Sixteen Bits December 2005

Welcome to Sixteen Bits online

If you would like to read off-line, **Click HERE** to download, unzip to a folder
you choose, then double click the index.htm file.
If you prefer - you can read as a PDF file. The internal links will
not work in this file which you can download **HERE**

> **The PCUG Centre will be closed from
> Saturday 17th December until Monday 9th
> January**

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We hope you enjoy this edition of *Sixteen Bits*. We are always on the lookout for items for the next edition. If you have anything to contribute - please send it to **pcug.editor@pcug.org.au.** The nominal cut-off date for submissions is the 15th of each month. All submissions gratefully received. Please send us feedback as to what you might like to see published in your magazine.

For more news of *events to come* - don't forget to check the **PCUG** *Calendar* at: **http://www.pcug.org.au/members/calendar/**

Ctrl-A to **Select All** in current window.

NEXT

Main Monthly Meeting

There will be no monthly meeting in January 2006. We will all be out enjoying the holiday break and summoning up the energy to conduct a busy schedule beginning on 07 February.

The good news just before Christmas is that the new office renovations at the PCUG Centre in Holder are now underway. On Saturday 17 December, a team organized by John Saxon and Peter Reeves removed the internal partitions in the south room. This will now be fitted out as the training room, with the "office" now in a corner of the north room opposite the door. Drop in and see progress when the Centre re-opens on 9 January.

The committee has appointed Joseph Tandl as training coordinator and we hope to establish a strong training program in 2006. Watch Sixteen Bits for details as courses are offered and feel free to request courses or offer your services as a trainer to training@pcug.org.au.

As my tip for 2006, remember that all members are entitled to a pcug.org.au email address, whether or not they use TIP as their ISP. If you do not use TIP, your pcug.org.au email can be automatically forwarded to your current ISP mailbox or read:- by a free dial-up to TIP; using webmail from another Internet connection such as a library or Internet cafe; or using a normal email client to read from the PCUG mail server.

Advantages of using a pcug.org.au address for the member is that it can stay constant for as long as they remain members of PCUG, no matter how often they change ISP; and for the PCUG it simplifies our contact with members, particularly as they change external email addresses. More information on this will be published on the web site in the new year.

Finally, compliments of the season to all members. Happy computing in 2006 without the scourge of worms, viruses, spam, and blue screens of death.

Allan Mikkelsen
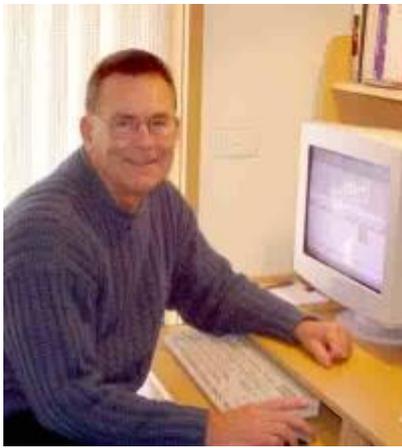
From the editor's desk

Promises, Promises!
Sometimes difficult to honour, but we seem to be very close to implementing some we have been agonising over throughout the last year.

New Members day has not happened for many months, and we will be reinstituting it on the last Monday evening in February in the PCUG Centre at Holder. Committee members will be present to explain to new members, and not-so-new members who wish to attend, what the group can offer them. There will be more information in the February newsletter.

Joseph Tandl has accepted the position of Training Coordinator and is planning to resume one of the most important PCUG activities: providing training opportunities for a variety of computing skills at many levels. Getting training courses going again is a high priority for the PCUG. We firmly believe that our training facilities (when completed) will be one of the biggest assets for our membership. Joseph is planning to eventually run a mix of different types of training, structured as:
workshops; simple courses for beginners; weekday 1/2 day or so; one day courses; and Microsoft Ultimate Potential courses.
Hopefully we will begin to be active by late February after an email campaign to asses your wants and seek your input.

Terry Bibo

PCUG Meetings 2006

The Main Monthly Meeting will be held on the first Tuesday night each month during 2006. The planned dates are:

No meeting in January	7 February 2006
7 March 2006	4 April 2006
2 May 2006	6 June 2006
4 July 2006	1 August 2006
5 September 2006	3 October 2006
7 November 2006	5 December 2006

The meetings will commence at 7:30 pm, and are normally held in Lecture Theatre 3, Manning Clark Centre, Australian National University, Acton.
The monthly meetings are free. Members, friends, and the public are welcome to attend. Stay for coffee, tea, biscuits and good company after the meeting!

E-mail inquiries to mailto:pcug.mmm@pcug.org.au or phone 02-6287-2922

Software Reviews

Absolute StartUp 5.1

Press release. Optimise and secure your Windows startup process.

MP3 Tag Assistant Pro

Press release. Versatile Hardworking Assistant for Swift Inventory of Music Libraries.

Absolute StartUp 5.1

F-Group Software proudly announces the release of a new version of the multifunctional Absolute StartUp 5.1 manager, with an updated database for automatic optimization of data on automatic-starting Windows programs.

(I reviewed version 4.1 of this utility in Sixteen Bits for December 2004, and it is available [here](#). Terry Bibo)

Absolute StartUp is a fast optimizer of the Windows boot-up process. Absolute StartUp manages all registry startup sections as well as startup folders and services. More importantly, it lets administrators control the startup sequences of other users of the PC! With Absolute StartUp, an administrator can modify the startup configuration of any user -- and it won't require their passwords and logins to do so.

Absolute StartUp is intended primarily to resolve the problems a casual user faces. During the startup, users witness numerous programs being automatically loaded by Windows. The msconfig utility will gladly list these programs, but a regular user may find it daunting to try and determine which of the programs he really needs.

Absolute StartUp uses an online database to settle that issue on behalf of users. The database contains information about all the programs looking to be started and also includes recommendations from other computer users regarding the advisability of keeping certain programs on your startup list. The database makes an exception for viruses and spyware/adware applications: all recommendations on such programs are ignored; Absolute StartUp will remove them from the startup lists on sight. The database is available for searching and browsing at http://www.absolutestartup.com/startup/.

By optimizing your startup process, you can reduce the Windows boot-up time - which is especially important for laptops. It only takes a minute: launch Absolute StartUp, approve the optimized version of your startup list, and you are done.

At the same time, with Absolute StartUp you can fine-tune the automatic startup behavior of your programs. Besides the Windows startup, you can schedule a program start to a certain time, schedule a program to run after a timeout, start several programs simultaneously, or start Internet applications only, and on top of all this use hotkeys to control the launching.

Absolute StartUp Pro costs only $29.95; Absolute StartUp Home Edition costs $19.95. Both versions are available for ordering on Absolute StartUp's Website, http://www.absolutestartup.com/. You can download the free trial version of Absolute StartUp from the same address.

System Requirements Windows 95/98/ME/2000/NT4/XP, 32 MB RAM, Pentium-2, 5 MB Hard Disk

MP3 Tag Assistant Pro

AssistantTools.com offers a 30% Christmas discount to all members of ACT PC Users Group to mark two years of work and collaboration with users and the beta test team, and as a way of wishing Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone. Please find the press-release below to learn more about our product and the special offer.

Versatile Hardworking Assistant for Swift Inventory of Music Libraries

MP3 Tag Assistant Pro is a robust, multipurpose tool to manage tags, file lists, and play lists; compare and update tag information from web databases; keep inventory of music files. Its rich functionality combines with ease of use to provide for better management of music libraries.

AssistantTools.com announces today the release of the newest version of MP3 Tag Assistant Pro, a dedicated tool for music file management. This release has brought together two years of development work and offers rich functionality for inventory keeping, play list management, and access to web databases of albums and lyrics. Support for a full spectrum of tag information and a choice of modes, both manual and automated, help swiftly generate, edit and manage tags, file lists, and playlists. Its extended capabilities make MP3 Tag Assistant Pro useful for music library management as well as business use.

"The latest version of MP3 Tag Assistant Pro provides for a wider range of music management needs," says Roman Kandratiev, CEO of AssistantTools.com. "Now, users can easily generate tags from filename strings and rename files with existing tag fields. Preset and custom templates help to split strings into separate tag fields, or, vice versa, paste them into name strings. Users will find that managing playlists became easier, and that now they can use auto replacement for file locations and other data on the list. As before MP3 Tag Assistant supports various tags available in ID3v1 and ID3v2 formats, but now the database wizard can compare tags with the freedb.org database and supply the missing fields. We also extended supported file types to include WMA files. On the whole, users should find the new features a much greater help in managing the content of their music libraries."

However rich the assortment of its options is, MP3 Tag Assistant v2.6 remains simple in use. Partly it is due to its comfortable working panel with multiple tabs for each operation. A click on the tab brings forward the fields available for editing in each tag group. Supported tag fields include media player tags, commercial and publishing information, comments, lyrics, and URLs. The Selected Items window instantly shows the virtual image of tag changes. To save the changes to files, however, you should click on the Save button. The window also provides a multi-tab interface for one-click filtering. A click on an appropriate tab limits the selection to a single file extension or a tag format. The multi-frame interface with tab filters makes the functionality of the program readily available to the user of any competence.

Thanks to advanced selection and filtering options, MP3 Tag Assistant Pro can easily handle numerous music files. After marking files in the Selected Items window, you can generate and edit tags for all the selected files. To raise the efficiency of batch processing, the program offers a batch mode where users can also form a list of actions that need to be done and save the list as a profile. The batch mode should further facilitate the management of music file libraries.

The functionality introduced in MP3 Tag Assistant Pro v2.6, wide range of tags (up to 35), support for Unicode symbols, batch mode, intuitive interface, animated tutorials, and other advanced features make a robust, multipurpose tool for better management of music files.

MP3 Tag Assistant Pro v2.6 Features at a Glance - Support for up to 35 tag fields, including Original (Original Artist, Original Album, Original Text Writer) Commercial (Publisher Name, Copyright

Message), URLs, WinAmp tags, multi-line comment and lyrics tags; - Unicode and ANSI characters; - Preset and custom templates to generate filenames, tags and play lists; - Generation and editing of play lists(M3U and PLS) and file lists (TXT, XML, and CSV); - Auto correction of strings, symbols, and upper-lower case; - One-click sorting and filtering; - Filters by tag format (ID3v.1 and ID3v.2) and file extensions (MP3 and WMA); - Album database wizard, comparison with existing tags; - Integrated web search for lyrics; - Integration with WinAmp media player and a in-built player; - One-click tag removal; - Support for drag-and-drop and hot keys; - One-click renumbering and tag swaps; - Intuitive multi-frame interface.

XMAS30 coupon is available from:
https://www.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1639166&couponCode=XMAS30.
The Christmas offer comes into force on November, 21 and lasts through to January, 21, 2006.

Freeware discussion

Check LCD monitors for dead pixels

I recall someone at a recent C&C meeting asking about how to check for dead pixels on an LCD monitor. I've put in an order for a new 19" LCD monitor and will check it carefully on arrival. The application I have found to do this check is called Dead Pixel Buddy. It's freeware from http://www.laptopshowcase.co.uk/downloads.php?id=1

The download zip file is only 26 K in size and unzips to 294 K so it would fit on a floppy if you wanted to take it somewhere to test an LCD screen. Works on XP, 98, 2000 and Me.

DPB enables you to view the whole screen in a single selected colour so that you can eyeball it for dead pixels in that colour. You can set the screen to each of these stock colours: red, green, blue, white and black. If you want to, you can also set the screen to any of about 40 other colours, but I can't see how that would add anything to the test of the stock colours.

Happy eyeballing!

Mike Boesen

Mail forwarding - free advice for members

Go to the PCUG home page www.pcug.org.au - click on either side link to   YOUR USER SERVICES
(I even made them a different colour to make them obvious).

- after entering your user name and password, you are presented with a lot of options which include a script to forward your mail with a single click, and entering the address you want to forward to.

Cheers - JohnS

WinBackup 1.86

Uniblue Systems have just released the full and unlimited version of **WinBackup 1.86 for free**.

Packed with advanced features, WinBackup 1.86 has been termed "exceptionally simple" by PC World and awarded "Best Backup Software of the Year" by Computer Shopper. The free download product is available exclusively at http://www.backupanswers.com/freewinbackup/

(I reviewed WinBackup 2.0 in the October edition of Sixteen Bits, and recommend it as a fine product. *Terry Bibo)*

Watermarks in Word

Sometimes Help Files are not quite up to what many users expect of them. Certainly Word 2003 left much to be desired for a member of my small computer group. So I have compiled a small tutorial that, I hope, details how to insert a graphic object into a Word file as a watermark. The same principle applies to text or word-art as a watermark. Available here.

TerryB

Inserting a Watermark into Microsoft Word 2000+

Add a watermark to a printed document

To print a watermark, you must insert it into a header or footer. The watermark is printed wherever you place it on the page -- it doesn't have to be confined to the area at the top or bottom of the page.

    1. On the **View** menu, click **Header and Footer**.

        On the **Header and Footer** toolbar, click **Show/Hide Document Text** to hide the text and graphics in the main document.
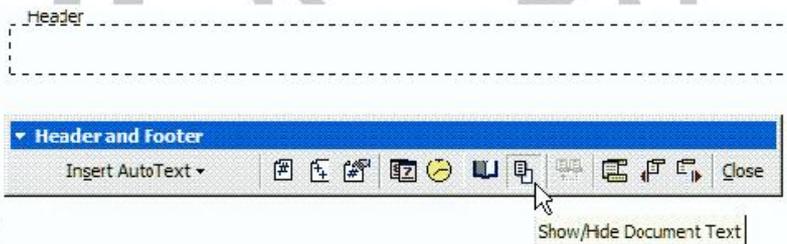
    2. Insert a graphic --clip art, WordArt, or picture.

        On the **Insert** menu, click **Picture** then **Clipart**.
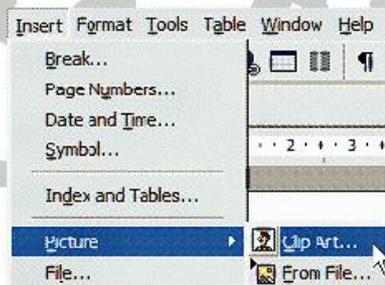
    3. Select the **picture** and **insert** it into the document.

    4. On the **Header and Footer** toolbar, click **Close**.
        The image will then appear on the page.
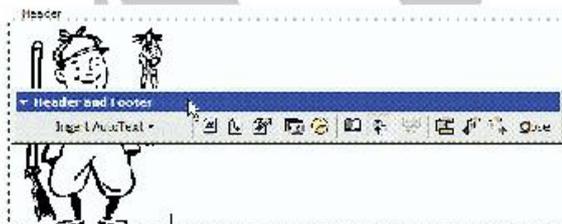
5. To modify or move the picture it is necessary to go to the **View** menu and click **Header and Footer**.

6. Click on the picture to produce a frame with handles. Right click on the picture and click on **Format Picture** to open the format dialogue.

7. Select **Layout > Behind Text** to enable the picture as a watermark.
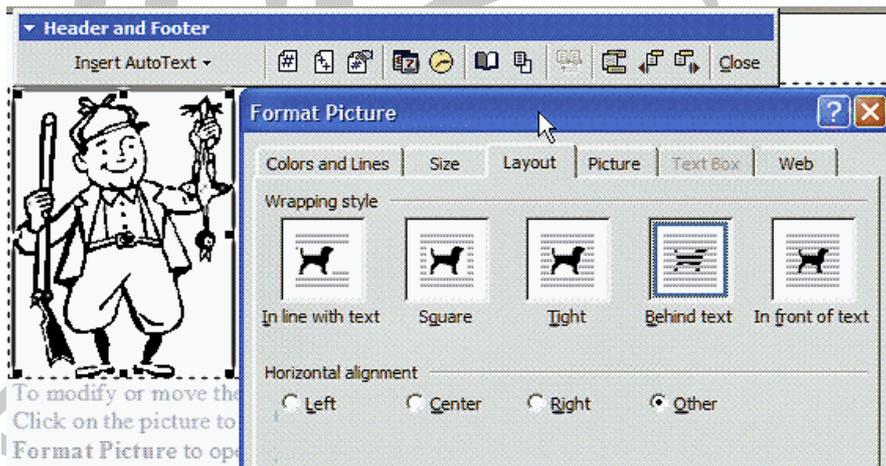
8. Select **Picture** to control the brightness and contrast. I found about 90% brightness necessary for this watermark. You can set other options here to suit your needs.
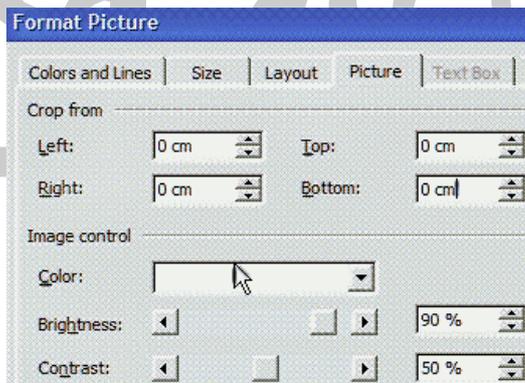
9. You can then drag the picture anywhere on the page and resize it using its handles.

Enjoy your computing.   *Terry Bibo*
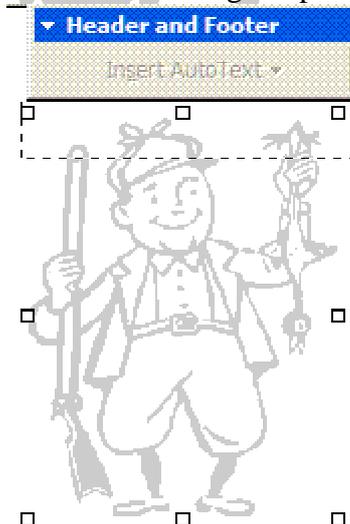
Googling to the max

Philip Bell addresses the expanding Google empire, and stimulates discussion and involvement with byte-size serves.

Google remains a central talking point round the 'net.

It's still number one search engine - by a long shot. And its lead over competitors continues to grow.

An end-year US survey found that Google was used in 48 % of US web searches, which number 2.4 billion per month. Yahoo came second with a 22% market share and growing at a slower rate than Google. Micro$oft's M$N came third at 11%, with growth weaker than market average.

Last week I sat down to write up my notes for PCUG Coffee n Chat about the newish double "Watch Watch" website on Google (see below). And one think led to another think. So here we go.

Google's 7-year itch

Do you remember opening the Google homepage earlier this year and seeing a birthday cake image to celebrate Google's 7th anniversary - the biblical "fullness of time".

To recapture this moment, I went to Google News. The lead story of that day in Google News for the 7 years celebration was a long and wide-ranging piece in Computer World about Google's development and recently obvious "7-year itch". http://www.computerworld.com.au/index.php/id;1108127624;relcomp;1

Not that there was any talk of Google deserting the marriage bed of its established revenue stream - namely, pay-per-click advertising based on response to its web search results. But Google definitely does have an itch to be going places elsewhere. Google has decided to put itself about. "We are not just a 'search engine company'", says Google. "We are an 'information company'. And we go wherever the info leads us."

Such waywardness of course can lead to all sorts of promiscuities and dubious dalliances. Google has doubled its number of employees in the last 12 months to over 6000 employees. Google Europe is about to put on 500 new people in Ireland.

Just think of all the unlikely things that over the last year or two have jumped out of that hotbed of software engineering called Google Labs as well as from other parts of the Google organisation: ·   Picasa, ·   Orkut - the (lead balloon) social networking tool, ·   Froogle, ·   Google Define, ·   Google Scholar, ·   Google Books, ·   Google Maps, ·   Google Transit for planning your public transport trips, ·   Google Ride Finder and ·   just released today, Google Music ·   Etc etc.
It goes on and on. But one must mention also Google's Gmail - offering every citizen of the world a minimum 2.5 gigs of free mail storage space. I still find this mind blowing.

Google now seems to be heading off in more than a dozen different directions. But relentless competition continuing for their major revenue base - the pay-per-click advertising from web searches.

Below are some jottings on various goings-on at and about Google. Nowadays even IT events outside Google tempt analysts to look around to see what Google might be doing about them. If you are always the centre of attention, if you are the Sun King, and wisdom streams out of your every orifice, well - What have you got to say about this,? For example, what about BlinkX?
Image has proved to be recently the fastest growth area of web search.

BlinkX

I thought it may be of interest to those CNCers who are doing things with digital video to have a look at this recent startup competitor to Google, which specialises in video search, namely, BlinkX.
http://www.blinkx.com/overview.php

I read that "technically" Blinkx knocks the sox off Google in video searching. But how many have yet even heard of it?

Google Watch Watch

Many of you will have heard of the playground site for Google paranoids at: http://www.google-watch.org/

In last week's CNC notes I mentioned my recent discovery of the "Watch Watch" Google-observer site: http://www.google-watch-watch.org/

Google Watch Watch is "guarding the guardian", keeping watch over the Google Watch website - and taking GW to task for daring to question the motives and commercial practices of our good friend Google. GW has provoked a Google devotee's equal and opposite reaction.

Over the years I have found some interesting stuff about Google from the GW website, even if you need to take it with a large dose of salt. It's somewhat ironic that a company whose informal motto is "Don't be evil!" should inspire such a sustained attack on its commercial morality. http://investor.google.com/conduct.html

I must say that some of the criticisms from Google Watch become more understandable once you know the GW author's background, as revealed by the Watch Watch author. The original Google watcher is a web publisher with a very sharp axe to grind about why doesn't his commercial website get much better ratings in Google?

Comparing search engines and "Googling to the max"

I spent quite some time about 2 1/2 years ago trying to find the best site for understanding search engines and how to use them. It was then that I discovered the UC Berkeley library site with its raft of detailed tutorials on every aspect of the Internet as a source of information and research.

Every university library needs to be able to help students get started in finding stuff on the net. I found that virtually all the most prestigious Anglophone universities refer their students to this UC Berkeley site: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html

You will find here a detailed analysis of the 3 leading search engines and how to use them.

This UC site has long held the view that metasearch engines are no longer helpful for most search purposes. Note also the discussion about differences in results obtained from different search engines.

In looking again at this UC Berkeley library website, which is constantly updated, I found only one broken link, among such a large number. This website is exceptionally well maintained.

It is interesting to note that many of the major observations and findings on how the web works (and still currently reported on this web site) were made a few years ago. This UC site has not found updates to a lot of these findings. Some aspects of the web have hardly changed, apparently, in recent years.

The 'Googling to the Max' page on this UC site is at: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Google.html This page discusses why Google often turns up pages near the top of its search results which do not have all your search terms.

Google Base and "Googlius disruptus"

The new Google tool "Google Base" is yet another outrageous example of the "Googlius disruptus" or even of a "Gooitus interruptus!" phenomenon which is causing havoc in normal commercial relationships.

It's as if the Google software engineering triads start every day by discussing: "Whose applecart shall we overturn today?"

I find it fascinating to read about how Google organises its research effort in order to maximise creativity. For example (and I quote from a Newsweek blurb direct from Google at):
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10296177/site/newsweek/ "Google engineers can spend up to 20 percent of their time on a project of their choice. There is, of course, an approval process and some oversight, but basically we want to allow creative people to be creative. One of our not-so-secret weapons is our ideas mailing list: a company wide suggestion box where people can post ideas ranging from parking procedures to the next killer app. The software allows for everyone to comment on and rate ideas, permitting the best ideas to percolate to the top."

This Newsweek article quoted above gives you a glimpse inside the ideas factory of Google. I found it fascinating.

It looks to me as if the new Google Base may revolutionise the way a lot of the web operates.

The established WWW pattern is for web authors to publish all their stuff out into the wide blue yonder. Then search engine spybots have to try and find all such websites worth finding; and then try (within strict limits of cost and time) to discover what useful info may be hidden deep within them. The limitations, inexactness, inefficiencies and commercial limitations of the web crawling process have led analysts to describe the phenomenon known as the "hidden web" or "invisible web". This major impediment to web searching is discussed in detail on the UC Berkeley site: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/InvisibleWeb.html The spybot managers draw arbitrary lines as to how deep they dig, even in a website rich with information. Sometimes the technology does not even allow the spybots to enter information-rich sites.

Google appears to be planning to shortcut the spybot search engine process by inviting web site publishers to lodge their material direct with Google, perhaps enhanced with the publisher's carefully chosen indexes taking the web searcher perhaps deep into their rich information.

Paranoids and even non-paranoids may see this as an attempt by Google to "take over" the web! The fact that Google now has the processing power to offer the Google Base option must make even non-paranoids wonder somewhat about the concentration of so much power within one organisation. Google's Beta site on this product is at: http://base.google.com/base/default

It is just as well that we can feel relaxed and comfortable, knowing that "Google is good" and "Google is your friend." Just as our ever loveable PM has promised us he would never abuse the majority we have given him in parliament. We are so blessed to be living in a world peopled with benevolent powers.

I notice that Google Base has been publicly released in Beta without first getting a listing in Google Labs, http://labs.google.com/

Perhaps the Google marketing people wanted to get this new tool straight out into virtual full operation before the Google paranoids try their damnedest to stop it, by raising a stink in the US Congress etc. They would rather not face again the storm raised by the release of Gmail and Google Books.

It looks as if a fair bit of the Google Base tool is aimed squarely at those legendary "rivers of gold", namely, the classified ad pages of the major dailies. No wonder some folk now describe Google's creativity as organised disruption - including disruption of established information access patterns within various industries and disruption of those who feed off these established patterns.

Just think of the poor Canberra Times advertising market and how much the web is already undermining it! It looks like another body blow is looming.

Google "Black"-mail

The Google Watch site concentrates particular venom on Gmail - "it's too spooky", says GW, "so don't send us

any messages via Gmail."

Another irony here. The engineer at Google who was the main architect of Gmail is the same person who came up with Google's informal logo "Don't be evil."

Personally, I tend more and more to see Gmail as a "killer application" for Google, and I don't mean that pejoratively. The stream of improvements to the product continues, and shows no signs of abating. In fact, the pace of improvements seems to be quickening - with centralised virus checking recently added, as well as RSS feeds (the next BIG thing, as they say), Gmail Mobile, Vacation notifier, Group mailing facility - as usual, the list goes on.

Gmail's enthusiastic following so soon after its release must have a lot to do with Google's software development maxim "Eat your own dog food". Apparently, this product and all improvements to it have been extensively tested on Google's own staff before release.

Following Rod B's example, I recently integrated my Gmail with my resident email client (a more practical way for people still on dial-up to use Gmail, in my opinion). But since going overseas in April I have lost interest in using my dear old Eudora. Going back last week to face using Eudora once more did not fill me with joy. I find the filtering and folders approach of traditional disk-resident email clients just too old hat. Bypassing this and having Google's search engine at your fingertips on your personal mailbase is a facility I find hard to beat.

I also much prefer Gmail's approach to contact listing (address book). It's so much more streamlined.

I believe I now like Gmail so much that I would be prepared to pay for it. I wonder if Google regrets their declaration at the outset that they have no plans to charge for Gmail. I reckon probably not, as it integrates so neatly with the revenue generation patterns of their web search results pages which has proved such a "river of gold" for Google.

In fact, I suspect that Gmail will continue to be a major focus of Google software development. It has already proved to be an important diversification for the company. Such a major part of Google's googy eggs are concentrated in the web search advertising pay-per-click financial basket. Gmail opens up an entirely new stream of discreet but personally-targeted advertising and a consequent new revenue stream.

My guess is that Google will in due course release a version of Gmail which will offer all the functionality of Outlook in personal information management, and more.

So make sure you get your address ASAP, while more attractive addresses are still available. Give yourself the monopoly of earlier choice.

Concluding - PC World's top 100 products for 2005

In putting together this article, somehow or other I stumbled upon a listing in computing magazine PCWorld of its 15 December awards for the world's top 100 info technology products for 2005.
http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,120763,pg,12,00.asp

Sadly, I could only find about a dozen that had even rated a mention during our past year's wide-ranging discussions in the PCUG Coffee and Chat meetings.

Their top product is the Open Source web browser Firefox.

Number 2 is (Don't mention the too spooky!) Google Gmail.

No 8 is Skype, the free VoIP Internet phone software.

The PC World story links to individual assessments of each one of these 100 products.

Feeling out of it?

Do you get the same feeling as me - namely, that in this race to the future, some of us are falling ever further behind?

But at least at Coffee and Chat, we seem to have heard about the top 2 plus one other in the top 10 products, if little else!

It's as if Gordon E. Moore's law of 1965 is having the same devastating effect on our personal rate of obsolescence as it does on the computer chip and all those myriad devices that hang off it nowadays in their blossoming diversity. (Moore is widely known for "Moore's Law," in which in 1965 he predicted that the number of transistors the industry would be able to place on a computer chip would double every year. In 1975, he updated his prediction to once every two years. While originally intended as a rule of thumb in 1965, it has become the guiding principle for the industry to deliver ever-more-powerful semiconductor chips at proportionate decreases in cost.

Moore's law continues to the present day and seemingly into the future. To see a graphic on how this doubling of the chip's power and cost efficiency every 1 to 2 years, go to: http://tinyurl.com/dhmds
Ah well. C'est la vie! Like the 8080 chip and Pentiums I, II and III and so on, we all approach our fullness of time and our ultimate demise.

Long live our children and grandchildren, if we are lucky enough to have them and lucky enough to be able to celebrate with them over Christmas the birth of new life and new hope for a new generation.

Let us all wish for ourselves in 2006 a measure of the same dynamism and "joie de vivre" which appears to animate the Google machine!

Philip Bell <philip.bell@gmail.com>   Dec, 2005

Skype - voice setup

Skype is a VOIP provider that is probably as well known as Windows in the PC lexicon these days. Its popularity can be gauged by the fact that, when I logged on, there were over 2.5 million users on line. Skype provides free voice

telecommunication between individual users or in chat mode for a group, and is currently in Beta for video calling.

Prepaid credit with SkypeOut enables calls to landlines and mobile phones almost anywhere in the world at highly competitive rates - currently at 3.2 cents/min within Australia, and to UK and USA.

Subscribing to Skype Voicemail provides the same service on the PC as we enjoy on the mobile phone.

Skype is basically very easy to install and set up, but there can be little problems with voice connections to the PC.

Immediately after successful installation Skype initiates a Test Call to determine whether voice is coming through the handset or the PC speaker. Initially my sound came through the PC speaker. And I had the option of accepting this or diverting all sounds - including those in games - through the handset. Not acceptable.

The function of this little tutorial is to ensure you have the correct settings in both Skype and your Control Panel to enjoy your VOIP.

Open your Skype Options through the Tools menu and go to Sound Devices.

My handset is USB connected, so I set the Audio In and Audio Out to the Generic USB Audio Device. This was one of the options in the drop down box that listed compatible devices on my PC.

Go to Sounds and Audio Devices in your Control Panel.

Click the Audio tab and set the Default Device for both playback and recording to your sound card.

Click the Voice tab and set the Default Device for both playback and recording to your Generic USB Audio Device.

Finally, click on the Test hardware button and follow the Wizard. It walks you through recording and playback with sound and visual indications.
You will probably have to reduce the Playback volume to eliminate distortion in the form of over modulation.

Having done this you can now hopefully enjoy pleasant Skyping.

Enjoy your computing.
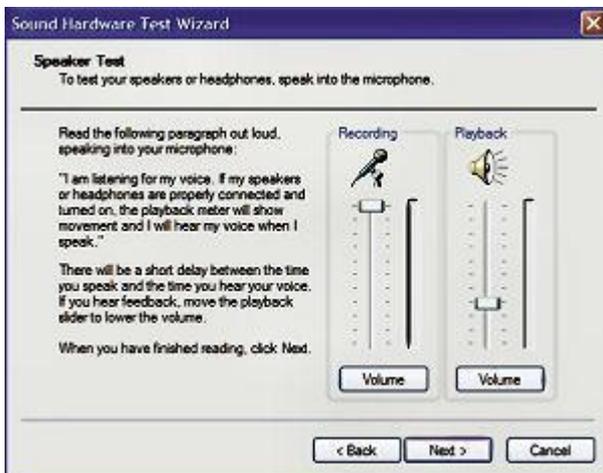
Terry Bibo

More humour from the net

Mental Health

Jim and Edna were both patients in a mental home.

One day while they were walking past the hospital swimming pool, Jim suddenly slipped and fell into the deep end. He sank to the bottom of the pool and stayed there.

Edna promptly jumped in to save him. She swam to the bottom and pulled JIM out.

When the Head Nurse Director became aware of Edna's heroic act, she immediately ordered Edna to be discharged from the Hospital, as she now considered Edna to be mentally stable.

When she went to tell Edna the news the Head Nurse Director said, "Edna, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that you're being discharged. Since you were able to rationally respond to a crisis by jumping in and saving the life of another patient, I have concluded that your act displays sound mindedness. The bad news is, Jim, the patient you saved, hanged himself with his bathrobe belt in the bathroom, right after you saved him. I am sorry, Edna, but Jim is dead.

Edna replied "He didn't hang himself, I put him there to dry. . . . How soon can I go home?"

I Can Hear Just Fine!

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day.

One remarked to the other, "Windy, isn't it?"

"No," the second man replied, "it's Thursday."

And the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a beer."

Old Friends

Two elderly ladies had been friends for many decades.

Over the years, they had shared all kinds of activities and adventures.
Lately, their activities had been limited to meeting a few times a week to play cards.

One day, they were playing cards when one looked at the other and said, "Now don't get mad at me ... I know we've been friends for a long time ...but I just can't think of your name!
I've thought and thought, but I can't remember it.
Please tell me what your name is."

Her friend glared at her.
For at least three minutes she just stared and glared at her.
Finally she said, "How soon do you need to know?"

Happy Christmas Anyway

My heartfelt appreciation goes out to all of you who have taken the time and trouble to send me "forwards" over the past 12 months. Thank you for making me feel safe, secure, blessed and healthy.

- Extra thanks to whoever sent me the email about rat crap in the glue on envelopes - cause I now have to go get a wet towel every time I need to seal an envelope.
- Also, I scrub the top of every can I open for the same reason.
- Because of your genuine concern, I no longer drink Coca Cola because it I know it can remove toilet stains, which is not exactly an appealing characteristic.
- I no longer check the coin return on pay phones because I could be pricked with a needle infected with AIDS.
- I no longer use cancer-causing deodorants even though I smell like a water buffalo on a hot day.
- I no longer go to shopping malls because someone might drug me with a perfume sample

and rob me.

- I no longer eat KFC because their "chickens" are actually horrible mutant freaks with no eyes or feathers.
- I no longer worry about my soul, because at last count I have 363,214 angels looking out for me.
- Thanks to you, I have learned that God only answers my prayers if I forward an e-mail to seven of my friends and make a wish within five minutes.
- I no longer have any savings because I gave it to a sick girl on the Internet who is about to die in the hospital (for the 1,387,258th time).
- I no longer have any money at all in fact - but that will change once I receive the $15,000 that Microsoft and AOL are sending me for participating in their special on-line email program.
- Yes, I want to thank you all so much for looking out for me that I will now return the favour!
- If you don't send this e-mail to at least 144,000 people in the next 7 minutes, a large pigeon with a wicked case of diarrhoea will land on your head at 5:00 PM (EST) this afternoon. I know this will occur because it actually happened to a friend of my next door neighbour's ex-mother-in-law's second husband's cousin's beautician.

(From an overwrought user)

PCUG Help Directory

The people in this directory are volunteers, so please observe the times given. The Help Directory is designed to help individual
users and should not be used as a substitute for corporate support calls to vendors. This service is provided for members only.
Please quote your membership number to the helper. Additions or amendments to this directory should be sent to
editor@pcug.org.au

Region	Subject	Name	Email	Phone	Days	Times
	Home Installation Team (HIT)	John Telek	tweek@pcug.org.au	0418605930	All days	Any decent time
	Hardware, modems, Linux, Open Office	Anthony Glenn		6286 3903	All days	Any decent time
Chifley	WinXP, PC hardware, Connections	John Saxon	jsaxon@pcug.org.au	6161 1524	All days	9am to 7pm
Dickson	WinXP, Mozilla, Office XP	John Agnew	jfa@pcug.org.au	6249 7911 0411147321	All days	9am to 9pm
Fisher	MS Word, Excel, Lotus WordPro, Agent	Derek Jordan	Derek.Jordan@tpg.com.au	6288 7810	All days	Any decent time
Flynn	Flight Simulator	Roger Lowery	bandrlowery@optusnet.com.au	6258 1583	All days	Any decent time
Hall Village	Noteworthy Composer	Andrew Purdam	apurdam@pcug.org.au	6230 2231	All days	Any decent time
Hawker	Home Installation Team (HIT) Internet connections, software and hardware.	Gordon Urquhart	gordonu@pcug.org.au	6254 5480	All days	Any decent time
Holt	FrontPage, Publisher, Internet Explorer	Gary Potts	gjpotts@pcug.org.au	6254 2818 0402342818	Mon Wed Sat	9:00am to 12:00 noon
Macquarie	Linux	Rod Peters	rpeters@pcug.org.au	6251 2580	All days	9am to 7pm
O'Connor	Digital Photography, Paint Shop Pro, Paint Shop Album	Jeff Colwell	jeffmeg@webone.com.au	6247 7756	All days	9am to 8pm

Page	Free software - installation and advice	Terry Bibo	tbibo@pcug.org.au	6255 2168	All days	9am to 7pm

Some handy links

Committee Members	http://www.pcug.org.au/members/committee/index.htm
Monthly Calendar	http://www.pcug.org.au/members/calendar/
Special Interest Groups	http://www.pcug.org.au/activities/sigs.htm
Members' Services & Charges	http://www.pcug.org.au/member_info/services.htm

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