

# COMPUTER NEWS



Volume 25, No. 7

July 2008

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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. From January 2003 to October 2007 the NVPCUG provided 783 computers and 140 printers to local schools. Additional equipment has been given to charitable nonprofit organizations and to disadvantaged individuals.*

## At the July Meeting, will present

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



At our July general meeting we will have a very special forum. The time will be divided between the Computer Tutor session and Q & A.



The Computer Tutor session

will be presented first. Jeff Solomon will be demonstrating and discussing several different Internet Browser options such



as Mozilla Firefox, Opera, and Safari. Please send your ideas to the Computer Tutor, **Jeff Solomon** at [tutor@nvpcug.org](mailto:tutor@nvpcug.org).



The Tutor Session will be followed by a Q & A panel. Our Random Access moderator, Jerry Brown will be joined by a panel of several well experienced computer members, some of whom work with computers at a professional level. Bring your questions to the July 16 meeting or submit them before **Jerry Brown** at [Questions@nvpcug.org](mailto:Questions@nvpcug.org).



*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 & Mac Group

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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:susyball@aol.com)

## Napa Valley Mac User Group

Meets: Monthly, second Thursday  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
Napa Senior Activity Center  
1500 Jefferson St., Napa  
Leader: Ron Rogers  
(707) 226-5352  
[ronrogersnapamug@gmail.com](mailto:ronrogersnapamug@gmail.com)

## President's Message

By Ron Dack, president, <http://www.nvpcug.org/>,  
[President@nvpcug.org](mailto:President@nvpcug.org)



The summer is in full swing and our State is burning up and smoking up. Well so much for quitting smoking in 1983. I have one of those wonderful summer colds that was probably brought on by doing my mandatory walks in the beginning of our smoke filled valley last week. I asked the Board of Directors to cancel the July Board meeting both because of this cold and there was no critical issue to discuss this month. As far as the group is concerned everything seems to be doing quite well (Knock-Knock).

The last time we used the projector I noticed it is becoming increasingly more difficult to see a true picture of what is on the computer that is running the display. The brightness and contrast controls have less and less effect on the picture. That of course means the projector is closing in on its end of life. Don't panic though because the decreasing cost of quality projectors coupled with the willingness of most of you to help the group survive we are now operating in the black and will probably be able to replace our projector. **Susy Ball** is looking into different models and the possibility of getting a non-profit discount or maybe even donated projector.

Remember the Annual NVPCUG Member's Picnic is coming up soon. **Dianne Prior** will again be coordinating this event. It's not too early to decide what you will bring and what you will do to help make it a great picnic. **Mike Ball** will be our barbecue chef.

Dawna and I are watching for Tri-Tip on sale we usually buy the roast and cut it up ourselves so if you see Tri-Tip roasts on sale let me know. We are also looking forward to helping **Susy Ball** apply her "secret" marinade to the meat again this year. Mark your calendars the picnic will be in August on Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1PM to 6PM. If you are a member and you want to attend you should signup at one of the next two meetings or e-mail **Dianne Prior** at [Prior@napanet.net](mailto:Prior@napanet.net).

We are looking for a wireless microphone to use at the meetings so if you have one sitting around and would like to donate it we would be more than happy to put it to good use.

I contacted the City and asked if some curtains can be put on the windows of the meeting room so no one is blinded during the meetings. **Ron Rogers** of the NVMUG has also asked for this to be done. Both groups have offered to cover the expense and the organization that paid to have the bocce ball area covered said they would be willing to cover the entire cost.

If you have any comments or ideas about improving the group in anyway let me know. You can e-mail me at [President@nvpcug.org](mailto:President@nvpcug.org). I hope to see each of you at the general meeting on Wednesday July 16<sup>th</sup> 7PM at the Senior Activity Center.

### 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

Take care,  
*Ron*

## NVPCUG Calendar

July 16	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting + A
Aug 6	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting + B
Aug 11	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Aug 13	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting + B
Aug 14	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Aug 20	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting + A
Sept 17	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting + A

### Meeting Locations

- A - Napa Senior Activity Center,  
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
- B - Piner's Nursing Home,  
1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
- C - Jerry Brown's home,  
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa

# Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group Contact Information

## Officers for 2008

### Board of Directors

<b>President</b>	Ron Dack	unlisted	<a href="mailto:President@nvpcug.org">President@nvpcug.org</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Dick Peterson	738-1812	<a href="mailto:VicePresident@nvpcug.org">VicePresident@nvpcug.org</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	<a href="mailto:Secretary@nvpcug.org">Secretary@nvpcug.org</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Roy Wagner	253-2721	<a href="mailto:Treasurer@nvpcug.org">Treasurer@nvpcug.org</a>
<b>Other Directors:</b>	Susy Ball, Ron Dack, Jim Gray, Dick Peterson, Bob Simmerman, Kathy Slavens, Dean Unruh, Marcia Waddell, and Roy Wagner.		
<b>Director</b>	Jim Gray	unlisted	<a href="mailto:Director_Gray@nvpcug.org">Director_Gray@nvpcug.org</a>

### Appointed Officers

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

• All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

## NVPCUG Computer News

**Computer News** (ISSN 0897-5744) is published monthly by the Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group, Inc. (NVPCUG), P.O. Box 2866, Napa, CA 94558-0286.

Subscriptions: \$30 for one year (12 issues).

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The NVPCUG is an IRC 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit educational organization (EIN 68-0069663) and is a member of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization. Donations to the NVPCUG are tax-deductible as charitable contributions to the extent allowed by law. Copyright © 2007 by NVPCUG.



# Uniblue Registry Booster 2

By Terry Currier, Vice President & Webmaster, WINDOWS usERS (WINNERS), CA,  
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<http://www.liutilities.com/products/>

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I've tested a number of programs on my secondary test computer over the years. I've also installed and uninstalled a number of programs. At start up the computer loads up my anti-virus, anti-spyware, firewall, UPS monitor, motherboard monitor, QuickTime, Intel graphics monitor, Maxtor storage monitor, printer software, TV software, and others. It takes a while for it to boot up. I turn it on when I need it, go away to do other things, and come back after it's ready.

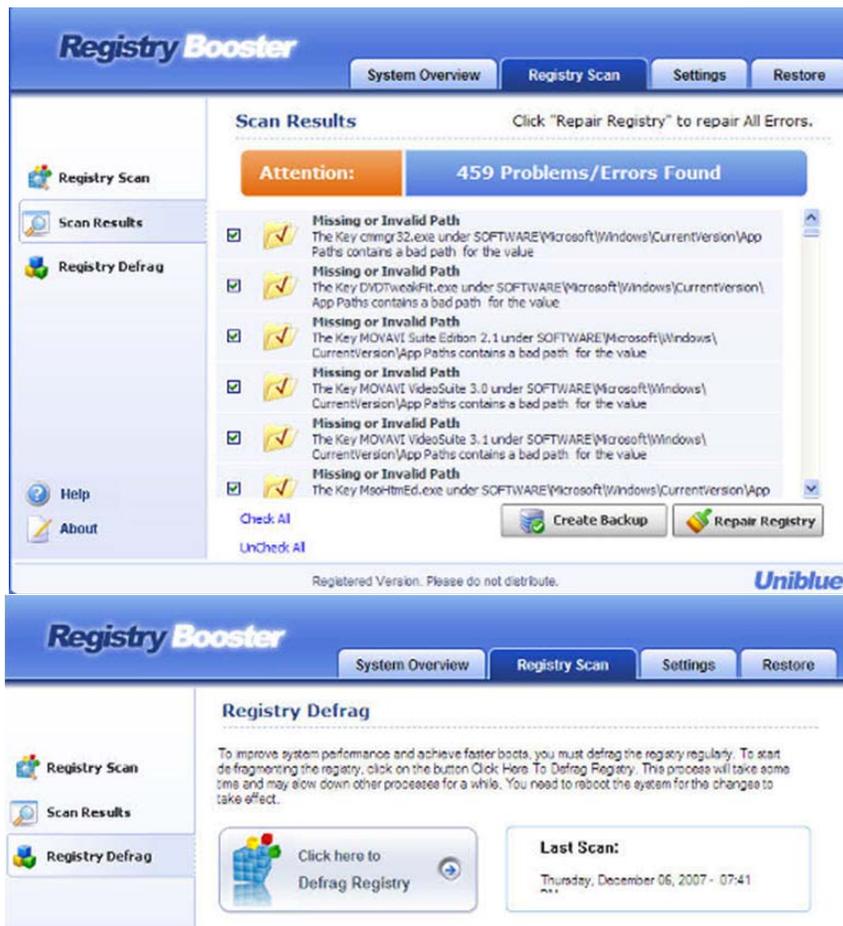
Rebooting is even longer with it shutting down everything and restarting. So I thought Uniblue RegistryBooster 2 would be something good to try. Rebooting took 4 minutes 45 seconds. When I first ran RegistryBooster it found 459 Problems/Errors. The vast majority being Missing or Invalid Path.

The Windows Registry in a broad sense is a database of the hardware and software on your computer. It contains all your settings for windows and other software. Whenever you install new software it creates new settings in the registry. When you uninstall software it removes all those registry settings associated with the software, right? Well it does uninstall the programs, removing it from the hard drive. Most really do very little removal from the registry. So the software is removed, but the settings are still in the registry and you have a bunch of orphan links.

Even before I installed RegistryBooster 2 I did a backup, for safety sake. It also can create a backup of the registry before you have it do any repairs. It can create up to eight backups, keeping the most recent. Before running it my reboot time was 4 minutes 45 seconds. After running and fixing what it said were problems I also used it to defrag the registry. Using RegistryBooster 2 (twice) my reboot time was down to 3 minutes 39 seconds, saving 66 seconds. Okay that's great, but for a program like this you want to make sure there are no problems later. So I've used this for two months now and I can say I've had no problems. I've run it about ten times total. Each time I chose to trust the program with what it said was a problem.

## Conclusion

RegistryBooster 2 is very easy to use, and at \$29<sup>95</sup> it is a good value.



## registrybooster/

### Supported Systems:

Windows 2000 Windows XP  
Windows Vista 32-Bit

### Recommended Requirements:

Intel Pentium 4 1GHz or Equivalent processor  
512 MB RAM  
200 MB free hard disk space  
Graphics mode 1024x768 true color (highest 32-bit)  
Microsoft Windows 2000 / XP / Vista (32-bit)  
Internet Explorer 6

*Terry Currier is currently Vice-President & Editor of WINNERS – WINDOWS usERS which meets in Fountain Valley, California. He has been a member of computer user groups since 1984 (months before he even brought a computer.)*

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# Skype 4.0

By Joe Nuvolini, Webmaster & APCUG Rep, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO,  
<http://ppcompas.apcug.org/>, [nuvo@nuvolini.com](mailto:nuvo@nuvolini.com)

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I've been a Skype subscriber for some time now. What is Skype, you say? Well, it's an online chat/phone/video service which has, as of the end of March, some 309 million registered users. Last I heard, that is more subscribers than all the US telephone services combined! It allows you to make computer to computer calls free worldwide. It can support 12 million users at a time. In addition to audio and video chat, you can instant message, send text messages to phones, and share files. You can call from computer to phone as well.

It has three levels of service for the computer to phone service. For \$2<sup>95</sup> per month you can make free computer to phone calls anywhere in the US and Canada. The \$5<sup>95</sup> service includes the US, Canada, and Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey Mexico. For \$9<sup>95</sup> per month you get unlimited free computer to phone calls worldwide. They point out that unlimited means up to 10,000 minutes per month. Let's see, 10,000 minutes is over 6.9 days! I'm currently subscribing to the \$2<sup>95</sup> service. To call overseas with my service it runs about 2.1 cents per minute to Europe or from Europe back to the States. Skype has been offering video calling as well since 2005. Their data compression allows quality voice transmissions on a bandwidth of as little as 2kbs and video on 6kbs. It has a new version, 4.0, which is in beta testing. It allows you to see the person you are calling full screen. For this feature to work well you need 90kbs. I'm using it



and it seems to work real well. This full screen mode will be very useful for the computer user group community.

While at the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) Convention held in conjunction with the January 2008 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) attendees in their forum with the vendors discussed presentations at user group meetings. Over the years, the cost of sending representatives out to user groups for the purpose of promoting their wares has become no longer cost effective. We discussed the use of Webinars (live presentations across the Internet).

This new version of Skype looks to be ideal for such a program and it can be done at little or no cost to the vendors and user groups. If you haven't tried Skype, you should. You can download the current version (3.8) at: <http://www.skype.com/download/skype/windows/>. If you are adventurous and want to try 4.0 beta go to: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en/download/skype/windows/bets/>.

By the way, if you have wireless Internet access you can purchase a WiFi phone at the Skype online store and it will allow you to make calls whenever and wherever you have wireless Internet access. There's a lot more information which you can checkout at their Website: <http://www.skype.com>. ■

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**Editors Note:** *This article may provide insight for those that missed the last general meeting.*

## Tables In Word

Tools such as Microsoft Word 2003 offer a variety of standard formats that can be applied to tables. Just click anywhere in your table and then click Table and TableAutoFormat. A formatting dialog box will appear, so you can select from a variety of established format styles. Examples are shown for each format, so you can experiment with different looks until you find the one that suits the situation best. When you decide on a format, click Apply to reformat your table. If you make a mistake or change your mind, click Undo and repeat this process to apply another table format.

## Microsoft Word Documents

The easiest way to see a document's creator is simply to check its properties. Open the document in Word and go to File and Properties. Select the Summary tab to learn about the document's creator, along with managerial and search-related information. Other tabs can reveal statistical information about the file, content summaries, and other details. Remember that much of

the information available in these dialog boxes has to be entered by the original document's creator, so some of the details may be quite sparse. Document permissions may also prevent you from editing or altering those details, so if you plan on editing these details, be sure that the document's author does not invoke protections.

## Word Formatting

Microsoft Word 2000 and later versions all offer a quick and easy way to remove all formatting from a document. Select the portion of the document you want to work with. (Use the mouse to select desired paragraphs or just press CTRL-A to select the entire document.) Now press CTRL-SHIFT-N to undo all of the formatting. This will not undo font styles, sizes, and other specific items, but it should clear paragraph spacing and other general format features.

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# Painter 4 Essentials, a First Impression

By Dave Chalmers, Editor, Kern Independent PCUG, CA, [www.kipug.org](http://www.kipug.org),

[newsletter@kipug.org](mailto:newsletter@kipug.org)

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Corel's demonstration of their products at the recent Southwest Computer Conference showed one new product that really interested me. Corel Painter 4 Essentials is a real painting program, not a photo editing program. It has the features of being able to paint or draw with a computer. If you have a shred of drawing talent, you might really like this program.

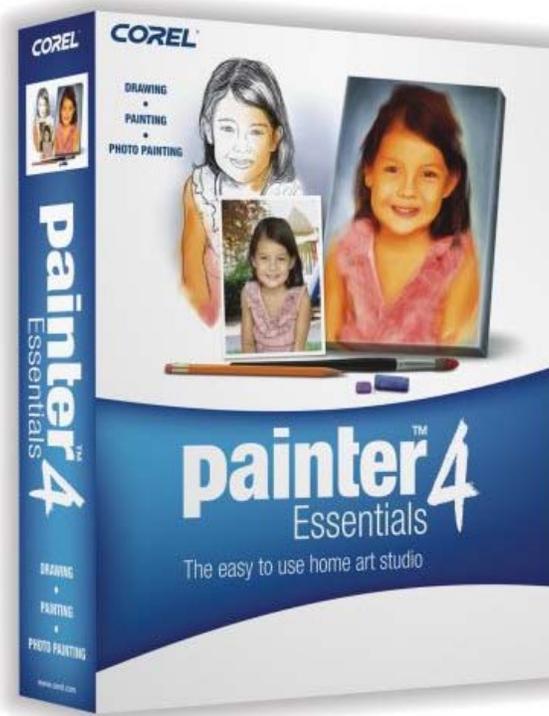
Now I have no talents this way unfortunately. Why I would buy a program like this, being a photographer, might surprise you. Painter has a great feature that will auto paint or draw from a photo. In this mode you pick a style from many artistic techniques and stand back.

Will this look great for all photos? The simple answer is no. If you have a lousy picture you will probably end up with a lousy painting. Photos that are dependent on a lot of fine detail to work will also not be a good candidate for this product. Simple landscapes or portraits or more abstract photos will probably work the best. Now having said that, there are always exceptions that will work, trying the process only takes some time.

You start with a photo that has been corrected and cropped using a photo editing program. Jpeg's, tiff, and PhotoShop psd files will work. Just open them in Painter and start selecting the artistic medium you want. Once the program commences you will see a very blobby and abstract image in the beginning. As the process continues, details emerge; you can stop the drawing at any time or let it go to completion. Once done you can go into using your own painting efforts to add or subtract details to enhance the painting. A good example of this would be a portrait. Increasing the details around the eyes usually helps the overall composition. If some of the background contrasts too much with the person, you can blur and tone down the background.

A graphic tablet is a real plus with Painter, as it uses the stylus for changing the brush characteristics, as you go. A mouse works fine, but it doesn't have as much flexibility as the tablet. Wacom makes some tablets that are fairly

inexpensive. Please note, a tablet is not required to get this program to work.



Printing with this program is quite simple. It doesn't have a dedicated color management system as more expensive programs, but if you can print a good photo, then printing with Painter is no problem.

Painter comes with some excellent video tutorials that really clue you in on the features and give a great how-to aspect to it. They are logically arranged and each segment is not too long. Painter even comes with a nice printed manual, with illustrations. The manual generally follows along with the tutorials.

Retail price is \$99 and the member price is \$79. It installs on both PC's and MAC's. As a supplement to a photo editing program, I certainly recommend it. ■

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## Screen Flicker

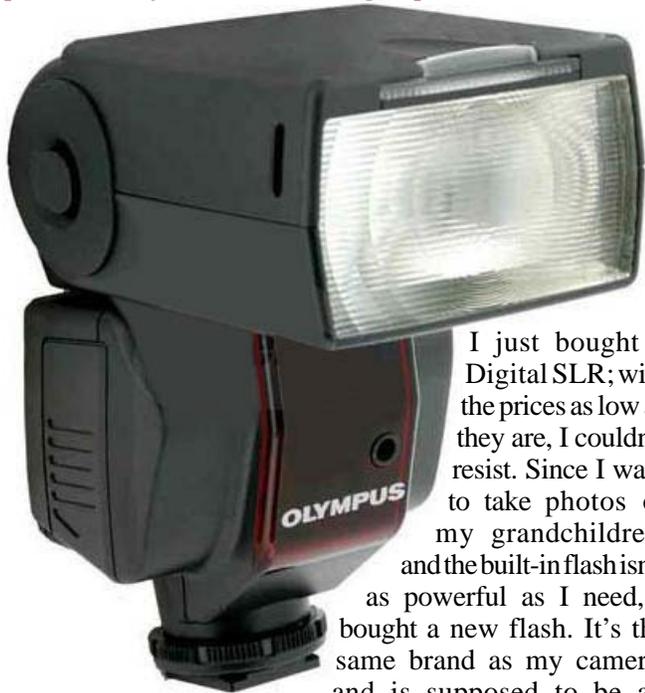
One of the causes of screen flicker, especially on CRT (cathode-ray tube) monitors, is a screen refresh rate that is set too low. In general, it's best to set the refresh rate to the highest possible setting. In WinXP right-click the Desktop, click Properties, choose the Settings tab, click the Advanced button, and choose the Monitor tab. If you see a Hide Modes That This Monitor Cannot Display checkbox, select it. In the Screen Refresh Rate drop-down menu, select the highest possible rate available. Click Apply, and if prompted, click Yes to keep the new settings. Click OK to close the dialog boxes and save your settings. In Win98 right-click the Desktop, click Properties, choose the Settings tab, click the Advanced button, and choose the Adapter tab. Select the highest refresh rate from the drop-down menu, click Apply and OK.

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# I'M ASKED...

By Bill Funk, a member of the Arizona Association for Computer Information, inc. (ASCIi),  
[www.asciigroup.org](http://www.asciigroup.org), [editor@asciigroup.org](mailto:editor@asciigroup.org)

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I just bought a Digital SLR; with the prices as low as they are, I couldn't resist. Since I want to take photos of my grandchildren, and the built-in flash isn't as powerful as I need, I bought a new flash. It's the same brand as my camera, and is supposed to be all

automatic. But, the photos aren't right. I thought the better flash would let me take photos inside, and freeze the movement of the grandkids, but the photos are as blurry as with the camera's flash.

## What's going on?

You're right, the on-board flashes on most DSLRs aren't very bright. Buying the new flash is the right idea, but it doesn't work the way many people think it does.

You're probably using the camera as a Point & Shoot: setting the camera to make the exposure decisions, and pressing the shutter button. There's nothing wrong with that, but doing things that way won't get your flash to work the way you want it to.

Instead, you should use the Manual mode for exposure (check your camera's manual for how to enter the Manual mode). While you're looking at the manual, check to find the highest shutter speed you can use with the flash, too.

Then, in Manual mode, set the shutter speed at, or maybe slightly below, that speed (I use 1/125 sec on my camera; it's fast enough to freeze most action), then set the aperture (f/number) for the desired result as far as depth of field is concerned, and set the ISO as desired. Set the flash to auto (check the manual), and fire away. This way, the camera will use the settings you chose, ignoring the amount of light in the scene. The flash will check to see what the camera is set to, and fire itself, checking the results as it fires to give the right amount of light to the scene. Neat, eh?

The way you're doing it will make the flash act as a "fill" flash, meaning the camera's exposure system will use the existing light in the scene to set the exposure, and the flash will intelligently fire to fill in shadows, but not be the major source of light in the scene. This is also the usual way the camera's on-board flash works, even though many cameras will set the shutter speed to take advantage of the flash's extra light to help freeze motion. The problem here, though, is that the on-board flash just isn't bright enough to light up a dark scene (such as a room) very well.



One of the really neat things about digital photography is that, regardless of the actual type of the camera, experimentation is cheap. In this case, once you get the basics of flash use down, you can experiment with different shutter speeds and aperture settings for different results. Also, off-camera flashes like yours will usually let you turn the flash head up and down, and side to side, for bounce flash. With bounce flash, you're bouncing the flash off the ceiling or wall. This tends to spread the light from the flash out to reduce that sharp look that a straight-on flash gives, and it also reduces harsh shadows (as well as changing where the shadows are); more to experiment with!

This brings up another question: if you have an older flash from your film days, can you use it with your new DSLR? The answer is a very firm: maybe. The problem is that most older, film-era flashes have a higher trigger voltage than what DSLRs can tolerate. In other words, using that old flash can cause some expensive damage to your DSLR. There are some devices that can be put between your older flash and your DSLR's flash shoe that will solve the problem. However, a new flash will also work much better with your new DSLR, and do things that old flash can't even dream of doing. ■

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## Focus Your Test Shots

Your camera's autofocus system might not work very well when it doesn't have well-defined subjects to target, so make sure you know how to use the manual focus capabilities. To do this with most point-and-shoot models, you have to turn off the autofocus and then use one or two control buttons to adjust the focus on your own. After you take a couple of test shots, use the playback mode and zoom in on your images to make sure they're sharp.

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# Viewing the Bigger Picture



By Bonnie L. Snyder, P\*PCompAS, Colorado Springs, CO, <http://ppcompas.apcug.org/>, [Bonniels21@gmail.com](mailto:Bonniels21@gmail.com)

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At the risk of being the bearer of bad news, I have to say that none of us is getting any younger. User groups tend to be populated more by senior citizens than by any other age group. As we age, we find the need for more and more assistive aids, including those that will help us to use our computers more comfortably and efficiently.

Many of us will find, as time goes on, that our vision is not what it used to be. We may find that our eyes fatigue as we read information on the computer monitor, and we may find that some of the smaller fonts and graphics on the screen require us to squint and lean forward into the display.

In this article, I will discuss two screen enlargement programs that might help us minimize our visual difficulties as we use our computers.

The first program I want to talk about is called Magic Lens Max. I downloaded an older version of the program from Giveawayoftheday.com and was very impressed with what it could do. I e-mailed the program's author and told him what a terrific program it was and I have demonstrated it to various groups who provide services to the blind and visually impaired. Additionally, the cost of the program is only \$39<sup>95</sup>. I went ahead and purchased a copy of the most recent edition and was even more pleased with what the author had added since my downloaded version.

Magic Lens Max provides a variety of ways to magnify the computer screen, from resizable moveable lenses, which magnify directly over where your mouse or cursor is working, to a full screen magnification option, which slows down the screen refresh very minimally. You have some color contrast options to choose from with this program as well as an invert colors option for light text on dark background. The magnification levels can be selected from 50% (which is non-magnification) up to pretty much infinity. Anything above 350% starts to blur a bit, although there are options to sharpen.

Below is the Magic Lens Max option screen:



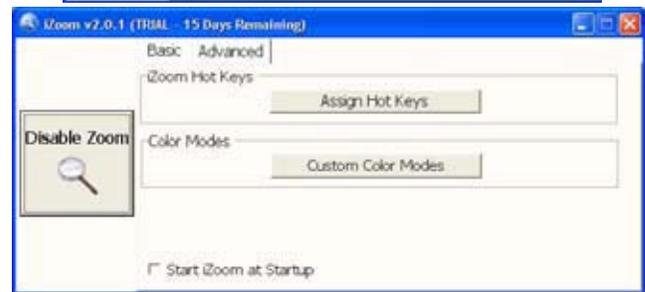
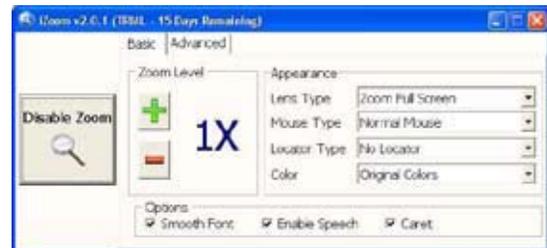
The Magic Lens Max icon that resides in the system tray can be single-clicked to turn on or turn off the magnification.

This is an excellent program that is both useful and affordable. If

you are interested in testing it out, go to [www.visionsuit.com](http://www.visionsuit.com). You can download a 30-day demo of the latest version. If you decide to purchase Magic Lens Max, once you have paid the \$39<sup>95</sup>, you will be sent a registration code that can be entered into the demo, and it becomes fully functional.

The second program I evaluated for screen magnification

allows for an additional option: speech along with the magnification. This program is called iZoom, and can be obtained from <http://www.issist.com/>. I really like the customizing options available in iZoom. These can be accessed from the initial menu when iZoom comes on, or once the menu is closed, you can reopen it quickly by clicking the mouse on the iZoom icon in the system tray. Here are the option screens:



iZoom allows for default or customizable hot keys, several sizes and colors of mouse pointers, color combinations supplied with the program, as well as custom color modes, several sizes and shapes of "locators" that help the user find the location of the mouse pointer, and a choice of several lens shapes, as well as full-screen magnification. iZoom magnifies from 1X to 32X.

The negatives I have found in iZoom are as follows: First, when using the lens mode, you have to place the lens first over what you want to interact with, and then move the mouse pointer within that lens. Second, from about the 3X magnification up, the display becomes more and more pixilated which can be a problem for some vision conditions, such as astigmatism, among others. Third, there is only one voice offered with the speech option and it is not a particularly pleasant one.

As you would expect, with additional options comes an additional cost. Again, you can download a 30-day demo of iZoom from the Website, and if you wish to purchase the program, the price is \$199<sup>00</sup>. However, keep in mind that the two major commercial screen magnification programs, MAGIC from Freedom Scientific and ZoomText Plus from AI Squared, both weigh in at from \$30,000 to \$55,000, depending on how many options you wish to have. So, if you feel the need to view the bigger picture, give the demos of the above programs a try, and see if they will be of use to you.

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# Email Etiquette

By John Roy, President, The PC Users Group of Connecticut, [www.tpcug-ct.org/](http://www.tpcug-ct.org/),  
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**EMAIL** Do you really know how to forward an e-mail? It is estimated that over fifty percent of email users do not know how to do it properly. Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail? Email messages get forwarded countless times without concern for the security of the previous sender's addresses.

Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses and names. As the messages get forwarded along the list of addresses builds and builds creating a huge resource for spammers. All it takes is for someone to get a virus and the infected computer can send that virus to every e-mail address that has come across that computer. Even if the address collection doesn't result in a virus it surely will be harvested by spammers or someone looking to make a couple of cents for a listing of good email addresses. How do you stop or at least minimize the propagation of email addresses? There are several easy steps that we should all practice.

- 1 Before you send out a forwarded e-mail, DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know how to do. It only takes a second You MUST click the 'Forward' button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on 'Forward' first, you won't be able to edit the message at all.
- 2 Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This is the way the people you send to will only see their own e-mail address. If you don't see your BCC: option click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the address and choose BCC: and that's it, it's that easy. When you send to BCC: your message will automatically say 'Undisclosed Recipients' in the 'TO:' field of the people who receive it.
- 3 Remove any 'FW:' in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.
- 4 ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the

actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-mails that you have to open 10 pages to read the one page with the information on it? By forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

- 5 Have you ever gotten an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. A FACT: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and email address on a petition. (Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports? And don't believe the ones that say that the email is being traced, it just isn't so!)
- 6 One of the main ones I hate is the ones that say that something like, 'Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen.' Or, sometimes they'll just tease you by saying something really cute will happen IT AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN!!!! (Trust me; I'm still seeing some of the same ones that I waited on 10 years ago!) I don't let the bad luck ones scare me either, they get trashed. (Could that be why I haven't won the lottery?)
- 7 Before you forward an Amber Alert, or a Virus Alert, or some of the other ones floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail that's been circling the net for Years! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to <http://www.snopes.com/>. It's really easy to find out if it's real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

So please, in the future, let's stop or at least minimize the junk mail and the viruses by taking the steps outlined above.

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# Pinnacle PCTV HD Ultimate Stick Review

By Bill James, APCUG Director; Editor & Webmaster, Computer Club of Oklahoma City,  
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Some computer products just have a 'wow' factor on first sight; the Pinnacle PCTV HD Stick is one of those devices.

It is a TV tuner on a USB stick and not just any TV tuner but one that is capable of pulling down Standard Definition (SD) and High Definition (HD) content to your PC. On seeing the Pinnacle presentation on their PCTV HD Stick at the APCUG Convention in 2008, I have been itching to get my hands on one. I was imagining a new widescreen computer monitor coupled with this device as a means of having a really cheap HDTV. So I purchased a new widescreen monitor (22") and the PCTV HD Stick. The USB device comes in 3 flavors, PCTV HD (\$69<sup>99</sup>), PCTV HD Pro (\$99<sup>99</sup>) and the top of the line PCTV HD Ultimate (\$129<sup>99</sup>). There is also an internal card version (\$79<sup>99</sup>). All these devices are designed for

Windows XP and are Vista Certified. There is a separate device with similar features for Mac users (\$129<sup>99</sup>). I opted for the 'Ultimate' model because of its onboard memory DVR and software. More on that later, but the Ultimate is a plug and play that allows you to start watching and record SD and HDTV almost immediately.

## Packaging

The packaging contains a mini remote control including batteries, a portable telescoping high-gain antenna, A/V adapter cable, A/V adaptor cable, a USB extender cable and the usual manuals and CDs. With the Ultimate model you also get a neat soft leatherette carrying pouch.

## Setting Up

Setting up the PCTV Ultimate could not be easier. This model has all the software preinstalled including the

Personal Video Recorder (PVR) that allows you to record up to 2 hours of video. You just plug it in and follow the onscreen instructions and start enjoying live TV within seconds. The on-board memory on the Ultimate can also be used to store additional files. You run setup once, even if you use the device on a different PC, the settings and preference are stored on the device.

## You have 3 options in setting up the PCTV:

- 1) Antenna (for digital/analog TV reception);
- 2) Cable (analog TV reception);
- 3) Capture from Cable/Satellite Set-top Box.

For this review we will be using Option 1 – Antenna (digital/analog TV reception). During setup, the PCTV will scan for SD and HD signals via the included antenna. The antenna is designed for digital and analog TV reception in regions with fair to good signal coverage. When using the antenna, it should

be fully extended in the upright position as high as possible and near a window. The base of the antenna is magnetic so it should not be placed near a cathode ray tube monitor, television or similar equipment as the electromagnetic field of such devices might deteriorate the signal quality. Also be careful with the magnetic base around other objects that are sensitive to magnetic forces – i.e. PC hard drive. In my region I was able to download all the local SD and HD stations available within my region via the antenna.



Mark August 23rd  
on your calendar  
It's the Napa Valley Personal  
Computer Users Group Picnic.

## Software

When you first install the PCTV HD Ultimate Stick, it checks whether all the required drivers and the .NET 2.0 Framework are already on your computer and, if necessary, installs them. After the initial startup, every time you start the program, a TV screen appears immediately on your desktop. The integrated memory on the PCTV HD Ultimate Stick is divided into 2 different areas or drives.

- 1) A re-writable memory area (removable media area) with the TVCenter Pro program and available memory for recorded shows or other user data. The drive is labeled PCTV flash.
- 2) A read-only memory area (CD-ROM area) contains the drivers. This drive is labeled PCTV Start

Also included in the package is Pinnacle Studio QuickStart that allows you to edit your recordings or home movies and transfer them to DVD, complete with custom menus and soundtracks.

## Controls

The package comes with a full-featured remote control. Although small in size it does give complete control of the PCTV. If you elect to use Windows Media Center, the included remote will not work. You will have to purchase a compatible Windows Media Center remote that is available from Pinnacle.

## Display

The first time Pinnacle TVCenter Pro is accessed, you will see the Player. This screen can be full-screen or resized to suit. There are navigation icons that select settings, channels, TV or Radio and the program guide.

## FM Radio

As sort of an added bonus, during setup PCTV stick also scans for available internet radio signals for play back on your PC. It categorizes them by genre rather than call letters. Unfortunately, the software does not provide any other information regarding the available stations or for the music that is being played.

## Picture Quality and Sound Quality

The quality of picture and sound is dependent on your monitor and speakers. The PCTV HD stick is capable of providing digital sound, SD and HD quality picture that if is available within your region.

## Windows Media Center

If you have a PC equipped with Microsoft Windows Vista Home Premium or Ultimate or Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 and you want to watch and record TV using the Windows Media Center application, then you will have to run TV setup in that application. I'm running Windows Vista Ultimate on my PC and using the Windows Media Center software for my TV viewing and recording, but you can use either product. There is not a conflict between the included software and Windows Media Center. However, the Windows Media Center software overrides the included TVCenter Pro software for TV viewing and recording. The included remote does not work with Windows Media Center; however you can select channels directly by keyboard input and/or by mouse when viewing TV via Windows Media Center. You can also opt to purchase a compatible Media



Center Remote control that is available from Pinnacle for \$29<sup>99</sup>. Again, to get the PCTV HD stick to work with Windows Media Center is the matter of selecting the TV setup in Windows Media Center and following the onscreen instructions. Window Media Center will recognize the device and do its own scan and download a TV guide that is used to identify the channels and for time shifting. The time shifting feature allows you to record your favorite TV shows and play them back at a later time. Windows Media Center does not support some of the onboard memory features of the PCTV HD Ultimate stick.

## Conclusion

I now have my cheap HDTV and so far I have not been disappointed. The PCTV HD is pulling free off the air HD signals and displaying them on my monitor in full HD. The PCTV HD Ultimate Stick is a slick ultra-portable USB device that will allow you to watch and record SD and free HD TV. The TV tuner and personal video recorder software run directly from the Stick's on-board flash memory, so you can plug it into any PC and start watching and recording TV in seconds – no installation required.

It supports both analog (NTSC) and digital (ATSC) TV signals. The tuner hardware is also ready for ClearQAM (unencrypted digital cable).

You can record up to 2 hours of TV directly to the stick for playback on any PC and save recordings to your hard drive in MPEG-1/2 or DivX formats or even direct-to-DVD.

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# E-Mailing Photographs

By Richard Kennon, Editor, Amador Computer Users Group, CA, [www.acug.net](http://www.acug.net),  
[Drtrdguy@volcano.net](mailto:Drtrdguy@volcano.net)

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First, we **must** understand that photograph (image) size in the camera and in the computer is measured in **pixels**. These are the basic dots of color that make the picture. **Do not** pay any attention to anything that says "inches" or "pixels per inch." These terms are meaningless when we are considering a picture either in the camera or in the computer. They may come into play later if we want to print the photo on paper. But, that is a subject for another time. For now, we think only of pixels. Most cameras record too many pixels to e-mail. For instance a 6 megapixel camera will make a picture about 3000 pixels wide by 2000 pixels tall and the file size may be several megabytes. Our screens are usually only about 1000 pixels wide (some are larger and some smaller). So, if we e-mail the native picture, it will be wider than the screen for the recipient and the file will be so large, it may take "forever" to download to the recipient's computer. It is possible the service provider will not even accept it.

There are two things we must do to make a photo e-mailable. The first is to **resize** or **resample** the picture. We want to change the picture width from 3000 pixels to 800 pixels, for instance. This process is called resizing or resampling. We have to pick the best 800 pixels out of the 3000 to represent our photo. Well, no, that is not exactly correct but it simplifies things to think of it that way. We don't have to worry about it because a lot of very smart programmers have developed ways (algorithms) to help us. Just remember, you want to resize or resample to get the photo down to a size convenient for e-mailing. I usually use 800 pixels or 900 pixels width for pictures I attach to e-mails.

The second thing to do to make a photo e-mailable is to save it in **JPEG format (.jpg)**. That is a format that reduces file size a lot and picture quality a little so the

picture can be downloaded more quickly and still be nice to look at. Some software programs give you choices

of compression amount with numbers ranging from 1 to 10. One will result in a very small file but the picture quality will not be good at all. A 10 will give the very best quality but with a very large file size. A reasonable compromise is to use 5 or 6. I usually use 6.

How do you do this? First, I will describe how to do it with a free Microsoft program. Then I will try to look at some other programs.

Microsoft Power Toys for XP has a Resize Pictures toy that is slick and easy but feedback says it only works on XP. It can be

downloaded at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.msp>. Right click on an image name or thumbnail in Explorer or My Computer and choose **Resize Pictures**. You are limited to four specific sizes but they are good choices. They don't tell us what compression they are using but the results look OK. Unless you tell

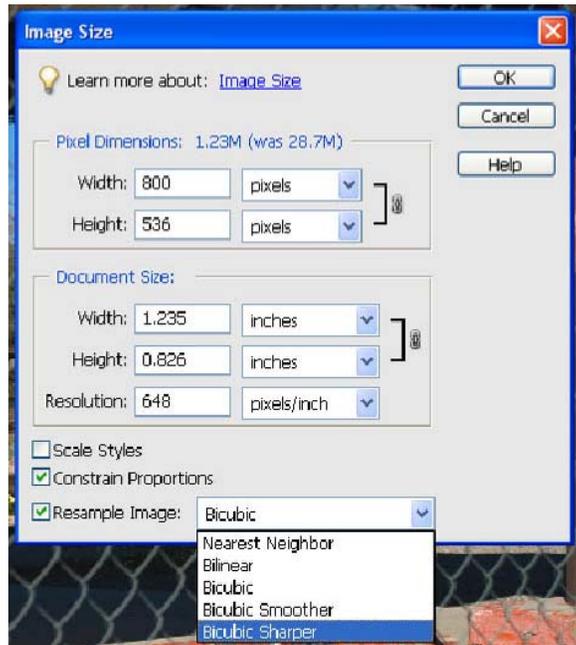
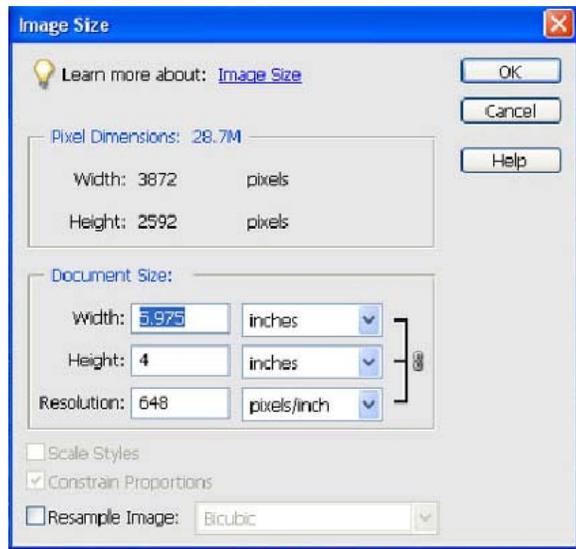
them under **Advanced** to replace the image in the file, it will make a copy. That's good. They will add the word, "Large", "Medium" or "Small" to the end of the name you have chosen.

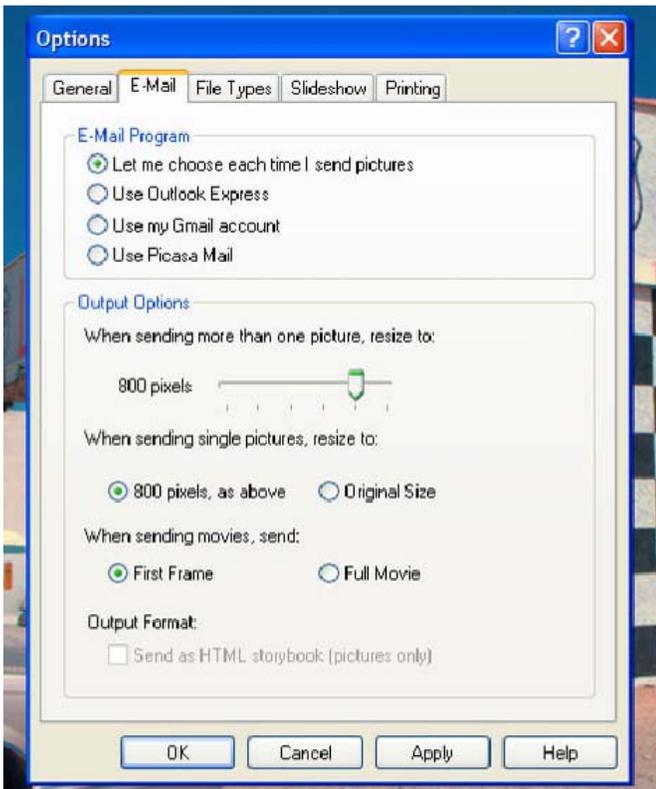
If you are happy with this solution, then read no further. But, if you want to use a picture editing program, maybe this will help.

In Photoshop Elements 5, click on **Image>Resize>Image Size** and this window will pop up. Note that there is some garbage at the bottom about "inches" but we will ignore that. First we will click the **Resample Image** box. That puts the Pixel Dimensions in play and that is what we want.

I selected the Width box and changed the width to 800 pixels. Since the **Constrain Proportions** box is selected, that is all I have to do.

Note, down at the bottom, that we have several choices





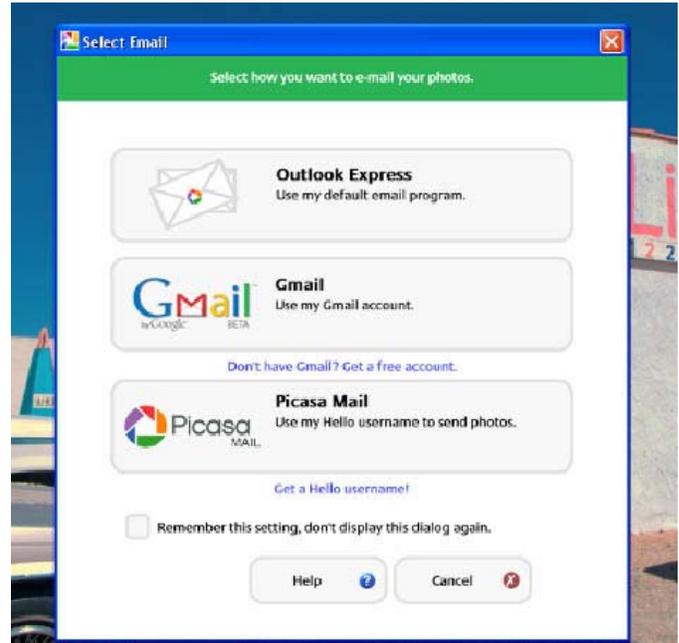
of sampling algorithms. This is frosting on the cake. I read somewhere that I should use **Bicubic Sharper** when downsizing so that is what I do. Most programs don't give us all these choices. Then we should click on **File>Save As** and give the photo a new name. I often just use the same name and add "\_800px" so the next time I will know it is ready to e-mail. Here we can choose the JPEG format and the compression amount. Photoshop Elements 6 is out now and sells for about \$100. If you are able to spend that much and want one of the best editing programs, I highly recommend it.

Let's look at Picasa2. It is a free program from Google and looks really good but I do not have much experience with it. By all means, try it first because the price is right! When it comes to e-mailing photographs, it is a little more automated but not any easier to use than Elements. First, click on **Tools>Options>E-Mail**. Then select the width you want in pixels. There are six choices. Then click on **Apply** and **OK**.

The next step is to click on **File>E-Mail** and you will get three choices of how you want to e-mail your photos. Fortunately, I use Outlook Express so my choice is listed.

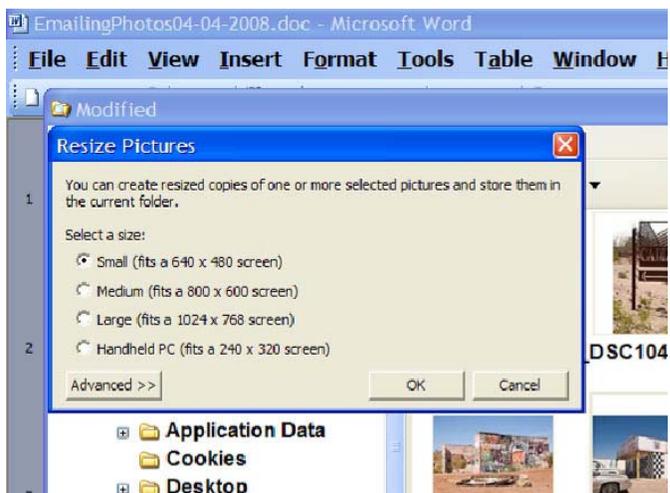
When I clicked on Outlook Express, an e-mail page popped up with the photo attached. At this point we can write something else on the e-mail and send it. I recommend this so the recipient will know it is really from you and not something sent out by a virus. When I receive e-mails that only say "Attached", I **Delete** them without looking at the attachment. This saved me one time when I received a virus from my sister-in-law that she did not know she sent. She spent weeks and

dollars getting her computer back up. Oh, I digress. If you want to send more than one picture (and, who doesn't?), you must select the picture and click on the Hold button near the bottom of the screen. Do this for each photo you want to send and they will all be attached to the e-mail. The program automatically chooses JPEG format and a compression ratio but does not tell you. That is OK as the pictures I tried looked good. Picasa2 has considerable capability for editing photos in many respects. Try it!



There are many other editing programs that I haven't mentioned and have no experience with. In all cases you want to change the picture's size in pixels by resizing or resampling. Pay no attention to anything that says "inches" as that will have no meaning for this process. Sometime later we will talk about printing pictures and then we will use inches.

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### illegal character

A character, such as a period, that isn't valid or can't be used in certain commands because the character is used for some other reason within the operating system.

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Work: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (check preferred):  Home: \_\_\_\_\_

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News and announcements:  Yes  No

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Revised 4-23-07

# Firefox 3 – Hot New Browser

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio and TV Show Host, [Iwilsker@apcug.net](mailto:Iwilsker@apcug.net)

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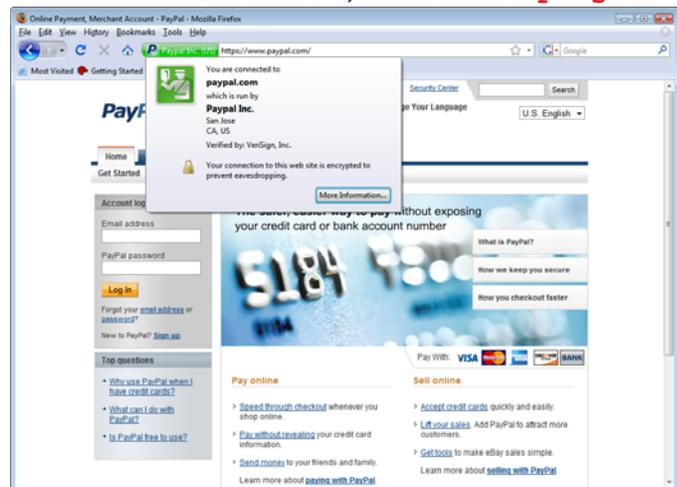
<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/features/> - Features

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- Add ons

After a lengthy wait, Mozilla has released the latest and greatest release of the very popular web browser, Firefox 3. This new release, available for free download from [www.getfirefox.com](http://www.getfirefox.com), has many new features, making it a very strong competitor to Microsoft's ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer.

Firefox evolved from an earlier browser, Mozilla, which in turn grew out of the Netscape browser as AOL announced the cessation of Netscape development. Since its first release several years ago, Firefox in its current and previous versions has developed a wide following, with hundreds of millions of copies downloaded. The newly released version 3 has tentatively set a Guinness world record with over 8 million copies downloaded in its first 24 hours of public release, despite overloaded servers that discouraged countless people from downloading it the first day of issue. According to published reports, the number of copies of Firefox 3 downloaded surpassed 14 million downloads in the first 72 hours. Obviously, many people are using it.

Rhetorically, so why are so many using Firefox 3 rather than Internet Explorer (IE), which is installed by default on all contemporary Windows computers? There are several other fine browsers in circulation, such as the newly released update to Opera, and Apple's Safari (for both Windows and Mac), but for Windows computers, Firefox is firmly in second place, right behind Internet Explorer. If Internet Explorer was not preinstalled on Windows computers and integrated into the operating system, there is a good chance that Firefox 3 could surpass IE in a fair competitive market. Firefox 3 is faster rendering web pages than IE, has superior tabbed browsing, is written in tighter code taking fewer system resources, and has many advantages over IE. There is no reason why PC users should not download Firefox 3 for Windows (7.8mb download), and install it, as it runs happily on computers that already have IE installed. On a fresh installation of Firefox on a Windows computer, Firefox will nondestructively import the favorites (bookmarks), cookies,



or impeding IE in any way. If Firefox 3 is installed on a computer that has an older version of Firefox installed, it will automatically install it as an upgrade, including all bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other information. Once installed, many users, such as me, prefer to use Firefox instead of IE. In my case I would say that I use Firefox for 98% of my browsing tasks; it would be 100%, but I have IE setup to access another internet account that I have, but rarely use.

According to the Firefox 3 website at [www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox](http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox), over 15,000 improvements were made to version 3 over version 2. The newly released version 3 is claimed to be faster, safer, and smarter than the previous version, and also IE! One of the new features, which I have personally verified, is the fact that web pages do indeed load faster than on IE and previous versions of Firefox. Firefox 3 also consumes less system memory and system resources, leading to improved computer performance when Firefox is loaded and running, compared to the previous version, or even IE. Firefox 3 is also more secure than previous browsers, and incorporates the latest technologies to help prevent phishing (identity theft), and other website forgeries. A neat new feature in Firefox 3 is “Instant Website ID”, where clicking on the tiny website icon (“site favicon”) at the left of the URL in the menu bar will display site information and identification, which will likely indicate if the site is as

intended, or a web forgery. Firefox 3 has also been engineered to work smoothly and compliment Vista's parental controls, as well as most antivirus and other security programs.

Another interesting feature unique to Firefox 3 is the “Smart Location Bar” that shows detailed information on websites

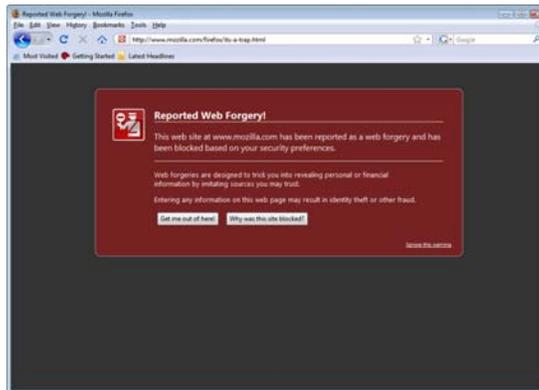


## Foxfire cont. on page 15

recently visited, and is accessed by clicking on the right side of the menu bar. This Smart Location Bar is intelligent, in that it adapts to persona preferences to locate better website matches. Typing a “tag” or keyword in the menu bar opens a detailed list of previously visited websites containing that keyword, making it very fast and easy to locate websites that have previously been visited. Another very useful feature is the integrated spell checker, which underlines any misspelled words typed in a browser window; right clicking on the word opens a list of suggested spellings, which a mouse click will instantly replace the incorrect word with the correctly spelled word.

Malware of various types, including worms, Trojans, viruses, and spyware is a growing menace to internet users. Firefox 3 integrates a sophisticated anti-malware feature that provides some protection if the user either intentionally or erroneously accesses a website that contains attack code. If such a dangerous website is accessed, a full screen (browser window) display will appear as a warning. Firefox, working with other organizations (including Google) maintains a continuously updated list of so called “attack sites”, so there is nothing for the user to update or maintain. In the event the user does happen to fall into a suspect site, such as a very freshly created phishing (identity theft) website, the forgery can be quickly reported by simply clicking on HELP–REPORT WEB FORGERY; this will connect to a Google service that collects such information on a real-time basis, verifies the forgery, and automatically adds it to the malware list, as well as forwards the information to groups like Phish Tank ([www.phishtank.com](http://www.phishtank.com)) for further action.

Many of us use multiple passwords and user names on countless websites. Firefox 3 has an excellent integrated and



secure password manager. When a password is first entered, Firefox 3 asks if you want it to remember that password and logon information, without any annoying pop-ups. Speaking of pop-ups, Firefox 3 incorporates a sophisticated and easily configurable pop-up blocker which can stop pop-ups and pop-unders, speeding and making more enjoyable the surfing experience. In some cases, pop-ups are not irritating advertisements, but instead contain important information;

these can be easily allowed when desired.

Many of us choose to tweak the appearance and features of our browsers, and Firefox 3 happily obliges. Firefox has many themes and “personas” that can be selectively implemented to change the appearance of the browser to meet our individual tastes. For those of us who want additional features, Firefox offers over 5,000 free “add-ons” ([addons.mozilla.org/firefox](http://addons.mozilla.org/firefox)), which are easy to install devices to customize the browser to work as desired. I have installed about a dozen add-ons, including some security add-ons (PhishTank, McAfee SiteAdvisor, and others), as well as an enhanced download manager (the one integrated in Firefox 3 is very adequate for most users). I also have selected to use differently colored tabs on the top of the browser window, an add-on that can make a tab

an IE window (for the rare cases when a website is intended for IE only), a PDF manager, and several other add-ons.

Firefox 3 is an outstanding and free product. It is a very worthwhile competitor to Internet Explorer, and users should try it to see if they like it. I like it, and use it almost exclusively on my

desktop and notebook computers. That is the best recommendation I can give it.

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