



Computer News

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Speech Recognition Products Will Be Demonstrated at August 17 NVPCUG Meeting

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, August 17, 2005, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California.

Scott Horton, business manager at **CompUSA** in Vacaville, will give an overview of current speech recognition technology and demonstrate leading products, including ScanSoft's *Dragon NaturallySpeaking 8* and IBM's *ViaVoice 10*. These products allow users to easily dictate and edit documents, complete forms, and control most applications by voice. Also, Scott will show some of the special things, such as Internet surfing, that can be done by simply speaking.

In the past, speech recognition by computers was not known for great accuracy. In recent years, however, the technology has been greatly improved – delivering up to 99 percent accuracy – and now can be used reliably to capture textual data. This is especially important for medical, legal, and business professionals who regularly dictate numerous notes and letters, and also for people who have difficulty using a keyboard or pen or who have poor vision. Most important, speech recognition enables much faster data entry than typing.

Scott has more than twenty years of experience in computer sales. As the business manager at CompUSA's Vacaville store, he handles all sales to corporations, small businesses, and government agencies in his store's service area and regularly makes product presentations.

In the **Computer Tutor** session prior to the main presentation, **Roy Wagner** will present a short tutorial on creating movies on DVD media from images taken with digital camcorders. His presentation will feature a short movie he made about the annual polar bear migration to Hudson Bay in Canada. Roy has been making home movies for many years. An NVPCUG member for more than 12 years, he has served as our group's treasurer since 2003.

Our meeting will begin with **Random Access**, a period in which you can ask questions about specific issues you have encountered while using computer products and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees. Questions may be submitted in advance of our meeting by e-mailing them to Random Access Moderator **Jerry Brown** at Questions@nvpcug.org.

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

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group has served novice and experienced computer users since 1983. Through its monthly meetings, newsletters, on-line 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 more than 323 computers and 102 printers.

**NVPCUG Annual Picnic Set for August 20
See Back Cover for Details**

August Highlights

By Orion E. Hill



August General Meeting

Don't miss our August 17 meeting. **Scott Horton's** presentation on speech recognition technology should be very interesting and may convince you that it is time to try this leading-edge technology. Speech recognition has been hailed as the next big advance in data entry and application control for more than a decade, and the technology has finally reached the point where it can easily keep up with typical conversation speeds of 120 to 160 words per minute (wpm). By comparison, it takes a typing speed of at least 40 wpm to get a secretarial job, and most untrained typists struggle along at less than 20 wpm.

I understand that **CompUSA** is going to provide one or more items for a drawing at the conclusion of Scott's presentation.

If you know people who have special business or personal needs for speech recognition technology, be sure to invite them to attend our meeting.

Annual Picnic

I hope that every NVPCUG member will be able to attend our potluck picnic on August 20 in the redwood grove at **Dick and Sandy Peterson's** Christmas tree farm on Darms Lane. Featuring great food, competitive games, prizes, and plenty of time to socialize, our annual picnics are always lots of fun. For more information about this event, please see picnic coordinator **Dianne Prior's** article on the back cover of this newsletter.

Dianne is looking for volunteers willing to handle various picnic activities, including procuring equip-

ment and supplies, barbecuing meat, coordinating games, and setting up and cleaning up. If you will be attending our picnic, please

let her know how you can help by calling (707) 252-1506 or sending e-mail to *Membership@nvpcug.org*.

"Build Your Own Computer" Workshop

Arrangements for a computer-building workshop are still being made. **Dick Peterson**, who is coordinating the activity, has informed me that Intel is expanding its kit offerings to include "everything from high-end machines, like the one I discussed at our June (2005) meeting, to low-end machines that can be upgraded later, as each owner decides whatever else he or she wants." If you are interested in this workshop, let Dick know by calling (707) 259-1712 or sending e-mail to *Winemaker@aol.com*.

Volunteers Are Still Needed

The NVPCUG board of directors is still looking for volunteers willing to serve as Vice President, Programs Director, and Special Projects Director and to help our current officers plan and administer our group's activities. Please contact me to discuss how you can contribute to the success of our group, even if you can devote only one hour each month.

Sound Off!

Got a suggestion for improving an NVPCUG activity? Want to help with an activity? Send e-mail to *OHill@napanet.net* or call (707) 252-0637.

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NVPCUG Special Interest Groups

The NVPCUG currently has two special interest groups. By attending SIG meetings, you can learn about a subject in greater detail than is feasible at NVPCUG general meetings and can share your knowledge with other people. SIG meetings are open to everyone. Meeting times and locations occasionally change. For current meeting location information, see our Web site, www.nvpcug.org, or contact the SIG leaders.

Digital Photography SIG

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

Leader: **Susy Ball**
(707) 337-3998
SusyBall@aol.com

Investors SIG

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

Leader: **Jerry Brown**
(707) 254-9607
bqandjbb@sbcglobal.net

For more information about
the NVPCUG,
visit our Web site:
<http://www.nvpcug.org>

Membership News

By Dianne Prior, NVPCUG Membership Director



The Napa Valley Computer Users Group welcomes new member **John Pitt** of American Canyon.

We are sorry to hear of the death of member **Ray MacWay** on April 7, 2005. Condolences to his family. *Dianne Prior*

As of July 31, 2005, the NVPCUG had 117 active members. A year ago we had 108.

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group Officers for 2005

Board of Directors

President	Orion E. Hill	252-0637*	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	(Volunteer Needed)		VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Julie Jerome	224-6620	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org

Other Directors: Dianne Prior, John Simcoe, James Stirling

Appointed Officers

Computer Recycling Coordinator	Bill Wheadon	224-3901	Recycler@nvpcug.org
Computer Tutor Coordinator	Mike Moore	255-1615	Tutor@nvpcug.org
Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator	Orion E. Hill	252-0637	CTS@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	Steve Siegrist		Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter@nvpcug.org
Librarian	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Librarian@nvpcug.org
Membership Director	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Membership@nvpcug.org
Mentor Program Coordinator	Hilton Des Roches	224-6170	Mentors@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Circulator	Jim Hearn	224-2540	
Newsletter Editor	James Stirling	944-1177	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review Coord.	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	(Volunteer Needed)		Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	John Simcoe	258-8233	Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	(Volunteer Needed)		Projects@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack		Webmaster@nvpcug.org

*All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

NVPCUG Calendar

Wednesdays	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
August 3	7:00 p.m.
August 8	5:30-7:30 p.m.
August 10	7:00-8:30 p.m.
August 17	7:00-9:00 p.m.
August 20	1:30-6:00 p.m.

Computers-to-Schools work parties. To volunteer contact Orion Hill.
Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Investors SIG meeting, Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Digital Photography SIG meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Annual Picnic, Peterson Family Christmas Tree Farm, 1120 Darms Lane, Napa

29 Useful Bookmarks

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET, www.tugnet.org

The Web is a marvelous resource, and most of us come nowhere near tapping its full potential. I've attempted here to list 29 websites that without any necessary downloading provide exceedingly useful free non-specialized services and tools, yet require no particular knowledge except how to navigate the World Wide Web.

1. *Time Cave* www.timecave.com

2. *Memo to Me* www.memotome.com

Using these two e-mail reminder services, you'll never forget another upcoming activity or event. *Time Cave* allows you to schedule incoming messages by interval (so many hours, days, weeks, months, or even years away) as well as by date and time. *Memo to Me* allows editing of content and date. With *Time Cave* you can choose your own subject line and send reminders to others, but *Memo to Me* will charge you for those features. On the other hand, *Time Cave* charges for the ability to repeat messages (monthly, weekly, etc.), standard with *Memo to Me*.

3. *Way Back Machine* www.archive.org/web/web.php
Is a website you're seeking no longer around? If it was active as late as 1996, you'll probably find it easily in this huge archive.

4. *Centerwatch Clinical Trials* www.centerwatch.com
Gives information on more than 41,000 active clinical trials in which you could participate. (Some compensate you handsomely for helping, along with free medical monitoring.) Includes a notification service, for trials in areas of your interest. Also describes the newest drug therapies.

5. *Objectgraph Dictionary* www.objectgraph.com/dictionary

A combination standard dictionary, technical dictionary, and thesaurus. (There's also a dictionary of chemical elements, of rather limited interest). A unique feature is the site's ability to "read your mind" if you're not sure of the word you're thinking of—or its spelling—or if you just want to save typing.

6. *Myway email* www.myway.com

An excellent Web-based e-mail provider with an exceptionally clean interface (no banner ads or pop-ups). Unlike the case with competitors like Yahoo mail, *Myway* will respond to support inquiries. (It also has a terrific weather page -- see link #7 following.) [If you prefer *Gmail*, equally clean-appearing, I can get you an invitation.

7. *Myway weather* weather.myway.com

The best weather page on the Web. Even though its weather information is from *weather.com*, you'll see when you use it that the interface is much cleaner (and loading therefore faster) than if you were to bring up either *weather.com* or one of its competitors. You can personalize the weather according to your home town or zip code; the page you'll want to bookmark is that personalized page.

8. *Past Weather* www.weather.com/activities/other/other/weather/yesterday.html

Use this site to compare today's forecast with yesterday's weather. There's also interesting historical data and a graph showing the weather for the past seven days. The past weather information can easily be compared with the forecast from *Myway weather* (link #7), which derives its data from the same source.

9. *Furl* www.furl.net

Bookmarking is useful, but what do you do when you find that a bookmarked page has disappeared (left the Web)? Or maybe it's still there, but—as with many newspaper sites—you can't read it without going to a paid archive. This won't be an issue if you've Furl'd the page. *Furl* allows you to create a set of special bookmarks that can be easily searched or browsed—or shared with others—but whose contents are permanently stored on your hard drive. (If you feel the need to save parts of a page, try *Net Snippets Free* at www.netsnippets.com/basic. This does require a download.)

10. *Gold Star Events* <http://snipurl.com/bl9o>
Gold Star enables admissions to a large variety of live California productions at 50 percent off or better. After your (free) registration, you'll receive regular e-mail notices of well-described shows in the zip code areas of your preference. There's a small per-ticket service fee, usually between \$3 and \$7.

11. *Password Generator* <http://mistupid.com/computers/passwordgen.htm>

Random characters compose the safest passwords. This tool will create a password with random characters according to your specifications. On your instructions, it will even avoid ambiguous characters [o and 0, 1 and I].

12. *Zap2it* www.zap2it.com

With *Zap2it* you can check out both TV and movie schedules. Various options let you permanently personalize each set of listings, to give you just the information you need, in the format you prefer.

13. *Acronym Finder* www.acronymfinder.com
Don't be baffled by acronyms and abbreviations you encounter on the Web and elsewhere. This site offers definitions for over 398,000 such terms. Optional downloading of any of a number of search tools (for various browsers) will allow you to view a definition almost instantly.

14. Restaurant health ratings (LA County).

<http://lapublichealth.org/rating>

Avoid traveling to an appealing restaurant only to find that its health rating is below the level with which you're comfortable.

15. *Translation Wizard*. www.faganfinder.com/translate.

The *Translation Wizard* uses other sites' services to ease

the process of finding a translation—that otherwise might require visiting ten or more sites to find the language of interest! It also has a neat button to identify a mystery language.

16. *Anybirthday*. <http://anybirthday.com>

A fun site that can divulge your friend's birthday or even tell you where to mail the card.

17. *TrackEngine* www.trackengine.com

This notifies you via e-mail of changes in Web pages that you select. You can preview the changes or view the whole page via e-mail, with changes highlighted. Choose the Web address of a neighborhood theater, to see what plays are coming up. Or see every new installment of a favorite newspaper column, without having to buy the paper.

18. *GovBenefits.gov* <http://govbenefits.gov>

A source of information on over 400 government-funded programs that extend benefits for which you may qualify, including compensated volunteering. Features a confidential questionnaire designed to point you to the most likely matches.

19. *AddALL* www.addall.com

Use this site to find the very best price for a book you want to buy. Unlike most other comparison sites, it figures in shipping costs for your location. Links will take you to pages for magazine subs, music CDs, and videos.

20. *Jux2* www.jux2.com

Jux2 lets you receive and compare search results from two or three different search engines, or see what you're missing from your regular search results. (According to the site, competing search engines typically share fewer than 4 out of their 10 top results.) Still in development, it's currently limited to *Google*, *Yahoo*, and *Ask Jeeves*.

21. *Medem Medical Library* www.medem.com/medlb/medlib_entry.cfm

Searchable and browsable medical library, organizing contributions from 45 medical societies. Features a complexity indicator for each article, from “introductory” to “professional.”

22. *Metacritic* www.metacritic.com/film

Metacritic is an excellent source for movie critiques. For each film, it arranges its large variety of reviews from most to least favorable, and then tabulates the opinions, for an overall “metascore.” (Additional *Metacritic* pages cover videos, music, and games.)

23. *Kids-in-mind* www.kids-in-mind.com

For evaluating movies for children, or if you have a concern about violence, sex, or profanity, *Kids-in-mind* will rate and describe each film's content in those three areas.

24. *CardRatings* <http://cardratings.com>

This site maintains information on over 700 credit cards, and will suggest the best cards in a variety of categories—low or no credit, no annual fee, low interest, rewards/rebates, etc.

25. *The California Patient's Guide*

www.calpatientguide.org.

A well-organized extensive guide to Californians' health care rights, and what you can do if they're compromised. Assembled by medical, legal, and consumer experts, and published by the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights.

26. *CheckFree* www.checkfree.com

There are a host of good reasons for paying your bills online. It saves time, saves the cost of stamps, reduces the chance of late payment, extends the time in which you can use your money, cuts down clutter, eliminates the danger of checks lost in the mail, and facilitates tracking. With *CheckFree* you'll be able to pay many or most of your bills online, and the service is free to the payers.

27. *Bug Me Not* www.bugmenot.com

This site and the one following save you time and trouble while helping you cut down on spam. *Bug Me Not* keeps on hand log-in data (passwords with user names) for a huge number of sites that require registration. If you want access to such a site (like *latimes.com*), but don't want to bother registering, just visit the *Bug Me Not* site and log in easily.

28. *Spam Bob* <http://evil-wire.luvfeed.org/cache/1269>
Spam Bob offers a choice of three e-mail addresses that you create, to protect your privacy. *Anything@spambob.org* is a phantom address, messages to which disappear into the ether. Use *anything@spambob.com* if you'll want to check on a reply message. (This is handy for registrations that require confirmation.) And you may want to use *anything@spambob.net* for all your correspondents. Mail from each such “net” address can be forwarded to you, and if it starts generating spam, just cancel the forwarding order!

29. *Google Maps* <http://maps.google.com>

Head and shoulders above the competition, these maps are much larger and far easier to configure. Zooming in and out is quick as a bunny, and re-centering is instantaneous. You can locate by category businesses in the map area, along with their phone numbers. Note that (at least as of this writing) these maps are not implemented in the regular Google search results, which will still point you only to Yahoo and MapQuest maps.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and is founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (<http://theskillspool.org>). He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

This article has been provided by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups.

Canned Air Computer Maintenance

By J. Kohr, from Tech-Tips, Computer Geeks.com

Many people don't think of their computer when doing a bit of cleaning around the home, but perhaps they should. We're talking about an effort far less unpleasant than doing windows or cleaning the bathroom, and the use of a can of compressed air can take care of the bulk of the work for you.

Cleaning your system on a somewhat regular basis can easily help extend the life of components, increase system stability, and reduce noise. This Tech Tip will take a look at a few areas to focus on, and all you really need to do is open your case and pull the trigger!

Case Fans

A well-designed computer case will have at least two (sometimes many more) case fans in order to exchange air with the room and thus cool the Internal components. With the typical home computer being installed in, well, the typical home, it is reasonable to expect things like dust, hair, pet fur, and so on to be drawn into these fans.

The blades of the fan, as well as the walls of the fan's frame, can grab hold of this debris, which creates a thin film that can eventually grow in thickness. As it does, the cooling performance of the fan will decrease and more than likely the noise produced by the fan will increase. In addition, as the fan motor has to work harder to overcome the extra load and resistance created by the debris, the life of the fan can be expected to be cut short. A healthy blast of canned air will knock a good deal of this dust and debris away, and if the fans are running while the blast is administered, they will hopefully eject all the dust out of the case. If not, it should settle to the bottom of the case, and a cloth can be used to wipe it clean.

In addition to gunking up the fans, dust can also cover the fan grills, or other types of guards, intended to pro-

tect fingers from the spinning blades. Keeping these clear will allow the maximum airflow for efficiently cooling the components, as well as cutting down on noise created by the air trying to flow past a restricted opening.

Some case manufacturers now include removable filters in front of their case fans in order to make maintenance easier. These filters can then be removed and blown clean, while the fans and case internals remain relatively dust free. For those without such a thoughtful feature included in their case, fan filters are available in standard sizes to be added to just about any fan.

Heat Sinks

Heat sinks are necessary for cooling the heat-generating chips inside your computer, and keeping them clean will help them keep your machine running smoothly. Whether we're talking about a CPU heat sink, or something like a VGA heat sink, dust and debris can not only cling to the blades/walls of the fan, but can also become trapped between the narrow fins of the heat sink body.

As with case fans, a dirty heat sink fan will suffer a drop in cooling efficiency, create more noise, and perhaps have its life shortened. The heat sink body, generally constructed of aluminum or copper, is the means by which the heat from the chip is transferred to the air. A layer of dust will act as a blanket and insulate the heat sink, thus preventing it from freely exchanging heat with the air.

Keyboard

Keyboards seem to suffer most when it comes to accumulating the debris of everyday usage. Not only do they gather dust and hair like most of the other components discussed, but they seem to be magnets for crumbs of food, cigarette ashes, and just about anything else that can slip down between the cracks. Eventually a key-

board may look too gross for you to stand, and you may even find that the key action is less responsive or even blocked by items under the keys.

A sweeping blast of canned air will work wonders to eliminate the debris, and for best results hold the keyboard upside down while doing so. It might not hurt to give the keyboard a good shake while it is upside down, but be prepared, as you never know what might fall out.

Mice

Optical mice may be more immune from dust than the old roller ball mice, but both styles are still prone to diminished performance caused by dust. Roller ball mice require fairly frequent cleanings in the socket around the ball, as it can sweep just about anything you roll over up into its mechanism. Optical (and laser) mice have a smooth bottom surface that may not have anywhere for dust to gather, but there are still places for it to settle elsewhere.

The buttons on either type of mice are generally not sealed, and junk can get into the small cracks around the edges, potentially interfering with the click action of the device. In addition, the area around scroll wheels can easily become gunked up with dust and debris, which a blast of canned air can alleviate.

Power Supply

Power supplies are much like heat sinks with respect to keeping them clean. The housing of a power supply features a fan (or two) used to cool aluminum heat sinks found inside, and the same issues that impacted the performance of a chip's heat sink and fan will be found in a power supply. Overheating power supplies can be a major cause of system instability and failure, but it seems like they receive the least attention when it comes to prevent system maintenance. A good

blast of air through each of the fan openings and vents on the side can help keep these critical components operating well.

The components of a power supply run hot because of the resistance in the process of converting the 120V AC power to the various DC voltages needed inside the computer. Power supplies with better efficiencies are now available that reduce the heat generated, but keeping the fans and heat sinks free of dust will greatly prolong their usefulness.

Laptops

Laptop computers can benefit equally from a cleansing blast of air. For example, the integrated keyboard and pointing device can get the same crud behind them as a desktop version, and inverting the laptop and giving it a blast can set this debris free.

The processor in a laptop may not be as readily accessible as in a desktop, but there are vents in the housing that lead to it. One set of vents allow a cooling fan to draw air in, and another set of vents allow this heated air from the processor to be expelled. Giving these vents a puff of canned air will

help ensure that the pathway doesn't become insulated by a layer of dust.

Final Words

A can of air won't take care of all of your computer maintenance needs, but one can really make keeping key components running at their best a breeze. Available at most consumer electronics and office supply stores, the (low) price of a can of air is well worth it to help maintain the large investment you have in your computer.

This article is taken from *Geeks.com* Tech Tip 38. Used by permission.

How to Thank the Leaders of Your Computer User Group

By Phil Shapiro, member of the Capital PC User Group, Virginia Macintosh Users Group, Washington Apple Pi, Young Hackers and Scholars Libre Users Group

If you have found benefit in belonging to a computer user group, there are many ways of thanking the leaders of the group. Sure, you can always walk up to them after a meeting and shake their hand. But there are more meaningful things you can do, too.

You can thank them by moving the club forward in countless small ways. You can drop off membership flyers at the local computer stores and public libraries. You can offer a smile and encouraging word to people who show up to meetings.

You can answer—or ask—questions on the club's e-mail list. You can exhibit patience with computer beginners—answering their questions in ways that benefit them the most.

You can offer some computer item you're no longer using to another member of the club. (If you're giving away commercial software, make sure you delete the copy on your own computer.)

You can also spread the word about the club around town. Be careful not to oversell, though. When I explain about the benefits of the local user group, I spell out honestly what the club can offer and can't offer. You

would be doing no one any favors if you raise false expectations in the minds of prospective club members.

You can write an article for the club's newsletter. Articles can be on almost any topic you think would bring value to club members. You don't need to be a computer expert to write an excellent article.

You can talk to your local public librarians about the benefits you've encountered in your user group. Librarians are the intellectual hub of any community and can pass on information to anyone who inquires about computer user groups.

And now here are some unexpected ways. You can show up at the club meeting with an unexpected door prize. Perhaps buy a pair of new computer speakers, some headphones or a computer microphone. Stop by a bookstore and buy a copy of a new how-to computer book. Offer to be a "club driver"—so if someone calls the club and says there is a sick child or adult who could use a computer at home, you'll be there to deliver that donated computer on behalf of the club. Bring homemade cookies to club meetings.

Offer to be a "computer mover," so that if someone in the club isn't

able to move their computer from one room of their house to another, you'll be there to help them do that.

You can start a scholarship program for five families/year in your community. Interested families could apply to the club to get a donated computer and 1/2 off the annual dues of the club.

Get creative in how you thank the leaders of your computer club. Behind the scene many hours of work go into making computer clubs work. Club leaders are not paid a dime. They do it because they get a thrill from seeing people help each other, from people increasing in their learning and computer confidence.

Surprise them in the ways you say thanks. You may even want to say: "I'm ready to work. I'd like to offer my time to help."

A grateful handshake is a good starting point. A grateful action is an appropriate follow-up. Actions speak louder than words.

Find a need. And then fill it.
pshapiro@his.com

This article has been provided by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups.

Dual-Core Processors Are Coming!

By Timothy Everingham, Member of TUGNET, California, www.tugnet.org
teveringham@acm.org;

Both Intel and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) are screaming, "Dual-Core Processors Are Coming." They say they are the future of microprocessors for computers. With both companies planning to introduce these processors in the next few months, it is important to understand the significance of this development.

So what is a dual-core processor? Basically it is two microprocessors on the same integrated circuit or chip. Having more than one processor in a computer has been around for a long time. It is normal for servers to have them. Multiprocessor workstations (high-end desktops) are used mostly for scientific, engineering and digital content creation for TV and movies. Dual-core is not Intel's hyperthreading, which is on its Pentium 4s and which lets the operating system think it has two processors rather than one. In a dual-core processor there are two actual processors, each one having its own L1 and L2 caches.

Why are we going to dual-core processors? One of the main reasons is heat. The higher a processor's clock speed, the more heat it produces. The 3.6 GHz Pentium 4 did have heat problems. Of course, what we have been doing is just putting more than one processor on a motherboard to increase performance beyond what you can get with a single processor (The general rule has been that adding a second processor improves computer speed by 60 percent over a single processor of the same speed.) However, to make this more cost effective, use less space, and reduce power requirements, putting two processors together on one chip is better. This is especially true in the desktop and notebook markets. As we move to high-definition TV resolution video on computers, the need for the average computer to have

very high processing speed will appear, leading to dual-core processor computers being dominant a few years from now. But can you upgrade your current system to a dual-core processor? If you have an AMD socket 939 motherboard you can upgrade to an AMD Athlon 64 dual-core processor with only a BIOS upgrade. The same is true for AMD Opteron socket 940 motherboards for Opteron dual-core processors. Intel said last fall that some Intel LGA 775 motherboards would be able to use their dual-core processors, called "Pentium D", but they now say the first generation of them will have to use a modified LGA 775 socket. This, of course, means getting a new motherboard.

For an application program to take advantage of multiprocessor systems, both the operating system and the particular application you are running have to have the ability to use more than one processor (multithreaded program). If the operating system is able to take advantage of more than one processor, but the applications you are running are not; you may get different applications running on different processors, but each will only use one processor. *Windows 98* and *ME* are designed for only one processor, so they can only use one even though there are two processors on one chip, real or virtual. *Windows XP Home* can use only one processor chip, but up to two processors on that chip. *Windows XP Professional* is designed to use up to 2 processor chips and up to 2 processors on each chip. Novell's *SUSE Linux* is already prepared for dual-core processors, and *Red Hat Linux* soon will be. Both are multithreaded and multiprocessor chip operating systems.

Most current multithreaded application programs are mid-high end

scientific, engineering, CAD/CAM and digital content creation programs. This includes video editing and 2D and 3D animation and image creation/editing programs. However there are some home applications that already have this multi-treading capability, such as the *Adobe Premiere Elements* video-editing program. The first programs for the home user to go multithreading should be content creation/editing, multimedia, and games. There seems to be an expectation by Intel that the transition over to most programs being multithreaded will be three years from now. However, some software companies base the licensing fees of some or all of their programs on the number of processors using the program. The question then becomes, Will software companies start charging licensing fees per processor core on the current per processor chip? Right now it looks like the trend says No. Microsoft has already said that for its programs that are licensed on a per-processor basis it will continue doing so and not go to a per-processor-core basis. Also to consider in upgrading both Intel and AMD systems, you may have software you have to activate that logs the system components. Upgrading processors and motherboards can cause these programs to say that this is now a new computer you are running the program on, which you are not authorized to do, and refuse to run. This could include your operating system. Check with your program's publisher/manufacturer to see what their policy on this is. Home and office use policies effectively have been known to be different.

So when will these marvelous dual-core processors appear? For Intel it will be the second quarter of 2005. For AMD it will be mid-2005

(Continued on page 9)

First Phishing, Now Pharming

By John Pearce, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, Colorado Springs, Colorado

First, there was phishing, trying to collect personal information. A newer attack, called pharming, is trying to do the same thing in a more technologically sophisticated way. You need to be on guard, but neither phishing nor pharming should keep you away from the Internet. Let's take a quick overview of both.

Phishing starts with an e-mail, typically from a financial institution, with a message that some dire consequences will happen if you don't immediately verify your account information. A Web site link is conveniently provided for you in the e-mail.

(Continued from page 8)

for the high level Opterons and second half of 2005 for the desktop Athlon 64s. As normal the price should originally be high, but then drop significantly over time.

We are moving this year to dual core processors. They will improve the speed of computers, and reduce the related heat and power requirement issues. They will be originally for those high-end power users, but over the next few years they could easily become the norm. They will be in a computer store near you later this year.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is also Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH. He is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, computers, video, audio, and entertainment/media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada plus Australia, England, and Japan. Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>.

This article has been provided by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups.

The provided link is to a Web page that looks like the real Web site but is actually one controlled by the bad guys. The fraudulent Web page asks you to enter credit card and billing information or possibly user name and password information. You can imagine what the bad guys are going to do with the information they collect.

Pharming is a way for the bad guys to redirect your Web browsing to a site that they control. Pharming is also known as DNS (Domain Name System) cache poisoning. DNS is what converts human friendly names like *web-board.apcug.org* to numerical addresses like 192.160.122.122. The bad guys want to impact the largest number of Internet users possible, so ISP's and large corporations are the most likely targets of pharming attacks. One goal is to download spyware or adware to your PC.

Protecting yourself from phishing attacks is as simple as ignoring the e-mail. All but one of the dozen or so phishing e-mails I have received have been from banks where I don't have an account. If you get a similar one, just delete the e-mail and go on with your life. If you have an account with the financial institution and are concerned, use the telephone and ask to speak with their Internet security department. If you go to the Web site to log in, type the web site URL into the browser—do not use the link provided in the e-mail.

Protecting yourself from pharming attacks takes a little effort. Start by keeping your browser updated with all the security patches. Next, you should be sure the padlock icon is displayed on any page where you enter personal information such as username, account number, or password. The padlock icon indicates you are connected to the legitimate

owner of the URL and the data you enter is protected by SSL encryption during transmission. The bad guys would have to know the private key of the site in order to make the padlock appear. You can view the security information by double-clicking the padlock icon on your browser. You can also use a tool like SpooferStick to confirm the URL of the web page you're viewing.

Two other exploits are worth a quick mention. The first is an instant messaging worm that changes the content of the host's file on your PC. This is effectively the same as DNS cache poisoning. The other exploit is domain hijacking, which is done by manipulating the domain name registrars. Domain hijacking is what happened to Panix, a New York ISP, in January.

Being aware of phishing and pharming, along with a little care and caution, will keep your Web browsing safe from the bad guys.

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Scrapbooking Hobby/Craft Rescues Baby Boomer Memories

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

As a baby boomer, I'm hardly unusual in having a large box of photographs in my closet. Also likely common is my photos' diversity: fading Polaroid baby pictures, travel shots, family gathering commemorations, images of people and places I can't identify, some professional photography, and quite a lot of etc. In addition, I have a few photo albums -- created when my parents thought I was cute and when I worked to record and remember vacations.

But the years have generated a lot of unorganized pictures, and I'm falling further behind in making sense of them. Worse, the photographs suffer from improper storage: being folded, fading, cracking, sticking together. Even the ones supposedly preserved in albums are being damaged by invisible hazards.

An antidote to my generation's mistreating photographs and neglecting family histories may be "scrapbooking." This inclusive term can mean anything from arranging pictures in scrapbooks (what albums are called when they contain pictures) to using computers. Whether high- or low-tech, it includes rescuing pictures from hostile environments. Old-style photo albums with adhesive corners or sticky pages can damage pictures. Scrapbookers use acid-free archival-quality paper and supplies (photo-safe adhesives and pens), aiming to produce material that lasts for generations.

Some people come to scrapbooking with organized materials, with pictures already sorted and documented. Others are in my camp, with a chaotic and ever-growing stash of family snapshots. Either way -- and especially if starting from scratch -- there's a fleeting opportunity for this, as memories and generations are lost.

I'm told that most scrapbookers are women, many of whom start as girls, assembling books about friends and activities, then continue as young mothers recording their children's growth, and as grandmothers making scrapbooks about their extended and extending families. But technology also draws men into the hobby, especially with improving capabilities and lowering costs of digital equipment such as scanners, cameras, and printers. Pixifun's [<http://pexagontech.com/pixifun/>] child- and budget-friendly kits for creating keyrings/magnets/stickers/badges/CDs include software and parts for creating instant photo keepsakes.

If you've collected a box of unorganized pictures; if you're falling behind in preserving your and your family's memories; if your photos suffer from being folded, fading, cracking, and being badly mounted -- the hobby and craft of "scrapbooking" can get you organized and preserve/share your memorabilia.

Scrapbookers develop unique styles and personalities, matching goals and resources available. Some keep things simple, using pictures, decorations, and a little labeling to tell visual stories. These scrapbooks are great for documenting oral history and reminiscing. They can follow themes such as genealogy,

school events, family milestones, travel, etc. Beyond pictures, scrapbooks can contain anything meaningful, such as mementos, postcards, clippings, cartoons, tickets, etc. This can be supplemented by decorations made with tools such as circle-cutout tools, edge scissors, and lettering stencil templates; accessories including colored and patterned pages, border trims, themed stick-ons; and stamped images. Some enjoy feeling connected to the past by producing final works from physical memorabilia rather than working with images.

Scrapbookers call telling a narrative story "journaling," finding this a way to create meaningful and long-lasting collections. Examples are keeping chronological scrapbooks of and for family and children, and creating time-capsules for events such as the new millennium. Pages can combine photos, captions, and decorative material so that each tells a visually appealing story. Alternatively, some people build pages with single images surrounded by cutouts, stickers, decals, lace, etc. -- less interested in telling a story than creating a picture. There's no rulebook, no single right way to scrapbook!

Scrapbooks can be wonderful gifts, conveying connections and feelings beyond those of any store bought gift. A dedicated scrapbooker I know is happy that her children will be able to leave home with their own history books.

Higher-tech approaches include using a digital camera or scanning original images into computer files, using photo-editing software to improve their visual characteristics or create effects such as the antique look, creating photo-montages blending multiple scenes, and producing "scrapbooks" on printed pages, CDs, or the Web. This tech-

nique protects precious -- and often fragile -- records, while allowing viewing and handling easily recreated digital replicas. And we've all seen "mini-scrapbooks" produced by technology: photo collages used as family holiday cards. Digital technology lends itself to producing multiple scrapbook copies -- for wedding guests, for example, or even as commercial ventures.

Techno-scrapbookers often use *Adobe* [www.adobe.com] *Photoshop Elements* and *Photoshop* software products; the vendor features kid- and adult-friendly tutorials. Click the link and search for "scrapbook". Other popular software includes Corel photo products [www.corel.com], *Macromedia Dreamweaver* [www.macromedia.com], and *Pinnacle Systems Studio 8* [www.pinnaclesys.com]. As photo capture/editing/printing demands increase, so do hardware requirements. One 20-year veteran

scrapbooker suggests a flatbed scanner with minimum 600 ppi (pixels per inch) without interpolation; a slide scanner for negatives and slides; 80 GB hard drive; 512 MB RAM or more; high-end graphics card with expandable non-shared memory; CD/DVD burner and minimum P4 processor. She uses a multimedia PC, digital camera, and camcorder to go beyond photo basics, adding design touches like antique finish and repairing defects such as tears and scratches.

Useful resource sites are *Scrapbooking Top50* [www.scrapbooking-top50.com], *Stamping Top50* [www.stampingtop50.com], and *Digital Scrapbooking* [www.digitalscrapbookplace.com]. Stores frequently mentioned are Michael's and Craft Country.

People discover scrapbooking by accident or design -- some take classes at community colleges or recreation departments, others discover

commercial sites such as *Creative Memories* [www.creativememories.com] or see friends' scrapbooks. Whether your taste runs to scissors or scanner, paper album or CD, narrative or decorative scrapbooks -- get out those picture boxes and preserve those memories! □

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HandiApped Independence: Part 1

by Frank Petrie, Freelance writer, *Macsimum News* contributor, Curmudgeon

I am a Mac user. I am a reviewer for *Macsimum News* and numerous newsletters. I also suffer from multiple sclerosis.

Recently, after a fall and a four-day stay in the hospital, I viewed my environment with new eyes. I realized that I needed to pace myself in a more efficient manner. I was pushing too hard.

So I started to monitor my daily activities and evaluate the layout of my house. I noticed that I used about 80 percent of my energy getting across the carpets. Wasted energy. I had set my drinking glasses out of reach, my food on pantry shelves that were too high. More wasted energy. Clearly I had to completely rethink my procedures.

How could I create an environment to facilitate my independent lifestyle without unnecessarily wasting energy getting to things?

My daughter is an avid fan of

those shows where friends exchange houses for a weekend to renovate one or two rooms. Once I told her about what I had been doing since my return from the hospital, she was all aglow. Here was her big chance to do like the TV shows without the fear of someone destroying her room.

Well, obviously, I use my computer the most, so this would have to be the focal point of my renovation. What I hadn't counted on was that most of my life, work and play involved my computer. Then it hit me! My computer was my robot! It helped me shop, pay bills, keep photo albums, and talk to people face to face. It saved my failing legs a lot of mileage. My computer/robot is an important part of my independent lifestyle.

This will hopefully be a series that goes beyond the ergonomic charts that we have all seen, and instead focuses on hardware and software (including OS X's Universal Access)

that can benefit the handicapped and the retired. We'll revisit our workspaces, look at special mice and keyboards, the benefits of Bluetooth and dictation software for those with arthritis or dexterity problems. In short, how to lay out your office for maximum workflow and the least amount of physical discomfort.

So, here's your first assignment. For the next several weeks, keep a mental or physical diary of your habits and routines. Notice where you spend most of your time and where your paths intersect most. Then we can think about how to make the best use of what we have.

Oh, and please post comments. Let's begin a dialogue and share ideas. Reach me at phranky@mac.com, Subject: HandiApped.

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Why Can't I Just Copy My Programs to My New Computer?

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org

Let's start this with a discussion of imaging software, something that many of us use to back up our hard drives. Imaging software makes a very complete "bit-mapped" copy of your hard drive. Bit-mapping means that everything contained on the hard drive is being copied, usually to a compressed file. Generally, imaging software also backs up open files, those that are currently in use on your computer. Most, but not all, regular backup software can only make copies of files that are not in use at the time of the backup. Thus it is very easy for a standard backup to miss some files or to produce a backup of your hard drive that is incomplete, especially with regard to files currently in use by your Operating System (OS). Imaging software overcomes this problem.

So when you buy, build or upgrade to a new computer, why can't you simply use your image file to transfer all of your programs and data from one computer to another? The basic answer is related to the difference in hardware between the two computers. If you are just replacing a hard drive in your computer, you can use the image file to move everything to the new drive. Some imaging software allows you to "clone" the old hard drive to a new drive. That is, providing both drives are connected to the same computer. However, when you change to a new computer with a new motherboard, the CPU, chipset, USB ports, sound and/or integrated video are different and require new drivers.

The image file contains a complete copy of the registry that has all the settings needed to connect to your hardware. It also has all the settings for the software installed on your hard drive. These settings are references to the files on your hard drive that are absolutely essential for the proper operation of both hardware and soft-

ware. On Windows versions prior to *WinXP/Win2K*, the registry was contained in two files: *system.dat* and *user.dat*. In *Windows XP* this has changed greatly. The registry is now found in files in hidden folders within the System32 folder and the Documents & Settings Folder. Presumably this is to prevent users from deleting vital files. You can examine the registry by running "regedit". However, it is not advisable to make changes to the registry unless you are a very experienced user. It is quite easy to corrupt the registry and find that your computer will not run.

The registry has five main branches in *WinXP/Win2K*. In earlier versions there were six. These are identified as keys. The most important are HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT, which has all the file types used by your software, and HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE, which contains all the information on the hardware and software in your computer.

So if you used the image file to transfer everything from your old computer to your new one you would overwrite the registry settings for the hardware and pre-installed software on your new computer. This would very likely prevent it from completing a boot-up. It is really not practical to try to selectively transfer items from the registry on the old computer. This would introduce other problems. I did a search in the registry for items related to one application. The search found 128 entries. This may not have been all of them. Considering the number of programs you might have on your hard drive, the total number of entries to be transferred is mind-boggling.

Another example, the Windows folder contains many Dynamic Link Library (DLL) files that are associated with the particular version of Windows you have been running. There

are also many shared DLL's used by Windows and your application software. How do you know which ones should be transferred and which ones will create problems with your new OS or your new software? Finally, the motherboard, chipset and CPU in your new computer require driver files that are specific to them and very likely are quite different from the drivers used on your old computer.

Faced with this problem, what do you do? The most commonly used solution is to dig out all the original disks for your application software. Find the serial numbers and/or other information needed to do a new installation on your new computer. Once you have the programs installed you can transfer the data files for each application. This gives you a clean install for your software and, if the programs are compatible with the new OS, you will have no problem running your applications.

This, however, can be a long and tedious process. Also, what happens when you can't find an original program disk? Maybe it was downloaded and you didn't keep the install file or make a copy of it. Or maybe you can't find the serial numbers you need to install some of your programs. Then you have to ask the software manufacturer for help, providing you registered the software when you first installed it. There is another option.

I got into all this because I have just built a new computer and needed to transfer all, or most all, of my software to a new computer. I had used two different transfer programs in past upgrades and found them to be somewhat lacking in both accuracy and speed. Since my new computer is running *Window XP Pro* I also looked at the "Transfer Files & Setting" Wizard. This transfers the Internet browser and e-mail settings between the two computers, providing you are using *Internet Explorer* and *Outlook*

or *Outlook Express*. It will also transfer the contents of your "My Documents" folder. It will not transfer any applications. For me this was useless, since I don't use IE or OE.

In my searching for possible solutions I found a program called *Move-Me* from Spearit Software. It is the first transfer program I've found that uses network connections to move programs, data files, settings, etc., between your old and new computers. It can also use the USB ports or the parallel ports. These are much slower than a LAN connection. *Move-Me* also works with removable media that can be read by both computers. Now, before you get too excited, this is not a free program. It will cost you \$39.95 for the Internet download version. You can download a trial version that has all the information and help files. It just will not do any transfer until you enter the serial number. That you get only after paying for it. The only thing that makes me nervous

about the whole process is that you have to turn off your software firewall and virus checker during the serial number validation process. This validation requires that you be connected to the Internet. In my case I still had a hardware firewall in my router, but that's not always sufficient protection. But I went ahead and ran the software. (You know the saying "Fools rush in.....")

Yes, it did work, but with some glitches. First let me say it transferred over 12 gigabytes of programs and data from the old to the new in just over 1.5 hours. Now that is a definite time saving. I had estimated it would take me more than a day to reinstall all my software and move the data files. Only a couple of applications and my external devices needed to be reinstalled after the move. By that I mean printers, scanner and external drive. The big exception was the Bookmarks for *Firefox* and the e-mail address book and mail settings for

Thunderbird. Those I had to transfer manually. Once I found the instructions on the *Mozilla* websites, the setup went quickly.

The point of all this is, if you buy a new computer, try to get the dealer to transfer your old software as part of the deal. If you do it yourself, a file copy won't work. You need special transfer software like *Move-me* or *Aloha Bob's PC Relocator*. However, if you don't have a LAN connection between your computers, expect to spend 1 hour per gigabyte for a USB 2.0 transfer and much, much more time with a parallel port transfer.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor whose e-mail address is. bwsail@yahoo.com.

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Sharing Your World

Vinny Labash, Sarasota PCUG, Florida www.spcug.org vlabash@comcast.net

If the thought of overcoming technical hurdles has deterred you from creating your own Web-based journal, stop fretting. Modern web tools make creating your own blog easier than it's ever been. The term blog is nothing more than a shortened version of Weblog. The term "weblog" was created by Jorn Barger in December 1997, and Peter Merholz introduced the short version "blog" in 1999. Blog came to be interpreted also as a verb, to blog, meaning "to edit or post to one's weblog."

The world's most gigantic digital conversation was born six years ago when blogger.com was started. At first, hardly anyone noticed. Thousands of Web sites come and go all the time, but blogger.com offered something unique. Anyone who wanted a blog could have one free. There was no charge to access the blog creation tools, and the site pro-

vided free space to anyone who wanted to host a blog. Once discovered, millions logged on and created their own web logs.

Blogs have changed the way educational institutions do research. Traditional journalists have been blasted out of their comfort zones, being continually challenged to defend their printed statements. They are now being held to the same standards of accountability they have long demanded from others. Families are using blogs to keep in touch in ways that were never before possible. Politicians and political organizations are using blog sites to raise funds.

Corporate entities are using blogs to find out what excites customers, and to track what they really think about the company and why. Wisely used, blogs could become the ultimate marketing tool, free of all the negativity associated with spam.

Starting your own blog is no longer a formidable task. If you are simply curious and want to see what it's like to have your own blog, the only investment you need to make is your time. If you have an irrepresible urge to share your ideas, philosophy, comments or conclusions with everyone else on the planet, you are merely a few short easy steps away from making this happen.

Pay homage to the original by visiting <http://www.blogger.com> and follow directions. Another direction is to go to Google and search on "starting a blog." Your only difficulty will be deciding when, not how, to start.

This article has been provided by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups.

Figuring Out How Spammers Get E-Mail Addresses

By Dave Gerber, Editor *Dave's Bits & Bytes*, and Director of the Sarasota PC User Group, Florida, www.spcug.org

Spammers employ a variety of methods to acquire e-mail addresses. Some methods take advantage of the e-mail addresses readily available on the Internet, whereas others employ different levels of trickery, from harvesting to outright stealing.

Harvesting from the Internet.

While harvesting requires a lot of bandwidth, it is ingeniously simple: download the right pages from select Web sites and extract the e-mail addresses that are there for the picking. Some of the tools and sources employed in harvesting include the following:

Web spiders: Spammers employ Web crawlers and spiders that harvest e-mail addresses from Web sites. It's common for Web sites to include `mailto:URLs` as well as unlinked `user@domain` addresses. Put your e-mail address on a Web site, and you're spam bait. Yahoo, Google, and others scan the Internet's Web sites with the aid of spiders and crawlers in order to keep Web search indexes fresh. But e-mail address harvesting spiders are up to no good. And where do these spiders get domain names? With over 90 million .com domains in existence, it's easy enough to just guess domain names in order to come up with quite a few.

Newsgroups: It's a straightforward task to harvest e-mail addresses from Usenet newsgroups: Just pull in a big news feed and extract the e-mail addresses with a simple shell or Perl script. Newsgroup volumes are still increasing exponentially—at a rate of at least several gigabytes per day. This means lots of e-mail addresses are there for the taking. Any spammer with enough bandwidth can slurp up all those bits and just sift out the e-mail addresses.

Groups, blogs, and discussion boards: Yahoo! and Google have their groups and mailing lists, many of which make their members' e-mail addresses available. There are thousands of blogs and discussion boards out there, too, that contain easily acquired e-mail addresses.

Test messages: In this method, spammers send test e-mails to recipients whose addresses they simply guess—so-called test e-mail messages sent to addresses like `service@`, `info@`, `test@`, `marketing@`, `security@`. Spammers at one time could reliably conclude that, if they receive no "bounce-o-gram" back from the domain, that the e-mail address must be legit. This is because e-mail servers used to routinely send nondelivery receipts (NDRs) back to the sender of a message sent to a non-existent address. But that isn't necessarily so any more: More servers are opting to stop sending NDRs.

Unsubscribe links: Many spam messages include an opt-out or unsubscribe link so that the recipient can request not to receive more spam. However, often the real purpose of unsubscribe links is to confirm a valid, active e-mail address.

Malware: Spammers sometimes use Trojan horses, viruses, and worms to extract e-mail addresses from individual users' computers. If mass-mailing worms can extract the contents of a user's e-mail address book for the purpose of propagating spam, then it's going to be easy to perform the same extraction and simply send the list back to the hacker's lair. This would probably be easier, in fact, because this activity is far less likely to be detected than a mass-mailing worm.

Unsubscribe requests: A good number of spam messages contain "unsubscribe me" links that a user clicks to opt out. However, many spam operators actually continue to send spam to e-mail addresses submitted to "unsubscribe me" links. When a user submits such a request, the spammer knows that the address being sent is a valid e-mail address. Do you think they'll actually stop sending spam to a known valid address? Not on your life!

Buying and stealing addresses:

Among spammers and e-mail address brokers, e-mail addresses are a traded and sold commodity. If you know where to look, you can purchase CDs and downloads containing e-mail addresses by the hundreds of thousands or millions.

And of course, everyone has heard the stories of Web sites that collect your e-mail address and promise not to sell it (ha!). But they sell, trade, or give away e-mail addresses anyway, even when their privacy policy says they won't. A few high-profile companies have been prosecuted and/or fined for this practice.

Business and service provider e-mail lists are also stolen and sold to spammers. In mid-2004, a former AOL employee was charged with stealing 90 million screen names and 30 million e-mail addresses from AOL and selling them to a spammer for \$100,000. This is not an isolated case, but it is a noteworthy one because of the size of the heist. So much for privacy, eh? □

Listen to "Dave's Bits & Bytes" radio show archives at www.davebytes.com; subscribe to his newsletter by sending an e-mail to dave_bytes@comcast.net.

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Do not list phone number Do not list e-mail address

Family members whom you want to sponsor as Associate Members:
(Associate Members have the same membership rights as their sponsors except for receiving newsletters)

Full Name

E-mail Address

Annual Dues:

\$30.00 **Regular Member**—an individual who is not a full-time student

\$20.00 **Student Member**—a full-time student not eligible for Associate membership

\$10.00 **Associate Member**—a family member of a Regular or Student member. Associate memberships run concurrently with sponsors' memberships.

Make check payable to **Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group.**

Mail application/renewal to: **Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group, Attn.: Membership Director, P.O. Box 2866, Napa, CA 94558-0286.**

The NVPCUG is an accredited IRC 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your dues payment may be tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

* To request a Corporate Membership Application/Renewal form, e-mail: Membership@nvpcug.org.

Revised 8-9-05

NVPCUG Picnic Set for August 20

By Dianne Prior, NVPCUG Picnic Coordinator

Dick and Sandy Peterson have again graciously offered to host our annual potluck picnic. The location is the **Peterson Family Christmas Tree Farm**, 1120 Darms Lane, Napa. The date is Saturday, August 20, from 1:30 p.m. Signups will be available until the general meeting on Wednesday, August 17, but you may e-mail me before then at Membership@nvpcug.org telling me the member's name, how many people are attending, what you are bringing for the potluck, and what you will

help with as far as setup or cleanup. Extra chairs are needed also.

The NVPCUG will provide barbecued beefsteaks and chicken. The group will also provide nonalcoholic beverages, ice, paper plates, cups, plastic ware and napkins. Alcoholic beverages are BYOB.

There will be games and prizes as well as time to visit with old friends and make new ones. We hope to see you there. The potluck picnic is always a lot of fun and the food is great and plentiful.



Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group
P.O. Box 2866
Napa, CA 94558-0286

Address Service Requested