

SacraBlue®

The Magazine of the Sacramento PC Users Group

Number 256

November 2003

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Sacra Blue, Issue 256 was edited in Microsoft Word 97 then output to PDF format using Adobe Acrobat 5.0.

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Educating the Luddite

PC Alamode, July 2003, Alamo PC Organization

by K. Joyce McDonald

Luddite isn't exactly the term I'm looking for, but I can't think of anything more accurate. The part of the term Luddite that refers to sabotaging technology does not necessarily apply, although one might do it unwittingly by misunderstanding the technology rather than fearing or despising it.

Thus, Luddite is a reasonably accurate term to describe myself in relation to my newest high-tech toys. Ignorance certainly played a part, as did the possibility of using the technology wrongly. The annoyance that comes with misunderstanding a technology might have even led to acts of sabotage.

So call me a Luddite. Call me a dummy. Maybe even call me a fool. But if I'm a fool, what would you call the person who hasn't owned three Palm devices, three cell phones, ten computers and a hybrid wired/wireless home network? Judge for yourself from the following confession.

Every few months I get e-commerce itch. The only cure for E. C. Itch involves visiting a technology Web site and ordering something new for my office or road warrior armory. I had in mind a dictionary for my Palm M130 and a graduation gift for my daughter, Laura, who recently finished her Master's degree at UCLA. Lucky for me, the Palm Website offered the dictionary as a free gift with the purchase of an M130, exactly what I wanted for Laura.

In addition, I wanted a small expansion card, also for my Palm. Sixteen MB would suffice, since that is twice the size of the standard memory in an M130. The expansion card, I was pleased to note, came with a freebie called a Bonzai USB Mini Drive. I had read about key-fob sized drives, so I was eager to try one.

When the items arrived, I checked the dictionary and expansion card for my own M 130. It took about two minutes to figure them out, after which I loaded my library of books and Palm Reader onto the expansion card, freeing up about five megabytes of main memory. I moved my e-books one-by-one over to the card. When you have an e-library of sixty volumes, this process can be tedious.

After I moved my books, I moved the Palm Reader, which promptly moved all of my books with it, overwriting the ones that I had previously moved. Nothing was damaged but my pride and the laundry, which wasn't getting done while I was moving the sixty volumes.

Next, I opened the package that held the Bonzai drive. The drive came with no documentation at all, not even an advertising card with a picture of the drive. The package included a small key-fob sized drive, a USB extension cable, and a lanyard (I'll get to that in a minute.)

I had read that a USB drive has only to be plugged into a USB port in order for your computer to recognize it. So I plugged it into the USB port on my laptop. XP recognized the hardware immediately and loaded the drivers. But I couldn't find the drive anywhere in My Computer or Windows Explorer.

I moved the Bonzai over to my old Win98 desktop. Here, Win98 prompted me to download the drivers, an easy task with a cable Internet connection. After the drivers were loaded, however, the Windows 98 system didn't display the Bonzai as a drive either.

I finally opened the tiny door to the Bonzai drive and took a look inside. The drive looked like it was supposed to have a media card in it, but it was empty. I checked out the Bonzai drive customer support web page. I downloaded the instructions manual and read the parts list. The Bonzai drive was supposed to come with a media card.

Why would someone ship an empty drive? It didn't make sense to me unless this was part of an elaborate scheme to sell the media cards (which are not cheap). I was composing an irritated letter in my head to fire off to Palm when I took another look at the drive.

The slot in the drive looked about the size of one of the Palm cards. I thought about inserting one in the tiny bay, but if the two weren't compatible, one, or perhaps both, could get fried. Back on the Simple Tech Website, I looked at the specs for the Bonzai drive. It took SD (Secure Digital) and Multimedia Cards. On the Palm Website, I looked at the specs for the expansion card. The Palm

expansion card was an SD card. Ergo, it should work in my Bonzai drive.

My clumsy hands had a certain amount of difficulty inserting the postage-stamp sized card into the drive. A younger less-Luddite would have no difficulty. After inserting the card, I plugged the Bonzai into my USB drive and got... nothing. At this point, I read the manual. I admit, even people who write manuals don't read them until they have to.

After rebooting my computer, as instructed, I inserted the Bonzai drive again. Its contents immediately popped up on My Computer and Windows Explorer as the E: drive (the DVD drive being D:). I could see all the files that I had loaded onto the drive via my M130. I could also save this article to the Bonzai drive. The drive had a little more room, but anything else I put there would take away space needed for my Palm library, in case 60 volumes isn't enough.

That mystery solved, I fooled around with my expansion card for a while. Then I began to put my toys away. At this point, the lanyard drew my attention. You probably already know what a lanyard is, but since this particular column is aimed at novices, I'll explain further. A lanyard has replaced the pocket protector as de rigueur geek fashion. It is a cable of a width somewhere between a belt and a shoestring, usually made from fabric with a company or favorite team logo applied. The cable is worn around the neck with a clip to hold the ID badge required by many companies. Simple Tech has adapted this technology to another purpose: a convenient way to carry your Bonzai drive. The Bonzai drive on its lanyard might even be a convenient place to carry your SD card, since the card tends to run the battery down if you keep it in your PDA - something else I learned the hard way.

I also learned another down side to miniature devices. I was digging through some past copies of my local user group's newsletter. I didn't find what I wanted, so I closed the file drawer and went on about writing. An hour or so later, I couldn't find my Bonzai drive. Since the expansion card and drive cover were on my desk, I wouldn't, even in a senior moment, have carried it off

somewhere. My husband and I spent a considerable amount of time crawling around on the floor under my desk without finding it.

After a while, I realized that I had been looking through my newsletters when last I saw the drive. I opened the file drawer, where it sat, on top of the files. I can be thankful that it didn't slip down between the folders and become a tiny capsule of technology suspended in time, to be later

discovered as an artifact reminiscent of a remote past when we carried our files on enormous, postage-stamp sized media.

So now this Luddite is educated, perhaps a bit late, in the workings of SD media technologies, and also that those tiny buggers are easy to lose. I read recently that technology is getting so smart that it is outsmarting most of us. It's certainly ahead of me. I was mulling this concept over the dishwasher,

wondering if I had been too hasty to dismiss in a past article the idea of an Internet fridge and clothes washer. With current technology as it is, a surgeon in Los Angeles can use a remote robotic arm to operate on a patient in Anchorage. It is comforting to think that when I'm too much of a Luddite to run my own dishwasher, someone across the Internet can do it for me.

Safari: Read Books Online

The Outer Edge, August 2003, Channel Islands PC User Group

by Toby Scott

The Internet is a wonderful medium for distributing free information - including free information with attached advertising. What has not been worked out yet is how to distribute information for a fee. If you know what books you want to order, you can get them from Amazon.com or a dozen other booksellers. But how do you browse books online? More importantly, how can you get the information from online books without having to order the book itself? Lots of books get outdated so quickly that we don't really want to buy them only to throw them out a year or two later. Up to now there has been no easy answer to how to get rapidly outdated reference books online - much less how to find the information you want or figure out which title has the information you want. Until now.

O'Reilly & Associates has devised an ingenious program called "Safari," which solves most of the problems related to online reference books. O'Reilly publishes some of the best computer books on the market (they have been a long-time supporter of user groups). They have teamed up with Microsoft Press and Pearson Technology Group (publishers of Addison-Wesley, Sam's, New Riders, Que, Adobe Press, Cisco Press and Alpha among others) to make 1,400 titles of computer books available to users.

Yearly subscriptions to Safari range from \$110 to \$330 to access these titles (more on pricing later). Here's how it works:

Use the Safari search engine to get a list of titles that include substantial material on your search properties. Browse those books. Initially, you'll be taken to an excerpt from the book regarding your search, but you'll also get the full Table of Contents and Index, plus the first couple of paragraphs of each chapter. After reviewing several books, select the one you want and add it to your Bookshelf. You now can read the entire book. Anytime you want to stop reading for a while, set a bookmark so you come back to the same place when you resume reading - also handy for keeping track of important material you want to go back to. The act of adding a book to your bookshelf is what allows the publisher and author of the title to get paid. Once you select a book, you must leave it in your bookshelf for a month. The \$110 per year subscription allows you to have a total of five titles in your bookshelf at a time, while the \$330 allows you to have thirty. There are quite a few options between the two: Go to <http://safari.oreilly.com> for details on pricing. The important thing is, that by forcing you to "buy" the book for 30 days, they can afford to pay royalties to the publisher and author. Keep it longer and they receive more.

I have thrown out dozens of computer books over the years and currently have on my shelf at home about 15 titles for which I have paid considerably more than a subscription to Safari would have cost. As long as Safari is around, I doubt I'll buy another computer book. Oh sure, it is easier to read paper than a monitor, but everything else is more convenient online. Ever try to click on a URL in a book? Worse is to type long URLs from a book into a browser to go to a specific page on a Web site. And how about those CDs glued to the inside back cover? Ever lose one? Ever run the program and receive an error? The authors I have read so far have Web sites that have all the data that would have been in the CD, but with all the corrections that other readers have suggested. Everything there is live and up-to-date. And most have message boards where readers can discuss issues from the book. Sometimes the interaction with other readers is more valuable than the book itself.

Even if you aren't a consumer of computer books, I urge you to give Safari a try. They have a free two-week trial to Safari for User Groups. Browse around and see if you don't agree that Safari is an excellent model for how to provide information for pay online.

Wireless From Your Neighbors

The Chronicles, October 2003, Palmetto PC Club

by Steve Bass

One of Steve Bass' correspondents:

From Toggle.org

I received a service request last week from a San Marino residential client that I hadn't seen in almost a year. He said he was having minor problems with his old PC and two recently added PC's and asked me to come over and clean things up. Upon arrival he added that he had installed a wireless network about six months ago and that it worked well but had frequent dropouts.

Network Name

While addressing the primary issues, I was surprised to see that his network was named "apple-something" and no one in the family seemed to know why. As an experiment, I unplugged the power from their wireless base-station and, you guessed it, everything kept working. They had been tapping into a neighbor's network for over six months and didn't realize it.

Another Network

Suddenly they remembered that the original name had "default" so I reset everything to "default" and it worked great until I realized that I still hadn't plugged in their base-station. They were now on a second neighbor's network. There's a lot more to this but you get the point – lazy users, confusion, and a complete lack of security. BTW, I brought up the second neighbor's routers in my client's browser and, since they hadn't changed the default login, was able to look at all of their settings. Of particular interest was the DHCP table that showed twenty-five (25) assigned addresses. The poor guy who owns the system is providing connections to everyone on the block and is no doubt clueless as to why he has such low bandwidth. Steve Gibson of grc.com commented: Isn't that a hoot?!

What's Not a Hoot ...

is wireless networking. Wireless networking makes me extremely uneasy. I don't use it and, despite the appearance

of extreme convenience, I doubt I ever will. It's too much like running a connection from your network's hub or router out into the front yard with a sign saying: "Come on over and plug in." There's little difference, since a wireless network is broadcasting just such invitation.

It may be theoretically possible to make it safe, I'm not saying that it's not. But it's also (obviously) theoretically possible to make absolutely 100% bug-free software. But we all know how unlikely and how apparently difficult that is. With code built upon code built upon code, and few people writing anything from scratch anymore, and with critical bugs being found in widely used core libraries, no rational personal who understands the complex nature of security would trust wireless networking.

I don't, and my standing advice is: Use it if you really must, but never trust it, and don't use it unless you truly would not mind running a wire out into the front yard connected to your system.

Chapter Reports

The Orangevale/Folsom Chapter Report

Meeting Notes by Mike Evans
October 23, 2003

The Orangevale-Folsom chapter was honored this month to host a Microsoft Corp. presentation introducing MS Office 2003. Microsoft approached the chapter officers in August about the possibility of presenting the newest version of their ubiquitous software suite at our regularly scheduled October meeting two days after the official release of the program on October 21. Our chapter was only too happy to oblige and arrangements have been underway since then. Fortunately, the Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church where we regularly meet has an outstanding



facility to accommodate such events and church officials quickly gave their approval.

About 99 members and guests showed up for the meeting and each received a ¾" thick Microsoft Press "First Look Microsoft Office 2003" book, a nice mechanical ink pen and a raffle ticket at the door. Chapter president Dennis

Richardson welcomed the large crowd and took the opportunity to explain the club's purpose and scope for the benefit of those new to our meetings.

We normally begin with a brief attempt to help members troubleshoot a vexing problem or two and despite the excited anticipation of the Microsoft portion of the meeting, we decided to take a few queries and let the visitors get a feel for how the group functions. After a couple of interesting questions concerning a balky CD/RW writer (possible ASPI layer problem) and one concerning the effect of emptying the Pre-fetch folder in Windows (emptying it would help speed up the computer), we turned our attention to the podium and readied ourselves for the good stuff.

Richard Katz is well known to SPCUG members, as he has been a frequent presenter for various other software manufacturers. Always entertaining, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic, he's an



engaging speaker who brings great energy and self-deprecating humor to his efforts. Tonight was no exception either, and he had only ninety minutes to take a whirlwind tour of the software programs that make up the Office Suite: Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook 2003, Microsoft Publisher, and OneNote. In passing, Richard informed us that Publisher is now back in the office suite, after being left out of Office XP, replacing FrontPage. He also let us know that he wasn't going to show off Microsoft Access for lack of time.

Richard started with Microsoft Word and explained that the task panes that were initially used in Word XP have been given even greater functionality in the 2003 version. Demonstrating, he showed how the panes could access both the local computer and the Internet to conduct research, search the Internet, or even secure help with a feature problem. Several other nifty features were also displayed, for example, the Document Protection and Document Recovery functions which in the former case allow

various levels of document security to be applied in server environments, and document recovery which allows the user to recover in the event of a crash or sudden loss.

From Word, Richard made a quick tour of Excel and then jumped to the latest version of Outlook. He knew from a show of hands that a great majority of those present used Outlook for email, address book, and other PDA functions, so the audience's rapt attention was expected. The features he demonstrated were those that were obvious changes and embellishments from those earlier versions and included the side-by-side view when the preview pane was activated rather than the top/bottom view in earlier versions.

When we got to Publisher, Richard gleefully demonstrated the myriad of



templates included in the package and sped through the interconnectedness of the Microsoft programs, designing a web page in Publisher, opening it in Word, and sending it on, ultimately, to FrontPage for publishing. And, leaving his best tricks for last, he hurriedly demonstrated OneNote, a software

program that allows you to annotate documents and then organize and manage your notes. OneNote works like a paper notebook on a digital device. Notes can be moved, rearranged, or customized in anyway and filed in folders for retrieval. This application seems ideal for

conferences, classrooms, and brainstorming sessions.

The presentation over, all that remained was giving away a box full of prizes Microsoft had sent along for the evening. Drawings were held and lucky ticket holders claimed five copies of Office 2003, one copy of FrontPage one copy of Visio, one



copy of Publisher, one copy of OneNote, an Xbox game machine and a MP3 player. And, as usual, there were plenty of Microsoft t-shirts, 30 for those who didn't have one of the lucky numbers for the main prizes. The drawing over, the audience presented Richard with a round of well deserved applause and many thanks to him and to Microsoft for the opportunity to preview this new release.

The Orangevale chapter of the SPCUG normally meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, but the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays conflict with the meet dates so the group traditionally combines those meetings into one and hold it on the first Thursday of December. This year's meeting will be held December 4th at our usual meeting place, the Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church at 11427 Fair Oaks Blvd. More information about the meeting can be found on the chapter's home web page at <http://ofpcug.tripod.com>

Home Wireless, Easy Access

The Chronicles, October 2003, Palmetto PC Club

by Merle Nicholson

Tampa PC Users Group

I've added wireless capability to put my notebook wirelessly on my home network. I can use the notebook anywhere inside my house and in my back yard, too. My spouse wants me to test it in the detached garage. I haven't asked why yet.

I've had a home network for several years and been very happy with its features and functions. I've had Roadrunner Internet access for several years. I managed to be on the RR network soon after it was available in Tampa, and I quickly set up my home network with Sygate Internet-sharing software, similar to the Windows Internet sharing that is now available. A year or so ago I replaced the Internet sharing with a Linksys Cable/DSL router, and I've been very happy with it, especially for its built-in firewall. It has a four-port switch to handle my network. I do have an older hub attached to provide a couple more ports.

The hardware firewall in the Linksys is wonderful. I was able to remove my software firewall and greatly improve the performance of that PC.

I have four hardwired computers in my home. One, my oldest, just manages my telephone now as its only function. It had served other functions over time, like holding online backups, and it originally did the Sygate Internet access. It's just a P-166. Its function now is to answer and hang up on anyone calling in with an unknown caller ID. It blocks people and businesses that we have identified and announces who is calling for everyone we do know. I love the hang-up part.

Then my wife and I each have our personal computers, and I have a Windows 2000 machine now collecting online backups from all the other machines and running my SQL Server. But we also have a one-year-old notebook that is mostly unconnected.

When I want to update Windows or anti-virus signatures or move files from other computers, I set it up on my office workbench where I have a spare network cable to the hub. It came home to me that I needed to improve it when I was watching the Wimbledon tennis matches in the living room, that I had a lot of down time that I could be using productively if only I had my notebook. I have a couple of software projects going on that I'd like to be working on. So wireless is the way to go if I can get it cheaply enough.

I felt that since I don't have an overpowering reason to do this, I needed to do it cheaply. That eliminated the new high-speed 'G' systems. So it had to be the older '801.11b' 11Mbps system because I can find them on sale right now. I got a D-Link Cable/DSL router for \$40 after rebates and a NetGear for \$30 outright, no rebates, both from Office Depot. No other costs except sales taxes.

The Router:

The router I got was not ideal. Remember that I have a Linksys router, and I don't want to disturb it. The ideal device is a 'Wireless Access Point' device. An Access Point is designed to do exactly what I need; add wireless to my network. But guess what – they're \$100! No way! So I got this wireless router.

How I Hooked It Up:

The new router has a 'Wan' port where you are supposed to connect the cable from your DSL or cable modem. I've left this empty. It has four switched ports where you can plug in Ethernet cables to hardwire computers directly. I picked one of these ports and cabled it to a similar port on the Linksys router, using a crossover cable. The port I picked on the Linksys is the one I was using for the hub. I disconnected and retired the hub. So I have six ports for computers now, three on each of the routers because the

interconnect cable between them uses one each.

It doesn't work... yet:

OK, right off, some of the network isn't working. So I have to fix it. The problem is, I have two competing routers. A router's function is to provide firewall protection and also to be a DHCP server. A DHCP server assigns an internal IP address to each of your computers, and you can't have two doing this at the same time. Also, both routers have the same fixed IP address. You access the router's setup with any web browser. The only PC working was the one that was hard cabled to the new router. The first thing I did was change the new router's fixed IP address. Then I started disabling stuff in the setup. The most important thing was to disable DHCP. Then each of the computers worked after releasing and renewing each computer's IP address using either Winipcfg (Win 98/ME) or IPConfig (WinXP and Win2000).

Finally:

It really works well. 11Mbps really is fast enough. Internet access is still very fast. When I think about it, my network started out to be 10Mbps and bumped up to 100Mbps only a year ago when I bought the Linksys. I replaced the PC network cards to 10/100 about the same time. The only problem I have is that, for the moment I don't know the IP address of the new router, so I can't configure it any further if I wanted to without resetting it. I don't know why this is, but my guess is that it doesn't have one any longer. I accessed the configuration of the Linksys and looked at the DHCP client list. All the computers were there. I don't see any practical disadvantage since the new router has an external reset switch that will set everything to the factory defaults and I can start over again.

Upgrading or Clean Install

by Michael Horowitz

Both Have Positives Windows Up Grade Options

Introduction by Fred Langa of LangaList
(<http://www.langalist.com>)

This is a change of pace- a letter so complete and detailed, it's almost an entire feature in itself. It's from Plus! Subscriber- and computing instructor Michael Horowitz (thanks, Michael!), and contains a wealth of great info, especially on two lesser-known upgrade options.

I'm personally more in favor of clean installs than Michael is. As Michael says, a clean install can be a good choice if the version of Windows you're upgrading has problems, because a clean install is a fresh start- none of those problems get carried over to the new setup. I like clean installs because, in my experience, almost all versions of Windows that have been in use any significant length of time do have problems. Even if your current version of Windows seems to be OK, there's a good chance that something isn't right, somewhere in the system. A clean install gives you a fresh start, no matter what.

But if you follow Michael's wonderfully detailed advice, you'll see that there's more than one way to accomplish a clean install; and that clean installs are just one of several options. Michael, take it away:

When considering installing a new version of Windows on a computer, the first issue is whether your computer is fast enough for the new operating system. Microsoft and others publish both minimum and recommended horsepower (CPU speed, installed ram and available hard disk space). You can learn about the horsepower requirements for XP at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp>.

The second issue is whether your software and hardware is supported by this version of Windows. Microsoft publishes a Hardware Compatibility List (<http://www.microsoft.com/hcl>) where you can see if Windows is supported on your computer. In addition, you should

<http://www.sacpcug.org>

check your printer, scanner and other hardware to see if there are drivers for the new version of Windows. This is especially of concern when moving from a Windows 9x family OS to an NT-class version of Windows (NT4, 2000, XP).

Software also has compatibility issues. Not all software runs on all flavors of Windows. Any software that you want to continue to use should be checked to make sure it is compatible with the new version of Windows. Windows XP was the first version of Windows to address this issue. It has a feature that attempts to fake out a program so that it thinks it is running under an older version of Windows.

If you decide to install a new version of Windows, the next issue is how. Most people discuss two options. There are actually four ways to run a new version of Windows on your computer.

A new version of Windows can be installed as either an upgrade of an older existing copy of Windows or on a new empty hard disk. An upgrade install places the new copy of Windows on top of the old copy. A clean install puts the new copy of Windows on your computer as if the old copy never existed. There are pros and cons to each approach.

Upgrade installation

Con: You lose the old copy of Windows. It is clobbered by the new copy being installed over it. Should there be any problems with the new copy of Windows, you can't fall back to your tried and true old copy. **Con:** Compared to a clean installation, an upgrade install is more likely to cause problems in the future. It's complicated, in a world where simpler is better. **Pro:** Your existing applications, data and settings remain more or less unchanged.

Clean installation

Con: You lose not only the old copy of Windows, but everything that was previously on your computer - all your data and all your applications. Obviously this requires that you first back up all your data files. Don't forget any files. If you fail to back up a file it is lost forever. It is easy to forget that email or an address book also needs to be backed up.

Pro: From a technical perspective, a clean installation is simpler and less likely to cause problems in the future compared to an upgrade installation. Con: It requires re-installing all applications and customizing things from scratch. An upgrade installation is not always an option. It depends on the old and new versions of Windows. The rules for Windows XP are presented later.

Also, you should not do an upgrade installation if the old version of Windows is having problems. If your motivation for a new copy of Windows is to fix problems with the old version, then do a clean installation of either your current version of Windows or a new version.

Further complicating things is the fact that many (most) copies of Windows that you buy in a retail store are not designed for a clean install. They are referred to as "upgrade" copies. Upgrade versions of Windows are much cheaper than "full" versions but are only for people who already own a prior copy of Windows. For example, the upgrade version of Windows XP Home Edition is under \$100, the full version is \$200 (as of February 2003). The upgrade version of Windows XP Professional sells for about \$200, the full version is about \$400. Upgrade versions of Windows are intended to be used to upgrade an old version of Windows. They require proof of ownership of a previous version of Windows. When you do an upgrade installation, the proof of ownership comes from the old version of Windows found on your computer. For a clean installation, you need to provide a CD-ROM from the earlier version of Windows as proof of ownership. Even though you own a previous version of Windows, you may not have a CD-ROM to provide as proof. Many computer manufacturers stopped providing this years ago. Instead they provide only a recovery CD-ROM.

It is safe to say that both the upgrade installation and clean installation are poor choices. There are two other options that offer none of the downsides previously mentioned. These next two options let you run both the old and the new version of Windows on the same computer.

The downside to these alternative approaches is that they require some technical skill and additional software.

The third alternative lets you run either the old or the new version of Windows, but only one at a time. When the computer starts up (boots) you are presented with a choice of which version of Windows to run. The fourth alternative lets you run both the old and new versions of Windows concurrently!

A Third Alternative

Installing two versions of Windows on one computer is done by giving each its own dedicated partition. The old copy of Windows remains where it is, but its partition will likely have to be shrunk. The new copy of Windows is installed in a different, new partition. The vast majority of personal computers have a single partition whose size is the full size of the hard disk. In this case, this single partition has to be shrunk and a new partition created in the free space.

This approach is referred to as multiboot or dual-boot or side-by-side installation. The terms refer to the fact that you can boot (techie speak for “start up”) either of two versions of Windows.

No version of Windows comes with software that can non-destructively resize a partition. This requires a commercial product, known generically as “partitioning” software. Among the available software is Partition Magic from PowerQuest, Partition Commander from V-Communications, Partition Expert from Acronis, and Partition Manager from Paragon Software. There is also a free program, Ranish Partition Manager, but the user interface is said to be very difficult, and for a job like this, it is better to have technical support available. Note that resizing a partition is potentially a dangerous thing. Always back up your most important files first and run a full disk check beforehand.

Also, this approach requires more hard disk space than either a clean install or an upgrade install. After all, two separate and independent versions of Windows reside on the computer. Be sure to check the amount of available space on the hard disk before even considering this approach. In general, figure on two gigabytes of disk space.

It is also possible to add a second hard disk to a computer and have each hard disk dedicated to one version of Windows. The advantage to this

approach is that it can save the cost of partitioning software. In fact, a large enough hard disk can be had for roughly the same price as the partitioning software. The general approach of having different versions of Windows installed in different partitions can be used with any two versions of Windows.

The advantages of this are many. You can fall back and use the old OS if the new version of Windows causes trouble. You can migrate to the new version of Windows gradually rather than in big bang. Software and/or hardware that is not supported in the new version of Windows can be run from the old one. Also, the new version of Windows is installed cleanly which means it’s less likely to experience problems.

The down side is that it requires a reasonable amount of technical skill to set up. However, if the old version or the new version is from the Windows NT family, and there is an available partition for the new version of Windows, then the new version of Windows has some crude, but usable features for managing the two versions of Windows.

During installation of the new version of Windows, the old version will be detected. Thereafter, the new version of Windows will offer a list (menu) of Windows instances on the computer at start-up time. You get to choose which copy of Windows to run every time the computer starts up. I am not a big fan of this approach however.

For one thing, the description of the older version of Windows is sometimes wrong. Also, files get installed in the partition where the older version of Windows resides. If the time ever comes that you want to get rid of the old version of Windows, it is very difficult. Finally, one copy of Windows sees the files that constitute the other copy – an accident just waiting to happen.

A far better approach is keep each copy of Windows totally separate, distinct and unaware of the other copy of Windows. This way, a problem in one copy of Windows cannot affect the other one. Also, each copy of Windows can be re-installed, removed or upgraded with no effect on the other copy. On their own, the NT-class versions of Windows cannot keep two copies of Windows totally isolated from each other.

There are also software programs that manage multiple copies of Windows on a single computer. The most popular such

program is System Commander from V-Communications. It offers a list of operating systems that you can chose from each time you start the computer. The software is easier to deal with than the corresponding features in the NT-class versions of Windows.

However, multi-boot software such as System Commander costs money and can be confusing to install. Also, it gets in the way of the normal Windows startup process, so if Windows fails to boot, debugging is all the more difficult. I’m not sure if it can keep each copy of Windows totally separate. Total isolation of each copy of Windows requires up-front planning to hide the partition with the old version of Windows. At the time the new version of Windows is installed, the computer thus appears to have an empty hard disk. This worked better with the 9x versions of Windows. Windows 2000 and XP will see the hidden partition at install time, but they can be directed to ignore it both at install time and after the fact.

You can have total isolation of each OS, a 100% normal boot process (i.e. no multi-boot software) and still run either OS. The trick is a program called PQBoot, included with PartitionMagic, which has to be installed in each copy of Windows. The computer will always boot to the last used OS. If this is not the OS you want to run, PQBoot can be run to shut down the current OS, hide its partition, and boot the other OS. There are DOS and Windows versions of PQBoot. The DOS version supports command line switches. In the best case scenario, there can be an icon on the desktop that invokes the DOS version of PQBoot to shut down the current version of Windows and start up the other version. Data files can be made visible to each OS by placing them in a logical partition within an extended partition. PQBoot makes no changes to logical partitions. Of course, this data partition has to be formatted with a file system (FAT16, FAT32, NTFS) supported by both versions of Windows.

Finally, there is yet another totally different approach. Providing the best of all possible worlds, this approach lets you run both the old and the new version of Windows at the same time.

This is done using “virtual machine” software. Two companies offer this software for home use, VMware (<http://www.vmware.com>) and Connectix

(<http://www.connectix.com>). They vary in the flavors of Windows they support and in cost. VMware costs \$330, Virtual PC from Connectix is \$230. (Connectix was acquired by Microsoft in March 2003.) These products are installed on the current version of Windows (known as the host OS), just like any other software. When you run them initially, you create a Virtual Machine with a virtual hard disk and virtual RAM. You install a new copy of Windows (known as a guest OS) inside the Virtual Machine. Virtual Machines are logically powered on and off, simulating a real computer. Powering a Virtual Machine on/off is somewhat akin to opening and closing a document with a word processing program.

There is no limit to the number of Virtual Machines you can define and use other than the hard disk space on your computer. The speed of your CPU and the amount of RAM in your computer limit the number of Virtual Machines that be run concurrently. When a Virtual Machine is running, the interface to it is a normal Windows window, which can be minimized and maximized. The virtual machine is just another running application: You can switch between a virtual machine and other applications in the usual way. VMware offers a full screen mode making it really look like a real computer.

VMware and Virtual PC have limitations on the versions of Windows they can be installed onto and the versions of Windows (and Linux) that

can be installed in a Virtual Machine. In addition, the guest OS may have limitations that prevent it from running inside a Virtual Machine. Two examples are BIOS locked copies of Windows and the product activation feature of Windows XP.

One caution with VMware, the 30 days of technical support starts the day you get the software, whether you install it or not. Note again - these final two approaches require a non-trivial amount of technical expertise.

Most likely, the version of Windows you will be installing is XP. Many programs originally written for Windows 95, 98 or Me will not run correctly under XP. For the most part, the burden of researching this falls to you.

As for an upgrade install (XP on top of an older version of Windows), the Home Edition of XP can be installed on top of only Windows 98 and Windows Me. The Professional Edition of XP can be installed on NT4 (only SP6) and 2000.

If you are installing XP on top of an older version of Windows, then you can use a program on the Windows XP CD-ROM called the Upgrade Advisor. It checks for programs and hardware known to be incompatible with Windows XP. You can run it straight from the XP CD.

These articles offer some advice specific to XP upgrades:

HOW TO Troubleshoot Windows XP Problems During Installation When You Upgrade from Windows 98 or Windows Me:

http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en_us;310064

Last Call for Windows XP Upgrades: PC World Magazine, May 2002
Tips on how to do an upgrade installation of Windows XP:

<http://www.pcworld.com/resource/article/0,aid,86927,00.asp>

Windows XP Professional Upgrade Center Information from Microsoft on the four steps to upgrading to Windows XP:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/howtobuy/upgrading/default.asp>

Bugs and Dust Balls: A 'Clean' Installation:
The New York Times, October 24, 2002, by Sarah Milstein, "The horrors of upgrading from Windows 98 to XP". (The article contains a number of technical mistakes.):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/24/technology/circuits/24basi.html>

This article was reprinted from:
I/O Port Newsletter, July 2003
The Chronicles, August 2003, Palmetto PC Club

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HardCopy

Reviewed by Don Frieze



I recently purchased a new computer with Windows XP Pro installed. It was a surprise that there was no user manual included - not one single page.

Windows XP is the latest, most reliable, and best-looking version of the world's most widely used operating system, combining the extremely stable engine of Windows NT and 2000 with the user-friendliness of the Windows 98

and Me consumer models. In its first year, XP became the fastest-selling Windows OS ever. But one major failing remains unaddressed: XP Pro comes without any printed instructions. For someone who reads and uses manuals, the lack of a Users or Systems manual was significant.

The "Missing Manual" is well laid out with chapters from getting started to networking to understanding security, to using Outlook Express. There are many screen shots, tips, warnings and alerts that are very helpful. The book isn't read but rather referenced when a question arises. There are many hints throughout the book and references to freeware and shareware that can be downloaded from O'reilly's web site.

David Pogue, *et al*, organize this book into six parts, including The Windows XP Desktop, The Components of Windows XP, Windows Online, Plugging into Windows XP, Life on the Network, and Appendixes as wells as an index. Note that the focus of this title is on Windows XP Pro. O'Reilly and Pogue

Press also publish David Pogue's equally super Windows XP Home Edition: The Missing Manual, for those working with the home edition of Windows XP.

Pros: Excellent guide for new Windows XP users, helpful and detailed pictures and examples, starts with basic topics but also touches on advanced topics.

Cons: Too basic for technically advanced Windows gurus, could use an electronic copy on CD for searching, it has been suggested that there are errors in the book.

Bottom Line: Software vendors have ceased providing printed, bound manuals with their products. Now they often provide nothing at all. This book is a good example of how a manual really should be done!

Windows XP Pro: The Missing Manual
David Pogue, Craig Zaker and L.J. Zaker
Pogue Press/O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.

Feeling Annoyed with Your PC?

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by Steve Bass

Contributing Editor, PC World
(and allegedly famous author)

Steve tackles six of his most irritating annoyances - from the dumb logos manufacturers plaster on screen during bootup to removing weird lines in Word.

My name is Steve Bass and I hunt down PC annoyances. What's funny is that it doesn't matter how many annoyances I fixed in "PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things About Your Personal Computer". More sit-in-the-corner dumb things keep cropping up.

Admittedly, most annoying things are easy to find - just boot up your system, spend a few minutes with Windows, and blammo, you're annoyed.

The challenging part, and the reason I wrote the book, is the thrill of finding fixes for the annoyances. I dug around and found solid solutions that instantly work and don't require a degree in computer science to understand.

Oddly enough, as I wrote the book, I bumped into even more Windows, Office, Internet, email, and hardware irritations. I didn't have time to include all of them in the book, but rather than waste them, I thought I'd share them with you. (Caution: shameless plug to follow.) And if you like what you see, well gosh, maybe you'll be motivated to buy the book. Perhaps several copies of the book. Maybe a case of books (they're ideal for gift giving...). You can get a copy here: <http://snurl.com/annoyances>

By the way, you don't know me so this may come as a surprise, but inherently I'm lazy and will always find something to do other than meet a deadline. My favorite deadline avoidance trick is nothing new - I browse the Web; I'll share a few time-wasting, funny, and occasionally weird sites I've discovered.

Six Irritating Annoyances - Six Fixes

These annoyances are contributions by actual annoyed PC World readers.

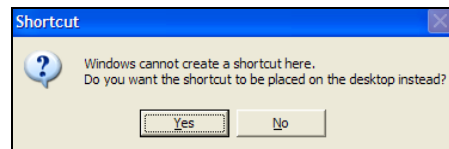
System Restore on Your Desktop

The Annoyance: I took the advice in your book about creating a Restore Point every time I install new software or fiddle <http://www.sacpcug.org>

with my PC's settings. The hassle is navigating through the Start menu to get to the buried System Restore dialog. There's gotta be a quicker way.

The Fix: It would be handy if Microsoft already had prefab desktop shortcuts for many of Windows' system functions. But it's pretty easy to do it yourself. Dig around and find the System Restore icon and drag it onto the desktop and when the dialog appears, choose "Create Shortcuts Here."

As you might imagine, you can do the same for other items. For instance, open Control Panel, right click on any icon, and choose "Create Shortcut." Then answer Yes to the follow-up dialog.



This dialog appears when you drag and drop the System Restore icon onto the Desktop. Answer Yes.

If you want to create a shortcut directly from the desktop, right-click any empty spot on the desktop and select New, Shortcut. In the "Command Line" (98 and Me) or "location" (2000 and XP) field, type:

```
%SystemRoot%\System32\restore\rstrui.exe.
```

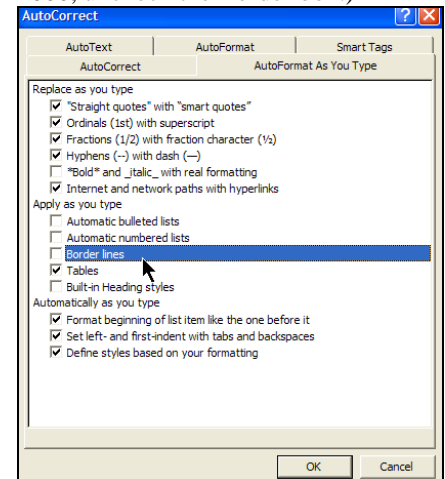
Click the Next button, give your shortcut a name, like SysRestore, and click the Finish button. Double-click the shortcut and up pops the System Restore dialog.

Kill Some Time: You thought duct tape was just for fixing leaky radiator hoses and covering wall holes under the kitchen sink? Wrong. It's good for decorative wall hangings. See: <http://snipurl.com/walltapings>

Remove Weird Lines in Word

The Annoyance: Whenever I enter underlines by themselves in a Word 2002 document, they're automatically transformed into solid, thick horizontal lines. That's not what I want. I think it's a bug in Word and it's driving me nuts.

The Fix: So you don't like Word's overly ambitious AutoFormat feature that turns your lines into borders? Because that's exactly what's happening. Every time you type more than three asterisks, hyphens, underscores, or equal signs, Word applies a character or paragraph border style. It's an easy - dare I say, gratifying - fix. From Word's toolbar, choose Tools, AutoCorrect, click the AutoFormat As You Type tab, and uncheck the Border lines box. (In Word 2000, uncheck the Border box.)



If you uncheck Border lines, you won't have to suffer with Word automatically turning your lines into borders.

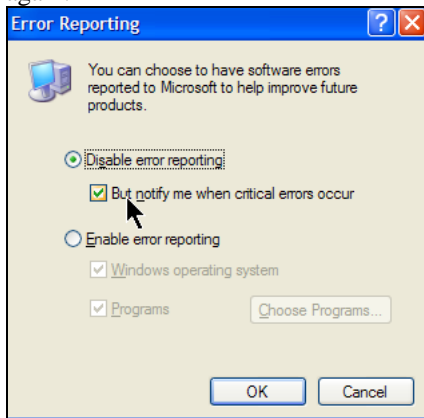
Stop Annoying Crash Reports

The Annoyance: I'm getting really tired of XP asking me if I want to send an error report to Microsoft every time a program crashes. I think the company should spend its time reducing crashes, don't you?

The Fix: I'll bet Microsoft's tired of taking all your reports, too, but that's another story. Stopping these report prompts takes five minutes. From the Start Menu, click the Control Panel, then double-click the System icon. If Windows XP is in the Category View, click Performance and Maintenance, then double-click the System icon.

In the System Properties box, click the Advanced tab, then the Error Reporting button. If you want absolutely no notification about errors, check "Disable error reporting" and make sure the "But notify me when critical errors occur" box is unchecked. (FYI: I leave notification checked so I can see details of the crash, something that helps me troubleshoot

system problems.) Click OK then OK again.



Eliminate annoying error reporting by marking "Disable error reporting."

Kill Some Time: Looking for something to do besides worrying about underlining in Word? Try the Snarg site. After the first few images flash on screen, click the tiny pound sign on the right, then click the "squee" or "framina" link. (To exit either, just close the window.) Hint: Move your mouse around and click here and there until patterns emerge, or until your significant other walks in and asks how that defrag is going. <http://snipurl.com/snarg>

Big Hard Drive Corruption

The Annoyance: Ever since I upgraded my PC with a 160GB hard drive, system hibernation has stopped working correctly. Every so often, my system annoyingly restarts rather than resuming from hibernation. I've run ScanDisk and defragged the drive, but the problem still occurs. What gives?

The Fix: Someone once said you can never have too much RAM or too big a hard drive. Unfortunately, without a fix from Microsoft, Windows XP will choke, and possibly corrupt data, on any drive that exceeds 137 GB. There's a quick and easy downloadable fix at: <http://snipurl.com/atapi1>

And if you're interested in the details, check out Microsoft's Knowledge Base

Article 331958:

<http://snipurl.com/atapi2>.

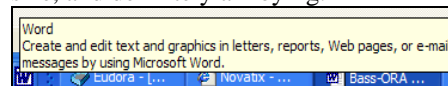
Kill Some Time: Almost everyone gripes about Windows. If you want to file a complaint, however, you'll have to take a number:

<http://snipurl.com/complaint>

Stop Quick Launch Pop-ups

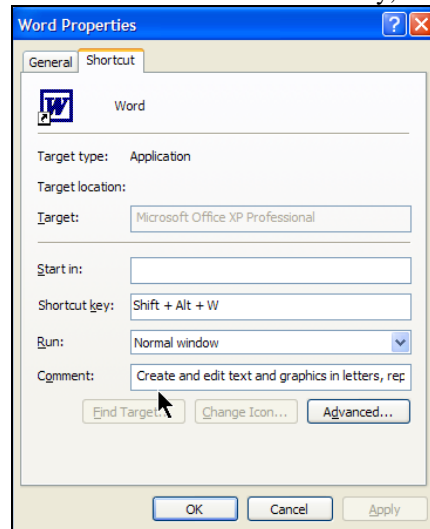
The Annoyance: Whenever my cursor hovers over the Quick Launch toolbar, enormous yellow pop-ups appear with tons of text. It blocks the other icons, and besides, I already know what program the icon represents.

The Fix: The biggest offenders are - surprise, surprise - Microsoft programs. Word's descriptive pop-ups are billboard size, and definitely annoying.



Hover your mouse over Word's Quick Launch icon and it insists on providing a lengthy explanation of what it does for a living.

Rather than eliminate the pop-up, shrink it down to size. Right-click the icon in the Quick Launch Toolbar, choose Properties, and change or remove the text in the Comment field. Easy, eh?



Remove the text in the Comment field and you'll no longer see Word's built in advertising.

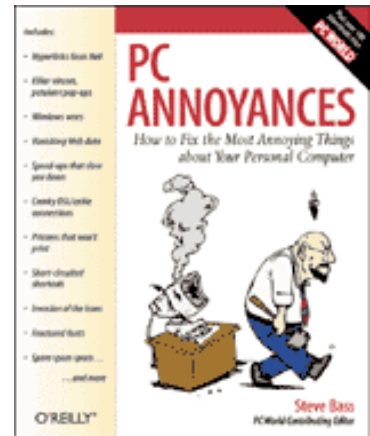
Ban Annoying Boot Logos

The Annoyance: I just bought a new PC. When the system boots, all I see is the manufacturer's irritating logo.

The Fix: In my humble opinion, watching the logo screen is more than just annoying; it's depriving you of valuable troubleshooting and diagnostic information served up while the PC is booting. This annoyance is pretty easily dispensed with, provided your system's BIOS allows you to turn off the logo screen.

As you're booting up, tap the Delete or F1 key. (Pay attention during boot-up: The system usually displays the proper key on screen.) Browse through the various BIOS options until you find something similar to "disable the Logo Screen," and change the setting to not show the logo.

Steve Bass is the author of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. Available at all fine bookstores, and from O'Reilly direct with 20% discount for User Group members.



From the DealsGuy

Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

by Bob Click

Just Some Comments

On our two week cruise, the ship (Summit) had a nice Cyber Café. Their computers all used LCD monitors. The price for using a computer was 50¢/min. Captive audiences have no choices, but I didn't think the rate was bad under the circumstances. All you had to do was run your stateroom card through a slot and start typing, *fast*. I didn't make use of it so when I got home it took me almost a day to go through all my e-mail, reading and cleaning out all the spam. It was a disgusting job - so much spam.

Who's next?

I read that Symantec is buying PowerQuest Corp. for \$150 million and should complete the purchase by the end of the year. I'm not sure if it will affect user groups, but as you know, Symantec dropped user group support a few years ago and PowerQuest cut the financial support they were giving Gene and Linda Barlow last year. It is, however, a fact that PowerQuest is more than pleased with the job that User Group Relations (Gene's Company, www.ugr.com) still does for them and I doubt they will want to lose that kind of product support. In the meantime, if you are thinking of purchasing a PowerQuest product, I wouldn't wait long and take advantage of the low UG prices, just in case. Who knows, with such a great track record, perhaps Gene will also be selling Symantec products. Makes sense to me!

A Show I Love To Hate

I was working a Direct Marketing Assoc. trade show and had a chance to browse some of the booths. I doubt I need to explain who participates. While they were very much in a minority, I came across a booth selling a few million email addresses for marketing. The weird part was the product's package, which was a can that looked exactly like a can of the famous Spam. I wonder if Hormel knows about this. There were also CD Duplicators, automatic mailing and dialing equipment, and other interesting

booths. I must say that I really had to bite my tongue when I talked to those who make their money inconveniencing us. On the other hand, I found nice give-aways there, such as clocks, calculators, stuffed animals and other cool things.

It was interesting talking to a salesman for a company that has print shops and distribution centers all over the country. They print many of the advert flyers we all find in our newspapers. He talked about how they transfer data by wire and computers handle the production.

Correction

I talked about flag screensavers at [<http://www.improbable.ukgateway.net/flag3d/flag3d.htm>] last month, but Paul Witheridge e-mailed me that I wrongly described the site offering Canadian flag screensavers. Here is the correction I received: "Bob, there was only ONE Canadian flag and a good selection of others including US, UK and Australia but the BIG bonus is that it will make a flag out of any BMP you add to the folder! Too bad you misinformed your readers and a lot of non-Canadians will miss out on a good screen saver thinking that it's Canadian only." Sorry, folks, and I thank Paul for the correction.

Still Good

I'm pretty sure that Serif's offer of free software and mouse for just the cost of shipping is still good. The various free programs are actually on just one CD ROM. The negative side is that now they often send you special offers for all kinds of products. Call 1-800-55-SERIF.

Enough Of Those Darn CC Offers

Most homes get an average of five credit card offers a month and I think I get that many in less than a week. You notice they are all "Pre-approved" too, although I doubt they actually check to see if you are credit-worthy. I sure get sick of them. With the National Do-Not-Call list lurking in the wings, the Post Office is offering better discounts to the issuers of major credit cards. Everybody knows that Internet use is hurting the Post Office's mail volume. I read that

you can call 1-888-567-8688 and opt out of those pre-approved offers by mail now. I get about two a day, often from the same people, in different envelopes.

More On Long Distance Deals

I previously wrote about cheap ways for long distance calling. Since then, I read about [<http://www.onesuite.com>] offering 2.9 cents per minute if you use their 800 number. They also have many local access numbers whereby you would get the service for 2.5 cents per minute if there is one in your city. When I looked, there was none in Orlando, but they are in many other cities.

Gerry Wooldridge of Boeing Employees Computing Society e-mailed that she uses the long distance service offered by Costco Wholesale, which has stores all over the country. It is TTI National and is billed separately so no extra charges are incurred on your phone bill. I don't have the details since I am not a member, but Gerry is well satisfied with the service and there are Costco membership stores all over the country to check on it.

If you have a lot of incoming calls from your own family, such as college students, some providers offer an 800 number to call home. Enhanced Communications Group (1-800-254-4060) want you to check them out: [<http://www.saveonphone.com>]

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged. My comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

Bob (The Cheap skate) Click
Bobclick@mindspring.com

Past columns are on my Web site at www.dealsguy.com. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.

Tech Talk

by Patricia Hill

How to Make the Office Toolbar *Your* Toolbar

Do you find yourself having to access drop down menus and clicking several times to perform repetitive tasks in the Microsoft Office product line? Did you know the toolbar is highly customizable? If the toolbar contains icons you never use - and don't think you will ever use - get rid of them! If you are looking for an easier way - with fewer mouse clicks - to do certain things, then add an icon to the toolbar. Here's how...

This article was written for MS Word 2002; the instructions are similar, if not the same, for previous versions of Word and other Office products.

Select Tools, Customize from the menu bar. You'll see three tabs in the window; Toolbars, Commands and Options. Notice there is a check mark next to the toolbars that are always displayed when you enter Word. In the Toolbars tab select the toolbar you want to customize. It's probably the Standard Toolbar.

Once you've selected the Standard Toolbar (it will be highlighted or colored in), go to the Commands tab.

Let's add a File Save As button. File should already be selected in the left Categories pane. Scroll down the right Commands pane in the Customize window until you see Save As.... Drag and drop the button to where you want it in the toolbar. Select Save As... by

holding down the left mouse button. Still holding down the button, drag the button to where you want it on the toolbar and release the mouse button. Now you're looking at lots of buttons and something that says Save As... This isn't exactly what you'd like to see, so let's modify it. It takes a few steps, but you'll be glad you took the time to do it.

Click the Modify Selection bar; then Default Style. The Default Style is a button that shows the button activity when you hover your mouse over it. The button is now blank. Click Modify Selection again and then Change Button Image. Click on the piggy bank, the third object from the left on the top row.

Your button now shows the piggy bank icon. It's a boring piggy bank - so color it in. Select Modify Selection bar a final time and Edit Button Image...

Pick a color and hold down your left mouse button and color the piggy bank. There's a small preview pane that's rather useless and you can move the icon within the button boundaries using the arrows.

If you're not sure in which Category a function you're looking for resides, scroll down the Category pane to All Commands and click on that.

If you want to add a new button that already has an icon, repeat the instructions in paragraph 3. Let's add the Grow Font and Shrink Font icons to the Standard Toolbar. Click on Format in the left pane of the Customize window. Scroll down the right pane until you see the Grow Font and Shrink Font icons.

Select them one at a time and drag and drop them to where you want them on the toolbar. Because there is an icon already available, that's all you have to do. You don't have to mess with modifying it and selecting the Default Style.

To delete any icons you don't think you'll use, drag and drop the icon to anywhere in the Customize window. The key is to have the Customize window open. If you decide you want to put it back, reverse the process.

Another way to delete or add icons from the toolbar is to click on the down arrow at the far right of any toolbar. Click on Add or Remove Buttons and then Standard Toolbar. You'll see a list of all icons currently displayed on the Standard Toolbar. Some are black and some are grayed out. The black ones are the original toolbar setup when you first installed Word. The gray ones are the ones you used to customize your toolbar. If you want to add an original button to the toolbar, click on it and it'll move to the toolbar. If you want to remove buttons, then click on them and they disappear from the toolbar. Remember, though, if you want to group your buttons differently than Microsoft originally set them up, the Tools, Customize window must be open.

Drag, drop, customize, modify to your heart's content. Set up your programs so that they make sense to you and are easier for you to use. Make the toolbar YOUR toolbar.

Computer News / Updates

by Ira Wilsker

Recently I wrote about safety recalls of computers and related products; there has now been another recall. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Sony announced a voluntary recall of thousands of Sony VAIO notebook computers. In a recent CPSC press release, "Users could receive a mild electric shock when the recalled computers are connected to a phone line and the phone rings." The notebooks recalled are model numbers PCG-FRV25 and PCG-FRV27, sold during the summer of 2003. One symptom of the problem, according to Sony, is unusually slow modem speeds, typically less than 24k, while the computer is powered by its AC adapter. If you have one of these Sony VAIO notebooks you should immediately disconnect the modem from the phone line and contact Sony at (800) 880-9743, or go to the Sony website at www.sony.com/pcsupport. Sony will repair the computer and extend the warranty on the repaired notebooks to two years from the date of original purchase, at no charge.

IBM and LiteOn Technology have expanded a previously announced recall on computer monitors. The recall now covers 119,000 monitors manufactured by LiteOn and sold by IBM. These monitors were manufactured with a circuit board that can overheat and smoke, and may be a fire hazard. According to the CPSC, there have been seven reports of overheated monitors emitting smoke, one report of property damage, and one injury. These monitors include CRT monitors with the model number G51, and touch screen monitors with a model number G51t. On the back of the units may be additional model numbers 6541-02N, 6541-02E, 6541-02S, 6541-Q0N, 6541-Q0E, and 6541-Q0S. These monitors were manufactured in a number of countries, and manufactured between June 1997 and September 1998. The recalled monitors were sold directly by IBM and MicroTouch Systems, as well as retailers

such as Best Buy, CompUSA, Office Max, and Radio Shack. If you have one of these monitors stop using it immediately, and call IBM at (866) 644-3155, 8am – 6pm Central time Monday through Friday. Recalled monitors will be repaired or replaced at no charge. The recall information is also on the IBM website at www.ibm.com/pc/g51recall.

With computers and peripherals becoming ubiquitous household and workplace items, it is inevitable that more of them will become the subject of recalls in the future. This is one of the many reasons why it is necessary for all computer users to complete appropriate warranty registration cards. Warranty registration will enable the manufacturer to contact the user directly in the event of a recall. The CPSC also has a free email alert service for all new recalls available on its website at www.cpsc.gov under the "Recalls / News" heading.

In mid-September I wrote about a Microsoft security warning that there were several viruses and Trojans circulating as authentic looking, but counterfeit emails from Microsoft. These emails appearing to be from Microsoft have again reappeared in large numbers and contain a variety of viruses and Trojans that can wreak havoc with the victim's computer, attack other computers in a "denial of service attack", capture personal information and forward it to destinations unknown, steal email addresses from address books and flood acquaintances with the counterfeit virus laden announcements, and cause a host of other vicious problems.

One of the most prolific of these Microsoft imposters, which has already appeared in several versions, is the Gibe or Swen worm. According to Panda, one of the leading antivirus publishers, about two percent of American computers, which is well over a million machines, are currently infected with this worm. As I type this, Panda rates Gibe/Swen as the number one virus infecting American computers. An especially insidious characteristic of this worm, in addition to its near perfect forgery of a security alert

from Microsoft, is its ability to disable antivirus software, firewalls, and other protective software. This leaves the computer open to hacker attacks and additional virus and worm infections. The worm can propagate not just by impersonating Microsoft, but also via file sharing services such as KaZaA, chat utilities such as IRC, and directly across networks. The worm also disables Regedit, Windows integral registry editing utility. Once infected, a keystroke logging utility captures usernames, passwords, credit card numbers, and other personal information, compromising the security of the computer and its network, and making the victim an ideal candidate for identity theft and other financial crimes.

The shame of the Gibe/Swen worm is that millions of users are still oblivious to the fact that Microsoft does not send out patches and security updates by email, and that any such email will certainly contain harmful content. This worm is just one of a long series of such malware utilizing "human engineering" to trick the victim into opening the attachment, falsely believing that there is some beneficial content to the email.

Allow me to give you this advice again: It is imperative that all users be suspicious of attachments even though the attachments may appear to come from trusted friends or companies. It is also important to periodically scan for viruses with a utility other than the antivirus software installed on the computer, which may have been unknowingly disabled. Free online scans are an excellent way to verify that a computer has not been infected by a virus or worm. See housecall.antivirus.com, www.bitdefender.com, or www.pandasecurity.com.

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Archiving Genealogy Information

Las Vegas PC Users' Group

by Richard T. Robusto

Most of us in the genealogy field find ourselves with large amounts of information. It challenges us to find a way to preserve it in a manner that in the future, near and distant, our descendents will be able to access this data in a timely and understandable manner.

When I first started my genealogy project, I had the mistaken idea that I could put away the program and all the data files so that it could be accessed years from now. Huh!. I was using Windows 98 at the time. Later I upgraded to WinME and then to Win2000. At this point, the program would not work at all with the new system. Of course, I got the updates and finally got it working, but it really got me to thinking that there had to be a better way to preserve information so that it can be used in years to come.

Of course, the first thing that comes to mind is that you should have a hardcopy of everything. This I did on good, acid-free paper. There are different results that can be achieved. For instance, you can print out a fan type chart. I did that first. It took close to 65 pages of standard letterhead size paper. Then these had to be meticulously trimmed and taped together making a large five foot square. Another method was to print out a horizontal "format" chart. This involved the same number of sheets and made a chart that was 3'x12'. This requires an empty wall in order to display it. As far as preserving them, it poses quite a problem. How long would something of this nature last rolled up and packaged? As we all realize, time is our enemy.

In 1999, My wife and I took a trip to Italy with my son and his wife. We went to the mountaintop village that my parents came from in the early 1900s. We went into the commune (town hall) to get information about the family, birth and death dates, etc. It turned out to be quite interesting in the information that we were able to acquire. When we went into the commune and asked, they took down a ledger about 10 by 18 inches with about 20 pages of paper inside. When they opened the book and turned the yellowed

pages, you could hear the sheets crinkling, almost as if they were leaves from a tree. The thought that went through my mind is that we didn't get there any too soon. I am sure that in a few more years, those sheets will deteriorate and be unreadable. On top of it all, I was not able to find any digital or photographic record of the information that was in that ledger. This experience left me with the resolve that records need to be digitized and photographed as much as possible. I know that this is happening in some parts of Italy, but in this rural area, it's a ways off is a long ways away.

So the problem of archiving has to be faced. Sure, we could leave all the information on an individual hard drive with the program itself. But the future holds many uncertainties. Will this drive be usable with Windows 4000 or Linux Extradense 4500? Sure, everyone says it can always be brought up to date with current technology. But what if this item were to be put away where no one saw it for a long time. It would become a relic and probably unusable.

In trying to solve this dilemma, I have tried one or two things that need to be discussed. The first is FlipAlbum, used to produce what is called an "e-book." This can be any number of pages and can be put in the order desired. To set this up, I captured the pages out of my genealogy database converting them into bitmaps. I also added all the necessary photos, being able to superimpose descriptions over any part of the photos. When they were finalized and put in the proper order, then the FlipAlbum can be shown on any computer. The program puts a small file in the beginning of the book so that it can be shown on any computer without the necessity of having the program installed. The pages can be seen as a slide show or can be turned manually as desired.

The advantages are that it can be viewed on any computer and there is no limit to the number of pages that can be inserted. There is also a provision to add MP3 music, plus it will accept most standard images and multimedia formats. The pages can be viewed in centerfold and double page mode to view photos

better. Included also is the ability to print the entire album or individual pages.

I have built a couple of FlipAlbums with the first and second generation of my genealogy. Next, I intend to revisit the project and add every page from the genealogy that I have and make a complete FlipAlbum. I'll copy the discs so that members of the family can have their own FlipAlbum, assuring the permanence of the information.

The second idea that I had was to take the same sheets that I had used in the FlipAlbum, and use them as individual files. Then, using a program such as Ulead DVD Picture Show, set them up as a slide show which can be shown on any TV using a DVD player. The files are big enough to fill the TV screen and, that allows you to read the text on the data sheets. The photos come out well as they fill the screen also. The only drawback is that the timing of the files has to be set for approximately 15 seconds so as to have enough time to read the data. Unlike the FlipAlbum, the timing cannot be changed once the disc is made. This program will also allow audio tracks to be added. I have an idea of narrating all the information as it is shown, but I'm not there yet. I do have to sleep at night. For the first discs, I added background music and a cover sheet that is shown first with the name of the families and the author's name. The only disadvantage to this is that you are limited to the capacity of the disc which is 700 MB. But as soon as I acquire a DVD writer, then I will be able to incorporate the whole genealogy section into one disc.

I like the idea of making my own slide show with this DVD program. DVD's are easier to show - not needing a computer. Plus the viewing is much more pleasant on a TV. And with the advent of HDTV, the views can only get better. And lets face it, the DVD image will be with us a lot longer than current operating systems. So, hopefully, many years in the future, our descendents will be able to see all this information and appreciate the efforts that went into making it as permanent as possible in this day and age.