COMPUTER NEWS

Volume 24, No. 7 | **July 2007**

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 666 computers and 139 printers. Additional equipment has been given to charitable non-profit organizations and to disadvantaged individuals.

At July 18 Meeting, Caboodle is Coming!

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, July 18, 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 submit before the meeting by emailing them to Random Access moderator **Jerry Brown** at **Questions@nvpcug.org**.

Do you collect coins, DVD movies, wines, stamps, dolls, plates, music, books, military medals, fabric, antiques or something else unique?During the Computer Tutor session which will follow, **Jeff Solomon** will be demonstrating various software programs for keeping track of and organizing your collections.

Our main presentation will be given by Nick and Kimberly Cavanaugh, co-owners of Caboodle Cartridge in Napa. Their ink products are environmentally friendly and Caboodle's remanufacturing and quality control processes ensure quality that is just as good as the leading brands. The presentation will include a powerpoint demonstration about printing technology, past and present and some hands on items and product brochures with sample pricing.

The door prize will be provided by the presenter, a $50.00 gift certificate, redeemable at their Main Street location toward the purchase of any ink, toner, ribbon or fax film. **Note:** members are eligible for the drawing and if you want to be included in the drawing, make it a point to attend this months meeting. Your name might be the one that is drawn!.

Caboodle Cartridge® can be viewed at **http://www.caboodle.com/**.

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

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

President's Message

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

July 2007, it looks like it will be a hot month so those of you who have not gone to Alaska the escape the heat should welcome an evening with the NVPCUG in the air/conditioned Senior Center. When you come to the July meeting don't forget to sign up for the annual members' picnic. So before July 18th you should think about what you will be bringing and who will be there and be prepared to fill out the signup sheet. This month we will have as our guest speaker Nick Cavanaugh, the owner of the local Caboodle Cartridge franchise. Nick should be able to resolve many of those pesky ink cartridge replacement problems our printers have developed.

I think that **Roy Wagner** and I have finally finished filing our 2006 tax forms. We have still not heard from the unit that is deciding about our final 501c3 status. Wait a second I just went to the Post Office and there was a letter from the IRS asking for more information about our funding. I called at 6AM our time and talked to a very nice lady and answered all her questions. She said we should get our final ruling sometime in the next three weeks. I for one am anxiously waiting.

Someday we would like to be financially sound enough to participate in things that will help make the public aware that we exist what we do. Each year there is an opportunity to participate in the local Public Television Channel 27 & 28 fund raising telethon. We could also participate in the Napa Town and Country Fair. All these cost money that we don't have. One way, to save money, I have looked at over the years is to go to an online newsletter only. If you aren't aware of it, I post our Computer News online every month. It is a full color PDF copy of the current newsletter can be accessed in several ways. You can go to the main webpage and click on the Quick Navigation menu and then click on Computer News Archives in PDF format or scroll down the main page to the section titled 'About our General Meetings' then click the link to read our current newsletter. You can also enter the URL in your browser (example: **http://www.nvpcug.org/Newsletter/6June07.pdf**) and get it that way. Remember each month is titled similarly with all the slashes and so on. When I get the July computer News it will be at **http://www.nvpcug.org/Newsletter/7July07.pdf** (I do abbreviate most of the months like January (Jan), August (Aug), and so on if your not successful try one of the other spellings or ways. Those of you who would be willing to receive a PDF version instead of a printed copy let us know. If there are more than a few I could send you a PDF via the NVPCUG discount list. Note also you have access to a complete archive of past newsletters dating from January 2004.

Well that's all I have to say for this month other than see you at the meeting July 18th.

Take care,
Ron

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

Wednesdays	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Computers-to-Schools work parties. To volunteer, contact Orion Hill, (707) 252-0637
July 18	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
Aug 1	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Aug 8	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Aug 9	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Macintosh SIG meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Aug 13	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting, Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Aug 15	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group
Officers for 2007

Board of Directors

President	Ron Dack		President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Jerry Brown	254-9607	VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org

Other Directors: Susy Ball, Jim Gillespie**,** Bernhard Krevet, Ken Manfree, Dick Peterson, Dianne Prior, Bob Simmerman, Kathy Slavens, Jeff Solomon, Dean Unruh

Appointed Officers

Computer Recycling Coordinator
Ken Manfree   224-3722   Recycler@nvpcug.org

Computer Tutor Coordinator
Jeff Solomon   Tutor@nvpcug.org

Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator
Orion E. Hill   252-0637   CTS@nvpcug.org

Facility Arrangements Coordinator
Dianne Prior   252-1506   Facility@nvpcug.org

Greeter Coordinator
Bob Simmerman 259-6113   Greeter@nvpcug.org

Librarian
Dean Unruh   226-9164   Librarian@nvpcug.org

Membership Director
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Mentor Program Coordinator
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Programs Director
Susy Ball   337-3998   Programs@nvpcug.org

Publicity Director
Ron Dack   Publicity@nvpcug.org

Random Access Moderator
Jerry Brown   254-9607   Questions@nvpcug.org

Special Projects Director
Jeff Solomon   Projects@nvpcug.org

Webmaster
Ron Dack   Webmaster@nvpcug.org

• All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

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More than 63 Tons of Electronics Collected

By Orion E. Hill, NVPCUG Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator,
www.nvpcug.org, OEHill@sonic.net

Ken Manfree surveys a driver. Photo by Orion E. Hill.

More than 63 tons of electronic devices were collected at the seventh annual Napa County Computers and Electronics Recycling Event held on Friday and Saturday, June 8 and 9, 2007, at Napa Valley College=s Napa city campus, Tim Dewey-Mattia, Napa Recycling and Waste Services= public education manager, has reported. The total weight of the material collected was only about one-third of the 179 tons collected at the June 2006 event. But our local free event, according to Kevin Miller, the City of Napa=s Materials Diversion Administrator, is still the largest per capita event in California. A total of 812 vehicles B 323 on Friday, 489 on Saturday B brought electronics this year, about half the total number last year.

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group was one of several sponsors of the event, which was organized by the City of Napa Materials Diversion (Recycling) Division. Other sponsors included the County of Napa, Napa Valley College, the Computer Recycling Center, local

Ray McCann unloads a reusable computer. Photo by Orion E. Hill.

waste disposal services, and Electronic Recyclers International.

The drop in the amount of electronics collected at the annual event this year reflects the huge increase in drop-offs at the Napa Recycling and Composting Facility, near the Napa County Airport, that began after free, unlimited drop-offs were allowed at the beginning of this year. For the first six months of this year, about 25 tons of electronics were dropped off each month. Also, about 40 tons of electronics were collected at a free American Canyon event last December.

Otho Rosado loads a reusable computer. Photo by Orion E. Hill.

Some Items Collected for Reuse

Most of the computer equipment dropped off by local residents, businesses, and public agencies was more than five years old and at the end of its usable life. However, NVPCUG volunteers were able to collect more than a half ton of reusable equipment, including Pentium 4 computers, LCD monitors, and laser printers, for our Computers-to-Schools program.

Also, more than 10 tons of computer equipment, including old computers and CRT monitors, was collected by the Computer Recycling Center for reuse. The CRC is California=s largest nonprofit organization dedicated to refurbishing and donating working equipment to schools, community organizations, and individuals in need.

All of the remaining items were taken by Electronic Recyclers International for processing at its Fresno recycling facility. The

Cartons of electronics are loaded for transport. Photo by Sara Gallegos, City of Napa.

plant recovers plastics, metals, and other materials that can be used in manufacturing new products. This recycling is essential for conserving valuable resources and for preventing toxic substances such as arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury, and nickel from contaminating the environment if dumped illegally in a landfill from which they can leach out into the ground and water supplies. ∎

NVPCUG Members Helped

Twenty-three NVPCUG members helped make the event this year a success. Thanks to the following members who directed traffic and surveyed drivers: **Susy Ball**, **Jerry Brown**, **Al Edmister**,* **Jim Gillespie**, **Bernhard Krevet**, **Ken Manfree**,* **Vivian Manfree**,* **Dianne Prior**, **Corinne Rau**, **Janet Riley**, **Ray Riley**, **Bob Simmerman**, **Jeff Solomon**,* **Dean Unruh**,*and **Marcia Waddell**.* Thanks also to the following members who identified and pulled reusable computer equipment: **Hal Bunnell**, **James Gray**,* **Orion E. Hill**,* **Ray McCann**,* **Don Robertson**, **Otho Rosado**,* **Davina Rubin**, and **Bill Wheadon**. (* - astericks indicate names of member who worked multiple three-hour shifts.

Fix That Fan

By Jim Sanders, Editor, The Orange Bytes, North Orange County Computer Club, California,

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Cheap (Sleeve Bearing) fans die young. Bet on it. The cheaper the system, power supply, cooler, etc., the cheaper the fan. A cheap ball bearing fan may be just as bad. When you hear that sleeve bearing fan (or a ball bearing fan for that matter) rattle, notice a fan is barely turning, or not turning at all, fix it!

As shown in photo #1 of a fan out of a power supply, get the fan out where you can work on it. On the side where the wires go into the middle, carefully peel back the label/sticker that covers the shaft area. The round item in the middle of the sticker in photo #2 is a metal hole plug. The better fans have a rubber plug that seals well and is almost invisible at times. The really cheap fans don't have a plug over the shaft area. If the fan still turns without much effort, just oiling it may make it well again. Apply a few drops of a good light machine oil such as, 3in1, Singer sewing machine, even ATF, but not the 30wt for your car engine, in the shaft hole. Sewing machine oil works well. Be careful not to get any oil on the surface where the label/sticker needs to be re-applied. This has to be put back in place to cover the opening and keep the oil in place.

If you get oil on the fan surface, it can be removed with acetone or MEK. If the label gets wrecked, I have found that on a clean surface a piece of black electrical tape works well. If you don't have a good applicator, see photo #3, use a toothpick.

Spin the fan some to work the oil onto the shaft. Re-assemble and you are likely to have a fan that quietly moves air again. If the fan is so gummed up that it is hard to move the blades, you will need to remove the retaining ring (C-ring) on the shaft. This allows the shaft to be pulled out of the bearing, see photo #4, so that both can be cleaned with a good strong solvent before oiling. I like the effectiveness of Methyl Ethyl Ketone or MEK. A pipe cleaner works well for cleaning the inside of the bearing, especially on the smaller fans.
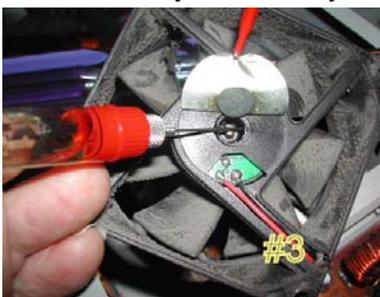
Arguably, this is more work than it is worth, but it is not always easy to find a replacement fan.
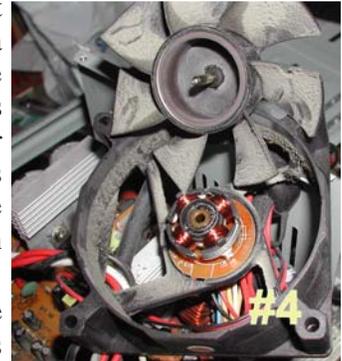
The video card fans and the motherboard chipset fans can be near impossible to locate. Even if you find a replacement fan, oiling the fan before putting it into service maybe a good idea as manufacturers seem to be chintzy about the amount of oil in new fans.

PS - Clean the crud off the fan before you replace it. In fact, if you have access to an air compressor regulated at about 90 PSI, it is a great idea to take a blow gun attachment on the end of an air hose and blow out the entire system keeping the tip about six inches away from parts. The little duster cans are better than nothing, but really don't have the horse power to do a good job. ■

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Note from Editor: Web sites and e-mail addresses of all authors are available in the byline of each article. Also remember that you may get a better view of graphics on our web site as described in the Presidents Message.

Here's an idea: Instead of copying a long URL from the newsletter why not copy it from the on-line version of the newsletter, and besides, you will find all web addresses and e-mails are viewable in RED.

Computing Tips and Tricks

External USB storage devices may not work when connected to a USB hub. If the drive isn't recognized, directly connect it to the computer's USB port.

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CyberLink DVD Suite 5.0 Standard

By Terry Currier, President, WINNERS - WINdows usERS, CA,

http://www.windowsusers.org, Winnersug@aol.com

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A do-all suite of products. It has 11 CyberLink programs put together into one suite so you can backup, burn, play movies, and music.
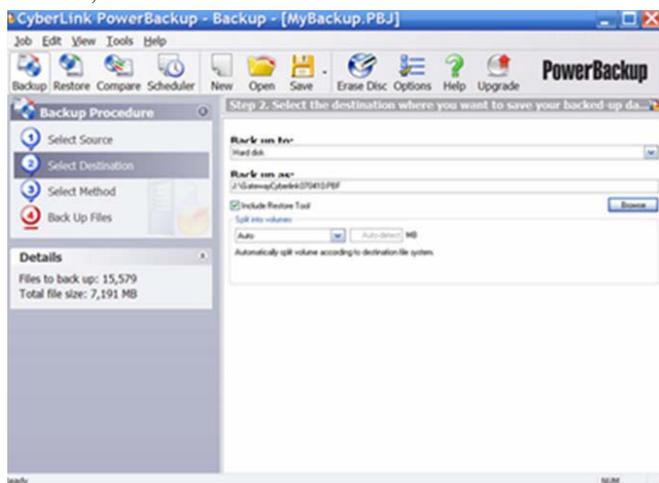
PowerDVD 7 (Express) is really the best way to watch a movie on your PC. I have been using it since version 4. Watching it on a PC gives the viewer greater control than just watching it play on a DVD player connected to a TV. The viewer has more speed options: Forward and reverse speeds are 1/2X, 1X, 2X, 3X, 4X, 8X, 16X, 32X. You can bookmark a scene to jump to it quickly. If you have several bookmarks, pressing the F2 key takes you to the next bookmark, or use the right-click popup menu. With PowerDVD you can also capture (snapshot) what is showing on the screen. I use that feature to capture images of home movies and print them onto printable DVDs. **Note:** my version came with PowerDVD 6, the latest version now includes PowerDVD 7.

PowerBackup 2.5 lets you backup you data easily. I backed up 7.1GB to an external USB hard drive in 26 minutes, including verifying. You can also bac kup to a Blu-ray Disc, or any type DVD. It lets you schedule automatic backups and you can do full, incremental, or differential backups. Filtering is available to include or exclude files (such as .doc files.) You can also password protect archives. When you do a backup it offers a Restore Tool that integrates the restoration application and your data, and saves the resulting file as an executable (.exe)

file. So if the computer crashes you can restore your data on a computer that does not have the PowerBackup program installed.

PhotoNow! is a photo correction program which allows the user to resize, crop, remove red eye, and do so me special effects on photos. It can also touch up color hue, brightness, and make a color picture monochrome.

MediaShow 3 helps you create photo slideshows and is fairly easy to do, with manual or auto playback of the show. Within MediaShow you can fix photos and apply image effects with PhotoNow!. You can add background music or record audio directly to narrate the slides. One nice feature is that you can have it saved as a Screen Saver (.SCR), allowing you to save the file as a desktop screen saver. You can also save a slideshow as an EXE file, allowing playback on any computer.

PowerDVD Copy lets you duplicate non-CSS encrypted DVDs. It will auto-shrink 8.5 GB of video to fit onto a standard 4.7 GB DVD. There is a preview window to view your chapters and select to copy all, or some.

Power2Go 5.5 is the disc burning module, whether it be data or music. Burn data onto Blu-ray Discs, HD DVDs, DVDs and CDs and you can rip CDs to create MP3, or WMA files as well as convert between file formats. I had a
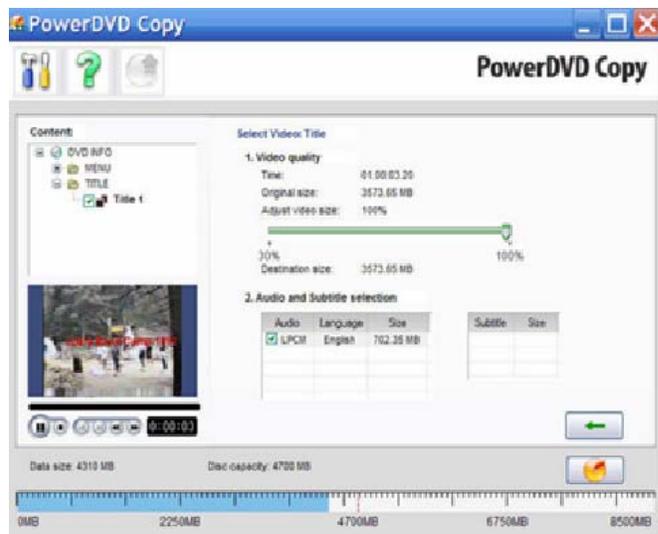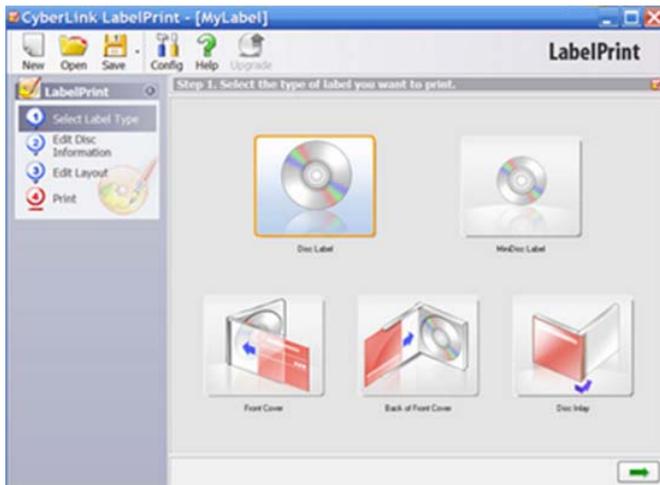
problem with this at first, shutting down when I tried to get information about the album, but CyberLink had a patch for it and I had no troubles after that. Which leads us into -

LabelPrint 2 helps you create labels, covers and jewel-case inlays. It can import photo files for the labels, or even etch images directly onto LightScribe discs. Two things I really liked was the ability to import MP3 song titles and playlist information to put on the label. The second thing which was great for me was it worked with my Epson printer to print the label directly onto the CD.

InstantBurn 5 gives the user the ability to use a CD, Blu-ray Disc, HD DVD or DVD like a super large floppy disc. Using drag and drop you can easily create an audio CD, Video DVD, or data disc. You can also copy files from one disc to another.

PowerProducer 4 allows you to record high-definition video content directly from a camcorder to disc. Bringing video into the program you can edit by cutting it to a desired length or splitting it into chapters. Working with a video you can edit, cut, rearrange and merge to get exactly want you want. You can add photos to create a slideshow within the video, and add background music to a video clip. PowerProducer will do just about everything you need, but if you want to do more, click on the Advanced Editing button and it takes you to -

PowerDirector 5 (SEP version) is the big brother of PowerProducer. It can do everything PowerProducer does,

but the editing is easier. It also has what they call Magic Fix to stabilize shaky videos and sharpen picture focus. Magic Style helps create movies with pre-designed templates automatically. It will put in effects, transitions, and create the movie using your timeline. Just pick a template, preview it, and apply the one you want. **Note:** the Standard version of CyberLink DVD Suite does not come with a full working version of PowerDirector. You have to purchase the Pro version to get it. I have the full version of PowerDirector 5 which also has more features such as the ability to put in Picture-in-Picture.

CyberLink Utilities lets you create a image of a disc onto your hard drive and then burn it onto another disc.
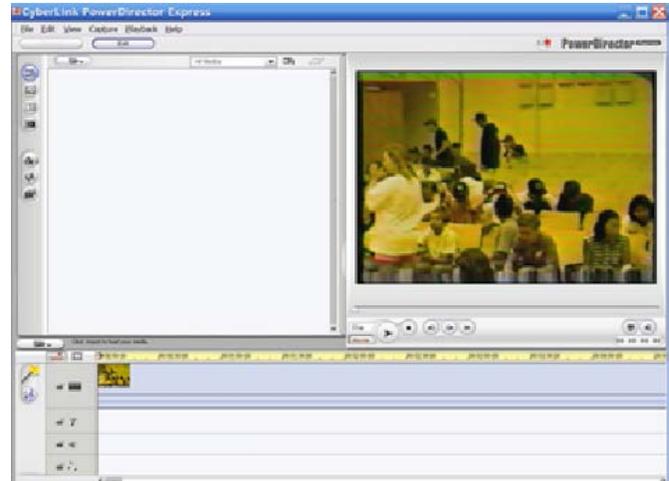
Conclusion

This is a great selection of programs for a good price $49^{95} for the Standard, but I highly recommend you opt for the Pro version for $89^{95} which includes PowerDirector. The only downside is on the PowerDVD and PowerDirector they include lite versions (SEP), but these will do just about everything you could want to do.

http://www.cyberlink.com/ ■

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Tips and Tricks

Garbage In, Garbage Out

It's great to take pictures at low resolution because you can cram more photos in your camera's memory. But with all things PC, the GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) rule applies. Low-resolution photos are ideal for posting to Web sites or emailing, but not for printing, unless you're willing to keep the size down to roughly passport-photo size or smaller. Let's say your printer works best at 200 pixels per inch. For a good 4- x 6-inch photo you need 800 x 1,200 pixels; double that for an 8- x 10- inch. Low resolution for today's cameras usually means 640 x 480 pixels, not nearly enough for anything above a 3- x 5- inch

picture. Shoot at higher resolutions for larger photos.

Clear Paper Path

Whenever you print a photo, make sure there's nothing blocking the paper path. If the paper slows down even a fraction of a second, you can ruin the photo by altering how the colors blend and how the image lines up. If you're using expensive photo paper, feed the sheets through one at a time. You'll also want to stand there and watch to make sure the paper goes through smoothly and consistently.

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Back-Ups Made Easy

A new solution for an old problem

By Carey Holzman, Co-host: www.computeramerica.com, www.careyholzman.com, Carey@ComputerAmerica.com

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By now you're probably well aware of the importance of making copies of your valuable data (referred to as 'backing-up'). You've probably read numerous articles about ways to back-up your data and prevent disaster. The problem is, most advice offered on this subject is not truly complete and many of the 'solutions' offered are expensive and time consuming.

There are numerous ways you can <u>lose</u> your data in spite of backing-up regularly. How you back-up, what you back-up, when you back-up and where you store your back-up are just a few important variables that come into play on that miserable day that you require it.

Still, that's better than eight out of ten customers that approach me for PC repairs who do not have any kind of back-up. After all, any form of back-up is better than no back-up … but just barely.

First it's important that you understand the existing problems with the back-ups most people create.

1. External hard drives: There are many problems with backing up your important data to an external hard drive. Since most people keep their external hard drives next to, or in the same building, as their computer, any fire or flood will render both the PC and back-up useless. Also, if you are a victim of theft, the crook now has all of your data, and it's probably not encrypted or protected in any way on your PC or your back-up device. Since your back-up device is also a hard disk drive, there is a good possibility that it will fail and need to be replaced. Ironic since that it what you are protecting your data from. If you always leave your external hard drive hooked up to your PC for automated back-ups, then it is prone to viruses and other malware that may cause the loss of data that you are attempting to protect yourself from! Then there's the high cost of around $150 for these devices.

2. Internal hard drives/RAID: Some people have a secondary hard drive or partition in their computer and simply back-up from one disk to the other. Here again, viruses and malware will render both drives useless at the same time. Fires, floods and thefts also leave you with no back-up source. This back-up is only useful if your internal hard drive fails. But as you can already see, hard drive failure is not the sole cause of data loss. Also, a RAID MIRROR (where one drive constantly mirrors what the other drive is doing) will not help if you accidentally delete a file. The RAID MIRROR will simultaneously delete that file at the same time.

3. Drive images: Some people believe an image or 'clone' of their entire hard drive onto an external drive or DVD is a good back-up, but it's not. If your computer has a serious component failure, such as a motherboard, or if your computer is stolen or lost in a fire or flood, you'll have to replace it. Once you restore your drive image, your new motherboard will most likely require different hardware drivers and Windows will most likely not start. All you'll get is the Blue Screen of Death. Sure, your data is theoretically fine and well, it's just too bad you can't get to it. Because full images copy everything on your hard disk, they tend to be very time consuming and, as a result, are not done often enough to be current.

4. Flash Drives: Flash drives are more reliable than CDs, DVDs or external/internal hard drives, but they are very slow and very limited. Flash drives are also prone to theft and being misplaced. Most people do not encrypt their data and, as a result, may have inadvertently just given some stranger all of their personal data simply because the flash drive fell out of their pocket somewhere or they can't remember where they left it.

5. Tape drives: Seriously? Does any consumer still use tape? Next to the floppy drive, it's the most unreliable way to back-up data and tape drives require a special reader and software to restore the data. In case of data loss, just get your back-up tape, reinstall Windows, reinstall your tape back-up device, reinstall your tape back-up software and then you can start to restore your data. That is, the data not damaged on the tape.

What's Left?

Why will you need a back-up? What will happen? Will your hard drive fail? Will your PC be stolen or will your PC just stop working one day? Will you be involved in a theft? An earthquake? A fire? A hurricane? A flood?

We can't answer those questions without a time machine, but we do know that even in the best of circumstances, all hard drives eventually fail. It's not a question of "IF" but a question of "WHEN?"

If you only have one hard drive, then you only have one hard drive that can fail. Backing-up your data to another drive doubles your chances of experiencing a hard drive failure in addition to not guaranteeing your data will be there when you need it for the reasons listed above.

We also know that most data is irreplaceable. Whether it's a database of your customers, your personal finance, photos from your vacations or of family and friends, your music

collection, your email, favorites and address book, once it's gone, it's gone.

Hard drive data extraction services can help recover data from a failed hard drive and even hard drives damaged by flood or fire. Expect to spend $800 - $2500 and expect to wait from two to four weeks with no guarantee which or how much data can be recovered.

Say Hello To My Little Friend!

I wear a lot of hats as a computer talk show host, author, instructor, technician and business owner. I like to think that being a consumer advocate is a hat that firmly sits upon all the others. If you're familiar with any of my work, then you're well aware of my passion for free and helpful software and services. However, very rarely a product comes along that is not free, but is still such a bargain I am compelled to write about it.

Allow me to introduce you **Carbonite.com** at **http://www.carbonite.com/.** Carbonite is a small, downloadable application for Windows XP and Vista (Mac version coming soon) that uses your high-speed Internet connection to automatically upload your selected data securely, off-site and in background.

For $49⁹⁵ a year, Carbonite offers UNLIMITED storage space. That's right, you can store as much data as you want. Installation is quick and easy. Carbonite's online backup service starts automatically and works quietly and continuously in the background while your computer is on and connected to the Internet.. If you've accidentally erased something, don't worry; you can restore deleted files with just a few clicks on your PC. If your PC crashes, just visit their website to recover your lost files.

Your data is stored safely - No one can see your data but you because your files are encrypted *twice* before they leave your computer using a combination of encryption techniques similar to those used by online banks and financial institutions.

Carbonite online back-up software is always looking for new or recently changed files on your PC. The moment you add or modify files, Carbonite swings into action. Whenever your PC is connected to the Internet (at home, the office, a hotel or airport, etc …) Carbonite automatically and continually backs-up all your files (but not system files or applications by default.). And it will never slow down your PC or Internet connection.

Once you install Carbonite, simply tell it what you want backed-up and you never have to think about it again. Set it and forget it. It's not loaded with tons of bells, whistles and features because it's designed to be simple and do just one very important thing: keep your data safe.

Carbonite offers a free 15-day trial and no credit card is required to take advantage of the free offer. As if that wasn't enough, I have a secret for you: Use the code word "AMERICA" and your 15-day free trial is extended to 30 days! If you choose to purchase a year of Carbonite service, the code word will also extend your subscription an additional two months at no additional charge!

Is This A Paid Advertisement?

Whenever I get passionate about a product that is free, no one asks me if I am being paid to promote it. I see customers everyday who lose data due to unforeseen circumstances and lack of a proper back-up. I like **Carbonite.com** and I use it myself. In fact, it's running and backing-up my data, securely and off-site, as I type this! I like this product so much, I've asked the folks at Carbonite to sponsor my radio show and to offer our listeners and readers a discount to help encourage proper, secure, automated, off-site back-ups.

Skeptical? Try it for yourself, free for 30-days! Read more about how Carbonite works **http://www.carbonite.com/howitworks.aspx?**.

Most people with high-speed Internet connections barely use them. Since your Internet Service Provider is charging you the same, regardless of how much or how often you use it, why not take advantage of that and utilize your unused bandwidth for backing-up your valuable data? ∎
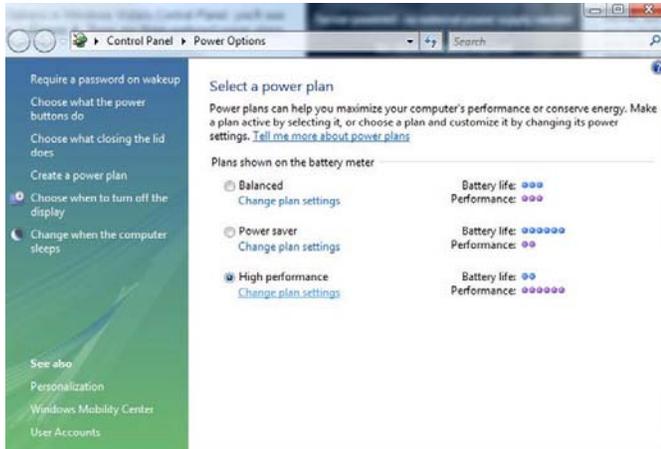
Windows Vista Power Management

By Vinny LaBash, Regular Columnist, The Sarastoa PC Monitor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida,

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

Those of us who drive laptops are usually more aware of power management than the desktop jockeys. When you're running on battery power only, you want to have your laptop running as efficiently as possible. In Vista, you can optimize settings to conserve energy, go for flat out performance or achieve some kind of sensible balance between the two.

Activating power management is simple, and you have two paths to take you there. If you like living in the past and have set Control Panel to Classic View, simply open the Control Panel and then open the Power Options icon. If you're more up-to-date, open **Control Panel**, then **System and Maintenance**, then select **Power Options**. Either way you're looking at very similar screens.

Vista gives you a web-like interface that's easier to use than the usual tabbed dialog boxes in XP. You have three power plans to work with, and if your PC is a desktop the right column will read "Energy Savings". You don't have any head scratching involved to determine what each selection controls.
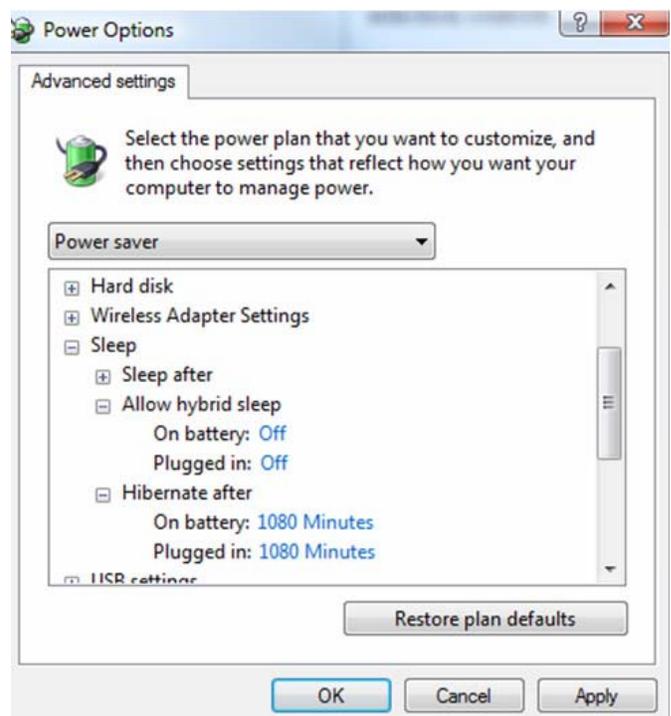
The first selection, **Balanced** power provides total performance when you need it while saving power during idle periods. The **Power saver** option reduces system performance to give laptop users maximum battery life.
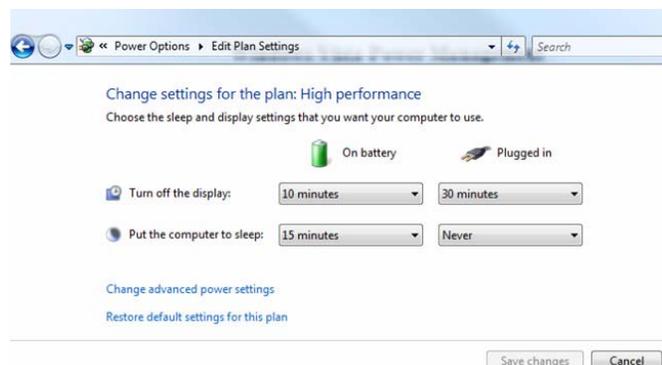
High performance does exactly what it says, but don't expect to be able to watch the Lord of the Rings trilogy on your laptop on battery power.

Examine the dialog box and you will notice that each of the power plans has a **Change plan settings** link. Any of these will take you to another dialog box where you can change the default settings. The defaults are reasonable and make sense. Change them if you must, but not because you can.

You can refine your setting further by selecting the **Change Advanced Power Settings** link. The number of power setting adjustments you can make to your computer in this dialog box is nothing short of mind boggling. You can regulate power consumption for USB devices, hard disks, displays, and even wireless devices. It's easy to get carried away.

Scroll down to the **Sleep** option, open it and you will see a new Vista option called **Hybrid** sleep mode. This mode combines the power savings of the Hibernate mode with the revive speed of the Standby mode. In practice you get a coma-like hibernation state combined with a jump start after pressing the spacebar.

The **Sleep after** and **Hibernate after** settings are nothing exciting and are very similar to the XP options that allow you to specify how much inactivity time you will allow before telling the system to take a nap.

At the bottom left corner of your screen is a new orb graphic that replaces the XP Start button. Left-click on the orb and

inspect the bottom of the Start menu. By clicking on the rectangular orange shut-down button, you can quickly induce **Hybrid Sleep** mode. Keep in mind that **Hybrid Sleep** is not a true shut down. The best way to completely shut down the computer, aside from pulling the power cord, is to access the **Shut Down** from the fly out menu.

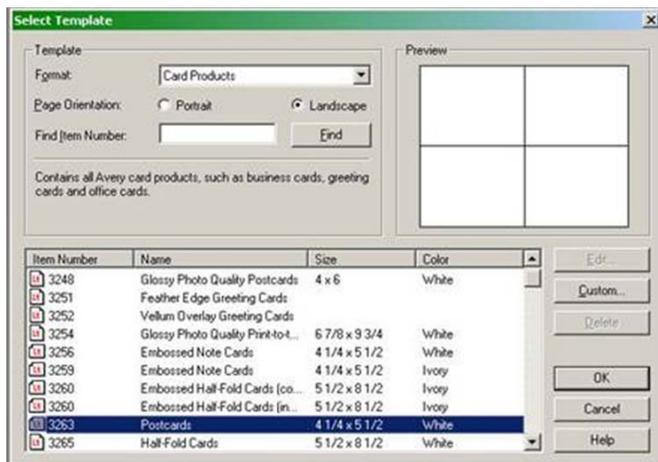Vista provides an intelligently designed method of regulating power consumption by offering a balanced variety of methods with a web style interface to help you select and configure various power plans. Use them wisely. ∎

Software Review

Avery DesignPro

By Ronnie Ugulano, Editor, Fresno PC User Group, www.fresnocomputerusers.org, priswell@comcast.net

Last month when I walked in for the FPCUG meeting, I was met by an old friend, a very familiar piece of software - Avery DesignPro, the software that is specially designed to be used with Avery cardstock and labels. A stack of the software was sitting on the table as I entered and was given to members as long as the stack lasted.

Over the years, I have used this software many, many times for a long list of printing projects. As a homeschooling parent, I've used the software to design student and teacher identification cards, bookmarks, T-shirts and certificates. As a housewife, I've created distinct address labels and business cards for each family member, get-together invitations, thank you and other occasion cards, and wish-you-were-here postcards to send to friends and family. As a soapmaker hobbyist, I make labels for the lotions, soaps, and bath salts I make for myself and others. As a computer geek, I fire up Avery DesignPro to create labels for the CDs I burn, and the occasional floppy.

So, you might say, I use Avery DesignPro a lot. Over the years, I've collected enough cardstock, artwork and cute sayings that I can whip up something for nearly every occasion that comes along. Who needs Hallmark?

But I wouldn't be able to be so glib with the printer unless DesignPro was easy and dependable. It's one thing to cheerfully tinker with computer hardware or software-gone-wrong for fun. It's another thing to need a really nice card to go with a baby shower gift at the last minute, only to find that the software doesn't do what you need it to do - yesterday.

Once you learn your way around DesignPro's simple interface, it's no trouble at all to whip up what you need, when you need it. When you open the program, you have the option of making something new, or opening a project you have previously used. If you are creating a new project, the tools for placing text and pictures is easy and intuitive. You can choose whether to make many copies of one design, or unique designs for each item. Fonts can be scaled as small as 8 or as large as 72, and graphics can be sized up or down to the size of the cardstock, or limit of the resolution of the graphic. There are even options for text direction, serial numbers and UPC codes - all push-button easy, using similar conventions as you'd find in Microsoft Word, only with much more in the way of options and flexibility for this specific series of jobs.

Oh, and did I mention that it's free? Yep, some Avery labels come with a disk enclosed (see specially marked packages) or, you can download the software from Avery's website (http://avery.com/us/Main?action=software.AverySoftwareDetail&catalogcode=WEB01&softwarecode=3200). If you choose to download, I recommend that you select the stand-alone version, the one that does not integrate into Microsoft Word. It's leaner, cleaner and less clunky.
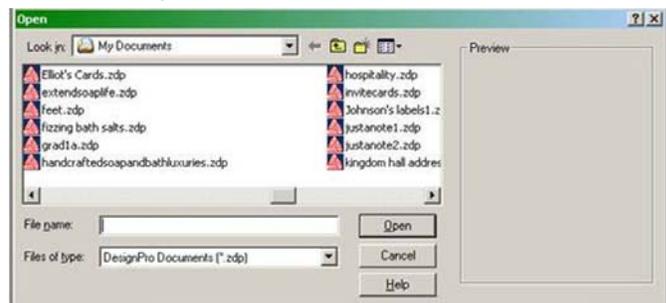
So, if you missed out on the stack of DesignPro disks at the last FPCUG meeting, a simple download will allow you to join the club. ∎

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Free Online Mapping and Driving Directions

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director, www.apcug.net, www.gtpcc.org/, Iwilsker@apcug.net

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WEBSITES:

http://maps.live.com

http://maps.google.com

http://maps.yahoo.com

http://www.mapquest.com

Many of us like to use maps when we travel. Maps can be used to display driving directions and points of interest. Fortunately there are several excellent and free mapping utilities available on the internet, such as those provided by Microsoft's "Live" service, Google, Yahoo!, and AOL's Mapquest.

Mapquest (www.mapquest.com) has the honor of being one of the oldest online mapping services, and during its tenure has earned a large following. The interface on the startup page is simple, giving the user the options to enter the "Maps" option to display the image of a single location, or "Directions" to calculate driving directions. Maps generated can be displayed either in traditional graphics format, or as an aerial image with key streets labeled. If an individual map is selected, a bar at the top of the screen allows the user to locate and select from a lengthy list of local facilities including restaurants, banks, pharmacies, colleges and universities, hospitals, auto repair, and several other options. Any of the attractions listed have a link to "map", "directions to", and "directions from" such that the user can easily find the desired destinations. This feature can be invaluable to travelers and locals alike to find points of interest. Since most hotels currently offer internet access to guests, the ability to locate any activity or points of interest using the internet can be a major contributor to the joys of any trips.

One of the most useful features of any mapping website is the creation and printing of driving directions. Mapquest offers a fully featured driving direction service where up to 10 intermediate points or stops can be selected. Options include the choice of shortest distance or shortest time, avoiding busy highways, and avoiding toll roads. For those who prefer detailed return directions there is a selection "Reverse Route" which will generate detailed directions back to the starting point. One very good capability of the Mapquest driving directions is the easy option to create turn-by-turn maps to go along with the driving directions. When the driving directions are displayed on the screen, each segment has a "Map" option on the right edge of that segment. If "Map" is selected, a detailed map of just that segment will be inserted showing that turn in great detail. When the "Printer-Friendly" link is clicked, the resultant map printed will include the directions along with any map segments selected, along with a large map displaying the entire route, with smaller maps detailing the starting point and destinations.
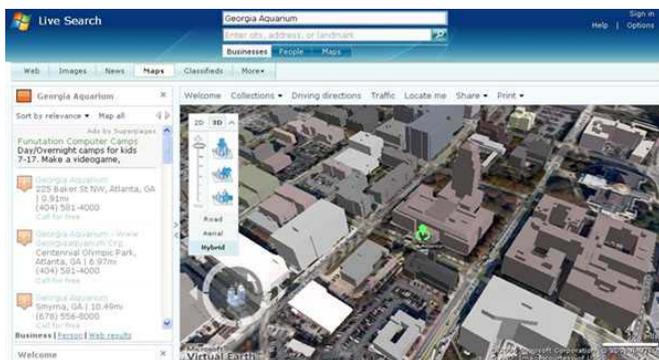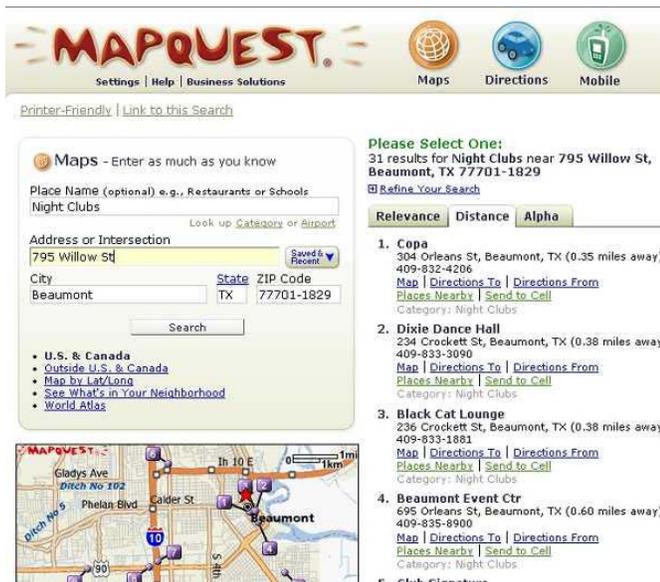
The newest entry into the online mapping fray is Microsoft's Live service at maps.live.com. Microsoft uses maps created with its "Microsoft Virtual Earth" using street data NAVTEQ. One interesting feature of Live maps is the ability to show both aerial views as well as hybrid maps which combines the aerial view along with the street map. Much of the aerial imagery is from the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Live also offers a most interesting service, a 3-D "birds' eye view" where images can be displayed in a virtual 3-D window, complete with buildings and major landmarks that can be displayed from any perspective, from straight above to any selected angle.

The search bar at the top of the page can display the location of any points of interest, such as restaurants.

Live offers detailed driving directions using either the flat 2-D maps, or the more sophisticated 3-D maps. When printed, the output includes detailed directions along with detailed maps. One interesting feature on Live is a display of real-time traffic conditions for major cities. As I type this, Live is displaying a Houston area map with some "moderate" incidents displayed on the map, but the color code for the Houston area highways indicates that traffic is flowing smoothly around most of the city.

Yahoo! has recently upgraded its mapping function (**maps.yahoo.com**). For those who may prefer the older format, but still very usable maps and directions,
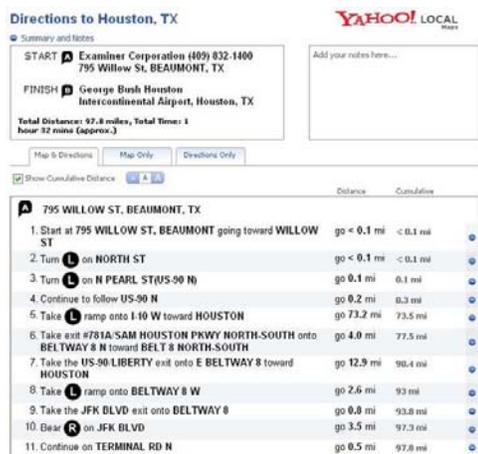
Yahoo! offers a link at the top of the page "Dial-up Map Original" which will open the prior mapping service. The new Yahoo! Maps offers a choice of a traditional road map, satellite view, or hybrid combining the roads with the satellite image. Options to display attractions such as restaurants and hotels are included in Yahoo! maps.

Yahoo! offers driving directions either direct or by adding desired stops or waypoints, and the printed output contains very clear text along with a detailed route map. Yahoo! also displays real-time traffic conditions for major cities showing incidents and average speeds along the major roadways.

Google also offers a competitive mapping service at maps.google.com. As with most of the others' services, maps can be displayed as a road map, satellite view, or hybrid. Google merges its popular search engine with the ability to locate attractions and local points of interest. As is now common, Google offers road maps, satellite images, or hybrid maps. Google also offers real time traffic conditions.

Google was recently rated as the most popular source of driving directions, and its printed directions are among the most precise and easiest to read. Small maps display the details of the starting point, destination, and route summary.

With the summer upon us, and as we enter the peak driving season, a good map or two may be most helpful on our journeys. With near universal internet access in most hotels, local information can be just a few keystrokes and mouse clicks away, by utilizing these services. I would suggest that readers experiment with two or more of the above mapping services to determine personal preferences, and print driving directions from one or more of the services. ∎

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More Tips and Tricks
Text In Vista

You can make the overall text size in Vista larger or smaller by right-clicking an empty portion of the Desktop, clicking Personalize, and clicking Adjust Font Size (DPI) on the left column. Click the Larger Scale (120 DPI) radio button to make text larger or click the Custom DPI button and use the slider to fine-tune text. Click OK to accept your changes.

Monitor Online Activity

The inexpensive but time-consuming way to monitor children's online activity is to sit by their sides or look over their shoulders - if they'll let you. Some parents are content with reviewing their children's site history from time to time; however, tech-savvy children can easily erase any evidence of their visits to forbidden sites. Most parental monitoring programs have varying degrees of Internet activity monitoring, but a more extensive monitoring tool is SpectorSoft's Spector Pro ($99^{95}; **www.spectorsoft.com**). Install this $100 software on your children's computer, and it will record their computer activity, including IM sessions, email sent and received, Web sites visited, programs launched, keystrokes typed, and files searched for and/or swapped. It will even record and let you play back actual time-sliced screen shots of their time on the computer.

Cell Phone Case

You'll find some universal cell phone cases, but typically, cases are made to fit certain models of phones. Make sure the case you have your eye on will accommodate your cell phone. For instance, the phone-fitting Body Glove Scuba II Cellsuit ($24^{99}; **www.bodyglove.com**) will protect your Motorola RAZR V3 from scratches and splashes, although you won't want to immerse your phone in water. You can use your phone while it's in the case, too.

Slow Computer?

If your computer is running slowly, you don't necessarily need to reinstall your operating system. make sure that you don't have unwanted programs hogging your memory. Do thorough spyware and antivirus scans, and then uninstall any unnecessary programs. Check your system tray. Are there a lot of programs running? Disable anything that you don't actually need, then see if your system performance improves. If all these fixes don't help, and it's been at least a year since you got your computer or you reinstalled the OS, then your PC might be a good candidate for reinstalling the OS.

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Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group
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* To request a Corporate Membership Application / Renewal form, e-mail:
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Thank You !

Internet Services –
E-mail and the Web

By Hilton Kaufman, a member of the Chicago Computer Society, Illinois,
www.ccs.org,
hmkaufman@earthlink.net

(This is the fourth article in a series of articles explaining the Internet. Previous articles provided a general overview of the Internet, explained how the system is hooked together, and provided some idea as to how the messages are routed to the right place.)

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

The Internet is a network of networks used to transmit messages, which might be web pages. Somehow things arrive at where they are supposed to go. It is the services that go over these networks that make the Internet useful. The two best known services today are e-mail and the World Wide Web.

Different Internet connections work in different ways. If your computer can get to the Internet, it will most likely have a piece of software known as a browser. The browser helps make the connection to the Web and translate a bunch of code into what looks like a web page. It is possible to work without a browser, if you know a bunch of Unix commands and do not want anything fancy.

The best known browser is Internet Explorer. It comes with most PCs today. Macs from Apple come with a browser called Safari. A PC might also come with a browser called Netscape. A computer that I bought a few months ago has both Internet Explorer and Netscape There are other browsers that you can purchase or download, such as Opera, that are reputed to work better. I find that Internet Explorer works fine for me.

The **http://** of a web address might not have to be typed into the browser and tells the Internet that you want something on the World Wide Web. Letters, such as **htm** at the end of address indicates that the site follows a standard type of coding. Most browsers will assume you want the Web unless you enter something different and automatically insert this coding. It is not necessary to type in some of the stuff at the very end of the address. Usually browsers are not used to get to other Internet services.

The World Wide Web is a way to find and send pages of information. People, businesses, schools, government agencies and others establish their presence and put up sites with whatever they want. Some are reliable and some
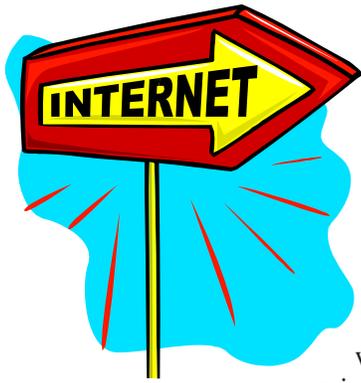
are pure junk or worse. Many ISPs will allow subscribers to put up personal web pages, which are usually pretty identifiable as personal pages.

Colleges, universities, and government agencies will usually maintain websites as part of their mission. These tend to be pretty reliable sources of information. Stores and other business are usually advertising what they sell and are good in their way. There are also spoof pages that may look like the real thing or go to places such as porno sites. Much of the information on the Web is advertisement supported. The World Wide Web is a wild place with some good stuff and some horrible things.

There is so much out on the Web that special services known as search engines are used to find information. At one time, there were a number of these engines, each with its own quirks. A few years ago, one called Ask Jeeves was considered pretty good. Now most people use either Google or Yahoo. Microsoft is also pushing one that they have, but it has not yet grown as popular as the others. You type in a word or two and some hits appear. If you are lucky, the first hit gives you what you want. On the other hand, you may get thousands of hits, with none looking very likely.

In addition to the browser, some software also usually resides on a computer to allow for special features of Web sites. These are things such as Flash, QuickTime, and Adobe Reader. They might allow for movements on the page, video clips, stable or locked pages of text and graphics, and similar things.

E-mail is a message system that holds items on a central server until requested. If you want, this server could be in your house, but is usually at an ISP or similar location. A computer being used as a server must remain on constantly. Anything sent to you, is held on this server until you request it. You send messages in the other direction by using someone's e-mail address. Those messages will go to the server for that person.

If someone is online, a message might reach the intended party in seconds. If the person is not online, it can sit on the server indefinitely. A message and response can take under a minute if both parties are available.

One can use a mail reader, or client in Tech-speak, to receive, read, respond to, and send e-mail messages. Usually, a mail reader will accept all messages on the server. Another way to get the messages is go to a special web site and select the ones that are wanted. If you get 30 messages, 20 of them might a type of junk known as spam. You can open the 10 that you want and delete the 20 that you do not without them ever being on your machine. With the web site method, messages can be retrieved from the server from any computer, even in a foreign country.

The most common e-mail reader is probably Outlook Express from Microsoft. It comes with the operating system on a PC or a download of Internet Explorer. I even used it when I had a Mac a couple years ago. There are others that are fancier and do some things that Outlook Express does not do. ∎

Hilton Kaufman serves as the technical support person for the procedures writing unit of an Illinois state agency, where higher level technical support personnel are concerned with the details of Internet connections and services. As such, he uses the software provided to him to create forms, convert documents into PDFs, advises members of his unit as to how to use the available software, and similar tasks. For his home computer, he can go all out and get a powerful machine that allows him to do things like playing games and surf the web without getting in trouble. He has prepared a number of articles aimed at novice users on the basics of standard computer programs.