Sixteen Bits February 2005

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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/

CTL-A to Select All in current window.

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Main Meeting: Tuesday 1 March 2005, 7.30pm

The next PC Users Group monthly meeting will be held at 7:30pm on Tuesday, 1st March 2005, at the **Manning Clark Centre, Lecture Theatre 3, Australian National University, Acton.** Visit the PCUG website http://www.pcug.org.au/activities/mmm.htm for a map of the Manning Clark Centre. The monthly meetings are free. Members, friends and the public are welcome to attend. Stay for refreshments and good company after the meeting! Inquiries to 02-6253-4911 or email pcug.mmm@pcug.org.au .

"WHY IS LINUX AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE RAPIDLY GAINING A HUGE FOLLOWING IN PERSONAL COMPUTING?"

Did you know that over 80% of web servers in the world operate under Open Source Software? Why you say? It's simply a matter of economics! The cost of Open Source Software is a fraction of that available from the world's leading software producers. Closer to home, PCUG's own Internet Service Provider, TIP (The Internet Project), is also operated with Open Source Software for that very reason.

New PC buyers are facing a dilemma when considering whether to invest in popular operating system software that includes licence fees and penalty components or move to "free" Open Source Software that is (arguably) perceived to be less capable.

The question to be considered is, "What is in the future?" The innovators know. They are the type of people who are always at the forefront of new innovations. They are usually right. They are using Open Source Software now!

The three presenters for the March meeting will look at Open Source Software from a user's perspective rather than a software developer's viewpoint. Mr Anthony Glenn will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of changing to Open Source Software, including the popular Linux operating system.

Mr Rod Peters, convener of the PCUG's Linux Special Interest Group, will present examples of Open Source Software that work well with the Windows Operating System. The free Mozilla Firefox browser, free Mozilla Thunderbird mail client and other free software will be demonstrated.

Dr Algis Kabaila, the coordinator and promoter of PCUG's Open Source Software activities will discuss the infinite opportunities of a free online encyclopedia called Wikipedia. You too can make a contribution to this fascinating work! Dr Kabaila will also demonstrate the PCUG wiki. This is a special facility set up within PCUG for you to "play" with and learn the infinite opportunities of Open Source Software!

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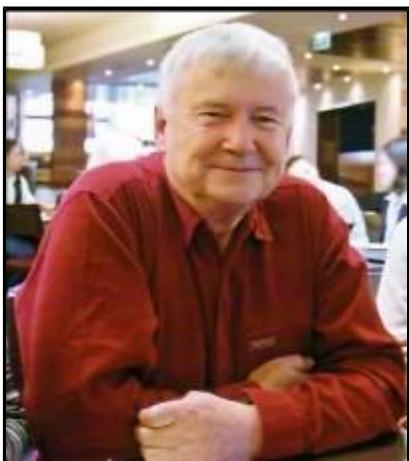
Hello All,

Here we are in February and it's really too late to wish everyone a Happy New Year. But I'll do so anyhow. Hope it's shaping up well for you so far.

I will try to keep this down to 3 subjects, all big ones, this time.

Just occasionally in this life we fall into it and come up smelling of violets. Just as we were getting into what could have been a major argument (possibly legal) with the landlord of the Belconnen Centre, we were contacted by the Department of Urban Services on Monday of this week. Were we interested in some community space at the Grant Cameron Centre in Holder? The old Holder High School in Mulley Street, just off the Cotter road.

Interested? Yes indeed. I arranged an inspection that afternoon and Mike Dinn also came along. Outcome is that the premises look ideal for us at 1/3 of the rent of the current Centre without the training room. Mike took some photo's and I wrote a description which are posted on Mike's web site at http://www.pcug.org.au/~mdinn/pcugholder/ We arranged another visit this Friday AM for the rest of the committee and some of the people who have helped us in the search for premises over the last few months. I hope that we can approve on the spot, and possibly complete a move by the end of March.

Of course with all major moves and changes there are Pros and Cons. Some are detailed on the web page noted above. But I'll cover a couple here.

Pros: Huge reduction in Rent for the long term. We will finally have some premises which recognise that we are a non-profit community based organisation, and we can join the hundreds of similar organisations that have been enjoying low rents for many years. After we have paid off some of the moving costs we should be solidly 'in the black' and we can start returning the benefits back to the membership, quite probably in the form of reduced fees and charges, and certainly more bang for your hard earned bucks. More announcements later.....

Cons: Although access is very good (see the web address) and the venue is quite central, some of our hard working volunteer staffers and others may not want to travel further than they are at the moment. If they decide that, we will understand, but hope they will think it over carefully. Parking is superb and free at least! Moving, fit-out and make-good is going to cost a lot. But can probably be recouped in saved rental in less than 12 months.

Almost as momentous is the fact that **TIP was 10 Years old on the first of this month!** All the TIP administrators who have given their time freely (some for more than 10 years) deserve a huge vote of thanks! They could certainly charge a minimum of $100 per hour for the services they perform out in the 'real world', but thank goodness they believe in the 'Users helping Users' motto.... I have asked them what sort of Party, drinks, certificates, etc. etc. they would like, but so far they have been too busy to answer! Perhaps Pizza would be acceptable? I always was a cheap date.

Hopefully some of the good things we are planning for TIP will be implemented soon. These include free 'proper' Email for all PCUG members, extra 'real' Email boxes, and even better Internet deals. Specially if the current 'further doubling' trial is a success. We did confirm earlier that the first doubling trial is now permanent, and our current rates and charges are detailed at http://www.pcug.org.au/member_info/services.htm **The new doubling trials effectively double all those allowances again!** And includes things like 100MB Web space allowance, and virtually unlimited dial-up access.

As TIP was one of the first ISPs in Canberra - it is a tribute to the Administrators

that we are still in business and the reliability has been absolutely outstanding. Some of us are visiting TransACT tomorrow to meet the General Manager and discus new and better deals. I hope we will have some good things to announce next week.

Finally I would like to mention that we have joined the ASCCA (**The Australian Seniors Computing Clubs Association**). See http://www.seniorcomputing.org/ for a whole lot more details. This is not just that many of us (a majority?) members are getting quite long in the tooth, but there will be many benefits to both organisations. From our viewpoint they will refer members to us and provide us with a voice to Government and other organisations. But also (and Microsoft haters can stop reading), we have become an 'Unlimited Potential' organisation. The 'Unlimited Potential' project was announced by Bill Gates when he last interviewed our Prime Minister - many millions of dollars worth of free software to eligible organisations. We are eligible for up to (I think) $17,000 of free software for training systems and other purposes like door prizes etc. I am told that there is a 10 Kg box waiting for us to inspect at the centre and it contains training course materials, CDs and similar goodies. It will be quite an incentive to get the training systems up and running again as soon as possible.

I could rattle on about the last MMM (**Main Monthly Meeting**) which was simply superb, and the next which will also focus on the path of Open Source Software, but that will be posted elsewhere - so I'll get out of your hair now.

Have a good month - John Saxon..... 9 Feb 2005

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From the editor's desk

Trevor has handed me the task of compiling the magazine this month and I am thoroughly enjoying it, though it is certainly time consuming at my level of HTML competence. Still, I am learning as I go and I appreciate how much more relaxed I am than when I made up my home page. I still have a long way to go. Trevor provided me with a well padded skeleton of the magazine and enough suporting material to provide for good pickings. Perhaps when I go to Queensland on my customary winter sabbatical and refrain from writing for a month or two I will upgrade the home page.

I have been a member of the PCUG since 1986, and seen its growth and decline. Its growth was explosive and its decline has been one of attrition as members moved from our ISP, TIP - (The Internet Project) - to more appealing providers, and taken their membership with them. Many of us who have retained our membership over the years realise that there is more to PCUG than just its ISP. Which, incidentally, was the first commercial ISP in Canberra and celebrates its tenth anniversary this month, February 2005. The Coffee and Chat Special Interest Group and several other SIGs are proof of that. But there may be another underlying cause for our steady decline - the effort needed to maintain the group. It really has been an onerous task for a lot of people, and still is. Why? Because for most of its existence we never had a paid member of staff, and even now I think we have only one. Volunteers have been the backbone of the group, and without them it would never have been born and grown to a healthy maturity. Volunteers come in a number of guises and wear a variety of hats, some of them more than one. They range through tutors, staffers at the PCUG Centre, contributors to the magazine, helpers in libraries and homes, book-keepers, and the TIP admins who, at great personal inconvenience and tremendous patience, maintain the equipment and fight the paper battles that have kept us afloat. They deserve an accolade of thanks for their perseverance and dedication to our cause. We need more like them.

The committee has great plans to extend services to our members and, hopefully, increase our membership again. It will not be easy if the burden falls on a relative few. Believe it or not, all of you have skills that could be gainfully employed in the group at little inconvenience to yourselves, and with a gratifying return in seeing a job well done. I would like to welcome more reviewers into the fold to research and filter the abundance of software being offered to us for review, and consequently being gifted to the group. There is great satisfaction in completing a review that gets the author's approval or even praise, and can have the additional reward to the reviewer of a free copy of the program. I am really thankful to see the response to my appeal for willing hands capable of rendering help, either by phone or home visit, to new and struggling members as is one of the aims of this committee. I know the president, John saxon, can allocate tasks in a variety of fields to almost anyone who is willing to come forward. Why not stand up to be counted and become more involved in creating

a more vibrant group?

Enjoy your computing.   *Terry Bibo*

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PCUG Meetings 2005

As the President has announced, the Main Monthly Meeting will be held on the first Tuesday night each month during 2005. The planned dates are:

	1 March 2005
5 April 2005	3 May 2005
7 June 2005	5 July 2005
2 August 2005	6 September 2005
4 October 2005	1 November 2005

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 02-6253-4911.

Terry Yan

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> **This page is reproduced from the PCUG site as a temporary measure and is currently under review. Internet services are certainly changing, and are currently more generous that tabled here.**

PCUG Membership

Includes all the benefits noted (except Internet services and Training):-

General Membership = $65 per year (Note 1)
Pensioner/Full time student concession member = $50 per year (Note 2)
Corporate membership = $170 per year (Note 3)

Notes:
1. General Membership covers all members of a household.
2. Concessional membership requires proof of entitlement.
3. Corporate membership covers 3 nominees. Additional nominees for $65 per year.

Internet Services

Our experienced volunteers run a full Internet service. Our Internet servers and other equipment are co-located with equipment belonging to other ISPs in TransACT house. We provide full dialup and broadband services via TransACT cable, and ADSL and dialup services via Telstra or TransACT phone systems. We also provide a DSL service for areas of Canberra and NSW which do not have TransACT equipment installed in your nearest Telstra exchange - see current list of suburbs at http://www.transact.com.au/promo/.

If you wish to print the following table and notes so that they appear on seperate printed pages please set your page orientation to Landscape then print this page.

Our Internet services pricing from 1st January 2005 is as follows:

Service	Time Period	Download	Cost	Notes
TIP Dialup via any phone line				

Dialup	3 Months or 180 Hrs	Unlimited	$39	1, 2, 12
Dialup	6 Months or 360 Hrs	Unlimited	$69	1, 2, 12
Dialup	12 Months or 720 Hrs	Unlimited	$119	1, 2, 12
TIP Broadband via TransACT cable, or TransACT ADSL-enabled exchange				
Broadband	3 Months	3,600 MB	$70	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12
Broadband	6 Months	7,200 MB	$130	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12
Broadband	12 Months	14,400 MB	$240	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12
PCUG DSL via any Telstra ADSL-enabled exchange				
Broadband	1 month 256/64 kbps	1,000 MB	$49 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 256/64 kbps	5,000 MB	$55 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 256/64 kbps	Unlimited	$60 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 512/128 kbps	1,500 MB	$65 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 512/128 kbps	15,000 MB	$80 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 512/128 kbps	Unlimited	$85 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 1,500/256 kbps	2,000 MB	$110 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 1,500/256 kbps	25,000 MB	$165 per month	8, 9, 10, 11
Broadband	1 month 1,500/256 kbps	Unlimited	$170 per month	8, 9, 10, 11

Notes.

1. Whichever comes first - months or hours. Unused allowance carries over to the next month for period purchased. No excess charges - just buy more time.
2. No Installation fees. Modem cost extra. Connection procedures at: http://www.tip.net.au/connect.
3. Only available via TransACT cable equipped suburbs or via TransACT ADSL-enabled phone exchanges - phone TransACT Customer Service on 13 30 61 to find out the situation in your suburb.
4. No excess download fees. Unused allowance carries over to the next month for the period purchased. Just buy more time or download.
5. TransACT fees are extra, but include a $22 per month phone service with free local phone calls to other TransACT subscribers. Full details at: http://www.transact.com.au
6. TransACT installation fee normally $200 (ADSL) or $249 (cable), but TransACT are offering free installation for their TalkWeb (ADSL) service until 31 January 2005, and free installation for their HomePack (cable) service until 28 February 2005.
7. Connections via TransACT ADSL require an ADSL modem and/or router - costs not included. Connection procedures at: http://www.tip.net.au/connect.

8. Installation fee $125. Does not include cost of ADSL modem/router.
9. Excess download 0.6c per MB.
10. For more information and connection procedures - See http://www.pcug.org.au/res-dsl/adsl_info.html.
11. Minimum sign up period is 6 months.
12. We will be trialling for 3 months (January-March 2005) a further doubling of dial up hours per 3, 6 or 12 month period, and doubling of Broadband download amounts.

Training

We occasionally run training courses at $44 (Inc GST) for weekend days 9 AM to 3:30 PM - courses include subjects such as 'Internet for Beginners', 'Getting to know Linux', 'Making your own web pages', MS Word, MS Excel etc.

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Comments regarding
this web site to:

serfweb@pcug.org.au

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Software Reviews

FinePrint & pdfFactory
easily make PDF files of any document, and print documents as multi-up on one page or as a booklet.
FinePrint Software has donated a copy of pdfFactory as a door prize for our March monthly meeting.

Backup4all
an eminently capable utility for maintaining regular backups of your data and applications.
I will be presenting this utility at the April monthly meeting, to which the author has generously donated two free copies of the program.

RegmagiK
a competitor with Microsoft's Registry Editor.

DiskInternals Flash Recovery
a very capable but simple utility that recovers lost and deleted pictures from digital camera cards.

BVS Solitaire
a challenging and enjoyable collection.

A full listing of software available for review
is held at
http://www.pcug.org.au/members/swreview/

All members are invited to take the
challenge and review something in their
field of interest or expertise.

pdfFactory & FinePrint

reviewed by Terry Bibo

I expect that most readers will be aware by now of the Adobe PDF (Portable Document Format) files created by Adobe Acrobat. PDF files are commonly used on the Internet for a range of purposes from council records through helpfiles to application manuals.

This format has become the open, de-facto standard for archiving and distributing electronic documents, for a very good reason. It is a compact, universal file format that preserves the layout, fonts, colors, and images of any source document in such a way that it can be read by any computer on which a free software program, Adobe Acrobat Reader - now known as Adobe Reader in its version 7.0 manifestation - is installed. This includes Palm and Pocket PC devices running Windows CE. PDF compaction is achieved by using the Unisys patented Lempel Ziv Welch (LZW) data compression and decompression technology. This involves compression of a file using an algorithm invented by Abraham Lempel, Jacob Ziv, and Terry Welch. Commonly-used file formats in which LZW compression is used are GIF (Graphic Image Format), TIFF (Tagged Image File Format), PDF and Postscript-2.

I use PDF files extensively for a variety of graphic and text documents, including eBay transactions, bank confirmation of transfers, ISP's listing of properties of a new connection, and email messages in addition to tutorials and program documentation. They are also a convenient way to save web pages rather than saving them in their native HTML format. They save as single files, not as files with associated folders, and are smaller while still preserving layout and permitting searching of text. But I do not have a copy of Adobe Acrobat to create these files. Instead I use **pdfFactory** from FinePrint Software that permits me to print any document to a PDF file through a printer driver. I have been using it for years. Records show that it was only released in 2001, so I guess I was among the first to adopt it, though I may not go back as far as that.

Installation is very simple and its use is transparent - just select **pdfFactory** from the list of printer drivers in the dropdown dialog box of the Print window that opens when you select File>Print> for any document. Standard printer options like paper size and orientation, and margins are available through the Properties dialog, but **pdfFactory** also allows for the embedding of fonts and the conversion of URLs into PDF links. Fonts not expected to be on some recipient computers can be embedded in the original document with some loss of compression. There are14 core fonts that are guaranteed to be included with any PDF viewer. These are basically a bunch of Times, Helvetica, Courier, Symbol and ZapfDingbats, and do not have to be embedded to preserve format. It is much more efficient to use these fonts whenever possible, as embedded fonts increase the size of the output file. **pdfFactory** can combine multiple individual files into a complete book for a more professional presentation, allowing addition or deletion of individual and blank pages - essential for the production of our magazine. Additionally, graphics can be preserved in fine resolution or resampled down to 96 dpi for a smaller document size. This feature is an advantage for documents destined for Web viewing, not for printing, which again applies to our magazine.

It may be easier to understand the properties and functions of **pdfFactory** if I walk through the process of converting our monthly magazine from a collection of discrete HTML documents containing text, tables, and images into PDF. The obvious place to start is with index.htm, which is the front page and lists the contents - each with its own link to the relevant other HTML file. Each of these

other files has two links: one back to the INDEX and the other to the NEXT item featured. That makes life easy for you and me. Having loaded the index page I then print it to **pdfFactory** and preview the output. Here I set the options for the entire document, and print index.htm. That's the last time I need to see **pdfFactory** until I have walked my way completely through the magazine using the NEXT links. I simply view them in turn and print them blindly, because I know they are being added in the correct order to the ultimate output file. Where there is a diversion, such as occurs when the Software Reviews page refers to possibly four other items before returning to the next item in the index listing, I print these in their turn after Software Reviews before returning to the index listing. In this way all items are bookmarked in the correct order. **pdfFactory** is far superior to what I have been using to date in producing bookmarks, and produces a significantly smaller and cleaner file. Having printed the final item in the index I then shift to **pdfFactory** with ALT-TAB or from the task bar and preview the long file, page by page. HTML pages do not know paper boundaries like those applicable to A4 or Letter and do not necessarily fit a standard format. There are times when there are only the words INDEX and NEXT on a page and I can delete this as being unnecessary, as these HTML links do not work in PDF anyway. Worse than this, though, is when an image is split over two pages. This happened in February with the drvimagerxp.jpg. To overcome this I was able to choose a different page size to the conventional A4. **pdfFactory** has variations on this and I used A4Plus at 210x330mm. All the pages in the file were subsequently reformatted and good formatting was preserved. I then opt to save the file, and the magazine is preserved in one PDF file of respectable proportions with valid URLs. And universally readable. If you are reading the PDF file while connected to the Internet, clicking the URL will open the browser or email client at that site.

pdfFactory is available in two versions, standard and Pro. Until writing this review I had used only the standard version, currently priced at US$49.95, and obviously found it satisfactory. Only after meeting the requirement to include bookmarks in our magazine did I realise the increased power and value of **pdfFactory Pro,** priced at US$99.95. This version also provides security in the form of 40 bit and 128 bit encryption, password protection, and restrictions on copying, printing, or editing PDF documents.

pdfFactory reduces document size and consequently paper usage, but a greater economy could be achieved by physically shrinking the size of the documents. The much touted paperless office will never be achieved, but in a move towards that aim FinePrint Software conceived the idea of printing multiple pages of any document to a single sheet of paper, and developed a printer driver to achieve this. The answer was **FinePrint**, the flagship of the firm, that was released in 1996 and ultimately spawned **pdfFactory**. I used this a few years ago to produce genealogy documents, travelogues, and copies of articles I was writing then for my family and a smaller computer group in which I was a member. I have a current version now, priced at US$49.95. **FinePrint** extends the features of **pdfFactory** by enabling up to eight pages to be printed on a single sheet - on both sides if the printer is capable of duplex printing as is my Canon iP4000, or in booklet form. With modern printers readability remains excellent. I was able to print last month's magazine with 35 A5 pages on A4 paper in booklet form, without any preparation other than installing a **FinePrint** printer driver. **FinePrint** cleverly tests the printer to determine if it is duplex and how it handles printing on both sides of the paper. Similar to **pdfFactory** it allows for page setup of margins and gutters, previewing of the output file and deletion of unwanted pages.In conjunction with **pdfFactory** it can be used to collect pages from disparate sources to be combined into a single file. But it goes further than this in superimposing water marks, creating forms and embedding letterheads. I have seen far larger and more complex packages that fail to reach the standard set by **FinePrint**.

Backup4All

Reviewed by Terry Bibo

Backups are the insurance policies of computing. They require only a small outlay but their return can be inestimable. Yet many, if not most, computer users do not have a sensible backup policy. It is foolish to assume that you can be immune from a disastrous computer failure in the face of the abundance of malevolent software circulating in the community, and the natural lifecycle of component parts. I have certainly been personally involved in recovering both my own and family computers on a few occasions in the past year. Failure to develop a sensible backup policy can be blamed on inertia or lack of awareness, and reluctance to undertake the necessary education. The easier the procedure the more likely it is to be adopted. At first sight many backup programs seem to require many hours of serious study to manipulate them effectively. Certainly it is advisable to read the help files at least superficially to gain a basic understanding of what policy you want to adopt and how best to execute it. With that understanding it should not be difficult or unduly burdensome to create a policy to meet your particular needs. I must comment here that programs of this type are designed for backing up data, not for backing up system files and you cannot use it for restoring the whole operating system. At least there is nothing in the documentation to lead me to believe otherwise. Any reasonable backup program will come complete with wizards to walk you through backup procedures. **Backup4all** is very good in this area and provides logical progression through selecting the source of backup material, the destination drive and folder, and the type of backup. It works with any drive letter, and comes with its own built-in CD/DVD burning support. But to use UDF format on CD-RW discs will require a third-party utility such as Roxio's DirectCD or Nero's InCD).

A simple strategy might be to backup all files in all folders in My Documents to a hard disk, CD or DVD. If the backup volume exceeds the capacity of the removable disc the program calls for a new disc to be inserted and carries on with the backup. This would constitute a Full Backup, offering options of password protection, file filtering, degree of zip compression and more esoteric options. **Backup4all** uses industry standard zip formats so that the backup can be recovered by simple measures in the event of a major disaster. It also allows for the extraction of a single file or specific files with any compatible unzip utility, without having to resort to its restore function. It will finally present a comprehensive summary of all the decisions made on every option, in a clear and logical list under appropriate group headings. It is then only necessary to click the Finish button and then the Backup button for the procedure to commence. I successfully backed up 911MB of files this way to span two CD-RWs as a test. From past experience I do not recommend your using CD-RW as the cost is greater, the writing is slower and the capacity less than CD-R. The procedure initially looks tedious, but working through it a few times should be sufficient to enable subsequent backups that are done done without using the wizard.

Having made a backup there is now a requirement to consider how this will be updated. **Backup4all** offers Differential or Incremental backup. Differential or Incremental backups to an existing backup are done by editing the Properties of the original backup. A differential backup contains all files that have changed since the last FULL backup. This has the advantage of shortening restore time compared to a full backup or an incremental backup because only two backup components are ever needed – the original and the differential. However, it has the disadvantage of growing larger than the full backup if used too many times. To cope with this problem **Backup4all** offers options to make a full backup when the

differential exceeds a stated percentage of full backup size (default is 50%), or to make a full backup when the differential exceeds a stated file size (default is 1MByte). I used differential backup to add a further 4MB to my CD. An incremental backup stores all files that have changed since the last backup of any kind - FULL, DIFFERENTIAL or INCREMENTAL. The advantage is that it takes the least time to complete. However, restoration can be a lengthy process as the number of incremental backups increases. Again, **Backup4all** offers options to reduce the size and limit the number of stored backups by merging files. These two options will perform an internal merge to keep the number of stored backups under the selected limit.

Finally, **Backup4all** has a mirror backup that is identical to a full backup; with the exception that the files are not compressed in zip files but are an exact copy of the backup data. It has the benefit that the backup files can also be readily accessed using tools like Windows Explorer, and can be copied back to the original location without using the program's restore function. The integrity of all backup files is tested automatically, using CRC32, to ensure the backup is safe and correctly executed.

Just as there is a backup wizard so there is a restore wizard to initially assist in learning to use the program. Backups can be restored to the original location or in a different location that you specify. I could restore My Documents backup to my desktop computer or to my laptop where it may never have existed. An easy way of transferring masses of files and increasing their availability. Individual files can be restored by selecting them in the Explore view of the toolbar, right clicking, then choosing the restore option.

Backup4all has eleven colourful icons on its toolbar giving immediate access to backup and restore wizards, deletions, properties, statistics, summaries, explore, test and cancel. The Explore view subsequently has five icons that will show what files have been added to or deleted from the backup, changed or not changed since last backup, or that are already present in the backup list but will be excluded from the new backup by new filters that have been set. There is a wealth of information here to provide refinements for your ultimate backup.

I can empathise with those users facing their first backup sessions and having to make decisions with too little awareness of what is needed, and the information they are presented with and asked to present. There is no substitute for DOING, and I recommend reading the comprehensive help file and associated FAQ to the best of your ability, then getting in and doing the job. You will learn with time, and you will appreciate your effort the next time your computer crashes. **Backup4all** is a good program to begin your education. Now be ready to settle in to a regular backup routine.

Get the latest version of Backup4all from http://www.backup4all.com
There are three licensing options: Mirror Edition, Classic Edition and Professional Edition.The major difference between Mirror, Classic and Professional Editions are the supported backup types. Professional Edition implements all four backup types, Classic Edition does not implement incremental backup type, and Mirror Edition implements only the mirror backup type.

RegmagiK

reviewed by Terry Bibo

RegmagiK is a shareware utility competing for favour with Microsoft's Regedit in editing the Windows registry. Most users like to stay away from this area because of the potential damage that can be done by irresponsible editing. So, in comparing the two utilities, we will briefly consider some of the functions of the Registry, to hopefully lessen your trepidation.
The Registry contains a set of five hives for XP, or six for Win98/ME, which are like folders and contain keys. These keys can contain additional keys that are spread along a path like deeply embedded filenames.
The five XP keys are:
　　* HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT File associations for file types
　　* HKEY_CURRENT_USER Configuration information for the current user account
　　* HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE Configuration information about the computer, for all users
　　* HKEY_USERS Configuration information for all user accounts
　　* HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG Hardware profile information for the hardware profile that your computer uses at startup
HKEY_DYN_DATA, found in Win98/ME, is not currently supported in RegmagiK because there was no demand.

Registry Editor, or regedit.exe comes preinstalled by Windows setup. To run it, select Start> Run>, type regedit, and press ENTER. **RegmagiK** comes in a small setup package with uninstall support. In as little as two clicks the setup will copy the necessary files to your hard drive, create shortcuts on the desktop and Start menu and start **RegmagiK**. After initial setup **RegmagiK** can be started using shortcuts or Start> Run> regmagik. Users who prefer no-setup option can simply copy regmagik.exe into the Windows folder for Start> Run to work. **RegmagiK** has the unique ability to create shortcuts to a specific registry key or value by drag-and-drop from within **RegmagiK** to an Explorer folder or the desktop, or by using the File> Create Shortcut menu. It can subsequently be started by double-clicking on this shortcut.<> Each of these utilities has a two-part window like Windows Explorer. The left pane of the window contains the keys, and the right pane contains the Name, Type and Data of each of the selected keys. This is where the first differences appear. Regedit has only a menu bar, and unimaginative yellow manila folders in the left pane, whereas **RegmagiK** has a useful toolbar, an address bar with autocomplete, and context sensitive icons for the main keys. The toolbar and address bar can be hidden if not required.

Frequently used keys can be saved as Bookmarks in **RegmagiK** or Favorites in Regedit. Regedit does not allow sub-folders in Favorites, whereas **RegmagiK** users can organize their favorites in folders much like in Internet Explorer, and can include existing Regedit Favorites as a separate folder. <> **RegmagiK** has a significantly faster search time, and has a bottom search-results pane that displays all the found items with their names and locations. Clicking on the location immediately jumps to the relevant registry entry. Regedit will only find one item at a time and shows that registry entry, until laboriously searching for the next item when ordered.

The right pane for Regedit contains columns for the Name; Type (String Value, Multiple-String Value, Expandable String Value, Binary Value, or DWORD); and Data Value; and displays entries even for empty keys. **RegmagiK**, on the other hand, represents the Type by different icons, and displays no entry at all for empty keys. A much cleaner presentation.

The Type of key, Name and Data Value can all be changed in **RegmagiK**. They should not, unless you know what you are doing, because there are almost no built-in checks or validation in editing the Registry. As you edit Registry entries, the changes are made immediately - there's no Save, Cancel, or Undo command. **RegmagiK** permits editing of either the Name or Data Value in the right pane by double-clicking on the item. The Type can be changed by right-clicking on its icon and choosing the Properties dialog, but this should rarely be necessary and may lead to loss of data in some circumstances. Regedit requires the Name to be double-clicked in order for another window to be opened, allowing the Data Value to be edited; relatively more cumbersome.

This next feature of **RegmagiK** demonstrates its unusual integration with Windows Explorer, something not available in Regedit. Bear with me. The key I have selected is CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop\ConvertedWallpaper. That is the picture of my desktop. In Regedit the Data Value is only shown as a String -- C:\Documents and Settings\Terry Bibo\My Documents\My Pictures\earthlights.jpg -- and has no links. In **RegmagiK** the Data Value is preceded by a Folder image, and clicking on this folder opens Explorer at that entry within My Documents with the full filepath of the JPG file shown. MagiK! Another powerful feature in **RegmagiK** is the ability to go directly to a registry path given as a string, such as is often found in instructions for removing Trojans or other malicious intrusions into the Registry. Just select and copy the registry path to the clipboard. Then open **RegmagiK** and press 'Ctrl+G' or click on the 'Go to Key' toolbar button.

Incorrect Registry entries can lead to anything from occasional flaky behavior to complete system failure. You should always backup the Registry before making any changes to it. Regedit is strong in this area, exporting the Registry as Registration Files, Registry Hive Files or editable Text Files. These can all be imported back into the Registry. **RegmagiK** appears to be able to export only Hives or Keys, but not the entire Registry, as Registration Files. But these files are, in fact, only text files and can easily be edited. Anyway, the Registry can readily be backed up and re-imported in Win98 by using Scanregw in Windows and Scanreg in DOS mode; and Windows ME and XP have System Restore that does this and more.

Regedit has a comprehensive help file but **RegmagiK** has only limited online help.

I am always interested in seeing Windows utilities presented in clearer, more user-friendly, or more attractive forms, and **RegmagiK** is a positive step in that direction. I regret that there is not a associated help file but, having said that, I realise the burden on the author to meet this demand. I have also to consider the market he is aiming at. Not many users will want to explore the Registry intimately, and those of us that do will surely have a 1000-page Windows Reference Manual to refer to. Readers without these tomes can easily get helpful tutorials from the Internet to improve their computer awareness.

RegmagiK is available from: www.RegmagiK.com
1 License @ USD 15.00   Activation code by e-mail.

DiskInternals Flash Recovery

reviewed by Terry Bibo

This should be in every digital camera owner's toolbox. It is unbelievable in its simplicity of operation for its powerful results. It recovers digital images from flash cards or other media that have undergone disasters, intentional or unintentional. Files lost through deletion or card formatting are recovered with a few keystrokes long after the event. **DiskInternals Flash Recovery** recognises hard-drives, external drives, cameras and flash memory devices such as SmartMedia , CompactFlash, Memory Stick, MicroDrive, xD Picture Card Flash Card, PC Card, Multimedia Card, Secure Digital Card, and many others. I think I have given it a fair test, and will detail my actions and results.
Running the program starts a Recovery Wizard that opens the way to select a drive to scan, choose the type of scan - fast or comprehensive - choose the pictures to recover, and finally to choose the destination folder. By default this is My Pictures in My Documents.

For the primary tests I used two digital cameras with different cards, one a 256MB CompactFlash card (Card A) and the other a 128MB xD card (Card B). For additional tests I used another 16MB xD card (Card C) and a 32MB CF card (Card D) that I had lying around. I did not transfer the pictures directly to the PC, preferring to use a card reader for convenience and safety. When the camera, card reader, or memory stick is connected to the PC, normally the USB port, it is recognized as an external disk. Both the camera and the PC reported that there were no pictures on Card A, which I had long since cleared by deleting all pictures after successful transfer to the PC. When I ran **DiskInternals Flash Recovery** and selected the drive it then scanned memory and showed thumbnails of every picture that it found. And promptly recovered 35 of these non-existent pictures in full size with attributes.

Next came Card B, which showed I still had 8 pictures on the xD card. I had left them there after copying to the PC and was fully aware of their existence. I deleted two of these for the exercise and then ran **DiskInternals Flash Recovery**. It found 26 unspoiled pictures of the past that I previewed but left unrecovered. That was 24 unknown pictures plus the two I had just deleted. I then moved the 6 remaining original pictures to the hard disk. Theoretically there were then no pictures on this card that the PC or camera could find. **DiskInternals Flash Recovery** found and recovered 32 pictures - those previous 24 unknown plus the original 8.

I then formatted this xD card in the camera and from then on no program found any pictures of any kind.
I shot three pictures on nominally blank Card C then immediately formatted the card in the camera. As above, no program found any pictures.The situation improved when I then shot three pictures on nominally blank Card D and immediately deleted them. **DiskInternals Flash Recovery** found and recovered these three plus another 29. Where to go from here?

Well, I then did a Quick Format on Card D in the PC. **DiskInternals Flash**

Recovery found 29 files, but three of these were those I had just shot and had overwritten previous ones. The final test was a PC Full Format of Card D. **DiskInternals Flash Recovery** found 31 pictures. It can recover pictures after a quick format on the PC and, in the test immediately above, a full PC format. But each digital camera can format its memory card with its own method - quick or full - depending on the camera model. A deliberate full format.will destroy data entirely, as I saw on my cameras, but a quick reformat permits recovery.

DiskInternals Flash Recovery has an additional, very useful feature. Its Create Recovery Snapshot feature is able to create an image of all recovered pictures in a single file for transport to another drive. This is a binary mirror image of the scanned disk. Using the Mount Recovery Snapshot feature enables this image to be written to any other disk as a folder of the recovered pictures. It provides a very good temporary, or even permanent, backup for security against further misfortune.

I used other programs in this test to provide balance and comparison, and I can say that **DiskInternals Flash Recovery** produced the best results with the minimum of effort and a very user-friendly presentation.

DiskInternals DiskInternals Flash Recovery 1.11 is available at http://diskinternals.com/?s=2 for free evaluation. The price of registering the program is 34.95 US Dollars per copy.

BVS Solitaire Collection

reviewed by Derek Jordan

The **BVS Solitaire Collection 5.3** for Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP is a collection of **385** solitaire card games including a lot of original variations.

The collection has many useful features: "Show Next Move" command, multi-level undo/redo, statistics for multiple players, selectable backgrounds, automatic card moving, restart feature, shuffle selection, load/save feature, sound, support for both Drag-and-Drop and Point-and-Click methods to move cards, and more...

There are over 90 original solitaire variations. But it also includes all of the most popular solitaire card games such as Spider, Klondike, Freecell, Carpet, Forty Thieves, Monte Carlo, Russian Solitaire, Flower Garden, Golf, Cruel, Accordion, Pyramid... .

You can modify rules of almost any of the included games, thus creating your own solitaire game variation.

Interface is completely customizable. You can choose from lots of backgrounds and card backs, or you can use any .bmp or .jpg image files to create your own backgrounds and card backs. (Registered users can also download Plus Pack with lots of additional card sets and backgrounds.) Handy user-customizable toolbar can be dragged around and docked wherever convenient.

The collection offers a variety of statistical and scoring screens. You can track your performance and progress in playing solitaire to a degree most people would not use – but it is there if you want.

I did not download a registered version for the review. The trial version offers 22 "unlocked" games. For me that was enough to see it would be a very satisfying collection for the solitaire addict and an interesting relaxation for the less regular player. I found a few of the unlocked games difficult – the selection panel warns of the degree of difficulty of each. An occasional game was dull, but others, most I had not seen before, were challenging. Each game has its own help file to explain the rules and method of play; some of the difficult games warn that "a win is rare" – now there's a challenge!

The free trial version is available at ***www.bvssolitaire.com/*** and registration for the unlock key is US$19.95

Freeware discussion

Yes! I do use programs that I've paid for, but judging from the amount of discussion on the alt.comp.freeware newsgroup, I'm not alone with my liking for computer freeware programs. There are about 200 messages a day -- TrevorF.

File renaming

>> In directory D:\Temp\Pictures I have 100 files with same prefix :
>> Frame000.bmp
>> Frame001.bmp
>
>> What's the easiest way to rename all to, for example :
>> mymovie000.bmp
>> mymovie001.bmp
>
> Easiest way under XP, select all, and rename the first one.

Full instructions for this are at:
http://graphicssoft.about.com/cs/renamers/ht/renamexp.htm

For a more flexible solution, look at Lupas Renamer:
http://www.azheavymetal.com/~lupasrename/lupasrename.php

CCleaner
http://www.ccleaner.com/

CCleaner (Crap Cleaner) is a freeware system optimization tool that removes unused and temporary files from your system, allowing Windows to run faster, more efficiently and giving you more hard disk space. The best part is that it's fast! (normally taking less that a second to run) and Free.

In response to a query re Crap Cleaner going shareware, Boris responded:

> This ("$hareware" thing, or as some call it "going to the other side") is an experiment, like most of things in my life. I'll see how it goes. In an ideal world I would work on better features than serial numbers and activation code validations, but there are real reasons (other than my curiosity) to why RegmagiK is no longer a freeware. When these reasons go away it will only be natural to remove
>
> #define NEED_ACTIVATION
>
> from my source code.
>
> Until then, help me promote regmagik and your wish may come true. (This sounds just like these stupid messages that tell you to forward them to 15 people you know and a something good will happen to you in the next three days) So, cross it out.

The Windows XP Tweaking Companion (XPTC) is the complete Windows XP and system optimization guide.

http://www.tweakguides.com/XPTC.html

I've just begun to read through some of the 170 pages of information in this file. Author Koroush Ghazi covers a lot of ground in this guide, and it looks like I'm in for an interesting read.

Ian.

MasterYourWindows 6.0 can auto-maximize the application you want, simply by drag and drop

http://piussoft.100free.com/MasterYourWindows6.0setup.zip

Clean Software

Over the years I have accumulated a set of daily-use free applications which I trust are free from spyware, adware, and other unpleasantness. I decided to catalog them at this web site for easy reference, since I find myself repeatedly recommending the software to friends and colleagues:

http://www.cleansoftware.org/

Yes, there is much overlap with pricelessware!

For each title, there is an associated user comments section where anyone can contribute extra information about the title. The mandate of the site is to list daily-use free software that is free from nasties.

Quoting from the home page:

> *This site provides links to excellent daily-use free software that are believed to be free from spyware, adware, or other malicious or intrusive components. As a long time computer user, software developer, and student of Engineering and Computer Science I would not hesitate to use any of these programs myself.*

The "clean" software listed in the categories is, to the best of the admin's knowledge, free from:

- Adware - aggressive, unwelcome advertising
- Spyware - components that track, record, report your actions
- Data mining - analysis of personal data for marketing purposes
- Parasites - unwelcome, hidden, unexpected components
- Misleading or tricky license agreements
- Threats to personal privacy
- Threats to user/data security

Jem Berkes
Windows, UNIX software and system design
http://www.pc-tools.net/

ToDo List

Is there a program with "To-Do list" with checkbox, printable and the Load/Save option? When I go to vacation, I usually forget something...I'd like to create "blocks" of to-do list (one for mountain, one for sea, one common for both), better if in a tree-form with checkbox :-))

I've found Evernote, free now in beta stage, but shareware later...

I'm thinking to use Keynote, but is there something easier and more specific ?

Hi Simone,

Have a look at this list:

http://www.pricelesswarehome.org/acf/P_ORGANIZERS.php#2.11Notes

In particular, there have been some rave reviews of this app.

Program: **What To Do**
Author: (Alex Tilles) Ware: Free for non-commercial use
http://www.handcraftedbytes.com

What To Do Version 1.04
http://www.handcraftedbytes.com/WhatToDo/v1.04/w2dsetup.exe (320 KB)

Date Difference

Several years ago Kobayashi Software released a small utility, DateDiff, for calculating the difference in days between two dates. It was written as an in-house tool to assist in manual testing of interest calculations, and released as freeware almost as an afterthought.

It was quite surprising, then, when DateDiff proved to be popular, receiving several dozen downloads each month. I suspect a lot of people are using it to count down the days until they can retire :)

Recently I received a few requests for new features, which I've implemented. I'm pleased to announce version 2.0 of DateDiff is now available. It is, of course, still freeware.

DateDiff can calculate the number of days between any two dates. As of this new version, it can also determine the date X days before or after a given date.

Other changes in version 2.0:

- Overhauled interface
- Improved calendar controls
- Jump directly to month (click on month name in calendars)
- Fast scroll through years (click on year)
- Week of year displayed in left column on calendars

Date and plus/minus values restored from last session

Available for download at **www.kobayashi.com**

Eric Schreiber Kobayashi Software

Visual Basic for Applications

Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2005 9:34 AM

Hi
My VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) tutorial website has links to 6 FREE online tutorials that should allow anyone interesting in learning some basic computer programming, or interested in learning how to use VBA, how to use the VBA Editor in WORD, EXCEL or ACCESS, as well as to learn the basics of computer programming techniques and skills.

www.vbatutor.com

I hope you can pass this link on to your users.

Thank you

Gary Radley
11 Snell Court
Warrnambool, 3280, Australia
(03) 55 611315

For free on-line courses, including two on digital photography, have a look at

http://courses.help.com/

HP sponsors four of the courses currently available:

1. Windows XP Maintenance and Troubleshooting
2. Beyond Point & Shoot: Digital Photography Techniques
3. Advanced Photoshop 7 Applications
4. Digital Photography Made Simple

Every photographer should be aware of the importance of histograms and how to control them.
The best graphic explanation of histograms I have seen is at:

http://www.dpreview.com/learn/?/key=histogram

Many thanks to Mike D.

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Digital SIG

Below are some links that people interested in manipulation of pages, graphics and documents would most likely be interested in.

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http://www.photo.net/learn/jpeg/ is an excellent explanation of JPEG compression, covering the way it works and some of the trade-offs that the designers faced.

VirtualPhotographer http://www.optikvervelabs.com/

- Virtual Photographer is a Photoshop compatible plug-in that allows you to create a variety of photographic styles with the greatest of ease.
- Features many presets, all of which can be fine tuned to fit your requirements.
- Effects such as Film Grain, Soft Focus, B/W, B/W tinting, High Contrast etc. are all just a click away.
- No more struggling to get to grips with the steep learning curve of your photo editor. Great results are just a mouse click away.

/CoMa

Conny (CoMa) Magnusson hubbabub[AT]algonet.se http://www.algonet.se/~hubbabub/

You could take a look at Angela's rule of thirds tutorial. I don't have the link to hand but this link gives an idea: **http://www.silverlight.co.uk/tutorials/compose_expose/thirds.html**

I don't have a tutorial on the rule of thirds per se. The one that you're thinking of is the one on cropping, where the rule of thirds is mentioned: **http://www.fortunecity.com/westwood/alaia/354/tutorials/cropping/**

Paint Shop Pro Forums

Use your news reader to browse the forums for questions **http://www.jasc.com/community/forums/**?

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dpreview stands for **Digital Photography Review** and is one of the best sites on the web about this topic. You can find the site here **http://www.dpreview.com**. The site has discussion forums much like the Jasc ones accessible through the web. Click the forums link on the left.

Are there DRI (Dynamic Range Increase)-Plugins for PSP?

The technique is commonly called contrast masking. A Google search for "PSP contrast masking" without the quotation marks will get you several tutorials. The Photoshop tutorials are easily managed in PSP. once you get the idea of what is going on.

See also the **Foto Fixer script** at **http://pixelnook.home.comcast.net/**

Nig wrote: > > Hi, > does anyone know a good website or tutorial how to work with DRI and PSP? > There are different ways and I would like to know what is the best with PSP 9.

What works best depends on the content of your image. No one method is "best" unless it is adaptive to image content and even then it is up to human judgment and artistic taste.

Here are some tutorials: **http://luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/digital-blending.shtml**
http://www.luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/contrast_masking.shtml
http://www.vinberg.nu/photography/articles/technique/contrastmasking/contrast_masking.htm
http://www.erik-krause.de/blending/index.htm
http://members.surfeu.de/home/erik.krause/cn_hdr/index.htm

Here is some advice posted previously to the Paint Shop Pro forums: If you have just two images, I believe the simplest way to get what you want is to use layer blend ranges.

1. Combine the shots in a single two-layer image; make sure that both layers are full raster layers (promote background if necessary).
2. Open layer properties from the Layers palette and go to the Blend Ranges tab.
3. For an underexposed (too dark) shot, move upper left slider all the way to the right.
4. For an overexposed (too light) shot, move upper right slider all the way to the left. Should work IMO.

Just some clarification. First, do you want to correct individual photos using contrast masking or do you want to do contrast blending by combining bracketed exposures of the same scene? Second, how do you know this is what you need to do? In other words, what tools have you tried in PSP and why don't they do it for you?

Pretty much any contrast masking tutorial can be scripted in PSP, so find one you like and script away. Gary Barton has a script here that you might like:
http://pixelnook.home.comcast.net/FotoFixer.htm

Here is a contrast masking tutorial from a respected source:
http://tinyurl.com/t19g
All the steps can be replicated by recording in PSP.

Collage:

> *I have PSP 9.01 and what I want to do is combine 3 photos into 1.*
> *I have a photo of my Grandfather, myself and son, I want to place*
> *all three faces side by side on 1 photo. Is that possible without*
> *taking an advanced course in PSP?*

That's a montage, sometimes called collage.
http://www.pspiz.net/tutorials/advanced/collage1.html is a good
introduction to the technique. You can find more with a search at
http://www.psplinks.com/ . Some of the tutorials were written for
earlier versions; you will find some of the tools in different
places. Write back if you get stuck with any of the parts.

Fred Hiltz, fhiltz at yahoo dot com

Information from Lockergnome Windows Fanatics

Stamp v2.7 (Download)
http://channels.lockergnome.com/windows/archives/20050103_stamp_v27.phtml

Stamp lets you rename your digital camera photos so they sort in chronological order. It uses the EXIF
metadata that is contained in digital photos and renames the files using the date information as the name
in addition to incremental numbers, optional batch information, and sequence numbers.

Since the program sets the date information as first part of the file name, pictures can be easily sorted in
Windows Explorer using the true creation date. Stamp...

Add Scanned Pictures and Digital Photos to Your Word Documents (Tips)
http://channels.lockergnome.com/windows/archives/20050103_add_scanned_pictures_and_digital_photos_to_your_word_documents.phtm

Word 2002 (and previous versions of the application) ship with clip art that you can easily insert into your
documents. However, with the increasing popularity of digital cameras, scanners, and other photo imaging
technology, you an image that you have captured that would be more suited to your document than clip art.
Word 2002 has the built-in tools to allow you to easily add images from digital cameras and scanners to
your documents. The steps...

AbsoluteDeNoiser
http://absolutedenoiser.free.fr/

AbsoluteDeNoiser is an easy to use software (step 1, 2, 3) that produces very competitive noise reduction
filtering for digital images. It is a Java software that should run on almost every machine: Windows
98/2000/XP, Mac Os X, Unix, Linux.

AbsoluteDeNoiser (Free version) works in 3 steps: Edges detection Surfacing Texturing.

/CoMa

Helcon has released (Jan 6, 05) a new version of their **noise reduction** program.

Here is the link for the new free version
http://downloads.heliconfilter.com/HeliconFilter2.01Free.exe
2.9Mb

This is also a free version of Imagenomic's noise reduction program
Noiseware Community Edition v 2.0.3 (build 2031).

1. **http://www.imagenomic.com/setup/NoisewareCESetupxp2031.exe**
   1.3Mb. for **Win XP**.
2. **http://www.imagenomic.com/setup/NoisewareCESetup2031.exe**
   2.3Mb. **Win 98SE/Me/2000**.

/CoMa

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Old Al's Snippets

Software Copyright

Let me state right at the outset that I am not a lawyer, and that I have a dismally limited knowledge of the law. I do maintain, however, that in a democracy citizens have the right, indeed a responsibility, to have opinions, and express their opinions about the laws that affect their rights. We do not live in an autocratic society, where Big Brother dictates what we are allowed to think and say.

We all know copyright. It is a legal protection for authors, right? Well, not quite. Wise heads have decided that copyright applies to software. At first sight, that does appear reasonable. But is it, really? Let us compare the use of books and of software.

The copyright of books has been in wide use ever since Mr. Gutenberg invented printing and since the law makers decided to stop others, than the publishers of the first version of a book, to make additional copies. Also, copyright prevents significant chunks of a printed work to be copied word-by-word without the copyright holder's permission. It was never intended to prevent the thoughts, expressed in a copyright protected publication, to be absorbed and used by the readers of that publication. OK, we accept these restrictions of copyright without much loss of sleep. But are books and their use the same as software? If they are not similar, is it reasonable to have the same restrictions on their use?

When I buy a book, I can read it, I can lend it to a friend or friends to read it. After I get tired of it, I can sell it at some price. I can also use a book not only as a decoration on an empty shelf, but also as a weight to keep the paper sheets on my table straight. In a word, a book is a physical object and can be used as such. Sure, I am not allowed to reprint it, nor parts of it, but that is the only major limitation imposed by copyright on my use of a book.

But software is different. It is not really a physical object, though undoubtedly it is carried by a physical medium, such as a floppy or a CD. If the software is proprietary and subject to copyright, I am not allowed to lend it to a friend - that is not legal.

Though one pays for the proprietary software, there are severe restrictions on its use. Sometimes its use is restricted to one computer only. Is that reasonable? I don't think so. In fact, when proprietary software encroaches on my freedom to such an extent, I refuse to buy it - and to use it.

And that is where GNU GPL (General Public Licence, http://www.pcug.org.au/oss/ user=pcug, pwd=member and look for a link to GNU GP Licence) and Open Source Software (OSS) comes in. If there is a choice between OSS and proprietary software, other things being equal, I would choose OSS any time.

Wouldn't you?

Our own Open Source Program depository on our own server, TIP, is at http://www.pcug.org.au/oss/ until further notice.

Al. Kabaila akabaila at pcug.org.au
web page http://www.pcug.org.au/~akabaila
Kind regards, Al.

Promoting OSS in PCUG - akabaila[at]pcug[dot]org[dot]au

Making email simpler and safer - gmail

I remember well a humorous article that Mike D passed around the group last year - with the catchline "Owning a PC is more trouble than keeping a pet!"

Last week I told the story of how I became a convert to Google mail (Gmail), how it saved my bacon when my PC failed and how the more I use it, the more I think it makes computing simpler for me. It was a bit of a complicated story and I didn't get around to putting a summary on last week's notes, but a number of people offered opinions which made me think that I hadn't told the story quite well enough. The main point of this story is how I now believe I have found a simple way to give me greater protection for my emails and immediate access should my computer fail, and in a way that brings many other benefits, including independence of relying on any one ISP. I am conscious that there may be many CNC members who do not feel such a strong need as I do to keep one's email going through thick and thin. There are many times when I rely heavily on it. Over the years, the few times that I have totally lost my email capacity - whether through software or hardware failure - have caused me significant distress. There are also many CNC members who are much more technically skilled than I am, and who are happy to weather any storm with software or hardware failure. For me the PC remains a large assembly of mysteries, many of the somewhat threatening kind. There are also others in the group who are prepared on a daily basis to implement very stringent backup plans on their local PC. I don't have the enthusiasm for this level of machine vigilance. I am afraid I look for solutions which to me appear much simpler. So here is my story again, as I told it very briefly at 2 recent meetings, together with points raised by others as well as I recall them.

AUTO OFFSITE BACKUP AND SECURITY

Early last year I installed Windows XP Pro on my 2.7 megahertz Pentium 4 machine, using a 60 meg hard disk. Around September/October the system crashed. It would not boot up properly. As soon as I started it, it went into the shutdown screen. On advice from Tony S, I took the machine to Eva at ATM computers. They spent a lot of time on diagnosis and could find no fault with the hard disk nor any virus or malware. Mystery! And more trouble than keeping a pet. So they simply backed up the contents of the hard disk on another machine and reloaded Windows for me, plus other software. My hard disk was already a couple of years old and I was getting a little nervous about it anyway, long before this total system failure. Being a prudent soul, I had purchased an 80 meg hard disk early in the year as a replacement - so that I could do a Drive Image and change over to a new disk. But I could not get the new disk to work properly. I found out later that it was from a faulty batch of Seagate Barracudas (Thanks Tony S). This problem took me quite a while to sort out. More trouble than keeping a pet! This system crash happened at just the time that I was busy organising some October meetings. My email had been buzzing. I was suddenly without my machine for almost a week - and deprived of all my recent emails and addresses on my hard disk at just the moment I needed them urgently. Fortunately, Charlie K had given me an invite to Google mail earlier in the year. I have been using various forms of webmail extensively as part of training beginners at Digital Divide centres around Canberra. I recognised Gmail's superior features. I immediately made Gmail my main email tool, with copies auto forwarded to my email client (Eudora) on my home machine. When my main machine crisis hit, I just booted up my ancient Windows 98 machine, went onto the web and Gmail, and I had everything at my fingertips. I didn't have to worry too much about my malfunctioning system. Google had taken care of my mail for me - offsite. Now while you are still on dial up, webmail is not the most convenient tool. In fact, without broadband, the whole computer loses a huge proportion of its utility and convenience. But Google webmail did save my bacon, even when on dialup last October. Now that I am back on broadband again, Gmail is "always on", as an envelope-shaped icon sitting in the system tray. Just right click and up comes the Inbox and I am up and running. I still use Eudora to send a lot of messages, but I nominate my Google address as my sending address and then get all mail back to Google mail automatically copied back to my ISP and Eudora. Auto backup.

EASIER CONTROL OF SPAM

I get plenty of spam via my ISPon Eudora. I have experimented with quite a number of webmail accounts over the last couple of years. The Telstra one was the only one I met which had problems with spam. But not on Google mail. It automatically quarantines spam and I just don't have to worry about it. It's there in its little spambox, if I am curious. I started wondering about installing a spam filter such as the one Peter H uses (Frontgate?), but this is just another complication I would rather not have to worry about. Let Mr Google look after it. The simpler my computer is to run the better. John S said Gmail's spam filtering didn't work for him.. But because I get the Gmail to be my main recipient address and channel as much as possible through it, it cleans out the spam before I see it.

ENJOY BETTER SOFTWARE WITHOUT WORRY ABOUT UPGRADES

I have used Eudora now since first going on the net in the mid 1990s. I have also had to teach Outlook Express to beginners a fair bit over the last couple of years. This experience has not made me any fonder of OE. But I am also tiring of Eudora now too. With Google mail automatically keeping my address book for me without me raising a finger, and not having to worry about creating and managing folders to keep stuff in, I now see Eudora and OE as belonging to an older generation of software. Gmail is still in beta mode I believe. Since joining up, it has been very significantly improved - and development is continuous. What I like about this is that with this software, I don't have to worry about upgrades anymore. It all happens automatically. You never know when you boot up next whether the Google engineers will offer you yet another valuable feature with the software. I believe Gmail will come to reflect the cutting edge best practice with email. Or so I hope. I had warned my neighbour next door a number of times about relying on OE on his old hard disk for keeping his records of old emails. But then it crashed and he lost the lot. What I didn't expect was that I would lose significantly too with Eudora, when I had my bout of woes with XP Pro. I still have all my old emails, but most of my old address book is inaccessible. And I have lost enthusiasm for remaking all the old mail folders and links I had put together so carefully. Until recently, there was also another new and streamlined piece of email software available with many of Google's features - but operating as a resident email client. It was called Bloomba and was developed by Stata Labs. It got many rave reviews. Automatic address book. No folders. Bloomba uses power searching instead, etc. But Yahoo recently bought out the company in order to recruit the brains there - and the Bloomba email client software has been taken off the market. Perhaps Bloomba features will soon be incorporated into Yahoo mail. Perhaps this is just another indication of the future direction of email.

NO NEED TO DISCARD EMAILS - PLENTY OF SPACE

Until my recent problems with XP Pro, I had accumulated 4 years email on my Eudora client. Including attachments, this amounted to 360 meg. So Google mail's one gigabyte will obviously be quite adequate for me for some years. I don't put much weight on the objection that Gmail space is not big enough. If so, why not give yourself more than one account - and use extra ones for receiving the mailing lists that fill up your space.

ISP STABILITY - WHY NOT USE GMAIL AS YOUR DEFAULT ADDRESS?

One of our CNC subscribers recently wrote: "I've had enough complications with ISP's (no names mentioned) not handling my mail and not notifying me that it was just going to the big bit-bucket in the sky." Here, here, Terry! I have just changed ISP again in order to move to broadband. But instead of telling everyone that I have a new email address, I will just let people continue to write to me at Gmail. Even though Google has only been with us for 5 years, it seems like a major institution already. I recall John S telling the meeting that Google is now worth more than the combined value of GM and Ford. I think my mail will be safe with them as an offsite location and home for my email for quite some time to come. Provided you back up your emails on your resident email client (easily arraned under Gmail options), you should have a failsafe and simple way of using and securing your email. So if Gmail does fall over, I still have all my stuff in a backup copy on my email client on my home PC.

SUMMARY

So if you are on broadband, want to keep your email computing as simple and failsafe as possible - while keeping up with changing technology - I would recommend using Gmail as your main email and using your ISP and PC client email software as a backup. Just use Gmail forwarding function to send a copy of all your replies to your PC email client. And perhaps continue to use your email client for originating correspondence, but auto send a copy to your Gmail address.

The advantages of Gmail in a nutshell are:

1. Safer and easier backup of one's email
2. Better software and easier to use with auto upgrades for spam control, address lists and replacing folders with the Google search facility. In my view, organising all our emails in separate folders really belongs to the last century.
3. Plenty of space for years to come for most people - and if not, just shout yourself another Gmail address for the overflow of eg mailing list stuff.
4. Email stability and independence from any one ISP.

When you add up all these advantages and also realise that you don't have to cut your links with your old email software client, why not give it a go?

Philip Bell. Wednesday, 19 January 2005

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<p align="center">**About Web Safe Colors**</p>

by Gary W. Priester

Do you write or maintain a hypertext page (known as a web page)? Here's part of what Gary W. Priester wrote in February 2000.

> Color for web graphics can get pretty confusing. While there might only be two basic file formats, GIF and JPEG used for web graphics, there are several color systems that apply to GIF images. In this article we'll look at Web Safe or Browser Safe Palettes.
>
> Next month we'll continue exploring GIF palette options and look at Adaptive, WebSnap Adaptive, Uniform and System (Windows and Macintosh) palettes. Well also get a handle on which palettes are best used with which images.
> February 21, 2000

What Are Web Safe Colors?

Web Safe, or Browser Safe palettes as they are also referred to, consist of 216 colors that display solid, non-dithered, and consistent on any computer monitor, or web browser, capable of displaying at least 8-bit color (256 colors). The reason why this palette contains only 216 colors, instead of the maximum 256 colors, is that only 216 out of the basic 256 colors will display exactly the same on all computers.

Why is this?

This discrepancy is similar to what happens when a Windows user opens a word processor document created on a Macintosh (or vice versa) and sees a lot of odd characters in place of the expected punctuation marks and other extended characters. While the basic character set of lowercase and upper case characters and numerals map identically on all platforms, each computer platform treats some extended characters, like ampersands, foreign currency symbols, accented characters, and so forth, differently. And so a proper curly quote mark on one computer platform might be a pound sign on another. This happens with colors as well, so what is gray on a Windows monitor, might display pale yellow on a Macintosh browser. In the same way that there are common characters and numbers that are consistent among computer platforms, so there are colors that display the same. These are what we call Web Safe colors.

Full story here from the **Web Developers Journal**

Gary W. Priester is a reformed advertising art director having spent 25 years creating print and TV advertisements to get people to buy products and services they didn't need. For the past decade, Priester has been a principal in The Black Point Group, a Northern California graphic design firm. He is the author of Looking Good in Color, Ventana Press, and co-author of CorelDRAW Studio Techniques, Osborne/Corel Press. In addition, Gary writes for numerous magazines and Web sites. He lives just north of San Francisco with his artist wife, Mary Carter, their six chickens, five cats, four doves, two finches and one extraordinary canary.

If you'd like to view them in hexadecimal **number and colour**, have a look at
http://www.jessett.com/web_sites/html/hex_colours.shtml

The main page is http://www.jessett.com/

If you're using Mozilla Firefox as a browser like I do, this month
you might notice the background of pages are **light green**. Next
month will probably be different.

To do that, insert
<body bgcolor="#ccffcc">
into the hypertext

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Tweak Firefox

To **make Firefox faster** see....

http://forevergeek.com/open_source/make_firefox_faster.php

To tweak till you drop...
http://www.mozilla.org/support/firefox/tips
http://www.mozilla.org/support/firefox/options
http://www.mozilla.org/support/firefox/edit

Backup your hard disk to CD ROM

Drive Imager XP

http://www.woundedmoon.org/win32/drvimagerxpsetup_2.2.html

download DrvImagerXP v2.2   **656,504 bytes.**

Unlike typical backup programs that copy files, DrvImagerXP makes backups (image files) of NTFS and FAT32 drive partition structures (as well as floppy disks), for the Windows 2000/XP operating systems, by copying, byte-for-byte, the drive partition sectors. And when not using file compression, can do this very quickly, much faster than copying files.

You'll never have to install your operating system again! You can install it, make all your option changes and get it just right, then use DrvImagerXP to create a partition image that you could name "Fresh Install". If you need to go back to a brand new fresh installation of your operating system, you can restore the partition using the "Fresh Install" image in just a few minutes.

You can make partition images of different operating systems and swap them in and out at will!

- Save floppy disk images for faster copying, or for archives.
- Save the image file as multiple zipped files.
- Span an image file over multiple CDs/DVDs.

Though not as powerful and flexible as "Drive Image" or "Ghost" drive imaging programs, the simplicity, yet powerful capabilities of DrvImagerXP make it the favorite choice for many.

DrvImagerXP is freeware! Pass it around! Give it to your friends! Let me know what you think of it!

Unlike typical backup programs that copy files, DrvImagerXP makes backups (image files) of NTFS and FAT32 drive partition structures (as well as floppy disks), for the Windows2000/XP operating systems, by copying, byte-for-byte, and very quickly, the drive partition sectors. The backup image file is an exact reproduction of the entire drive partition.

DrvImagerXP takes a snapshot of your drive partition, saving every aspect of that partition, so later if you want your partition exactly like it was the moment you took that snapshot, you can restore it back to that point in time in minutes, much faster than with file backups.
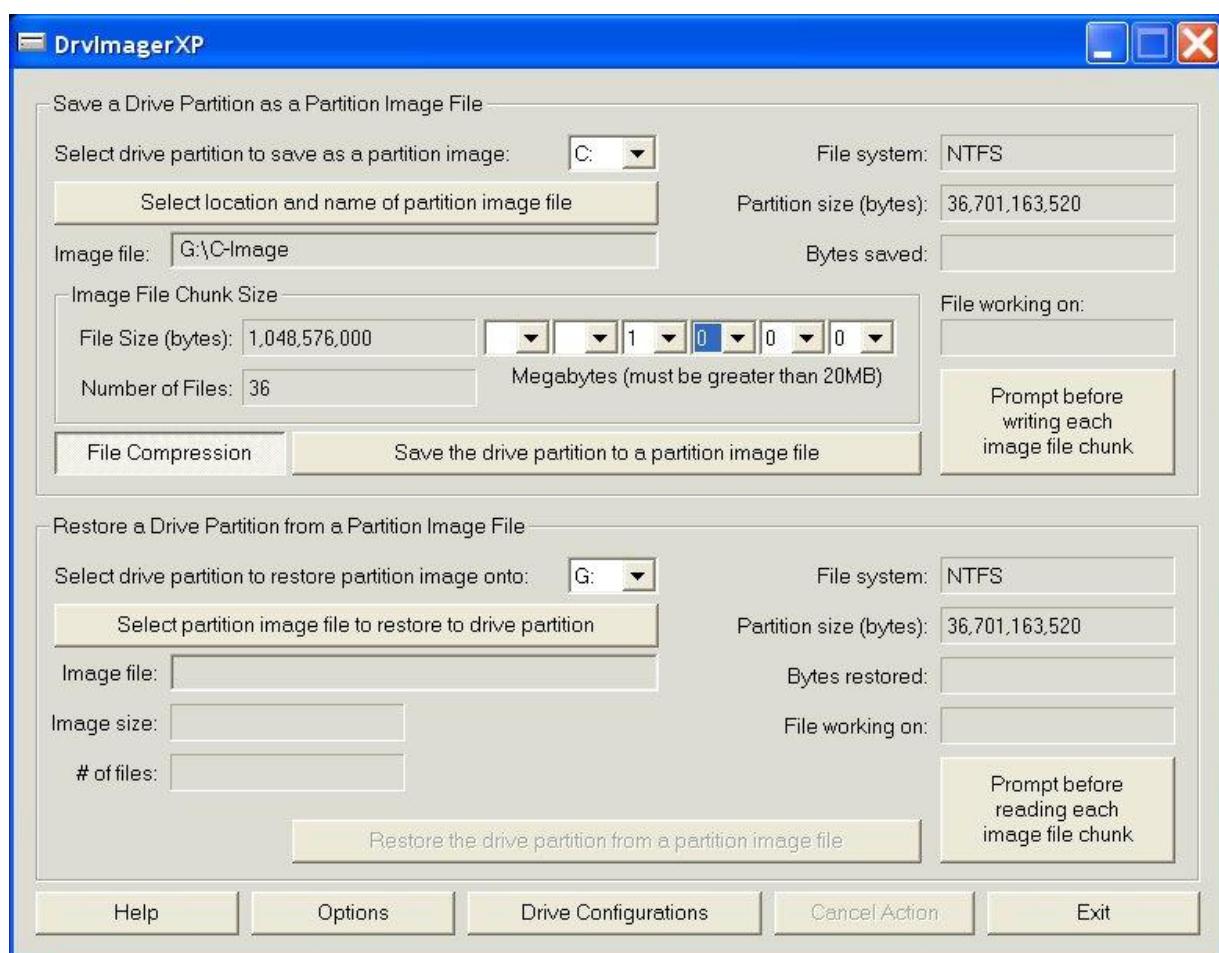
More humour from the net

courtesy of Gary Potts gjpotts@pcug.org.au

- **<u>Just following orders.</u>**

**A couple of hunters are out in the woods in the deep south when one of
them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing, and his eyes
are rolled back in his head.**

**The other guy whips out his cell phone and calls 911. He gasps to the
operator, "My friend is dead! What can I do?"**

The operator, in a calm and soothing voice, says, "Alright, take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is silence, and then a gun shot is heard.

The hunter comes back on the line. "OK. Now what??"

- **<u>Blonde dieting.</u>**

**A blonde is terribly overweight, so her doctor put her on a diet. "I want you to eat regularly for 2 days, then skip a day, and repeat this
procedure for 2 weeks. The next time I see you, you'll have lost at least 5 pounds."**

**When the blonde returned, she shocked the doctor by losing nearly 20
pounds.**

"Why, that's amazing!" the doctor said, "Did you follow my instructions?"

**The blonde nodded, "I'll tell you though, I thought I was going to drop
dead that third day."**

"From hunger, you mean?" asked the doctor.

"No, from skipping," replies the blonde.

- **<u>Me and The Boss.</u>**

When you take a long time, you're slow.

When your boss takes a long time, he's thorough.

When you don't do it, you're lazy.
When your boss doesn't do it, he's too busy.

When you make a mistake, you're an idiot.
When your boss makes a mistake, he's only human.

When doing something without being told, you're overstepping your
authority. When your boss does the same thing, that's initiative.

When you take a stand, you're being bull-headed.
When your boss does it, he's being firm.

When you overlook a rule of etiquette, you're being rude.
When your boss skips a few rules, he's being original.

When you please your boss, you're apple polishing.
When your boss pleases his boss, he's being co-operative.

When you're out of the office, you're wandering around.
When your boss is out of the office, he's on business.

When you're on a day off sick, you're always sick.
When your boss is a day off sick, he must be very ill.

When you apply for leave, you must be going for an interview.
When your boss applies for leave, it's because he's overworked.

- **I don't know.**

A young man named Murphy applied for an engineering position at an Irish
firm based in Dublin. An American applied for the same job and both
applicants having the same qualifications were asked to take a test by
the department manager.

Upon completion of the test, both men only missed one of the questions.
The manager went to Murphy and said, "Thank you for your interest,
but we've decided to give the American the job."

Murphy asked, "And why would you be doing that? We both got nine
questions correct. This being Ireland, and me being Irish I should get
the job!"

**The manager said, "We have made our decision not on the correct answers,
but rather on the question that you missed."**

**Murphy then asked, "And just how would one incorrect answer be better
than the other?"**

**The manager replied, "Simple, the American put down on question No 5, 'I
don't know.' You put down, 'Neither do I'."**

- ## Cartoons

Ron Lacey ron@ronstoons.com wrote:

This week's Random Acts is ready for your cartoon edification at...

http://ronanddave.com/rat.htm

Enjoy - Ron

Ron Lacey

Murillo, Ontario, Canada.

Photos ron@ronsfotos.com	Ron's Cartoons http://ronstoons.com
The Adventures of Ron and Dave http://ronanddave.com	Paint Shop Pro Zero to Hero http://www.friendsofed.com/books/1590592

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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
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

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Three frustrating days.

Arrrghh!!! This one was really horrible for a while. Sorry this is a bit long, but the job did take nearly 3 full days. Some people who fix systems may find it of interest.

Symptoms: The system was delivered (complete with peripherals and original software). It is quite a new system P4 running XP home. **Described symptoms** were:
1. Broadband connection could not be established.
2. Canon MPC-190 scanner/printer did not work.
3. Control Panel, Windows Explorer, and other XP windows would not fully load.

The Connection problem was quickly solved by deleting the old and building a new connection. XP SP2 was already installed - so just downloaded and installed a few post-SP2 Windows updates & also installed the latest Avast! anti-virus updates - ran a full anti-virus scan (just in case) - nothing found.
The MPC-190 was not connected (via USB). Control panel appeared to be working fine. The printer software was reinstalled - but when it was reconnected - absolutely nothing was displayed when the USB cable was reconnected in several of the available USB ports. Nothing seemed to be amiss with USB using Device manager and other USB devices (like my flash drive) worked fine. Tried another USB printer cable and almost decided to advise the owner to take the printer back. But as it came from the markets - I took pity on the owner and decided to pursue things further.

Did a Google search and found that the **MPC-190 driver was incompatible with SP2**! The owner did not even know that SP2 had installed automatically - that's broadband for you. Although there was no reference to the problem on the Canon web site (I certainly couldn't find one) they had apparently produced a patch which I was able to download from another source. **Now for the Catch-22**. I could not install the patch as the driver could not be re-installed under SP2 as the printer needed to be plugged in during the install process, and as soon as it was plugged in – the process halted!

Now things really started to fall apart. I decided to uninstall SP2. The patch uninstalled O.K. but the printer still could not be installed. Also the system was now asking for an administrator password which the owner did not know..... At this point I rashly decided to reinstall Windows XP 'Over the top' of the previous installation. This has normally been no problem in the past.

The reinstall went well until about 1/2 way through, then the system re-started and setup started again from the beginning. **Serious trouble now** - no working operating system. Very tenacious that Windows setup program. Doesn't matter what you try - it just wants to continue from where it left off, get half way through - reboot and start again.

At that point I started to consider trying to back up data & settings. **Should have thought about that much earlier**. Tried DriveImage 2002, but that only does images and not files when run from the recovery floppy disk, also it managed to delete the Disk drive partition. As I was now working from DOS, downloaded and tried 'NTFS File Reader' from http://www.ntfs.com/products.htm A great utility that allows you to read & copy NTFS files from DOS but it will only write to FAT32 (or lower). No FAT32 partitions on that system..... Tried XP Quickboot from http://www.bootdisk.com/txtfiles/xpquick.txt But no go. Nothing I tried would allow backups or stop the faulty re-install.

Time for the Big Guns. Use the XP recovery console...... Ran a repair from the recovery console using the great (but 7 incredibly laborious A4 pages) of procedures from http://www.digitalwebcast.com/articles/viewarticle.jsp?id=8658-0 BUT - you need the admin password {:-((
The previous URL pointed me to http://www.petri.co.il/forgot_administrator_password.htm and I eventually downloaded EBCD (Emergency boot CD from http://ebcd.pcministry.com/) one of the recommended solutions from the 'forgot password' site. You download and create a bootable CD which brings up a Linux system which in theory allows you to copy files as well as recovering passwords and much more. Although I was not able to work out how to copy files, I was able to null the Admin password. A big step forward. Thanks Linux!

Ran a repair from the recovery console per the digitalwebcast site above - through the 7 pages of command line typing. Got to the end but XP would not boot without activation. Would not even start in Safe mode... And a network connection could not be found.

Ran the repair process again - but this time I stopped 1/2 way and reloaded the NIC driver and was finally able to backup important data. **Whew!**

Then finished the repair and was able to recover using an earlier restore point. And was then able to activate XP (via my network router) as for some reason the system could not be activated via a direct connection from the NIC to TransACT modem.

Finally we had an XP SP1 system back again and I was able to install the MPC-190 printer which worked fine using the original Canon CD - for some reason I was not able to install a later printer driver downloaded from Canon.

Reinstalled SP2 and the printer driver patch. **Back to the original problem** - not only would the computer not recognise that the printer had been plugged into the USB port. But it also killed things such as control panel and My Computer/Windows Explorer. So rather hard to install other software which might have helped. But with the printer disconnected I was finally able to access Windows Explorer and install the Canon Patch. Still no go {:-((

At that point I was able to find a wonderful thread on Whirlpool at http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/forum-replies.cfm?t=228589&p=2 Five pages of accumulated wisdom on exactly this problem. One member reported "edit the file MPNETIPC.INI, change 127.0.0.2 in this file to 127.0.0.1, this will fix your problems. The file should be located in \windows\system32". Never did establish why he knew this, but it **finally fixed the problem!** The MPC-190 Printer and scanner functions now worked well as did all the other XP services......

Conclusion:
Canon make nice hardware but I think their software can sometimes be rather suspect. I have had problems with two different Camera drivers. Canon's web site is very poor. They were well aware of the problem and had produced a patch - but I could not find either an admission of a problem, an explanation or their own patch. Windows XP SP2 was not entirely blameless. Apparently the 127.0.0.1 is the standard 'loop back' address, and Canon were using a somewhat less standard 127.0.0.2 which was being blocked by the new SP2 firewall. Apparently when the printer is used in a networking role - Canon decided to use an address which is normally used in 'loop back' testing.
Thank goodness for another computer to access Google and the Whirlpool forums!

John Saxon 5 Feb 2005

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