recycler@nvpcug.org
Computer Tutor Coordinator	Mike Moore	255-1615	Tutor@nvpcug.org
Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator	Orion E. Hill	252-0637	CTS@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	John Moore	252-3478	Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter@nvpcug.org
Librarian	Dean Unruh	226-9164	Librarian@nvpcug.org
Membership Director	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Membership@nvpcug.org
Mentor Program Coordinator	Dick Peterson	259-1712	Mentors@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Circulator	Jim Hearn	224-2540	
Newsletter Editor	James Stirling	944-1177	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review Coord.	Susy Ball	337-3398	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Product Review Coord.	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews2@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	Susy Ball	337-3998	Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	John Simcoe	258-8233	Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	Bob Kulas	255-9241	Projects@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack		Webmaster@nvpcug.org

*All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

Come to the NVPCUG General Meetings

Held the third Wednesday
of each month

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Napa Senior Activities
Center

1500 Jefferson Street,
Napa

NVPCUG *Computer News*

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Susy Ball Talks on Digital Photography

The main presentation of the March 15 evening meeting featured **The Digital Photo Guy, Lee Otsubo**, in a workshop on digital photography that can be accessed online. The program originates in Escondido, Calif., and is designed to help photographers at all skill levels to improve their technique and get more out of their cameras. **Susy Ball**, programs director, introduced the workshop using a presentation prepared by Otsubo.

Bernhard Krevet Demonstrates Picasa Photo Organizer 2.0

At the NVPCUG general meeting March 15 **Bernhard Krevet** demonstrated the popular free photo management program, *Picasa*. This program scans your computer for photographs, then organizes them by date and enables you to edit them, give them ratings and even share them on the Internet. It collects not only JPEGs but also GIFs and most other image formats—even video files. It has a search tool that lets you track down old files by keywords, ratings, and dates. Tools available include adjusting highlights, shadows, fill lights, and color temperature. You can add many effects, including sepia, black and white, and soft focus. And you can crop, straighten, and remove red-eye. And if you don't like an edit, you can reverse it with no more than the click of a mouse. The program will also enable you to burn photos onto CD or DVD disks. And you can also send your pictures on the Internet with your e-mail client or use Google's new Web-based e-mail service, *Gmail*. This is another demonstration of the fact that it is becoming more possible to get quality application programs without spending a lot of money.

Southwest User Group Conference August 11-13 in San Jose

The Southwest User Group Conference X3 will be held from Friday evening, *August 11* through Sunday, *August 13*, at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center in San Diego, Calif.. Activities will include: workshops on Saturday and Sunday; vendor-sponsored presentations and meals; a Vendor Faire; numerous prize drawings; as well as up close and personal time with participating vendors. In addition, attendees will receive a T-shirt and Welcome Bag.

For further information see <http://www.swugconf.org/index.htm> (and check often for updates).

Exhibit Hall Passes Still Available for MySQL Users Conference in Santa Clara

You still have time to sign up for a MySQL exhibit hall pass (\$25.00). The hall is open Tuesday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and then you are welcome to attend the exhibitor reception—"food and drinks included"—from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, April 26, the exhibit hall is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The conference exhibit hall, the biggest one yet, will feature MySQL and open-source products and services. You'll also be able to learn more about worthwhile projects in the DotOrg Pavilion, located inside the hall.

To purchase an exhibit hall pass, go to: <http://www.mysqluc.com/pub/w/45/register.html>

(Sorry, UG discount does not apply on exhibit hall passes.)

For more information on the MySQL Users Conference 2006 in Santa Clara, Calif., go to: <http://www.Mysqluc.com/>

NOTE: NVPCUG does not endorse any vendor or product. Product discount e-mails are sent to member groups as information only.

Editorial

By James Stirling

So it's almost spring already. You may have noticed that we are trying out a new, more open format for the page layouts of our newsletter. We hope you find it more inviting and readable. In this issue is a story on how to do a spring cleaning on your computer, removing the clutter of unused and unwanted programs. Gabe Goldberg tells how to check on the tracks you may have left behind in your Internet surfing, and tells of amusing coincidences that may come from name searching. Pim Borman from Indiana rants about the annoying junk with which manufacturers and software producers plague us, including the stealthy rootkits used by Sony and evidently others as well. And Vinny LaBash tells us how to get clearer type from our monitors.

We hope you find these and other stories in this issue useful and that you will try out some of the Web sites the authors have dug up for you. And when you do so, I would appreciate it if you keep track of what happens and let the rest of us in on your successes or disappointments. Your setbacks or triumphs may be just what the rest of us need to get the most out of our computers—and perhaps help us avoid spending money on what doesn't work.

I tackled a few new things over the past winter, including the free *Ubuntu* distribution of *Linux*, *Open Office Write*, *AVG* free virus checker, *Roxio Media Creator 8*, *Jv 16 Power Tools*, and the Apricorn 40 Gig external mini hard drive system. Time will tell whether they deliver on their promises.

I found the *Ubuntu* program fairly straightforward to load. Part of the process involved answering questions about things I was unprepared for, like which “primary network interface,” I wanted (I opted for “none”), and my use of the DHCP protocol, whatever that was. I was also asked for a hostname for the system. But my guesses seemed to satisfy the installation driver. Overall the loading time took longer than the typical *Windows* installation. I rejoiced at the ease with which the *Open Office Write* opened, particularly when it assured me that I could freely copy *Microsoft Word* into and out of it. I decided to use it for the newsletter

articles, only to discover that *MS Publisher* refused to recognize the kind of *Word* files that resulted. Eventually it got over it. Now I use both, being careful to convert the *Write* into *Word* for anything going into *Publisher*. But I am impressed with this open source word processor as being as good as any others I have used.

My first experiences with the 40-Gig Apricorn mini external hard drive powered through its USB port, were disappointing; When it was connected, the whole booting up process was slowed down and stalled. Eventually I learned that the reason was apparently that the Apricorn, lacking its own power supply, was sucking power from the USB system. Now I wait till the boot up is finished before plugging it into the USB port, and it seems to work OK. Its small size makes it very handy for transporting data between computers.

I was very pleased with the performance of the free version of *AVG* anti-virus program; it very diligently on the job every day with new patches as it discovers new virus attacks. And now I am about to tackle income tax preparation, using the system I saw in a computer magazine last year. It turned out to be very adequate and for preparation and electronic filing didn't cost a thing. I will try to detail my experience this year and perhaps include it in next year's newsletter.

So my search is a work in progress. Trying out any new program takes time, whether or not the makers talk of “off the shelf” immediacy. I'll keep you posted on what else happens while I explore other new territories. And we'd like to hear from you as well.

JS

Do a Clean Sweep of Your Computer

How to safely remove software and files from your PC

By Marc Saltzman, microsoft.com/athome/moredone/cleansweep.msp

Like many mothers, Andrea Grace will sit down at her PC to check e-mail, only to find that her kids, Jason, 8, and Rachel, 10, have installed some new programs. "Between those CD-ROM games found in cereal boxes and downloaded Neopets, there are now icons all over the place," says Grace. "And of course they don't play half the games. If I ran out of space I wouldn't know how to delete them," she admits.

Grace isn't alone—it's not uncommon to fill space on a hard drive with games, productivity programs, or files, such as music, digital photos, and video clips. Some technology analysts believe that we use less than 10 percent of the programs installed on our computer.

So, considering you're likely to do some spring cleaning in the coming months by removing old and unwanted clutter from your closets and garage, why not tidy up your computer as well?

While deleting programs is relatively easy, many novice computer users believe they can be removed by simply deleting their icon on the desktop. This does not work, as it's only a shortcut to the real program that consists of many files. And keep in mind that you can do damage to your PC's performance by deleting from your hard drive an entire program folder that you don't realize you do need.

The following is a look at how to safely—and easily—remove old or unused programs from your *Microsoft Windows XP*-based computer. Much of the advice is also applicable to older versions of Windows.

Decide which programs to purge

The first step is to decide which programs you no longer need. Try to keep only the programs you use regularly, as it's easy to become a digital packrat. If it helps, make a list of programs you want to keep and others you can do away with.

Has it been a year since your child touched that action game? Chances are you still have the original CDs anyway (should you want to reinstall it in the future), so perhaps it's time to wipe it off the hard drive.

Have your music tastes changed since you went through that Country and Western "stage" in 2002? You can easily delete downloaded MP3 files—or at least burn them to a CD to free up space on your PC.

If you're unsure about a program that's on your hard drive, you can always do a search at your favorite search engine (e.g., MSN Search) to see what it is. For example, if you don't plan on buying a camcorder, remove any preinstalled video-editing software that may have come bundled on your PC.

Ready, set, "Start"

The easiest way to remove a program from your hard drive is to look for an uninstall or remove option from within its program group. You will find this by clicking the Start menu, then All Programs (or Program Files), and then choosing the program you want to uninstall.

Once inside this program group, you will usually see an icon to launch the program, a ReadMe file (documentation that tells you how to use the program), and, for our purposes, an option that enables you to remove or uninstall the program. Click this and follow the onscreen wizard to safely remove the program from your PC. You may be asked to reboot your computer. Only click to do so once you've saved everything that's open at that time.

Quick tip: If you want to free up even more room on your hard drive, go to My Computer or Windows Explorer and right-click on the letter associated with your hard drive (usually C:). Click Properties, then click Disk Cleanup. Check off the desired boxes, and it will tell you how much space it can free up.

When uninstalling a program, you may

also get a message that says the program can remove a file that may be shared by another program. To be safe, keep these suggested files on your PC (they shouldn't take up much room on your hard drive, anyway). Similarly, when you uninstall a game, the program may ask if you want to keep saved game files (i.e. a bookmark of your progress). If you think that you will reinstall and play this game again, you can choose to keep these files. Sometimes the program group may be the company's name. Move your mouse over the name and it will reveal which program(s) are inside.

Quick tip: If you download a .zip or .exe file from the Web and then install the program to the hard drive, you can delete the original file once it's successfully installed.

Keep in mind that your PC automatically creates restore points while you're using your computer. That way, if you accidentally delete a program that you want to keep, you can revert your PC back to an earlier time. To do so, click the Start menu, then All Programs (or Program Files), then Accessories, and then System Tools. Click System Restore and the program will guide you through the steps.

Take "Control"

Some programs do not give you the option to uninstall them from a program group. No problem. You'll need to go to the Start menu, select Control Panel, and then Add or Remove Programs.

It may take a few seconds for this page to load, but once it is finished, it will display a long alphabetical list of installed programs. Once you see the name of a program you no longer want on your hard drive, click it, then click the tab to the right of it, which will say Remove or Change/Remove, and follow the prompts. A progress bar will show you how long it will take to safely remove the program. When it's finished, you will see the list once again.

Go through the list, but leave those programs that you are unsure of. Remember—you may use *Microsoft Word* all the time so do not uninstall *Microsoft Office*, as *Word* is part of it. Some programs may not be familiar to you but are required for an-

other to run—a rule of thumb is to ignore it, especially if it doesn't take up too much space on your hard drive (you will see how many megabytes on the right-hand side of the program name). If the program is spyware or adware (such as SuperShopper Toolbar), then you may want to leave this for your spyware/adware program to sniff out and safely remove. Two good free programs are *Ad-Aware* and *SpyBot*, both of which are available at *Download.com*. You can also download the free new *Microsoft Windows AntiSpyware* (Beta).

Quick tip: This article focuses on uninstalling entire programs, but it's even easier to delete individual files. Once you're inside My Computer or Windows Explorer, simply highlight the files you no longer want on your hard drive and tap the delete button or right-click and select Delete. This will send all unwanted files to the Recycle Bin for safekeeping—until you're sure that you no longer want them.

Article written by Marc Saltzman and adapted from an original piece in *Microsoft Home Magazine*. Reprinted by permission.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups has provided this article.

How to Rename a Series of Files

By Dave Gerber

If you have a series of files you want to rename, but want to keep the sequence intact, here's how: Using Windows Explorer, locate the files. Be sure you're in "Details" mode. Go to the last file in the sequence and select it. Hold down the Shift button and select the first file in the sequence. All the files should now be highlighted. Go to File/Rename. You should now be able to rename the first file. Be sure to keep the file extension. All the files should now be renamed in sequence with the new appellation.

Being Online Brings Coincidences and Lasting Trails

By Gabriel Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computer Technology Website, www.aarp.org

A song written by Peter Mayer, a great singer I've just discovered, is titled "Earth Town Square." Describing how technology and travel have shrunk the world, Peter lyrically observes "Now it's feeling like a small town, with six billion people downtown, at a little sidewalk fair, in Earth Town Square." Even though all six billion of us aren't (yet!) online, the Internet as a meeting place is certainly one of the engines making the Earth seem smaller. While it was once exotic — or alarming — to have a long-distance telephone conversation, chatting electronically with people half a world away doesn't raise my pulse.

A decade ago, early in my use of the Internet, I was astonished by its ability to create coincidences. This is a true story. I was consulting for an online service that gave me an e-mail address used only for their work. I received a note at that address with the intriguing subject, "I am you" from another Gabriel Goldberg. Nowadays, that's the sort of spoofed e-mail I'd likely delete without reading. He had checked his entry in the service's directory and found my entry next to his. We exchanged pleasantries, described ourselves, shared wonder at having found each other, and he mentioned that he was a music student in Boston.

Later that week, I received another note at my regular e-mail address, from a woman who said that she'd known a Gabe Goldberg years earlier, the last she'd heard from him he was going to Boston to study music, and was I that person? I replied to her, copying the other Gabe, that either they were playing a joke on me or we had a mighty powerful coincidence. Truth is stranger than joke — they were former high school sweethearts who had drifted apart. In the same week they both found my name and two different e-mail addresses, and for very different reasons, they contacted me. I later heard from her mother, who thanked me for reuniting them! Remarking on the coincidence of names, the other Gabe wondered "how do guys named Jim Smith handle

all the coincidences?"

Participating in mailing lists, newsgroups, and Web sites leaves online footprints and makes us visible. The bad news is that's one of the ways spammers find targets, but the good news is that being visible makes it easier for lost friends to track us down. Soon after 9/11 I heard a voice on the phone I hadn't heard for nearly 30 years: my college girlfriend. She'd searched Google (often called "Googling") for me, found me, and called. We've stayed in touch since, have gotten together several times, and shared news of our respective families. And just recently I used Google to contact an elementary school friend after hearing of her taking a new job in San Francisco.

Amidst the fun of unanticipated connections and reestablished friendships, there's a cautionary note: information online has a long memory. Web sites like Google always cache (retain) Web pages even after they're deleted from their original Web locations. Postings to mailing lists, Web forums, newsgroups, and other online venues are usually retained indefinitely. It can be unnerving to discover that items posted in the heat of the moment or as youthful indiscretions can be retrieved years later by potential employers or new acquaintances, or just by someone snooping for unpleasant reasons.

Just as it's worth checking your credit report periodically, it's a good idea to occasionally check out what online trails you've left. My current favorite surfing tool is Google, so I search for "Gabe Goldberg" and "Gabriel Goldberg." The quote marks bind the first and last names together so that only Web pages having the exact full name are found. I search on Gabe and Gabriel because I've used both names. If your name is closer to Jim Smith's — offering 56,000 hits rather than the more manageable 182 for my name — you can tighten the search by adding terms such as a middle initial, state of residence, hobby, employer, etc. But don't make the search too

Participating in mailing lists, news groups and Web sites leaves online footprints and makes us visible.

It's tedious to erase tracks from an online history. . . . It's much better to avoid saying anything online that might return to haunt you.

narrow, or you may miss genuine references.

It's tedious to erase tracks from an online history. It requires contacting each site that hosts material you'd like to delete, perhaps following instructions and filling out forms. Some mailing list sites refuse as a matter of policy to delete list postings, reasoning that doing so would distort a list's historical record. The government has made serious efforts to sanitize the Web by removing content deemed dangerous, such as plans for water and power systems. Even when successful, scrubbing data off Web sites often doesn't really make it unavailable, it just slows people from finding it. It's much better to avoid saying anything online that might return to

haunt you, than try to clear the record after the fact.

This article originated on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, www.aarp.org/computers, and is copyrighted by AARP. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, or transferred, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to AARP. It should be unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail Gabe Goldberg at [gabe\(at\)gabegold.com](mailto:gabe(at)gabegold.com) when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups has provided this article.

Windows Tip—Back to the Original, by Dave Gerber

We've all done it. At some time or another we've all inserted a picture into a document, worksheet or presentation and started altering its appearance. Let's make it larger... no smaller... no wait, we'll stretch it only vertically. And let's lighten the colors and crop it a bit over here. Next thing you know you've got a mess and you're looking at the undo button thinking "How far back do I have to go to fix this one?" Or maybe you figured that it would be faster to delete the destroyed picture and re-insert the original.

Both of these ideas work, but there's a quick and easy one-button solution to your problem. Interested in the "how to"?

Yeah, I thought you might be.

When you have a picture selected, the Picture toolbar should open. If it doesn't, don't panic!

Try a right click on the picture and choose Show Picture Toolbar from the menu or use the View menu, Toolbars submenu, Picture choice. At any rate, once the toolbar is open you're only one button away from a reset of the picture to its original state. The button you're looking for is on the far right end—the Reset Picture button. Click it and Poof! Your picture is restored, no undo or re-insertion required. As you're browsing Web pages with Internet Explorer, you may come

upon some sites that offer graphic images for downloading, for example .. "Dave Bytes." You can save Web graphics on your computer hard drive in one of the following three ways:

1. **As a graphic file for viewing a printing in the My Pictures folder.** To do this, right-click the graphic and then click Save Picture As on the image shortcut menu.

2. **As the wallpaper for your desktop.** To do this, right-click the graphic and then click Set as Background on the image shortcut menu.

3. **As a Desktop item that appears on your computer desktop.** To do this, right-click the graphic and then choose Set as Desktop Item on the image shortcut menu.

Note that if you save a Web graphic as the wallpaper for your desktop, you have a choice between tiling the image (that is, duplicating it across the entire desktop), centering it in the middle of the desktop, or stretching it so that it fills the entire desktop (which most often results in a severely distorted image). Also note that some Web graphics (photographs and works of original art, usually) are copyrighted, and Web designers do have a way to disable your right-click function while you're surfing their Web sites.

The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

Rants

It is a dark, dreary, drizzly day in mid-January as I write this, perfect for contesting a will (as they say in my native Holland) or protesting the peculiarity of PC peddlers.

Rant #1 concerns the software Dell installs on new computers, whether you want it or not. James Derk, computer columnist for Scripps Howard News Service, wrote recently about the effort it required to remove all the extraneous junk from someone's new Dell system: "Dell is on the list this year for adding so much junk to their new PCs that it takes a trained technician to remove most of them. Their 'starter' edition of *QuickBooks* is the most annoying...even popping up reminders to try the program long after you've deleted it. I know Dell sells 80 percent of its PCs to businesses, but there's no reason to have such an invasive product and selling tactic. Most large businesses don't use *QuickBooks*, most small businesses already have it and consumers don't want it. Editing the Windows Registry should not be needed to remove it. (Dell gets an honorable mention for charging \$25 for a USB cable to connect their "free" printers to their computers.)" (<http://snipurl.com/derkcolumn2>). Elsewhere Derk mentions the desirability of removing the pre-installed temporary version of McAfee anti-virus. He wrote: "If you have McAfee pre-installed on your new PC, I would uninstall it immediately and install a free product. It's not just a bias...in my computer repair business I have seen dozens of PCs with McAfee installed that are riddled with viri. Something either about McAfee's online-only product or the configuration just lets viruses pass through." (<http://snipurl.com/derkcolumn>).

As luck would have it, my neighbors asked me soon thereafter for

help with the installation of their new Dell computer. The recently retired professional couple had been using a Mac-Intosh computer for the past eight years and were unfamiliar with *MS Windows*. Remembering Derk's comment, I suggested we remove the McAfee program and install *Norton Internet Security*. Tough luck! As I attempted to remove McAfee via the Control Panel's Add/Remove feature, I kept getting error messages that part of the program was running and could not be removed. I did everything I could think of to stop/disable McAfee, but nothing managed to kill it dead. I did a Google search later on and found that usually there is no simple way to get rid of it. A "help" page on the McAfee page provides pages of procedures to "try," all of them obscure and nonintuitive. An unwanted program that cannot simply be uninstalled is malware, in my opinion. If Dell is unwilling to sell computers without all the junk, the best solution may be to reformat the hard drive and reinstall the desired programs only. Or choose another vendor. It is hardly an attractive option for new *Windows* users.

Rant #2 Sony BMG recently got caught using rootkits to provide copy protection on CDs they sold. Rootkits are programs that hide on your hard drive, out of sight of *Windows*. They are an open invitation for virus writers to invade your system and are hard to remove without damaging *Windows*. Sony was forced to apologize for its error, recalled the CDs involved, and published a patch to remove the rootkits from the customers' computers.

According to an article in *eweek.com*, the rootkit trick is being used by other companies also (<http://snipurl.com/lis7>). *Norton SystemWorks* is specifically mentioned. Symantec explained that they used the rootkit to prevent users from accidentally removing the file, but offered to relocate it with a program update. According to *eweek.com* there are other instances of rootkits being

used, but no specifics were mentioned.

My *Norton Internet Security* subscription is about to expire. I already had planned to try the *ZoneAlarm Security Suite*, based on a recommendation in *PC Magazine* (12/27/05) that included it in their list of Best of the Year Products (but that also included *McAfee Antivirus!*). But then Linda Gonse, editor/ webmaster of the Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, wrote that the *ZoneAlarm Security Suite* interfered with her ftp program and mangled the files she uploaded to her Web site. She had a dickens of a time trying to uninstall the program. However, she never had a problem with the plain, free *ZoneAlarm* firewall. I concluded that my best bet was to use free *ZoneAlarm* as the firewall.

I chose a separate antivirus program, *f-prot* from Frisk software (<http://www.f-prot.com/products/>). I used that program years ago in the DOS days, and more recently I have been using it on my Linux computers. Their technical support is outstanding, as I mentioned in a previous column. *F-prot*, based in Iceland, was one of the first to spot the rootkits and to provide an uninstallation patch. They update their database as soon as they add new data, usually several times a week. The *Windows* version costs \$29 per year, but a trial version is available to make sure the product fills your needs.

As expected, replacing *Norton Internet Security* with *ZoneAlarm* and *f-prot* was not without problems. I downloaded the trial version of *f-prot* without difficulty and stored it, ready for use. Getting the free version of *ZoneAlarm* was a different story.

Rant #3 If you make a free, limited version of your software available for download, don't play silly games trying to hide the download button, hoping that the prospective customer will finally give up or make an error and order your paid-for version. It may work sometimes, but you lose every last bit of goodwill you may have worked years to earn. Is that worth it? After struggling with *ZoneAlarm* for 20 minutes trying to download the free program, I simply copied an older setup version that was still on my other Windows computer and installed that. *ZoneAlarm* then promptly offered to update that version, and I was in

business. Installation of *f-prot* went without a hitch.

Although I had uninstalled *Norton Internet Security* with the Control Panel-Add/Remove route, it was evidently not quite dead yet. *ZoneAlarm* started telling me that *Norton* was still trying to access various parts of my computer, which I blocked. Soon thereafter everything froze, and I got the Blue Screen of Death. It took two cold restarts to get everything back up and running, and my first action was to have *ZoneAlarm* block everything with the *Norton* label. That seems to work thus far.

As every successful business, from Wal-Mart to General Electric, knows, your most important asset is customer goodwill. A happy customer is a return customer. Over the years Dell has built up an excellent reputation for product quality, price, and service. They stand to lose all that for a few bucks they make as "partners" with the likes of McAfee and *Quick Books*. It isn't worth it. The same goes for Norton, known since DOS days for its reliability and excellence of technology. Avoid exasperating your customers and they'll keep coming back.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups has provided this article.

Killing a Window

By Dave Gerber

Have you ever had one of those windows that misbehave? By "misbehave," I mean you cannot get it to Maximize or Minimize. Sometimes Web programmers want to splash a screen onto your PC with no controls and will use this technique so that you can't get their junk off your screen. For some bizarre reason they think this is a good thing. Anyway, you do have some control with the standard Windows window control options. Click anywhere in the misbehaving window and hit Alt + Spacebar. On the resulting menu, you can choose Close and kill the window.

Test Your Internet IQ: Top Security Myths

By Kraig Lane, Group Product Manger, Symantec Corporation

The Internet is crawling with risks. If you bank or shop online, or even just surf the Web and send e-mail, you are exposed to hackers, thieves, and con artists. And today's bad guys don't need to pick your locks or break your windows; they can attack you and your family over the Internet. Are you prepared?

Every day, many of us use the Internet without really understanding that if we can get out to the world from our home computers, the world can get it. By testing your knowledge of home computing security issues, you might be surprised by some commonly held misperceptions.

Myth 1 – I have antivirus software—that's all I need. This is the most common Internet myth. Yes, antivirus protection is important and you need it. But just having the software isn't enough. New viruses emerge all the time, so you need to update your virus definitions regularly to make sure they're current or, better yet, use software that does that for you automatically. Furthermore, antivirus software provides only one type of security (stopping viruses from infecting your system) when you go online. But hackers are also a threat, and antivirus software can't deflect a determined hacker (see Myth #4). You need a firewall to stop hackers from getting into your system and to make sure your personal information doesn't go out without your authorization.

Myth 2 – There's nothing on my computer that a hacker would want. Most of us believe this to be true. But a hacker could want the private data you store on your computer. Hackers might search for personal information stored on your system—your Social Security and bank account numbers, for example—which they could use to make fraudulent purchases in your name. Identity Theft is the fastest-growing white-collar crime in the U.S. today. And even if you don't do any financial work on your home computer, you may keep a resume on your hard drive in a desktop file conveniently named "resume." Your resume lists your name, address, where you went to school, your work experience. That's exactly the type of information you need when you apply for a credit card or a loan. Once hackers get hold of your personal data, especially your Social Security number, they can

do all kinds of damage.

Myth 3 – Only big corporations—not home computer users—are targets for hackers. This is another common myth. "Why would they bother with me when all I do on my home computer is play games and send e-mail?" Hackers usually are looking for easy prey, and your home computer is much simpler to break into than a large corporate network would be. Hackers can infiltrate your system by using a number of tools readily available online. Broadband connections are particularly vulnerable because they have an "always-on," static IP address that can more easily be accessed, and it might take you a while to realize you've been hacked. If your home computer is always on and you don't check it frequently, you could be an ideal target.

Big corporations, on the other hand, have invested heavily in their Information Technology departments. They have huge antivirus programs on their gateway and very effective firewalls. In other words, they are harder to hack.

Myth 4 – It takes a lot of technical knowledge to be a hacker. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be a genius to hack into a computer. Hacking actually takes very little technical knowledge, because any search engine queried about "hacking tools" will list site after site. The tools are readily available and can be downloaded in a few minutes. They even come with directions.

Myth 5 – My ISP provides protection (antivirus and/or firewall) to me when I'm online. ISPs rarely provide comprehensive protection, but for some reason users think that they do. So you might want to check with your ISP and ask how safe you are from viruses and hackers. And even if your ISP does provide a certain amount of protection, you should still install good antivirus software on your own computer.

Why? When you're online you're vulnerable to downloaded viruses, because your ISP probably screens email only. That doesn't protect you from a virus you may download inadvertently yourself.

Myth 6 – I'm using dial-up, so I don't need to worry about hackers. It's true that broadband users are more vulnerable to attack. A high-

speed (broadband) connection means you have a static Internet Protocol (IP) address, so once hackers know where to find you, they can come back. They know where you live.

With a much slower, dial-up access, your IP address is changing all the time. This random access address allows dial-up users to enjoy a false sense of security, but that doesn't mean hackers can't find you anyway.

And if you have a dial-up connection, a hacker who does break into your system could install a back-door Trojan Horse, which lets the hacker see you each time you log in. The Trojan flashes a beacon that says, "Hey I'm here, come and get me"—so they know you're online and vulnerable. It's also possible to pick up a Trojan Horse through an e-mail virus, or you might download it in an infected Internet file. If you've picked up a Trojan Horse, it doesn't matter whether your connection is broadband or dial-up.

Myth 7 – I have a Macintosh. Mac users often feel safe because most viruses are designed for Windows-based platforms. But to a hacker it doesn't matter. A computer is a computer. They don't care what platform you're using, they just look for open ports. Many Mac-specific hacking tools are readily available on the Internet. Also, the new OS X is

Unix-based. Unix computers have been around for so long that many of the hacking tools available to Unix users are now applicable to Macintosh.

Protect yourself

Be smart. Install an antivirus program to safeguard your computer from virus attacks and to be sure you don't download a Trojan Horse or other "back-door" program. It's also important that you keep your virus definitions up-to-date. Some antivirus programs do this for you automatically, so your protection stays current. And use a firewall program. It protects you from hackers trying to scan your personal files, steal data, or damage your system.

About the Author

As group product manager at Symantec (www.symantec.com), Kraig Lane is responsible for the overall management of Symantec's consumer Internet security solutions. He works to define product objectives and strategies for Norton Personal Firewall, Norton AntiSpam, and Norton Internet Security, cornerstones of Symantec's thriving consumer business. Lane also utilizes his vast knowledge of the Internet security space to drive the development and introduction of new solutions to tackle emerging online threats.

Computer Tips and Tricks, by Dave Gerber

Shortcut Labels

The solid box behind a shortcut label can be very annoying, especially if you have dozens of icons on your desktop.

It doesn't take much to change this. Right-click "My Computer" and choose Properties (or hold down ALT and double left-click "My Computer"), to bring up the Systems Properties window.

Select the "Advanced" tab. Under Performance" click the "Settings" button. This will bring up the Performance Options window. Under the "Visual Options" tab, click the "Custom" radio button. You'll see a list of check boxes. Check off the one that says, "Use drop shadows for icon labels on the desktop". Then "Apply" or "OK" to make the change.

When you go back to your desktop the labels should be clear. Now you can see your wallpaper better.

How to Find Out What Programs Are Installed on Your Computer

Here's an easy way to get a list of all the Microsoft programs that are installed on your computer: Click Start | Help and Support. In the left column of the Help and Support window, under Pick a Help Topic, click Windows basics. In the left pane, click to expand Core Windows tasks. Click Searching for information. In the right pane, under Pick a task, click Get information about your computer. In the right pane, under What do you want to do?, click View a list of Microsoft software installed on this computer. The list can be copied and pasted into another document.

Clear Reading With ClearType

by Vinny La Bash, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida, www.spcug.org

My students know why LCD displays are superior to CRT monitors. When one of them complained to me that he found text difficult to read on his new 21-inch LCD monitor, I told him it was probably because the screen resolution made the text too small to read easily. He didn't think so, because his teenage granddaughter also thought the text wasn't clear. His comment made me think.

Flat panel LCD Monitors are designed to display information at a specific resolution known as the "native resolution." Manufacturers refer to them as "fixed-pixel displays" because they are limited to displaying only one resolution. If they receive an image signal that is either higher or lower than the native resolution, they convert or scale the image automatically to fit the native resolution.

If the incoming source has more pixels than the display's native resolution, you will lose some visible detail and sharpness. Very often you will need to carefully compare the images side by side to see any difference. Only the most exacting applications will suffer from this small constraint.

If the incoming source has fewer pixels than the native resolution, there is no benefit from the higher resolution. Extra pixels will not improve the appearance of a lower-resolution source.

Converting images from either a higher or lower resolution to the LCD's native resolution hardly affects the quality of graphic or video images, but it can make text appear blurry. Early LCD displays had no ready solution for this problem. All one could do was experiment with various font styles and sizes until an acceptable compromise was reached.

Microsoft didn't want to keep its customers waiting while it found an answer, so it licensed TrueType fonts from Apple. The advantage of TrueType fonts was that text could be made larger or smaller with little distortion. Text became easier to read, and Microsoft made some improvements to the technology; but TrueType proved to be an interim response.

While Microsoft was working on *Windows XP*, it was also developing a new software technology designed to enhance text readability on flat-panel LCD monitors, laptops, PDAs, Pocket PCs, indeed any device that used an LCD screen, no matter how big or small.

Microsoft claims that its development people spent two years studying typography and the psychology of reading to create *ClearType*. Instead of affecting individual pixels that are either treated as "on" or "off," *ClearType* works with a different type of pixel that is constructed of three individual pieces tinted with red, blue, and green stripes. The technol-

ogy varies the brightness of the sub-pixels, making the screen characters appear smooth, clean, and sharp around the edges.

Now that you know what it is, how can you use it? You have three ways to turn on or "enable" *ClearType* for your LCD display. Let's start with the easiest way.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/clear-type/tuner/Step1.aspx>. Follow the online directions to enable *ClearType* on your system.

Another way is to download the *PowerToy* version of the online tuner. This lets you do the same thing that the above procedure does, but you do it by accessing the Control Panel and activating the *ClearType* settings from there. Then you can go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/ClearTypePowerToy.msp>. Follow the online directions to download, install, and use. It's easy.

Finally, for the propeller heads and bit twiddlers in the audience, you can access the Registry. To enable *ClearType* for all users of your system: From the Start button, select Run, and type Regedit in the Text box. (As if you didn't know). Navigate to HKEY_USERS/.DEFAULT/Control Panel/ Desktop. Create or Modify the Data Type and Value Name as detailed below.

Data Type: String Value

Value Name: FontSmoothing

Setting for Value Data: [Set Value to 2]

Data Type: Dword

Value Name: FontSmoothingType

Setting for Value Data: [Change Value to 2]

Exit Registry and Reboot.

Enabling *ClearType* only for the current user instead of all users is identical to the above procedure except that instead of HKEY_USERS, work with HKEY_CURRENT_USER.

When you're finished, check the Desktop and examine the icon titles. Open the Start menu, while you're at it, and observe the readability of the text. You may find the text too small to read even though it is sharp and clear. If this is the case: Right click on the Desktop. Choose Properties from the popup menu. Click the Appearance tab. Click the Advanced button and make changes there.

Decide which technique is best for you, and enjoy text that is clear, crisp and sharp.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups has provided this article.

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Windows Tips

By Dave Gerber

Making Your Multimedia Editing Programs Run Faster

Everything these days is digital -- digital video cameras, digital still-shot cameras, digital audio recorders, digital mixers, and so on. All that digital equipment stores tons of information and can plug into your computer. Everyone wants to store, edit, play, and share all that digital information. New software is appearing all the time, promising the ability to slice and dice multimedia information 12 ways to Sunday.

The problem with having all that digital information on your computer, of course, is that the files created for digital multimedia are huge, huge, huge! Many things can affect the size of multimedia files, including quality, resolution, and audio or video speed. CD-quality audio can take 50KB of disk space per second. Video throws the storage needs through the roof: every second of video can require 6MB of file space. That is huge!

Say that you shoot two hours of digital video of your parents' 50th anniversary. You get everything -- the grand entrance, the arrival of the siblings, the arrival of your aunts and uncles, the arguments, the food fight. Hmmm... Let's see; that's 7,200 seconds, or anywhere from 36 to 44 GB of data. Ack! Just for a single event!

As you can imagine, programs that allow you to fold, spindle, mutilate, and otherwise process such huge files can place quite the burden on your computer system. Top-notch programs push the envelope, trying to squeeze all the performance out of your system that they can.

The following points are the best two ways to speed up those programs:

1. Make sure you have lots and lots and lots of RAM in your computer. The more memory you can install, the better. If your motherboard can handle it, install 1GB or

more of RAM. *Windows XP* can handle the added memory just fine, and the addition helps with editing Mom and Dad's anniversary party, so it doesn't show when Uncle Joe showed up with his walker and his surprise twenty-something bride.

2. Make sure you're using the fastest video card you can, along with a fast hard drive designed for multimedia use. Yes, they do make hard drives just for multimedia use. If you have one of these babies, you won't be sorry when it comes time to doing gymnastics with gigabytes of data.

Stop Printing That Document

Sometimes you begin to print a document and then change your mind. How do you stop a print job? Because your program simply passes off its printing jobs to Windows, there is no obvious way to cancel printing. It can be done if you're crafty, however. Follow these steps:

Locate the printer icon located on the task bar at the bottom-right of your screen. (Look near the current-time display.) This printer icon appears only when Windows is sending something to the printer. Depending on how much you're printing and how fast your printer is, you may not even see it at all. If you don't, you're out of luck and you may as well quit right now and eat some ice cream.

Double-click the little printer icon. Click the name of your document "job" in the Print Manager's list. Choose Document-->Cancel Printing.

You may be asked whether you really want to terminate the employee, er, print job. Click OK. If you're using a network printer, you may not be able to cancel the document. Oh well. Choose Printer-->Close. You are zapped back to your program, ready for more editing action.

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