

COMPUTER NEWS



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The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group has served novice and experienced computer users since 1983. Through its monthly meetings, newsletters, online forum, special interest groups, mentor program and community involvement, it has helped educate people of all ages. The NVPCUG provides opportunities for people to find friends who share common interests and experiences. Through its Computers-to-Schools program, members refurbish used computer equipment for donation to local schools. Since January 2003 the NVPCUG has donated 666 computers and 139 printers. Additional equipment has been given to charitable non-profit organizations and to disadvantaged individuals.

At Sept. 19 Meeting, Ergonomics Presentation

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, Aug. 15, 7:00-9:00 P.M., at the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California

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

During the Computer Tutor session which will follow, **Ken Manfree** will give a short presentation on Microsoft Excel. He will show how to set up a basic spreadsheet and how to set up formulas (mathematical equations that do all the work) He will also seek suggestions from our members as to what they would like him to cover in a lengthier future Microsoft Excel presentation. Any questions or comments should be sent to the Computer Tutor, **Jeff Solomon** at tutor@nvpcug.org.



Our main presentation will be given by **Ronald Kleist**, president of SmartMotion Technology, Inc. He will be talking to us about ergonomics. Ronald comes to us with 35 years experience bringing new technologies to market for market leaders such as *Instapak/SealedAir Corporation, Genzyme, Sprint, OCLI/JDSUniphase*. The last 10 years have been devoted to ergonomics and include development of mechanisms and finished products that support natural human motion such as *SwingSeat* and *Clickit!*. He is also involved in a family trading company started more than 65 years ago in Asia and travels there often.

The door prize will be provided by the presenter. He will bring a clamp-on version of the 4-ARM Tray (List Price \$129⁰⁰). **Note:** members are eligible for the drawing and if you want to be included in the drawing, make it a point to attend this months meeting. Your name might be the one that is drawn!.

View his websites at <http://www.swingseat.com/> and <http://www.ergonomixx.com/> for more details. The site even includes a short video demonstrating how easy it is to assemble and use the *swingseat*.

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

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

NVPCUG Special Interest Groups



President's Message

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

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

Investors SIG

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

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

Digital Photography SIG

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

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

Macintosh SIG

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

Leader: Jim Gillespie
(707) 252-1665
napanerd@pacbell.net

Whew, what a month this has been. Suspending activities at the Computer to Schools program until we could work through several problems not the least of which included finding a solution to a huge tax dilemma relating to the large donation that Dey, L.P. wanted to make to CTS. This donation would have changed our status to a Private Foundation and possibly cost us our tax-free status.

After just going through the paperwork, forms, accounting, and filing of our IRS Form 8734 to obtain the final decision as to whether we are considered a tax-exempt organization this spring. Finally receiving the letter confirming us as a Public Charity in July.

Then the filing of our 2006 Form 990-EZ for our 2006 taxes in April, only to be notified we had filed incorrectly by not including a Form 990 Schedule B. Reading several hundred pages of twenty or so IRS publications and instructions to find out first what the "hell" is a Schedule B and what has to be included on it.

Reading several hundred more pages of additional IRS publications to try and be up on what is coming and what we will need to report in the future I discovered that if Dey, L.P. donated the 300 to 400 laptops they intended to donate to our group it would thrust us into a whole new category called a Private Foundation. Because we don't have the public support to offset that type of donation we could not accept the laptops. To hold our IRC 501(c)(3) Public Charity status we would have had to receive over \$19,000.00 in other public donations to offset the laptop donation Dey, L.P. wanted to make. I had hoped that the good work done by our group, the CTS volunteers, and the positive impact on the school systems, it would bring our group some semblance of public support but I guess that was too much to ask for. On the other hand we did not want to deprive the students of the Napa area schools the use of these laptops.

In an effort to resolve this issue I decided to see if we could arrange with Dey, L.P. to donate the laptops to the schools and just have our CTS program refurbish and distribute them for Dey, L.P. I arranged a meeting with **Charlotte Converse**, Computer Services Manager, Dey, L.P. Present at that meeting were NVPCUG Directors **Susy Ball**, **Marcia Waddell**, **Roy Wagner**, and I. Computers to Schools Coordinators **Orion E. Hill**, **Ray McCann**, and **Bill Wheadon**. After discussing the issues it was decided that our Computers to Schools program would take the laptops and refurbish and distribute them to the schools for Dey, L.P. That way Dey, L.P. would remain the owner and be the donor to the schools. With the approval of Dey, L.P.'s Legal Department this agreement has been made. There are still issues regarding NVPCUG's donation policies and procedures to be worked out but with this decision our immediate crisis has been resolved.

Finally at this month's program I will get to see and maybe try an ergonomic chair. I have been at my computer so much lately that I know I need one. I hope to see each of you at the September 19th meeting and remember: Bring a friend they might find something interesting at our meetings. ■

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

Wednesdays	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Computers-to-Schools work parties. To volunteer, contact Orion Hill, (707) 252-0637
Aug 15	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
Sept 5	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Sept 10	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting, Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
Sept 12	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting, Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
Sept 13	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Macintosh SIG meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa
Sept 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group

Officers for 2007

Board of Directors

President	Ron Dack		President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Jerry Brown	254-9607	VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org
Other Directors:	Susy Ball, Jim Gillespie, Bernhard Krevet, Ken Manfree, Dick Peterson, Dianne Prior, Bob Simmerman, Kathy Slavens, Jeff Solomon, Dean Unruh		

Appointed Officers

Computer Recycling Coordinator	Ken Manfree	224-3722	Recycler@nvpcug.org
Computer Tutor Coordinator	Jeff Solomon		Tutor@nvpcug.org
Computers-to-Schools Program Coordinator	Orion E. Hill	252-0637	CTS@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter@nvpcug.org
Librarian	Dean Unruh	226-9164	Librarian@nvpcug.org
Membership Director	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Membership@nvpcug.org
Mentor Program Coordinator	Dick Peterson	259-1712	Mentors@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Circulator	Jim Hearn	224-2540	Circulation@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Editor	Susy Ball	337-3998	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Susy Ball	337-3998	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews2@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	Susy Ball	337-3998	Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	Ron Dack		Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	Jeff Solomon		Projects@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack		Webmaster@nvpcug.org

• All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

NVPCUG Computer News

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

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SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC 2007

By Coordinator Dianne Prior, prior@napanet.net, www.nvpcug.org

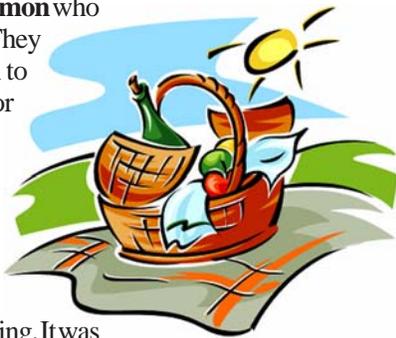


The weather was perfect for this year's picnic held at Peterson's Perfect Picnic Place (a.k.a. Peterson's Family Christmas Tree Farm). Thank you, **Dick and Sandy**, for hosting us. All 34 people seemed to have a good time and there was plenty of good food. It's been said that we should make **Mike Ball** our permanent cook. Thank you, Mike, for

grilling the steak and chicken to perfection and also to **Ron Dack** for marinating the beef.

We had a special treat this year with **Mel Cohen** playing his accordian. Thanks, Mel, for those delightful sounds.

Thank you to **Jeff Solomon** who organized the games. They were fun to play and fun to watch. We had three major competitive games with prizes awarded to the winners.



1. The Washer Toss had eight teams of two persons competing. It was after the second round play-offs that first place was taken by the team of **Mike Ball** and **Dick Peterson**.

To find more about this game go to <http://www.originalwashers.com/> or http://www.nvpcug.org/Graphics/Special/Washer_Game.pdf.

2. The Horse Shoes Champ with the most leaners and ringers was **Dean Unruh**. For official rules on how to play Horse Shoes see: http://www.ehow.com/how_3110_play-horseshoes.html
3. The Floppy Toss game top scorer was **Lou Schirm**. The floppy toss actually uses old CD's, as we no longer have a large supply of old floppies. There are no

official rules for this game so we made some up.

4. Other games being enjoyed by our members and guests were dominos, chess and cribbage.

The soft drinks and supplies were provided by NVPCUG except for the generous donations of beef & chicken by **Ron Dack**, plates/cups/napkins by **Susy Ball** and charcoal by **Dick Peterson**.

I also want to thank **Susy Ball** for getting the prizes together and contributing in so many other ways to the success of this event. Thank you **Bob Simmerman** and **Kathy Slavens** for taking care of nametags and sign-in sheets. Much appreciation goes to EVERYONE for pitching in to help set up and then clean up the picnic site.

Some of the comments made are:

- ☆ "The picnic and the holiday party are the best parts of being in the group,"
- ☆ "Such a lovely location in the shade of the redwood trees,"
- ☆ "The organizers were very good at getting everyone involved. It is the first time I have stayed for the whole time,"
- ☆ "I liked the music in the background,"
- ☆ "Enjoyed the picnic very much. It was great. I think there was enough of everything that should have made us all happy." ■



Updating Antivirus Software

How often you update can depend on how you use your PC. Antivirus software developers frequently update their applications and signature files, so it's worth your time to check the antivirus software's site every one to two weeks for updates. If you hear about a dangerous new virus outbreak, check for emergency or priority updates right away. Many antivirus applications include an automatic updater or utility that checks the software's site for you. For example, Norton AntiVirus provides a Live-Update feature that will prompt you to download updates as they become available. As for scanning your system, most users only perform a complete system scan once when they initially install an antivirus application. After that, the antivirus application resides in

system memory where it continues to scan downloads, emails, macros, and other potential sources of infection on the fly. Even so, if your antivirus software runs in memory, you should think about performing a complete system scan at least once per month, as well as when there's a major update to the software and/or if the system starts behaving strangely. If you don't run the antivirus software in memory (maybe you have a limited amount of system RAM), you'll need to perform a complete system scan much more frequently, such as once a week.

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ScanSoft PDF Converter Professional 4

from Nuance Communications Inc.

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

PDF Converter Professional 4 is a program I wanted to try because it renders many different file types into PDF format documents and can convert a PDF document into an editable **Microsoft Word** document as well as several other programs including **Microsoft Excel**, **Corel Word Perfect**, and generic RTF files and back again. For a long time I have used **Adobe Acrobat** but it will not convert PDF files into an editable **Microsoft Word** or other document.

I found that as NVPCUG's Webmaster, I needed to edit PDF files more frequently. On several occasions I tried using the Edit Text and Touchup Text tools in **Acrobat** but found they were only for tiny alterations of the document. By being able to convert a PDF to an editable document I can make the changes and then simply render the document back into a PDF.

The installation was quick and simple although there was the usual archaic serial number, web activation and registration. After rebooting and enabling my antivirus and firewall I started the program. I noted an easy to understand toolbar system with many similar tools I was familiar with from using **Acrobat**.

My next move was to see how it rendered an existing PDF file so I opened our July Computer News. It came right up and appeared to be everything I had hoped for. I did note as I scrolled through the pages that when moving the pages seemed to vibrate but when I stopped scrolling they cleared immediately. Then I reached our page 15 of 16 and everything went askew. See photo titled **PDF Converter Professional 4**. I then opened the page using



Adobe Acrobat 6 Professional

Adobe Acrobat and it rendered correctly. See photo titled **Adobe Acrobat 6 Professional**.

I then opened our June Computer News and scrolled to page 15 of 16 and found almost the identical results. I called **Susy Ball** the Editor of **Computer News** and asked her if she would check to see if there was

some reason (like hidden code) that this was occurring. After checking the original file Susy called and informed me that the **Minute Man Press** advertisement on page 15 was a "postscript" file. After removing this file **PDF Converter Professional 4** rendered the page perfectly. So it appears there may be a "postscript" file issue with **PDF Converter Professional 4**.

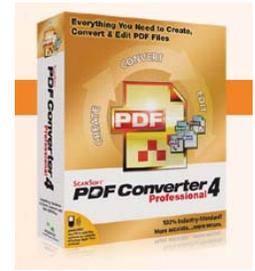
I then opened my **Outlook** program and was notified that **Word** had encountered a problem and had to shut down. I don't know if this was a result of the installation or not.

When I tried to open **Word** outside of **Outlook** it opened about 5 instances of the program with recent documents. After closing several I found a blank one. I noticed that **Adobe** still had PDF buttons in the toolbars. The button issue was easily solved by going to the **Microsoft Word** View menu/Toolbars and selecting **ScanSoft PDF** instead of **PDFMaker6**. I did note that there were between one and seven instances of **PDF Converter Professional 4**'s toolbar consisting of four buttons each displayed every time I started **Word**. At least it now only opened one instance of **Word** so I decided to let this go for awhile and just use the program.

PDF Converter Professional 4 easily created a PDF from a **Word** document so the next thing I wanted to try was converting a PDF into a **Word** document. I first tried a simple PDF and the conversion worked perfect so I moved up to a much more complicated PDF and once again a flawless **Word** document was the result.

Now I was getting really interested so I took a PDF form document and put it to the test. The original document was created in **Microsoft Publisher 2000** and there was no listing to save it as a .pub file so I chose to convert it to a **Word** document. It rendered in **Word** partially skewed. I do have **Publisher 2000** installed on my system but that choice is not one of the available file types.

My next venture was unlocking a secure PDF. I opened a PDF that I had created in and secured using **Acrobat**. It took me a few seconds to find the document's security info



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and with the password **PDF Converter Professional 4** unlocked the document and I was able to make any modifications I chose.

It will take me a little time to get comfortable with **PDF Converter Professional 4** but it offers a lot of functionality that other PDF programs don't. Some of the things I like about it already are: The ability to convert files from PDF to other formats. It has a built in OCR function. It will create a PDF from **Excel**, **PowerPoint**, and **Word**. It will convert those PDFs back again. **PDF Converter Professional 4** can combine different files and different file types into a single PDF.

After using **PDF Converter Professional 4** for a few weeks I decided to call their tech support about the "postscript" issue and the numerous instances of their toolbar that show up on my **Word** toolbar. After the usual phone menus I talked to a gentleman named "Albert" who told me that they were aware of the "postscript" issue and were working to solve it. They did offer a work around that consisted of first saving the "postscript" file as a document and then converting it to a PDF. Albert then walked me through the process of updating my normal.dot file and after a few tries the multiple toolbar issue was solved.

Nuance's Tech Support gives you one free phone support session and after that it is \$19.95 per session. I don't particularly care for that especially when they don't offer a toll free number. They do however have quite a lot of answers online for free at <http://support.nuance.com/>.

The minimum system requirements for PDF Converter Professional 4 are:

- Minimum Intel® Pentium® or higher processor
- Microsoft Windows® 2000 (SP4), Windows XP (SP1, SP2), Windows XP 64-bit Edition, Windows 2003, or Windows Vista™
- Microsoft® Internet Explorer® 5.1 or above
- Microsoft Office® 97, Microsoft Office® 2000 with SP3, Microsoft Office® XP with SP3 or Microsoft Office® 2003 with SP1
- 128MB of memory (RAM), 256MB recommended
- 160 MB of free hard disk space for application files plus
- 10MB working space during installation
- 10MB for Microsoft® Installer (MSI) if not present. (This is present as part of the operating system in Windows 2000 and Windows XP)
- SVGA monitor with 256 colors, but preferably 16-bit color (called High Color in Windows® 2000 and Medium Color in XP) and 800 x 600 pixel resolution
- Windows-compatible pointing device
- CD-ROM drive for installation
- Internet connection required to activate

Of course it will work a lot faster if you have a better system than the minimum. I am running an **Intel P4 Dual Threading** with 1GB RAM, **NVIDIA GeForce FX5200** with 128MB VRAM, and a **Princeton 19"** Digital flat screen monitor. **Windows XP SP2**, **IE7**, **Microsoft Office 2000 Premium**.

The price is really good too when you consider the price of comparable programs like **Adobe Acrobat Professional**. **PDF Converter Professional 4** is just \$99.00. If you want more info you can find it on their website <http://www.nuance.com/pdfconverter/professional/>. I am now looking forward to trying **Nuance OmniPage 16**. Maybe I can get it for my next review project. ■

Dial-up Modem

If you try to connect to the Internet with a dial-up modem and are told there's no dial tone, there are several things that might cause this problem. First, check the phone line itself. If your phones get a dial tone but your modem doesn't, check your modem's connection to the wall jack. Make sure it's tight. If you have an external modem, check your modem's power cable and power supply. If they all check out, you may have too much line noise in your connection, or your modem itself may need to be replaced.

Outlook Settings

My version of Outlook always launches to the Outbox. How can I make it launch to see my daily tasks? To change the option Outlook launches to (for example, daily tasks instead of your outbox), with Outlook 2000, click Tools and Options, click the Other tab, and click the Advanced Options button in the General area. In the Advanced Options dialog box, select Tasks from the Startup In This Folder: drop-down menu. Then click OK and Apply. You can also opt for other startup locations for Outlook (such as Calendar or Contacts), depending on your needs.

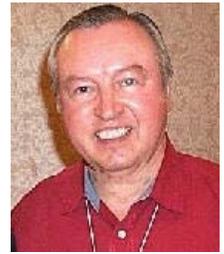
Hotmail Via Outlook

More recent versions of Outlook allow you to set up accounts for your Web-based email. This gives you the convenience of accessing your email anywhere you have Internet access, while still using a standard tool such as Outlook to organize and manage your mail (provided you have your computer with you or follow these instructions on a friend's computer). With Outlook 2002 running, click Tools and E-mail Accounts. Select Add A New E-mail Account and click Next. Choose HTTP and click Next. Enter your Web-based account information (including logon credentials) and click Next. Now click Finish to set up the new account, which appears in the Folder List.

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Backing Up to External Hard Drives

By Gene Barlow, User Group Relations, copyrighted May 2003,
revised July 2007, www.ugr.com, webmaster@ugr.com



Backing up your hard drive: This article is a sequel to one that I wrote last year titled, "[Backing Up Your Hard Drive](#)". I would suggest that you read that article before continuing with this one (you can read all Gene's articles by going to <http://www.ugr.com/TrueImage.html>). This article will cover a new area in backing up hard drives that has opened up in the past year with the introduction of many external hard drive models. Together, these two articles should give you a thorough examination of the important area of backing up your hard drive.

External hard drives are the ideal backup media: While external hard drives have been around for many years, it has not been until the past few months that these devices have become popular and low enough in price that everyone can afford them. The variety of models available today is wide and the choices are many. Hopefully, this article will help you to decide which external hard drive will best fit your needs as a backup device.

There are several ways you can attach an external hard drive to your computer. The two most common ways are USB2 and Firewire. Most computers today are built with USB2 ports. So, if your computer already has a USB2 port that will probably be the best type of external hard drive to buy. Just be careful that the port you have is not one of the older USB1 ports, as these can be very slow. If your desktop computer does not have a USB2 port on it, you can add one for \$20 or so. You can also add a USB2 port to your laptop computer for about \$40 using a PC Card type of device.

If you have a digital video camera and edit your videos on your PC, then you may already have a Firewire port on your computer. This port can also be used to attach an external hard drive to your computer and the performance will be about the same as the USB2 port. You can also add a Firewire port to your desktop or laptop computer for a few dollars more than similar USB2 port additions. Since the performance of these two ports are about the same, the decision comes down to whether

you currently use or plan to use a digital video camera with your computer. If yes, use a Firewire port. If no, then a USB2 port will probably be less expensive to purchase and you will have a few more devices to choose from.

Once you have an attachment to your computer, then you need to shop for an external hard drive. These also come in either a USB2 or Firewire version. Get one to match your attachment port on your computer. You can find 80GB and 120GB external hard drives for \$50 to \$100. Watch the ads and you may find a real good deal on one of these drives. You can purchase external hard drives that are 300GB or larger for a higher price. Again, external Firewire drives will cost you a few dollars more than a USB2 drive of the same size. I would suggest that you get an external hard drive that is

about the same size as your largest hard drive in your computer. That would leave you with plenty of room to backup your main drives to the external hard drive.

You can also find empty external hard drive cases that you can purchase and then mount a standard internal hard drive inside the case. This gives you a couple of advantages. First, you can pick and choose which brand and model hard drive you want to use. A second advantage of getting an external hard drive case is that you can remove the hard drive from the case if anything happens to your main hard drive. Then you can mount it inside your computer and be able to use it like any internal hard drive. It is possible to boot from external hard drives, but this may only work on more recent computer systems. These external hard drive cases also come in both USB2 and Firewire versions and cost about \$40 or so. Since a 80GB internal hard drive will cost less than \$50, the total cost would be about the same or slightly less than buying the combined external hard drives. This way you have a few more options to choose from.

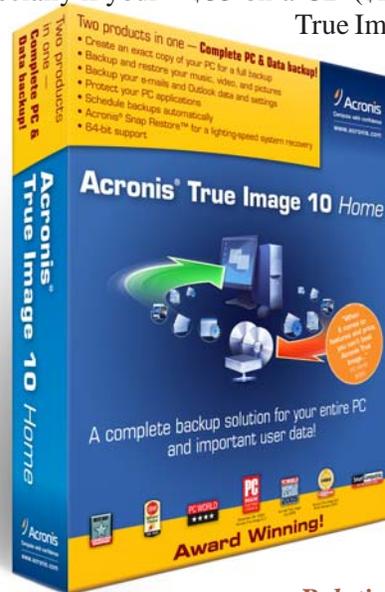
For more information on the differences between USB and Firewire devices, I would suggest you read the February 24, 2003 issue of PC Magazine, which has an excellent article comparing these two attachments.

The problem with external hard drives: While it appears at first glance that an external hard drive is the ideal backup media for your main hard drive, there is one very big problem that you need to be aware of. External hard drives were developed very recently and the



manufacturers of these drives have only provided Windows device drivers for them. They felt that DOS device drivers would not be needed. So, as long as you stay in Windows, you can access your external hard drive. But, if you should ever need to access your external hard drive while running DOS, you would not be able to see the drive or retrieve files from it. This is a serious problem, especially if your main hard drive with Windows on it should crash on you. This may leave you with an external hard drive and the only way to get to it is through DOS.

Using Acronis True Image with external hard drives: Fortunately, True Image does not need to boot into DOS to run, but completes its backup in Windows. If your main hard drive containing your Windows operating system should fail on you, True Image provides a way to boot that will still recognize your external hard drive and be able to restore your image files from these devices. To do this, you would boot from a rescue CD or diskettes that you have created using True Image. This makes rebuilding your main hard drive on an empty drive quick and easy to do.



True Image and external hard drives make an ideal combination: If you follow the steps outlined in this article, you will find that using Acronis True Image and an external hard drive is the ideal combination to do backups. Shop for a good price on external hard drives and order a copy of True Image at the user group discount price of only \$33 on a CD (\$29 as a download). To get your copy of True Image, access our secure web order form at

www.usergroupstore.com. Click on the yellow “Buy Now” button next to the product you wish to purchase. Complete the form including the special price code of UGNL0503. Submit it and your products will be shipped the following morning via US Priority Mail (Global Priority Mail to Canada). You should have your copy of True Image in 2-3 days (slightly more to Canada). I know you will enjoying using Acronis True Image with your external hard drive and you will be able to sleep well knowing that your hard drive is adequately backed up and protected.■

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File Extensions

By Fran Damratowski, Refurbishing SIG Chair, Chesapeake PC Users Group, MD,

www.chesapeakepcusersgroup.org, Refurbishingchesapeakepcusersgroup.org

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Have you ever wondered what the three alphanumeric extension at the end of a file name mean. (MS-DOS required filename to limited to eight characters for the base or root name and three characters for the extension. Windows 95 and above no longer have that limitation.) The three or more letters or numbers are a way for the computer user, software, and operating system to differentiate between and identify the program used to create a file (document, spreadsheet, database, etc.). We are all familiar with .exe for an executable file, .txt for a text document, and .pdf for a PDF file. There are many other file extensions. The same file extension may be used for more than one program. There is no standard or organization for creating file extensions.

Here is a sampling of the B list of some of the extensions and the file types they represent.

- .b!k:** Flight Simulator scenery file
- .b&w:** Atari Black and White Graphics, Atari Black and White Graphics

- .b1s:** BookSmith
- .b3d:** BDE Multipath Movie Digital Viewer, 3D builder
- .b8:** Piclab raw graphic file
- .bad:** Unknown Apple II file, Oracle BAD file.
- bag:** AOL 6 Organizer, <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BAGAOL> instant messenger buddy list, <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BAG>
- Emperor: Battle for Dune Archive, Infinity game engine
- .bak:** backup
- .ban:** Sierra Print Artist banner, Creatacard banner project
- .band:** GarageBand song
- .bar:** Age of Mythology
- .bas:** basic
- .bat:** batch

[File Extensions cont. on page 12](#)

- .bbm:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BBM>
Deluxe Paint image file
- .bcc:** C++ File/Makefile, Calendar Creator 8 Collection, <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BCD>
Turbo Pascal DOS file
- .bch:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BCH>
dBASE application generator batch process object
- .bck:** backup
- .bckp:** Ad-Aware quarantine file
- .bcm:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BCM>
Compaq Easy Access keyboard driver, Works communications file
- .bco:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BCO>
Bitstream Fontware
- .bdc:** West Point Bridge Designer
- .bex:** British National Bibliography file
- .bez:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BEZ>
Bitstream fontware
- .bfn:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BFN>
Brother Embroidery software font
- .bg:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BG> Lotus agenda file
- .bgb:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BGB>
Chat background graphic
- .bib:** bibliography
- .bhf:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BHF>
pcAnywhere host file
- .bif:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BIF>
GroupWise initialization file, <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BIF>
binary information file
- .bin:** binary file; macbinary
- .biz:** Creatacard Business CardpProject, <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BIZ>
PrintMaster Gold Document
- .bks:** Windows 2000 scheduled backup script, Works spreadsheet backup
- .blb:** DreamWorks resource archive
- .bmf:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BMF>
Corel Flow Image File
- .bmk:** Help Bookmark
- .bmp:** bitmap (bit-mapped graphics)
- .bmp24:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BMP24>
bitmap graphic
- .bnk:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BNK>
SimCity game file
- .boo:** book
- .borland:** <http://filext.com/detaillist.php?extdetail=BORLAND>
C Makefile
- .brx:** browse index ound on multimedia CD-ROMs.
- .bsn:** MIDI File
- .btm:** 4NT batch file
- .bw:** black and white image file

If your file extensions are hidden see the March issue of *The Printer* (www.chesapeakepcusersgroup.org) for instructions related to making them visible. ■

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abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Set Up Outlook To Download IMAP & POP Mail

Click Tools and Accounts. Once the dialog box has been displayed, go to the Mail tab and click Add Mail. Follow the prompts, adding the required information. When the Wizard asks you for your email server name, you will need to know whether your email is POP3 or IMAP; select the appropriate option from the drop-down menu. The Incoming server is usually the name of your ISP preceded by POP3 or IMAP (for example, pop3.emailprovider.com or imap.emailprovider.com) and the outgoing (SMTP)

server is normally the ISP name preceded by SMTP (smtp.emailprovider.com). Your ISP will provide you with your incoming and SMTP server information. Your account name is the part of your email address before the @ symbol. After you click finish, you can compose, send, and receive email from Microsoft Outlook.

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Configuring Outlook Express

By Dick Maybach, Columnist, Brookdale Computer User Group (BCUG) Brookdale, NJ,

www.bcug.org, n2nd@att.net

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You can greatly improve your e-mail experience by properly configuring Outlook Express, which is the default Windows e-mail client. Outlook, which is included with MS Office, is a completely different program, but it has a similar user interface for e-mail. The two programs are similar enough that you should have no trouble adapting these procedures to your version. You should modify them as you get more experience with your particular mix of e-mail messages.

By default, Outlook Express has X folders. You should add to these to organize your e-mail messages to make them easier to find in the same way that you organize your file system by using folders there. Set up a separate folder for each major category of e-mail that you send and receive. With Outlook running, click on "File", select "New", and then click on "Folder ...". Put the desired name in the "Name:" box and select "Personal Folders" in the "Select where to place the folder:" box. Move the messages in your Inbox to the appropriate folders. While you're at it, delete any you don't need. You will probably find some messages that don't belong in any folder; just leave these in the Inbox. Consider having Outlook Express empty the Deleted Messages folder every time you exit the program.

You will now set up a series of rules that tell Outlook where to place incoming messages, using the following procedure. Click on the Organize icon and then the Rules Wizard menu item. Click on the New ... button to create a new rule or the Modify... one to change a rule. Assuming you are creating a new rule, the first screen asks you what kind of rule you want, which is usually "Check messages as they arrive." At the bottom of each screen is a window showing the rule as you've defined it so far. You can click on any underlined terms in the rule to change them. (When you are defining a new rule, you must define these before you can go the next screen.) The second screen lets you specify for which conditions you want to test. In the third screen you set what to do with the message, and the fourth one lets you add any exceptions. Finally, name the rule.

First, establish the rules to move incoming messages to the desired folder. Make the following choices for the rules screens. **Screen 1** – "Check messages as they arrive". **Screen 2** – "from people or distribution list". (Select the names from your address book.) **Screen 3** – select both

"move it to the specified folder" and "stop processing more rules". (Click on specified and select an existing folder or create a new one.) – you probably won't need any exceptions. **Screen 5** – give the rule the same name as the folder. Repeat this until you have specified folders for all the people from whom you regularly receive mail.

By default, Outlook indicates junk mail by showing it in gray and adult content in purple. (I love that we use the new-speak term "adult" to describe content that most of us lose interest in by the time we leave adolescence.) To get rid of it, set up the following rule. Screen 1 – "Check messages when they arrive". Screen 2 – "suspected to be junk e-mail or from Junk Senders". (You will see a message asking if this is to be applied to every message you receive; select "Yes".) Screen 3 – "move it to the specified folder", probably "Deleted Items". Screen 4 – no exceptions. Screen 5 – name it "Junk Senders". Repeat this procedure, but for screen 2 select "Containing adult content or from adult content ...".

You will probably find that these filters are not very effective. The following step is quite effective in eliminating spam, but it deletes all messages sent to you on a "copy to" (cc) or "blind copy to" (bcc) list. I use bcc routing on the Roundtable and Hardware SIG meeting notices. Unless you have set up a rule to route messages from me to a folder and then to stop processing other rules, Outlook will delete these meeting notices. Repeat again but select "Where my name is not in the To box" in screen 2. Monitor the results of this rule in case you need to add exceptions. Note also that if you don't have your incoming mailed sent to folders as above, you will need exemptions for every correspondent that uses cc or bcc routing.

If you follow my suggestions, you are sending all suspect e-mail to the Deleted Items folder. On my PC, everything in this folder is erased each time I exit Outlook, which means that you should look before you exit, at least for a month or so. By the way, I find that many such messages attempt to access the Internet when you open them. I think that they are just downloading graphics, but I don't want to take a chance that they are doing something sneaky. After I download my e-mail I disconnect so I can abort such actions. (If you have high-speed access you probably can't easily do this.)

Your last step is to order your rules list. The rules moving the desired e-mail to the correct folders should appear at

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What is PCI Express?

By Brian K. Lewis, PhD, Regular Columnist, The Sarasota PC Monitor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, bwsail@yahoo.com



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Let's start this off with an explanation of PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect). These are the slots in the motherboard of your computer used for connecting peripheral devices directly to computer bus. Now you're asking what is the computer bus? Essentially, the bus is the electrical means for a peripheral device to connect to the computers chipset. The chipset is the interconnection between the peripherals, the main processor and system memory. (Got all that?)

The original PCI bus released in 1992 had a maximum communication rate of 33 MHz. This allows data transmission at a maximum rate of 133 megabytes per second (MB/sec.). The bus is used by such things as the sound system, video card, network adapters, parallel and serial ports.

In the PCI system all data are transmitted in parallel. In parallel transmission many "wires" or connections are required for each PCI slot or integrated device. For example, if you have a 32 bit data transmission path from the PCI slot to the chipset, this requires 32 connecting wires just for data. Additional wires are required for control signals. With six PCI slots you can have more than 1,000 wires required for the connections. Each wire should be exactly the same length so that all the data arrive simultaneously. However, in a computer it is impossible for each wire to be exactly the same length. So as the speed of devices increased, data started arriving out of order. Therefore, the receiver had to delay until all the data were available before it could be processed. Another aspect of PCI is that all the devices share the bus at the same time so the actual data rate per device will be significantly less than the maximum rate. It's like having a speed limit of 65 miles per hour on a multi-lane highway. When all the traffic lanes are full, everything slows down. Think Chicago or Atlanta in rush hour!

Shortly after PCI was introduced, the arrival of 3-D video cards made PCI obsolete for graphics purposes. That resulted in the development of the AGP slot in the motherboard for AGP video cards. AGP uses a separate bus and this freed up bandwidth on the PCI bus for other peripherals. The AGP-8X system can transmit data at the rate of 2.134 gigabytes per second (GB/sec.). In spite of the removal of the data intensive video card transmissions,

the number of high-speed peripherals being added to computers quickly saturated the PCI bus and it remained a data transport bottleneck. Additional problems arise as communication can only be made in one direction at a time. Today, many communications networks utilize bidirectional traffic.

In 2004 the PCI Express (PCIe) bus started showing up on computer motherboards. This is quite different from the original PCI bus and in the strictest definition is not a true bus. It is described as a high performance, scalable, point to point serial bus. Now, that statement requires some further explanation as I'm sure it is not immediately clear to all of you. It certainly wasn't to me the first time I read it.

First, consider the "serial" relationship. In a serial device the data is transmitted in a single stream rather than in several parallel streams. This is like reducing a multi-lane highway to one lane in each direction. That should slow things down instead of speeding it up! But in PCIe the clue is that you now have a point to point relationship. That means the device is connected directly to the chipset and does not have to share bandwidth with other devices. It is like having a high speed commuter corridor that bypasses all the slow traffic on the rest of the multi-lane highway. You may have multiple PCIe connections to the chipset. To prevent problems the connections occur through a system similar to a router. This router passes the data packets from each device in an ordered manner with a minimum of delay and contributes to the speed and accuracy of the transmission. Because this is a point to point connection with each device having its own pathway, this is not a bus under the strict definition of a computer bus. It is also important to note that PCIe transmission occurs in data packets.

The connections are in dual pairs so there is a possibility of a simultaneous bidirectional transmission. One pair is used for transmission and the other for receiving. As mentioned above, data is transmitted in packets, rather than in a continuous stream. Each packet contains an identifier so the data can be reassembled at the receiving end. This allows the receiver to work with multiple inputs. The data is encoded in what is called 8b/10b. This means that eight data bits are packaged with two information



bits in a ten-bit package. (See how much simpler it is to call this 8b/10b?) Also consider that this is the method used for data and voice transmission on the Internet. Hard drives have moved to an SATA interface that is a serial connection instead of the parallel IDE connection. Gigabit ethernet cards are also designed with a serial connection. More devices are moving to serial connectivity to gain additional speed and reliability.

The scalable part of the PCIe bus is in its ability to work with more than one pair of connections. These are called x1 (or times 1), x4, x8 or x16. The x1 version (two data pairs) can transmit the encoded data at a bidirectional rate of 500 MB/s or 250 MB/s in each direction. The x16 version (32 data pairs) can transmit at a rate of 8 GB/s. This is the combined bidirectional rate. The rate in one direction is half this figure. There is a second version of PCIe in the works, PCIe 2.0. This is expected to double the current transmission speeds and provide other benefits.

PCIe slots in the motherboard come in various sizes depending on the number of lanes they use for connection. These vary from the smallest connector for the x1 version to the largest for x16. It is the 16x version that is currently found on new motherboards which supports the latest graphics (video) cards. Unlike the AGP slots, the x16 slot can be used for peripherals other than the video card.

Another interesting aspect of PCIe is one means by which it achieves its high data rates. It is called “low-voltage differential signaling”. Another phrase that I had better explain a little more. As I mentioned earlier, connections occur in a pair of “lanes” in each direction. One of the lanes carries a “positive” image of the data and the other carries a “negative” or “inverted” image. The transmission of the data follows strict rules such that any noise that occurs will affect both lines. When the data is reassembled at the destination, the receiver collects both signals, inverts the negative back to positive and sums both signals. This effectively removes the noise from the signal.

PCIe is also backward compatible with PCI devices and software that uses PCI devices. The configuration space and programmability of PCI Express devices are unchanged from traditional PCI. In fact, all operating systems can boot without modification on a PCI Express architecture. Programs originally written for PCI devices can run unchanged on PCI Express devices because the PCIe layer is transparent to the application software. This provides benefits to users who don’t have to upgrade software applications to work with newer hardware.

PCIe has another characteristic that greatly improves on PCI. It has an active power management (APM) system. When a PCIe link is not in use it does require that the link remain active so that the transmitter and receiver remain synchronized. It is the role of the APM to reduce the power level whenever the link is inactive. The catch is that when

data needs to be transmitted there is a recovery time to allow full activation of the transmitter/receiver. The longer the recovery time, the lower the power usage. Overall, the systems are designed for the lowest power usage with the shortest recovery time.

There is a gradual transition from the motherboard with combined PCIe/PCI slots to those that will have only PCIe slots as more PCIe plug-in cards become available. This will also affect the size of the motherboard and the ultimate size of the computer. The specification for the PCIe mini-card allows for a card half the size of a standard PCI mini-card. Most of these mini-cards may be destined for laptop computers. However, some desktop designs that take advantage of all PCIe input are far smaller than the standard desktop computer. Some of the new small box computers utilize these smaller motherboards.

So when you get your next computer you should now have a better understanding of the role of the PCIe slots it contains.

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

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the top of the list. Since they stop checking other rules after they move a message, they will prevent the spam filter rules from throwing out messages from people with whom you regularly correspond. To do this, click on “Rules Wizard ...” and use the “Move Up” and “Move Down” buttons to sort the rules. You will have to reorder the rules each time you add a new one.

You will probably find that some spam still gets through. You can add to your junk senders list by right clicking on the message, selecting “Junk e-mail, and clicking on “Add to Junk Senders list”. However, many spammers change their e-mail address with each message, making this ineffective. In such cases, see if you can identify the junk in some other way, perhaps by looking for specific words or in one of the fields (address, header, etc.). Keep in mind however, that your goal is not to completely eliminate spam, but to reduce it to a manageable volume. Don’t let yourself become obsessed. ■

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Join Newsgroups With Outlook Express

By Mark Scapicchio, Smart Computing, Windows Tips & Tricks, April 2006, Vol.17, Issue 4,
Page(s) 82-83 in print issue, <http://www.smartcomputing.com>

In PC parlance, the word “newsgroup” is a bit of a misnomer. A **newsgroup** is an online discussion group focused on a particular topic. Because there are tens of thousands of **newsgroups**, together they cover just about every topic under the sun. And because most are frequented by gregarious experts who delight in answering the most vexing questions you can devise, the right newsgroup can be an indispensable resource for solving your toughest problems.

With a couple of carefully chosen keywords, you can quickly filter tens of thousands of downloaded newsgroups to the few that match your interest.

Of course, newsgroups aren't some sort of cyber-utopia. The language is uncensored and can get rough; even the names of some newsgroups aren't for the faint of heart. And not all newsgroup participants are helpful and courteous. Some, in fact, contribute nothing but vile verbal attacks on others who unwittingly ask a silly question or breach newsgroup etiquette (more on that later).

If you decide newsgroup pluses outweigh their minuses, you can use software you already own—Outlook Express—to find, explore, and participate in the newsgroups that interest you most.

Connect To A Newsgroup Server

To start using newsgroups, you first need to find a newsgroup server. It's highly likely that your **ISP** (Internet service provider), the company from which you get your Internet access, has its own newsgroup server you can connect to at no additional charge. To find out if your ISP has a newsgroup server, visit your ISP's Web site or call its customer service line. In the unlikely 

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group

Membership Application/Renewal *

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event that your ISP doesn't have a newsgroup server, you can subscribe to a newsgroup server for prices as low as \$6 per month: Just type **newsgroup servers** into Google (www.google.com) or Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) for a long list of providers.

Get the address for your newsgroup server (typically something such as newsgroups.ispname.net). Then start Outlook Express. Choose Tools and Accounts, select the News tab, and click the Add button. Or, if Outlook Express displays its Welcome page at startup, just click Set Up A Newsgroup Account.

When the Internet Connection Wizard appears, enter the name you want to appear in your newsgroup postings—this can be your real name or a nickname—and click Next. Type the address you'd like people to use when they contact you via email (which they will do when they want to send a message to you alone, so the rest of the group can't see it) and click Next. Enter the name of your newsgroup server; if your newsgroup server requires you to log on using a username and password—and most will—select the box below and click Next. In the Account Name and Password fields, insert the appropriate information. In the unlikely event that your provider requires secure password authentication, select the corresponding box below. Click Next and then Finish.

A box should appear and ask if you'd like to download newsgroup servers from the account you just created; click Yes. As the dialog box warns, downloading all the available newsgroups—there are tens of thousands of them—takes a little time, so be patient.

Find, Subscribe & Start Reading

When Outlook Express finishes downloading all the newsgroups, the Newsgroups Subscriptions dialog box appears, listing every single one of those newsgroups on the All tab. Find the groups that focus on topics that interest you. In the Display Newsgroups Which Contain box, enter (in lower case) one or two keywords related to your topic of interest. (The search is case-sensitive, and because all newsgroup names are in lower case, keywords in upper case will yield no results.) For example, to find newsgroups for Microsoft Publisher, we typed **microsoft publisher**. After you enter the keywords, the All list displays a short list of groups meeting your criteria.

Scan the list for newsgroups to which you'd like to subscribe. (You can always unsubscribe from any newsgroup you don't like.) You can rule out some lists by name. For example, because we don't speak Japanese, German, Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch, we were able to rule out the groups containing the initials jp, de, es, fr, it, and nl. And because we're not programmers, we were able to rule out microsoft.public.publisher.programming and so on. To subscribe to a newsgroup, select it and click Subscribe; an icon will appear next to that newsgroup.

[Join a Newsgroup cont. on page 16](#)

Join a Newsgroup cont. from page 15

Repeat for each newsgroup to which you want to subscribe and then click OK. Your newsgroup server and newsgroups appear in Outlook Express' Folders list.

To start browsing a newsgroup, click its name in the folder list. In a second or two, the right pane will fill with the most recent 300 **headers**, or original posts, in the newsgroup list. (If you want to load more or fewer headers, choose Tools and Options, click the Read tab, and under News, set Get To A Higher Or Lower Number, and click OK.) Headers with a plus sign (+) next to them indicate a thread of responses beneath; click it to expand and view the thread. To read any post, double-click it just as you would an email, and the post appears in its own window. (We recommend against using the Preview pane when browsing newsgroup posts because it requires you to click a link before viewing the post, which defeats the purpose and convenience of a preview. If your Preview pane is open, choose View and then Layout, deselect Show Preview Pane, and click OK.)

Once you open the first post in a thread, you can save yourself a lot of clicking and a litter of open windows by using the Next and Previous buttons to navigate to the next and previous messages, respectively.

Ready To Post . . . Almost

Once you start perusing posts in a thread, you'll probably have the urge to respond with your own wisdom or your own questions. Resist the urge. One of the cardinal rules of newsgroup etiquette is that one should not ask a question that someone else has already asked, especially if someone has answered that question. When you first subscribe to a newsgroup, it's best to read all the posts thoroughly before making a post or reply of your own. To be extra sure that your question hasn't been answered, you may want to run a quick search over the postings you've downloaded: Click the arrow next to the Find button,

choose Message In This Folder, enter appropriate keywords, check Search All Text In All Downloaded Messages, and click Find Next. Outlook Express will highlight the first post it finds containing your keywords; press F3 to go to each successive post containing the keywords.

To be even more thorough—and to avoid getting anyone's dander up with your first post—you can take the extra step of searching the entire newsgroup, beyond what you've downloaded. A great tool for doing this is Google Groups,

a free service that, though still in the beta test phase, has pretty much become a staple for newsgroupies. To use it, surf to groups.google.com/advanced_search. In the With All Of The Words field, enter your keywords, set the adjacent drop-down to 50 or 100 messages, and in the Group box, enter the name of

your newsgroup and click Google Search. Google will return all the posts that contain your keywords, and you can click to see if your question has already been answered.

When you are ready to post, you have three choices. To introduce a new discussion header, click the New Post button, enter a subject, enter your message, and click Send. To reply to a post with another post, first open the post, click Reply Group, enter your reply, and click Send. To send a private reply to the author of the post, click Reply. A warning box will appear because you're trying to access Outlook Express' email functionality, something a virus might try to do; check Allow Access For, choose a time, and click Yes. Type your response and click Send.

So long as you're considerate of fellow newsgroupies' time and feelings—and have a thick enough skin to ignore the few who aren't—you'll find your newsgroups to be some of the best sources of information online. ■

Once you've subscribed to your newsgroups, choose any one from Outlook Express' folder list (left pane): click the plus sign (+) next to any header posting to reveal all the replies in the thread.

Editors note: *In Vista, Microsoft built-in email client is called Windows Mail and Outlook Express no longer exists.*

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P.O. Box 2866

Napa, California 94558-0286

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