



January 8, 2004 Meeting Announcement

Alan's Annual Awesome and Complete Comdex Compendium

Each year Alan Mildwurm, DVPC president and program chairperson, attends the Comdex trade show in Las Vegas. This is the largest computer show in the U.S., and there are always a lot of product introductions and product "trial balloons" that may or may not ever show up at your local friendly computer retailer or web site. Alan will bring some goodies for a "high-tech" show-and-tell. Some of these will be practical, some will be eclectic, some will just be down-right weird. But they will all be fun to see as Alan will be demonstrating the features (or lack thereof) of each item. And we'll have some fun stuff for our usual raffle giveaways, including a keyboard from Microsoft designed for Microsoft Office, with a built-in roller for scrolling through documents! Who says you need a mouse?

Also, please note that we are not meeting on the first Thursday this month. That's because the first Thursday is January 1, and that's New Year's Day, and we figured that most DVPC members would have other things to do on that day. ;-} So, the DVPC January meeting will be held on the **second Thursday, January 8**, same time and same place.

This will be a fun meeting that will make you feel that you had actually attended Comdex!

DVPC meetings are held in the lobby conference room in Building B at the Bank of America Technology Center office complex in Concord, located near the northeast corner of Clayton Road at Galindo (see the map on page 4). Please use the entrance that's on the south side of the building. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. The New Users SIG holds its meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to the regular DVPC monthly meeting. We discuss whatever is confusing or puzzling new PC users. If you are a new user of PCs who would like to meet with other new users – and some experienced users who can answer your questions as well – then join us at the New Users SIG meetings. We'll also have the Networking Table from 6:30 to 7:00; if you have something to sell or trade, need technical help, or just want to exchange views, visit the Networking Table. Also, as usual, we'll have library disks and those great DVPC mugs (version 2) for sale, SIG news, and some of our usual great door prizes.

See you in January – on the 8th!

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President's Message

by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

Happy Holidays (in all formats) and best wishes for the New Year! Also apologies to our editor for my being late again with this letter – I have time management problems.

We will start 2004 (by the way our meeting will be on **Thursday Jan. 8**) with our brand new Sharp PG-A10X projector! We "opened" our new projector at the December Board meeting and watched Pirates of the Caribbean on the living room ceiling – awesome! We discovered that a sloped high ceiling makes a terrific projection surface. This new projector is truly excellent and many thanks to Ron and the projector committee for finding an excellent machine for a very reasonable price. Thanks also to all the members who supported this purchase by donating to the projector fund. In fact, we purchased the projector from www.newegg.com (remember Egghead Software?) for about \$1,200.00 with taxes, shipping, etc and I have seen the same machine for over \$2,000.00 – the MSRP is \$2,200.00! For those of you gearheads that like to know the specifications, go to www.sharppusa.com. Bottom-line: 1300 lumens, and XGA

(Continued on page 10)

DVPC January 2004 Calendar

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|--|--|-----|---|
| | | | 1 <i>New Year's Day Holiday</i> <i>The DVPC meeting will be on January 8 because of the holiday!</i> | 2 | 3 |
| 5 Windows SIG 7:30 p.m. | 6 | 7 | 8 DVPC Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m. New User's SIG 6:30 p.m. <i>Different night this month</i> | 9 | 10 |
| 12 Genealogy eSIG See SIG News on page 5 | 13 | 14 DVPC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Alan Mildwurm's house | 15 Advanced Users SIG 7:30 p.m. Clarion SIG 7:00 p.m. | 16 | 17 PC101 and PC201 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Concord Library |
| 19 | 20 | 21 Internet SIG 7:00 p.m. | 22 | 23 | 24 <i>Diablo Blue deadline: Email articles and ads to the Editor: rogg@value.net</i> |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 <i>See SIG News starting on page 5 for more information about SIG meeting dates, times, topics, and locations</i> |

Email Notification

We provide an email notification service for the current month's *Diablo Blue* password, the DVPC monthly meeting, and information about SIG meetings as well. You have to be a current, paid-up member to receive this service. To read the current month's issue of *Diablo Blue* on-line you need to receive these monthly email messages, so print this page, fill out the form, and mail it to DVPC, PO Box 3244, San Ramon, CA 94583, or bring it to the sign-in desk at the monthly meeting. Or, if you prefer, you can send an email message to nopaper@dvpc.org with your name and email address and your favorite SIGs.

Send me email notification of each monthly *Diablo Blue* password, the DVPC meeting, and the following SIGs:

Name _____

Email Address: _____

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| Advanced Users SIG | | | | | | New Users SIG |
| Clarion SIG | | | | | | PC 101/PC 201 Classes |
| Genealogy eSIG | | | | | | Windows SIG |
| Internet SIG | | | | | | |

Diablo Blue Article and Ad Information

Diablo Blue needs articles from the members of DVPC. See your name in print! Achieve fame and fortune! (Well, maybe just some limited fame in Contra Costa County...) We are particularly interested in product and book reviews and stories about your PC experiences. Send your articles or member ad copy as email attachments to the Newsletter Editor, rogg@value.net.

Commercial advertising is available in *Diablo Blue*. Prices are \$75 for a full page, \$40 for a half page, and \$25 for a quarter page for one insertion – or get three consecutive insertions for the price of two. For more information, call editor Ronald Ogg, at 415-281-0431 (days). Members of DVPC can submit personal classified ads that will be printed in *Diablo Blue* for three insertions at no charge. The rules are simple: up to 9 lines (as we format it), material must be suitable for publication (the editor is the sole judge of suitability), the member must be in good standing (current dues paid), and ad space is available on a first-come first-served space available basis only. If you want fewer than three insertions note that on your ad copy. If members want their business card reproduced, the rate is \$10 for one insertion, or \$25 for three insertions. The card must be horizontal and must be scanable. Send your ad copy as email attachments to the Newsletter Editor, rogg@value.net. See the deadline information in the Calendar on page 16 of each issue of *Diablo Blue*.

DVPC on the Internet

DVPC has a Web site on the Internet – thanks to our Web Team: Ron Ogg and Stan Umlauft. You can surf your way to our own domain and home page by starting your favorite Web browser and typing the following URL; be sure to save it in your browser's hotlist so you don't have to type it each time: www.dvpc.org.

DVPC Officers and Directors

Alan Mildwurm, President/Programs 510-770-5770 (work), awm@mildwurm.com

Nicholas Chase, SIG Coordinator 680-4211 (home), nachase@yahoo.com

Will Crites, Publicity 938-1291 (home), bugkiller@aol.com

Charlie Crothers, At Large 829-2237 (home), ccrothers@attbi.com

Dick Curry, At Large 376-5541 (home), racorinda@pacbell.net

Peggy Johnson, Membership Secretary 676-7522 (home), pegszone@aol.com

Tom Krauss, Secretary 689-9960 (home), tkrauss@astound.net

Jessica Mildwurm, Treasurer 829-5858 (home), jess@mildwurm.com

Ron Ogg, Newsletter Editor and Web Site 415-281-0431 (work), rogg@value.net

Craig Peterson, Librarian 671-7025 (home), compmail@pacbell.net

Stan Umlauft, Web Site 458-5560 (home), stanu@honeybee.com

The Board of Directors usually meets the week following the general meeting. Check the DVPC Calendar on page 16 of each issue of *Diablo Blue*, or the DVPC calendar page, for the meeting date, time, and location. You can reach any of the officers and directors by talking to them at the DVPC monthly meeting, by email to bod@value.net, or by leaving a message on the DVPC voice mail system.

DVPC Voice Mail System

DVPC has a computer-based voice mail system. The phone number for the DVPC VMS is 925-556-1449. Hear up-to-date information about monthly and SIG meetings, information about DVPC for potential new members, and a message center for Board of Directors members and SIG Leaders.

Diablo Blue is the monthly Web-based newsletter of the Diablo Valley PC Users' Group.

Editor: Ronald Ogg, Membership: Peggy Johnson

Please submit articles and columns to the Newsletter editor by email at rogg@value.net

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The Diablo Valley PC Users Group is a non-profit corporation.

DVPC is a member of APCUG, the Association of PC Users Groups, www.apcug.org

Get Involved! Learn! Join a SIG today!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Print this page, fill out this form, and enclose it with your check for \$30.00 for one year's dues with access to the Internet edition of *Diablo Blue* (\$20.00 for students who must enclose a copy of current Student ID), made payable to DVPC, and mail to: DVPC, PO Box 3244, San Ramon, CA 94583

Renewal _____ New Member _____ Referred by current member? Name _____

Name: _____

Company/School: _____ Email address: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

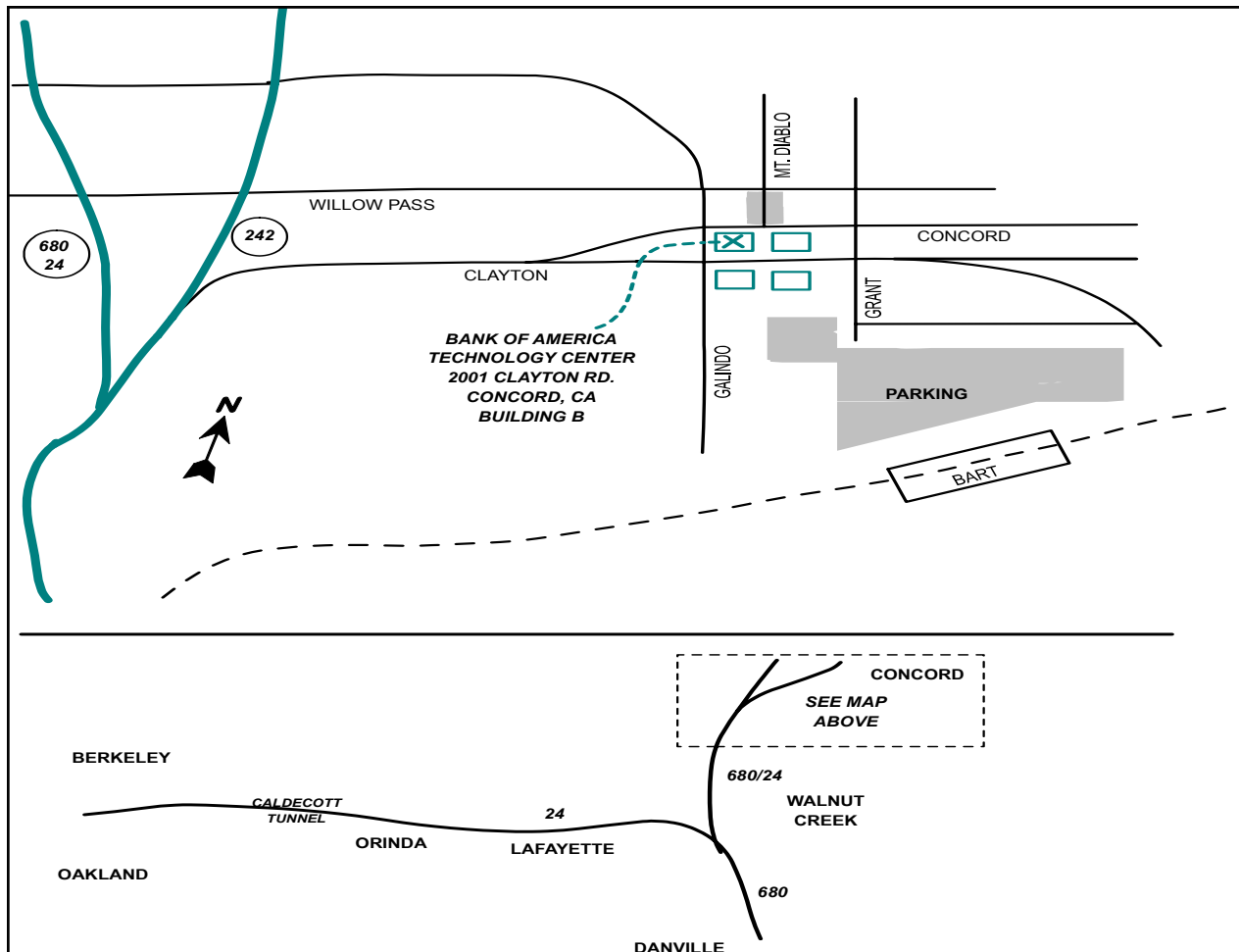
On occasion DVPC publishes a list of members for distribution to DVPC members only. Please check how you would like to be listed: No listing _____ List Name and Home _____ Work _____ phone number(s) _____

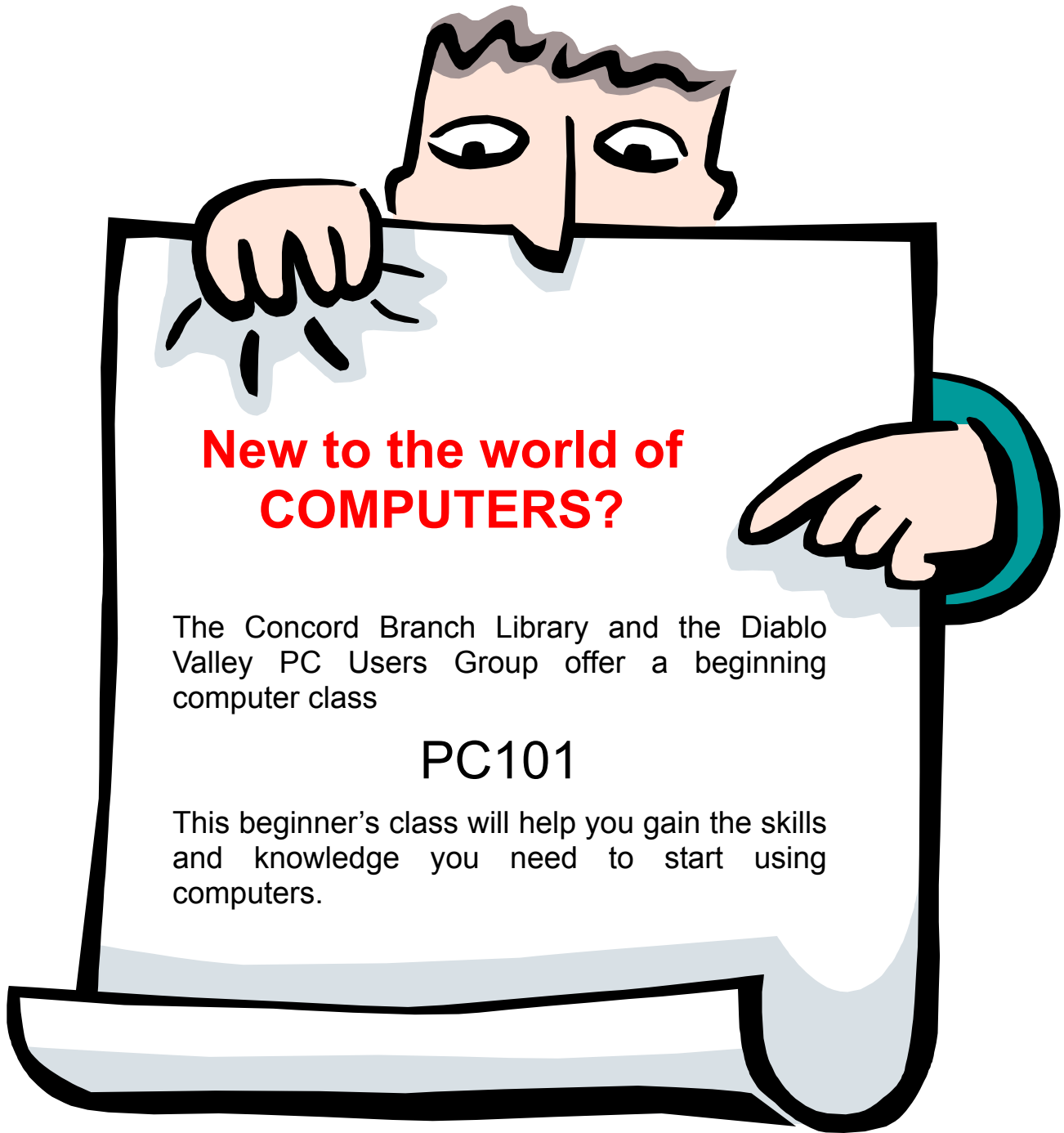
I'm also interested in these SIGs: _____

Directions to Bank of America Building B in Concord

Take the Clayton Road exit off of the 242 Freeway and go east on Clayton Road. After about 1½ miles you'll come to Galindo, and you'll see the Bank of America complex of four high-rise buildings. Parking: Turn left on Galindo then right onto Concord Avenue to find street parking. Or turn right on Grant Street (the first block past Galindo), then right into the BART parking lot at the back of the BofA complex. Building B is the building at the northeast corner of Clayton and Galindo. Enter the door on the south side of the building.

Be sure to observe parking regulations! Concord parking officers are very efficient!





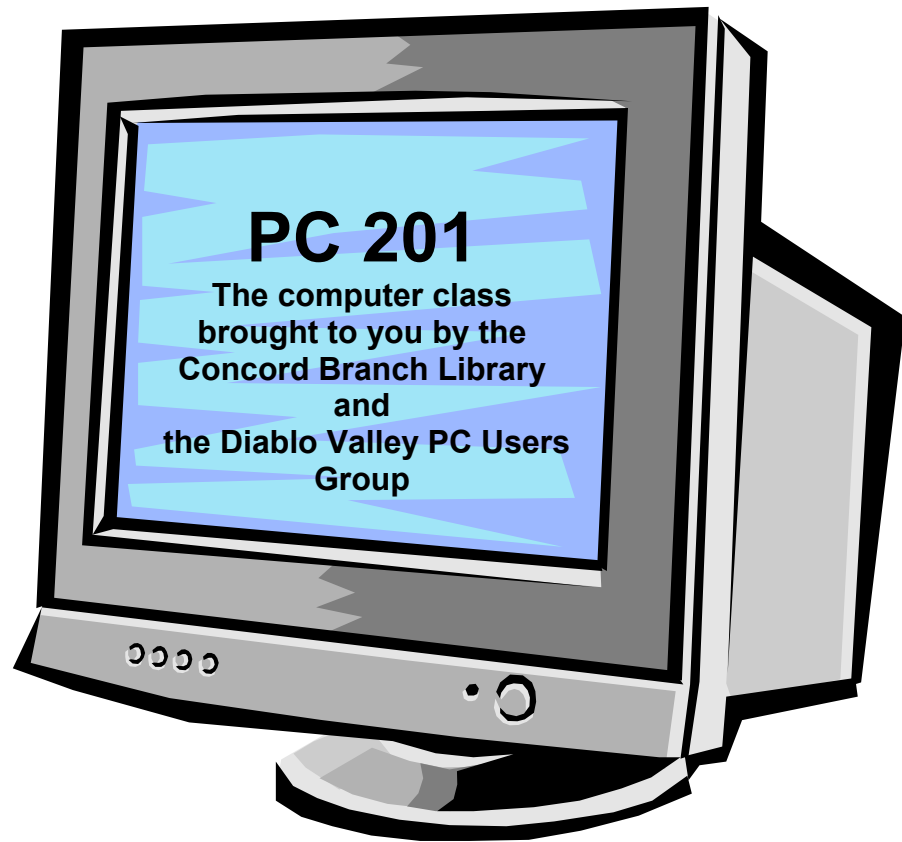
The next class will be **January 17th** from 10 am until 2 pm. In January we will cover **Unit #6 – The Future**

All classes are at the Concord Branch Library's Community room, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA.

Space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Branch Library.

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SOFTWARE

Join us **Saturday, January 17, 2004** for an exciting program. The topic is "Everything you ever wanted to know about Software". As usual, your questions will be answered by our speaker.

The class will be held from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. in the Concord Branch Library's Community room, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA.

This free class is brought to you by the Concord Branch Library and the Diablo Valley PC Users Group.

Advanced Users SIG Jeff and Sharon Noyer, SIG Co-Leaders – 778-4348

The Advanced Users SIG meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 4208 Amargosa Drive in Antioch. The Advanced Users SIG is for anyone interested in discussing advanced topics such as hardware and software issues, cutting-edge technologies, networking, servers, troubleshooting, etc. Please join us to participate in this very informative and educational forum. We hope to see you at the meeting!

Directions: Go east on Highway 4 through Antioch to the Hillcrest Avenue exit. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, go right onto Hillcrest Avenue, and then stay towards your left. At the 3rd light, Hillcrest Avenue turns to the left. Go left and stay on Hillcrest. (Landmark: “The Crossings” Shopping Center is at intersection). At the 4th light, go left onto Wildhorse Drive. (Landmark: 7-Eleven on corner at intersection). At the 2nd left turn, go left onto Meadow Lake Drive. At the 4th right turn, go right onto Amargosa Drive. 4208 Amargosa Drive is the 3rd house on your right, blue and white one-story.

Clarion SIG SIG Leader Bill Morris (bill@soft-trak.com)

See the Clarion SIG page on the web at www.desine.com/svcug/sv_meet.htm for meeting location, dates, and time, or send an email to Bill Morris (bill@soft-trak.com) asking to be put on his email announcement list for the Clarion SIG.

Genealogy eSIG Peggy Johnson, SIG Leader – 676-7522

The DVPC Genealogy SIG is a group of computer genealogists who share helpful websites, databases and source information found on the internet. It's an opportunity for members seeking help to put forth a question or problem to the SIG and receive suggestions and advice. When you locate a useful website, database or visit a research facility, please email the group of the details so we also can take advantage of this information. If you wish to be included in the Genealogy eSIG, please email Peggy Johnson, pegszone@aol.com.

Internet SIG Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025

After the long break, I'm sure that all members will be looking forward to the next meeting of the Internet SIG. Once again we will be joining together at Computer Renaissance (959 Contra Costa Blvd. Pleasant Hill, CA) so that we can share tips and solutions to problems we have encountered as we explored the “Wild Wild Web.” This month we will be having one of those wonderful “TBA” presentations – “To Be Announced!”. Hope to see you all there at 7:00 p.m. tools for doing so. For more information, please call Craig Peterson at (925) 671-7025 or e-mail him at compmail@pacbell.net.

New Users SIG Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025

The New Users SIG holds its meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to the regular DVPC monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month at Bank of America building B. We discuss whatever is confusing or puzzling new PC users. If you are a new user of PCs who would like to meet with other new users – and some experienced users who can answer your questions as well – then join us at the New Users SIG meetings at 6:30 p.m. prior to each DVPC monthly meeting.

PC101 and PC201 Classes Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025

PC101 takes place on from 10 am to 2 pm and PC201 takes place from noon to 2 pm at the Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, on the third Saturday of each month. Look information on future classes on the DVPC web site and each month's issue of *Diablo Blue*.

PC101 is a beginning class on computers. Offered in conjunction with the Concord Branch Library, it helps introduce computers to and empower the person not comfortable with the technology. This month we will be looking at what's coming in the world of computers in a class titled “The Future.” Class space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA 94519-2597. The class will meet January 17th from 10 am to 2 pm in the community room of the Concord Branch library. For more details, see page 5.

PC201 is a series of lectures that will be given by experts in different areas of computers and technology. This month we are back from vacation and will have a class on everyone's favorite computer topic, “Everything you ever wanted to know about Software”. The class will take place on January 17th from noon to 2 pm in the community room of the Concord Branch library. For more details, see page 6.

Windows SIG Ron Ogg (415-281-0431) and Walt Parsons (934-0775), SIG Co-Leaders

The Windows SIG usually meets at the Community Room at the Concord Police Department building on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. We discuss the latest version of Windows, demonstrate interesting shareware and freeware, and have random access sessions where we all try to answer SIG members' questions. Everyone who uses, is interested in, or is curious about Windows on their PC is invited to attend. Directions: The Concord Police Department is at 1350 Galindo Street in Concord. From the 242 Freeway take Clayton Road east to Galindo and turn right; the Police Department building is 3 blocks south on your left. From 680 Freeway take Monument Blvd. east and continue to where it changes to Galindo; the Police Department building will be on your right a short distance past the signal at Cowell Road.

December DVPC Presentation by Tom Krauss, DVPC

David Whittle, Author of "Cyberspace: The Human Dimension"

Once again Bank of America (which we love dearly and thank profusely for the use of their facilities!) double booked our room, and we met in our "backup room".

Random Access: Much of the discussion centered around software activation issues, notably in Windows XP, Office, Turbo Tax and Norton Anti Virus. It was also noted that Symantec has bought Power Quest, and the fate of Partition Magic, Drive Image and Gene Barlow is up in the air.

David Whittle began his presentation with a brief explanation of Centrino, the Intel brand name for their new laptop technology. In addition to new system processor and wireless chipsets, battery life on these machines is 5-6 hours, way up from the normal 1 1/2 to 3 hours we're used to.

The main topic of the evening was a series of photo and video related software that Dave proceeded to demonstrate. The first of these was "3D Album". This software allows you to select from over 90 presentation styles to create slideshows of your digital photos and .jpg files. More are being added weekly and are available on the web. You can add music, then save these shows in a folder and email them or burn CDs or DVDs and distribute runtime slideshow to your friends. This software has some truly amazing special effects and is remarkably easy to use.

David then demonstrated PhotoVista Panorama 3.0. This application automatically stitches photos together to create 360 degree, seamless, interactive photos that you can print or share. This did the best job of automatically merging the overlap I have ever seen, even down to ensuring that a moving object such as a person walking in the background of two overlapping pictures appears only once, even though their relative position has changed in the few seconds between the taking of the two photos.

PhotoVista Virtual Tour let's you create virtual tours of your home, vacation spots and more complete with 360 degree panoramas, 3D images and hotspots. For example, David showed a 360 degree panorama from the top of a mountain in Hawaii. It contained several hotspots. Clicking on one "zoomed" in on the object, which could be a building, the seashore, whatever. It was like flying from spot to spot. Truly amazing!

The final demonstration of the evening was *Muvee autoProducer 3*. This software lets you select a series of digital photos to create a slideshow that is like a movie. The software will "pan" one photo, zoom slowly in or out of the next, linger on one then rush through the next in an orchestrated blend that truly gives the illusion of being a movie. You can even tell it to select/focus on people and it will do so. You can add music as well. It will even allow you to insert your digital photos into your home movies.

These and several other applications that time did not permit demonstrating were available at the meeting at savings of from 25-55%. For the next 60 days you can also enjoy these savings by ordering from Webworking Services by phone, fax or mail. Contact me or check at the next general meeting for addresses and phone numbers.

Ho, Ho, Ho found on the Internet by Ron Ogg (who made a few minor revisions), DVPC

To everyone, have a great holiday!

'Twas the night before Christmas and all over town,
The screens were all blank, the PCs were down.
The hackers were all snuggled deep in their beds,
While graphics of computer games danced in their heads.

Mom and I, without making a peep,
Were all settled down for a long winters sleep.
When from my modem there came such a clatter,
I jumped from my bed to see what was the matter.

Away to my PC, I flew oh so brisk,
Signed onto the net with my ISP's disk.
My PC on line had a screen full of snow,
With red and green lights from the modem below.

When what on the color screen did appear,
But a tiny sled with eight tiny reindeer,
And a little red driver so lively and quick,
I knew in a flash it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than glitches, his coursers they came,
He whistled and shouted and called them by name:
"Now Sony and HP and Acer and Apple,
On Dell and Compaq and Gateway and Intel".

Across the screen with the speed of a game,
They rushed 'til they jumped right out of the frame!
To the top of the screen in a mad dash they flew,
With the sled full of disks and St. Nicholas, too.

Then in a twinkling I heard on the roof,
The dancing and prancing of each little hoof.
The graphics changed as I was turning around,
Then down the chimney he came with a bound.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of my self.
He seemed sure of himself in his Yuletide venture,
Like a character right out of a game of Adventure.

He set up his laptop and then for a while,
He uploaded software each from it own file.
He spoke not a word in his session of work,
Then closed his computer and turned with a jerk.

Laying his finger along side of his nose,
And giving a nod, to the top of the house he rose.
He sprang to his sled, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew with the speed of a missile.

And I read on the screen before it faded from sight:
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

Did You Get a Digital Camera for the Holiday Season? by Ira Wilsker, APCUG

Whether advertising hype or legitimate analysis, many of the published pundits are predicting that this winter will be the prime season for digital camera sales. In compliance with traditional technological history, digital cameras have improved in quality and features while plunging in price. I got a “deal” on my first digital camera three years ago, with 640 x 480 resolution – which is 0.3 (that’s three-tenths) of a megapixel resolution, 10x optical zoom, slow serial connectivity, and 2 megs of memory for \$270, about one-half retail. For the record, that camera still works fine. Today our local retailers are offering technologically superior digital cameras with 10 times the resolution and 16 times the built-in memory, with fast USB connectivity, for about the same price. In many markets, digital cameras far outsell comparable 35mm cameras. Digital cameras require no film (only memory), require no processing (no trips to the photo counter with the concurrent cost of processing), and provide the instant gratification popularized by the obsolescent Polaroid cameras of yesteryear.

Two of my daughters expressed an interest in a digital camera for the holidays so I have been shopping around. There is a myriad of techno-babble terms being bantered about in describing digital cameras that may require some explanation here so all can understand.

The primary feature being touted by digital camera makers is “megapixels”, or millions of tiny dots of resolution. A “pixel” is the common vernacular for “picture element”, which is each tiny dot of information that you see on your computer screen. To put megapixels in perspective, a computer monitor with the common 800 x 600 resolution means 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high, or 480,000 pixels. Likewise a 1024x768 resolution, common on today’s 17 inch monitors, is 786,432 pixels. If the primary intent is to email digital photos, or post them to the web, then very high resolutions are unnecessary. Someone recently sent me a huge image file as an email attachment. The picture was of a new grandchild, and taken with a 2.1 megapixel camera, at maximum resolution. The sender did not practice good “netiquette” and reduce the size of the image to reasonable dimensions (such as 320 x 240 or 640 x 480), so his large image was three times the size of the screen on my 17 inch monitor. The only way to view the unedited image was to scroll left and right, and up and down. In most cases there is little need to take photos at the maximum resolution; almost all cameras allow for smaller, lower resolution photos.

If the user wants to print the photos with a photo grade printer on high quality inkjet or laser photo paper, 2.1 megapixels, can produce an excellent quality 5x7 inch print, and a reasonable 8x10 inch print. Many of the moderately priced digital cameras are now being offered with 5 or more megapixels. With an appropriate printer and paper, 5 megapixels can produce an excellent quality 8x10 print, and a decent 11x17. The holy grail of digital cameras, 12+ megapixels, the resolution of good quality slide film, was passed about two years ago by the high-end professional models. Many professional photographers, who dismissed digital photography as a low quality fad a few years ago, are now embracing the new technology.

The ability to zoom the image in and out is a popular feature in most cameras. The two methods of zoom available on digital cameras are optical and digital zoom. In terms of sharpness, optical zoom is superior to digital, as the image itself is manipulated, rather than the pixels making up the image. The less expensive cameras typically only offer digital zoom (adequate for common snapshots), but the better cameras offer either optical zoom or a combination of the two.

The memory available to the camera determines how many images it can hold before the data must be downloaded to a computer or other device. Most digital cameras have some built-in memory, and allow for the addition of supplemental memory in a variety of formats. Some cameras minimize the need for digital memory by writing the image directly to a floppy disk or mini-CD. Since the integral memory in a digital camera can typically hold only a small number of images, it is important to determine the price and availability of additional memory in the proper format. Memory comes in different capacities and formats from tiny cards, to rectangular “memory sticks”. All camera memory is not the same, and differs in speed (faster is better, but often at a price), and power consumption (less power consumption is better by prolonging battery life). According to Lexar, one of the major manufacturers of digital camera media, the number of photos that can be held in memory varies by the resolution of the photo and the capacity of the media. If the inexpensive 32meg memory card is used, at maximum resolution, a 2 megapixel camera will store about 35 images, while only storing 12 images from a 5 megapixel camera. Media of 256megs (often around \$50) can hold much more; 284 images at 2 megapixels, and 102 images at 5 megapixels. A chart showing the capacity of different media is available at www.lexarmedia.com/digfilm/index_cf.html. It should also be noted that the memory, also referred to as “digital film”, can be reused indefinitely.

Almost all new digital cameras come with some form of fast USB connectivity to download images to the computer. Accessories such as docking stations and external card readers are a convenience, but not a necessity.

As an added convenience, most local photo finishers now print photo-grade images directly from the camera memory, at prices lower than printing them yourself. Now we can have the best of both worlds.

Ira Wilsker is the Advisor for Region 8, APCUG Representative & Bylaws Chair for the Golden Triangle PC Club, a columnist for The Examiner in Beaumont, Texas, and has two radio shows. He also graciously shares his articles with the APCUG editors.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Support DVPC — Get a friend to join!

DVPC Board Meeting Minutes by Tom Krauss, DVPC

I was five minutes early for the meeting, but the pizza was even earlier, so we got off to an excellent start. The centerpiece on the table appeared to be a birdcage wrapped in T-shirts. Alan was non-committal as to what was in the package. It was large enough to block conversation, so we moved it aside as more of the Board arrived and we got down to serious business.

The first topic of discussion was the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' first manned flight. The re-enactment that day at Kittyhawk was a bit of a failure according to the newscast. Despite the presence of President Bush and John Travolta, the weather did not cooperate and the replica of that famous plane did not get off the ground. The same could be said for our meeting.

Discussion of this led to the inevitable recitation of various flight-related anecdotes and factoids, the most interesting of which was offered by Ron. A recent flight he was booked on out of Washington National Airport was delayed over an hour while a red warning light in the cockpit was traced to a fault in the warning system, not the flight system. However, before the plane could take off the FAA official overseeing the incident required that the "flight-worthy" certificate on the plane be replaced because it was "too light" to read easily and a new copy that was "sufficiently legible" would be needed. This required a frantic call to the airline headquarters. As the time ticked away without a certificate in sight, Ron realized he was not going to make his connecting flight to San Francisco, so he exited the plane and took another flight. This one proceeded without a hitch except that after the movie was finished the DVD for the TV comedy that was the balance of the in-flight entertainment wouldn't play. Fortunately, the FAA was not alerted or they doubtless would have grounded the plane. The crew solved the problem by showing a second movie.

Back to business.

Alan now unwrapped the T-shirt covered package and removed our new video projector. It is a Sharp Notevision model PG-A10X. It has a zoom lens, remote control, amplifier and speaker, supports XGA resolution, and is not much bigger than two phone books stacked one on the other. We cranked it up to see what it could do. Alan had a home movie screen, but the image from the projector at about 12 feet was too big so we aimed it at the sloped ceiling in the living room. I spotted Ron looking at the instruction manual and accused him of selling out – real computer nerds don't read instruction manuals. But it turned out he was just trying to see if a cable for sound should have been included. The answer was "No". Interestingly, the manual has instructions in Chinese, Korean, French, Spanish, German and Swedish, each section 4-5 pages long. But the English section is 70 pages. I think this proves how much our country is lagging behind in education, that we need so much more detailed instructions, with pictures.

Those of you who have followed my recitations of our search for video projectors (this is the third one I have been privy to) will know that I am not quite the enthusiast that Ron and Charlie are. Frankly, I have not noticed any appreciable improvements as we upgraded from new model to newer model. However, even my jaded eye could detect the remarkable improvement in image quality with this machine. It is worth coming out on a cold January night to the next general meeting to see our great new projector! Note that the meeting will be held on the 8th of January, the second Tuesday of the month – **not on New Years Day!**

Alan had the "Pirates of the Caribbean" DVD, so we played that. The quality of the video compared quite favorably to that in the movie theater. The only complaint was that we got sore necks from leaning back to look up at a 45 degree angle to watch the movie on the ceiling. Several of us suggested that Alan provide beanbag chairs for our next Board meeting. We were ignored.

I don't have to tell you what happened next: we got hooked on the movie and watched it until the last of the coffee was drunk. When it became clear that Alan was not going to make popcorn for us, we ended the meeting and went home.

President's Message...

(Continued from page 1)

1024 x 768 resolution! The projector also has a built-in speaker, loads of inputs, and weighs only 6 pounds! Better yet: see it in operation on January 8!

In January I will do my Comdex report and, of course, show off our new toy (ummm... projector). In February, Nick Chase will do a cool presentation about all kinds of audio/video stuff.

For those of you who won copies of Microsoft Office 2003 at our November meeting, I have your software and will bring it to the January meeting! See you next year!

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Roboform Software Review by Walt Parsons, DVPC

How many of you, besides me, have a list of your favorite passwords on a sheet of paper underneath your keyboard? And then how many of you use the same password for multiple web pages and banking accounts? Come on now, let us be honest! ;-}

I just ran across a piece of software which makes it a lot easier to increase your computer security. Siber systems gives away, for FREE, their Roboform program. They also sell Roboform Pro for \$30.00, but more about that at another time.

When Roboform is first installed it asks you some information that you usually need for filling in web page forms: Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Credit card information, etc. With Roboform you only have to go through this exercise once. In the future, whenever you are placing an order or registering on a web page, Roboform pops up and asks whether you want to fill in the information. If you say “Yes” it will fill in every question it can.

Once Roboform is installed it sits there waiting for you to go to a web page and fill in a User ID and password or PIN number and then it pops up and asks you whether you want to save this information. The next time you go to that web page Roboform will ask if you want it to fill in the user ID and password and submit it to the web site. Later on you can click on the name of a web site in the Passcards section of Roboform and it’ll take you to that web page and sign you in.

Another feature of this software is it’s random password generator. You have the options of using all caps, all lower case, all numbers, and all special characters or any combination of these choices. You can also select the number of characters you want. Warning – some web sites do NOT accept special characters in passwords, and some of them get a little more specific on the makeup of the password. One web page I use specifies that the password must have no special characters, have at least two numbers, and have a mixture of upper and lower case. On this web page I had to have the password generator try several times until I got a combination that fit these requirements. Once you are satisfied, you drag the password onto the web page into the PIN or password space. Sometimes you have to do this twice where the web people want you to give the password twice. Warning: It is best to write the password on paper until the process is complete to avoid future problems if something goes wrong. Murphy is still alive and well! ;-}

You ask if your information is secure? Definitely. The data base on your computer is encrypted and is accessible only by bringing up Roboform and you enter your master password. To make it even more secure, the user can have Roboform save the data to one of those USB data sticks and then when you leave your computer you take the data stick with you. When the user gets back to his machine he inserts the data stick and Roboform activates.

You have nothing to lose by going to the web page and downloading and installing the program for free. It’ll probably save you a lot of time – and the price is right. Try it, you’ll like it. Check it out at www.roboform.com.

Using MScConfig by Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC Organization

Do you ever wonder what takes your computer so long to start up? In most cases the reason for that is that computer manufacturers and software developers think you need or even want all those programs and accompanying little icons to startup every time that you turn your computer on. By the time Microsoft, Compaq or whoever your computer manufacturer is, and a few software companies are done with your computer you probably have 10 or more different programs running into each other every time your computer starts. Most of the programs that start when your computer starts are being shoved in there vying for room for no reason at all, but you can prevent that. I used to work as a computer technician at a national computer chain store where they charged a pretty penny for this little operation but you can do it at home armed with a little knowledge.

First of all, MSCONFIG stands for Microsoft Configuration Utility. If you click on Start, run, then type MSCONFIG and press ENTER you will see 6 tabs. On the far right you will see the Startup tab.

Click on the Startup tab and there you see what loads up when your computer starts. Many applications put items in your startup group that are absolutely unnecessary such as Real Player streaming audio, calendar birthday reminder, bill payer reminder to name a few. Even if you have 512 megabytes of RAM or more I don’t recommend that you load any unnecessary applications on startup; hopefully you will know about aunt Jenny’s birthday before your computer tells you. Its like the guy who is unpacking the family car at the beach, he dropped the family off near the water so they are there ready to have fun but dad has to go park the car ½ a mile a way then walk through the hot sand loaded down with the sun tan lotion, towels, and ice chest. Do you really think he needs to carry any more? Even without the beach balls and rafts he’s lucky if he doesn’t fall and spill the sun tan lotion all over the towels – yes, that would be a mess.

After you turn your computer on it has to wake everything up (BIOS, network card, ports, etc.), load all its drivers, the bare essential applications, and the fonts. The only startup items you absolutely need are:

- ScanRegistry
- TaskMonitor
- SystemTray
- LoadPowerProfile
- Your antivirus software

There is an extensive and regularly updated list of startup files and what they do here: www.sysinfo.org/startupinfo.php. As of December 18, 2003, there are 3,912 files listed. The list was created by Paul “Pacman” Collins. I applaud his enthusiasm, but he really should get out more often. The general rule of thumb is – if in doubt leave it alone. After you uncheck the boxes of unneeded items and click Apply, OK, you will be asked if you want to restart or exit without restarting. You can do either, but you

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Using MSConfig...

(Continued from page 11)

will not reap the benefits of unloading the items until after you restart. After you restart your computer Microsoft will give you a message that says you have run the MSCONFIG utility and wants to know if you are satisfied with the results. If you do not want to see this message again, check the box. You should notice an immediate improvement in performance and stability, all for free and you did it yourself the all natural way without adding more programs such as Ram Booster or an "optimizer" program which only leads to more memory use and possible software conflicts.

MSCONFIG is not available for Windows 95, NT, or 2000. However there is a free "Startup Control Panel" created by Mike Lin, a 19 year old MIT student, at <http://mclin.net> that will work just as well for Windows 95. If you are using Windows NT or 2000 you can download and use the official Windows XP version of MSCONFIG from the Tech Guide Web site at www.thetechguide.com.

Bruce Cramer is recently retired from the Army and is A+, Network+, I-Net, certified as well as a Microsoft Certified Professional in Windows XP, and provides on-site computer services to individuals and businesses.

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New DVD Technology *by Linda Gonse, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group*

DVD writers and recordable DVDs are a fairly new entry into Personal Computer Land. Consequently, most of us still need to know what to look for in a DVD writer and how to record DVDs.

Almost everyone knows that a DVD is a type of optical disc that looks like a CD, but has a significantly larger storage capacity.

What you might not know is that the capacity of a DVD may vary depending on different physical formats technology, ranging from 4.7 GB to 17.1 GB. And, while CDs are recorded only on one side, some DVDs such as DVD-RAM support two layers per side and are rewritable up to 100,000 times. (This type of DVD is enclosed in a plastic case similar to a floppy disk which protects its surfaces and provides a label area.)

Another reason DVD drives are growing in popularity is that they can read most CD media as well. With such impressive features, it isn't surprising that DVDs are expected to become the next CD-ROM. In many cases, manufacturers are even building new PCs with DVD drives instead of CD drives.

The DVD "started in 1994 as two competing formats, Super Disc (SD) and Multimedia CD (MMCD). DVD now is the result of an agreement by both camps on a single standard to meet the requirements of all the various industries involved" according to Deluxe Global Media Services (formerly Disctronics). But, media formats still split into two groups: + (plus), or - (known commonly as minus; manufacturers may refer to it as dash). The quality comparison is close, and some DVD players will recognize both, while other models will only accept only + or only - disks.

Although there are many aspects of DVDs that we still need to learn, one of the basic questions people inevitably ask is, "What do the letters in DVD mean?"

The letters originally stood for Digital VideoDisc. As the technology gained in importance to the computer world, the word "video" was dropped, and the media and the technology was simply D-V-D. Later, it was given the name Digital Versatile Disc by the DVD Forum, which sets DVD standards. Most people just say D-V-D.

In addition, "The Burning Question" by Don Labriola, a detailed, comprehensive look at DVD recording with reviews on 23 products, is in the October 28, 2003 issue of PC magazine; it's also online at www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1306042,00.asp. For an excellent overview of DVD technology and disks, history, specifications, formats, DVD-5, -10, -9, -18, hybrid formats, file systems, copy protection, and DVD Forum, go to www.disctronics.co.uk/technology/dvdintro/dvd_intro.htm.

Note: This is the manufacturers' description of the Jackrabbit DVD writer/player:

The DVD writer is a Philips Jackrabbit JR32RWDVK — "Smart, Mobile, Multi Purpose, DVD Player, CD Rewriter / DVD Read Combo, Audio MP3 CD Player. The first 'All-in-One' device that converges your Home and PC environments."

Linda is the editor and webmaster for Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, in Southern California. You can contact her at editor@orcopug.org. Or, visit the user group's website at www.orcopug.org.

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PrintMagic and WebPrint Plus Software Review by Ron Ogg, DVPC

On rare occasions I come across some software that is innovative – maybe even revolutionary – that I wonder how I ever had gotten along without it. Recently, I discovered two such utilities from a small shareware developer, MacEase (these programs work on both Macs and PCs).

What makes these utilities so useful is that they make two frequently used and essential functions of any computer, printing and saving information, so much easier, more flexible, and more powerful. And they are extremely easy to install and use. In fact, both programs go way beyond just being innovative tools for printing and saving information – they also are essential tools for anyone that uses their computer for doing any type of research, including students, faculty, lawyers, journalists, librarians, businesses, comparison shoppers, etc.

The names of these programs are *PrintMagic* and *WebPrint Plus*. Both programs allow you to print from virtually any program – including Internet browsers, email programs, and many programs that can't (or won't let you) print their own data.

What's "magic" is that you don't have to print everything on a page – just the data you need. Imagine no longer having to waste time and paper because you have to print unnecessary pages just to print the part of a document that you need. Also imagine the amount of accumulated time you will save not having to scan printed pages to find just the snippets of information that you want. As good as these features are, this is just the beginning of the functions that *PrintMagic* and *WebPrint Plus* add to your PC. Both programs allow you to add – on the fly – time and date stamps to anything that you print, and both programs also let you add on-the-fly notes of any size to anything that you print.

For years Mac users have enjoyed the convenience and flexibility of having a built-in "Desktop Printer". Well, *PrintMagic* and *WebPrint Plus* add this function to PCs. Just drag-and-drop selected text from virtually any application onto your new Desktop Printer and it's instantly printed.

Both programs also add a "PrintBoard" to the PC. Essentially, this is a floating window that lets you drag-and-drop or cut-and-paste any combination of snippets from any combination of documents, including parts of documents from various applications, programs, and web pages onto the PrintBoard window creating a print project. Then you can edit and reorganize this information from within the PrintBoard before you send it to the printer. This is a great tool for collecting information from lots of different sources when doing any kind of research.

WebPrint Plus builds upon this feature set by adding the ability to – even on the fly – save selections of text from virtually any program – even many programs that don't provide a way to save their own data. *WebPrint Plus* also adds the option of adding on-the-fly time and date stamps and notes to your saved data.

Additionally, *WebPrint Plus* includes the ProjectBoard. This is similar to the PrintBoard, but the ProjectBoard lets you save as well as print its contents. The ProjectBoard also has its own built-in editor for modifying the information before it's saved. Another of the other cool features is the ability to add information and to transfer its contents to other applications without having to first open the ProjectBoard.

These programs include many additional innovative features, and I suggest you download the free fully-functional demo versions that are available from the developer's web site, www.macease.com.

Something else to consider when evaluating this remarkable software is that the productivity enhancements realized by using the software – not to mention the enormous savings from reduced use of ink/toner and paper – will mean these inexpensive utilities will quickly pay for themselves many times over. Also, the reduced use of ink/toner and paper is very good for the environment. In fact, you might score some points with your employer (and leverage the environmental benefits of using the software) by letting them know that site licenses are available for both *PrintMagic* and *WebPrint Plus*.

PrintMagic and *WebPrint Plus* each sells for \$25. I like *WebPrint Plus* – it has more features and you don't lose anything unique in *PrintMagic* by moving to its younger sibling.

Highly recommended.

Sony DSC-S75 Digital Camera Review by Nick Chase, DVPC

The Sony DSC-S75 is a very amazing camera. For a second generation 3.3 megapixel camera, it can produce magazine quality Tiff images of 8 megabytes in file-size, and when printed on glossy photo paper at 8.5 by 11.5 inches on a photo-realistic color inject printer, they appear to be finely detailed photographs.

One problem is the small Memory Stick Sony provides (16MB). Of course most snapshots can be taken at a more conservative 1600 x 1200 pixels in JPEG format which yields a much higher picture count. I immediately purchased a 128 megabyte Memory Stick which yields 133 pictures at the 1600 x 1200 pixel setting.

The LCD screen has a special back-light setting that makes the screen brighter so that pictures can be reviewed and framed even in bright sunlight. There is a thumb-nail view on the LCD and it is very easy to see the picture you want to open for review. A picture information setting in review mode, provides all of the data collected when the photo was taken including lens aperture, shutter speed, file size and time and date information.

A provided video cable facilitates connection of the camera to a TV set for viewing of stored images and movies. There is a USB cable provided, and software for downloading pictures to your PC. I found that Sony's USB drivers provided on a CD ROM, would not

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How Big does that Memory Card have to Be – Really? by Ron Ogg, DVPC

You may be one of the many people that were lucky to get a new digital camera for the holidays, or maybe you already have one. Certainly, digital cameras have become one of the hot technology products. Almost all digital cameras use some sort of memory card for storing the pictures you take. We're going to explore the wonderful world of memory cards, and give some guidance to those digital camera users who are confused by the question: "How big a memory card should I buy?"

There are a large number of different memory cards (sometimes called flash memory cards) on the market. Usually only one type of memory card can be used in a digital camera. Here's a list of common memory card types:

| Card Type | Minimum Capacity | Maximum Capacity |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| CompactFlash (CF) Card Type 1 | 8 MB | 4 GB |
| CompactFlash (CF) Card Type 2 | 128 MB | 6 GB |
| IBM/Hitachi Microdrive | 1 GB | 4 GB |
| Olympus xD-Picture Card | 16 MB | 512 MB |
| Secure Digital (SD) Card | 8 MB | 512 MB |
| Multimedia Card (MMC) | 4 MB | 1 GB |
| MiniSD Card | 16 MB | 256 MB |
| SmartMedia Card | 4 MB | 128 MB |
| Sony Memory Stick | 8 MB | 256 MB |
| Sony Memory Stick Pro | 256 MB | 1 GB |

Memory cards are available in various sizes, from 4 MB to 4 GB. Some, like the SmartMedia card, are older designs that have size limitations. Others, like the xD-Picture card and the MiniSD card, are new designs that emphasize small size and higher capacity. The IBM (now Hitachi) Microdrive is actually a hard drive in a CompactFlash Type 2 card form factor.

The main thing to remember is that you have to use the type of memory card that's supported by your digital camera. For example, the drivers for the SmartMedia card are in the camera, so cameras that were built before 2002 may not be able to use 64 MB or 128 MB cards. Microdrive cards have the same form factor as CompactFlash type 2 cards, but not all cameras that support CF type 2 cards will support the Microdrive. Multimedia cards have the same form-factor as Secure Digital cards, but may not be compatible with your camera.

Now, what about capacity? You're going on that trip to Hawaii, or Paris, France (or maybe Paris, Texas). You want to make sure that your memory card will

hold all of those pictures that you're going to take. Yes, you can delete the ones that don't come out – which you can't do when you use a film camera – but you sure don't want to run out of space on your memory card when you're on vacation! Maybe you should buy a spare memory card, maybe you don't need a spare. Maybe you need a larger memory card. How can you tell? It depends on the following:

- The image sizes and compression settings that your digital camera supports.
- The image size you're going to use and the compression you're going to use for that image size.
- The number of pictures you plan to take.

The image size is often the most difficult decision you're going to make. You bought that 4 megapixel camera, but if you take your pictures at the full 4 megapixel image size and use Fine or High-level compression you'll find that the 16 MB memory card included with your camera is only going to let you take about 6 pictures. It's either time to buy a much larger (and expensive!) memory card, or use a smaller image size and/or compression setting.

What's the best image size? That's something you have to decide. It depends on how you're going to use the pictures. Here are some recommendations; if your camera doesn't support the exact image sizes listed, use the nearest equivalent:

- Posting photographs on the Internet
Use a small image size; 1024 x 768 or 800 x 600 are OK.
- Viewing photographs on a computer screen
If they are for a slide show, 1600 x 1200 is OK.
- Sending photographs by email to friends and family
Use a small image size; 1024 x 768 or 800 x 600 are OK; if the recipients use a dial-up connection 640 x 480 with normal compression is better because you don't want your friends and family to wait while your huge image files download!
- Printing photographs on a standard size piece of paper
What's "standard"? 4 x 6 snapshots will look good at 1280 x 960, better at 1600 x 1200; 8 x 10 pictures will need a higher resolution like 2048 x 1360 or 2288 x 1712.
- Printing photographs on oversized paper (such as legal or ledger size)
Use the highest JPEG resolution and fine or high compression, or if your camera supports it, use RAW or TIFF.
- Using photographs for professional graphics work
Only use RAW or TIFF, and a camera with 6 megapixel or higher resolution. Best is a digital SLR, like the Canon EOS 1Ds (but the street price is about \$8,000 not including the lenses or memory card, but this is "professional graphics work".

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How Big does that Memory Card have to Be – Really?...

(Continued from page 14)

Now you’ve decided on the image size and resolution you’re going to use on that vacation. Let’s say, for argument, that you have an Olympus C-750 camera (like mine), and that you’re going to use 1600 x 1200 resolution images at SQ1 High compression. What does that mean?

The following chart lists the **approximate** number of images, for each image size and compression setting, you will be able to store on memory cards of various capacities. The key here is the “**approximate**”. Capacity depends on the content of the image (less colors and less complexity mean a smaller file size, more colors and more complexity mean a larger file size), the type of memory card, and how your camera writes image data to that memory card. The information is based on two digital cameras that I own, and extrapolated from the actual size memory cards that I own – the actual figures for my Canon 300D Digital Rebel (a 1 GM CompactFlash card) and Olympus C-750 (a 256 MB xD-Picture card) are shown in the chart in bold.

| Camera | Image Information | | | | Number of Images that Can Be Stored (Approximate; varies by card type and camera) * | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|--------|--------|
| | Image Size | | | File Size MB | Memory Card Size (MB) | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pixels | Megapixels | Compression | | 8 | 16 | 32 | 64 | 128 | 256 | 512 | 1000 | 2000 | 4000 |
| Canon 300D | 3072 x 2048 | 6.3 | Fine | 3.2 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 20 | 39 | 78 | 156 | 311 | 622 | 1,244 |
| Canon 300D | 3072 x 2048 | 6.3 | Normal | 1.9 | 5 | 9 | 17 | 33 | 66 | 132 | 264 | 527 | 1,054 | 2,108 |
| Olympus C-750 | 2288 x 1712 | 3.9 | SHQ | 2.9 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 23 | 46 | 92 | 184 | 368 | 736 | 1,472 |
| Olympus C-750 | 2288 x 1712 | 3.9 | HQ | 1.0 | 9 | 17 | 33 | 66 | 131 | 261 | 522 | 1,044 | 2,088 | 4,176 |
| Canon 300D | 2048 x 1360 | 2.8 | Fine | 1.9 | 5 | 9 | 17 | 33 | 65 | 129 | 257 | 514 | 1,028 | 2,056 |
| Canon 300D | 2048 x 1360 | 2.8 | Normal | 1.2 | 7 | 13 | 26 | 51 | 101 | 201 | 402 | 804 | 1,608 | 3,216 |
| Olympus C-750 | 1600 x 1200 | 1.9 | SQ1 High | 1.4 | 6 | 12 | 23 | 46 | 91 | 181 | 362 | 724 | 1,448 | 2,896 |
| Olympus C-750 | 1600 x 1200 | 1.9 | SQ1 Normal | 0.5 | 17 | 33 | 65 | 129 | 258 | 515 | 1,030 | 2,060 | 4,120 | 8,240 |
| Canon 300D | 1536 x 1024 | 1.6 | Fine | 1.4 | 6 | 12 | 23 | 45 | 89 | 177 | 353 | 705 | 1,410 | 2,820 |
| Canon 300D | 1536 x 1024 | 1.6 | Normal | 1.0 | 8 | 16 | 32 | 63 | 125 | 250 | 500 | 999 | 1,998 | 3,996 |
| Olympus C-750 | 1280 x 960 | 1.2 | SQ1 High | 0.9 | 9 | 18 | 35 | 70 | 140 | 279 | 558 | 1,116 | 2,232 | 4,464 |
| Olympus C-750 | 1280 x 960 | 1.2 | SQ1 Normal | 0.3 | 25 | 50 | 100 | 200 | 399 | 797 | 1,594 | 3,188 | 6,376 | 12,752 |
| Olympus C-750 | 1024 x 768 | 0.8 | SQ2 High | 0.6 | 14 | 27 | 54 | 108 | 216 | 431 | 862 | 1,724 | 3,448 | 6,896 |
| Olympus C-750 | 1024 x 768 | 0.8 | SQ2 Normal | 0.2 | 39 | 77 | 154 | 307 | 613 | 1,225 | 2,450 | 4,900 | 9,800 | 19,600 |
| Olympus C-750 | 640 x 480 | 0.3 | SQ2 High | 0.2 | 34 | 67 | 133 | 266 | 531 | 1,062 | 2,124 | 4,248 | 8,496 | 16,992 |
| Olympus C-750 | 640 x 480 | 0.3 | SQ2 Normal | 0.1 | 83 | 166 | 332 | 664 | 1,328 | 2,655 | 5,310 | 10,620 | 21,240 | 42,480 |

* Not all sizes are available in all memory cards; sizes are shown to provide capacities for other cameras

So, how many pictures can you get on that 128 MB xD-Picture card you bought for your C-750? The chart says that at an image size of 1600 x 1200 using SQ1 High compression, each image is going to take approximately 1.4 MB. Your 128 MB xD card will hold approximately 91 pictures. Whoops! Better reconsider! This is a vacation, and you’re planning to print some of the pictures as 4 x 6 snapshots, and turn some into a slide show using that copy of 3D-Album that you bought at the DVPC meeting in December and put them on CDs to send to family members, but you’re not going to print any 8 x 10s. Leaving the image size at 1600 x 1200 and switching to SQ1 Normal compression gives an image size of approximately 500 KB and will let you record 258 pictures on your xD card. Much better! And that’s the equivalent of seven 36-exposure rolls of 35mm film. Remember that you’ll have few “bad” pictures because you can delete those in the camera, making room for more good pictures.

You can use this article and chart as a guide for selecting your image size, and compression for the type and size of the memory card you own, and for helping you decide what size memory card to buy.

If you are going to buy a memory card, you might have sticker shock. A 256 MB Olympus xD-Picture card costs \$100 (at www.amazon.com) to \$199 (list price). But 36 exposure rolls of Kodak color print film are about \$4 per roll. Multiply that by the 7 rolls you would buy for your Hawaii vacation and that’s \$28. When you have the film developed you will probably get 4 x 6 prints. That costs about \$12 per roll. So your cost per roll is about \$16, multiply that by 7 rolls and that’s about \$116, more than the \$100 price of an xD card. You can re-use the xD card over and over again; once you’ve used those rolls of film you have to buy more.

Of course, you say, you have to print those digital pictures, too. Maybe, maybe not. Most digital camera owners find that they use other alternatives for sending pictures. You can email them, post them to a web site, and burn them as a slide show to a CD. These all cost much less than printing. And, if you want to print some of your images, you can send them to Kodak’s Ofoto service (www.ofoto.com) and get professional 4 x 6 prints for only 29 cents each. Also check with Long’s Drugs (www.longs.com), Costco, and other local stores for their prices for printing digital photographs.

Special Raffle Promotion

Bring a guest to a DVPC meeting, you get 10 Raffle tickets!
 If your guest joins at the meeting, you get 10 Raffle tickets –
 and your new member guest also gets 10 Raffle tickets!!

Sony DSC-S75 Digital Camera Hardware Review...



(Continued from page 13)

work. When I purchased a 'Dazzle', Memory Stick-to-USB peripheral this proved to be a better solution for high-speed picture downloads. The Dazzle device has drivers that worked. Transfer of 128 megabyte Memory Stick contents to my 1.3 GHz, AMD Duron PC, only takes about 2.5 minutes.

I purchased the camera just before going to Oregon on vacation, so I was able to try all of the features out after devouring the manual.

The camera features three, MPEG 1 format, video recording resolutions as follows: 320 x 320 pixel 'High-quality', or 320 x 240 pixels or 160 x 112 pixels at 15 frames per second. This is really only an 'emergency' video recording feature, as the images are grainy even at 320 x 320. There is sound recorded but you won't be playing this back on your home theatre system!

Battery life is approximately 3.5 hours, although turning the camera off makes it possible to shoot pictures over two days before a recharge is required. I

have a spare battery which prevents the 'oh no the battery is dead' embarrassment from occurring.

The camera has the usual sepia, negative effect, and monochrome settings, which can yield very dramatic results. Most of Mr. Ansel Adams photographs are black and white, and many are considered timeless and classic photos. The most compelling feature is the lens. Sony claims that this lens is a 'Carl Zeiss' model although some other manufacturers are using the identical lens without the Carl Zeiss name being mentioned. Hmmm? I have found this lens to have been, very carefully selected, to support the digital capture system Sony has utilized. The lens is a 6 X zoom, with very good optical design, and does not exhibit aberrations such as those on less expensive models. The lens is 7 - 21 mm (34 - 102 mm equiv.) F2.0 - F2.5 shutter specification.

An interesting feature is when you turn on the camera in the 'picture-mode', with the lens cap still on, it beeps at you and the LCD display states 'Lens Cap On'. If you are in the picture review mode, it does not warn you.

I have used this camera for sports photography, in airplanes and in moving vehicles, and it continue to amaze me with the results achieved. Another interesting feature is the built-in microphone, and the ability to record an aural notation or narration, stored with each photograph. Up to 15 seconds of speech can be saved with the photo. There is a two-image burst mode, which has been increased to 5 continuous images on some newer models. The intelligent flash prevents red-eye syndrome, and the auto-focus uses a pre-exposure infrared helper beam should you be shooting at night.

While there are now many cameras available, which exceed this model's resolution, I am not yet ready to spring for a more expensive one until they sell printers that exceed the results I am getting. Most Kinko's Copy Centers have a Sony Picture-Station kiosk, which now accepts Memory Stick and about 5 other types of Smart Media cards. I recently printed some 8-megabyte photos using this station and was very pleased with the results.

The quality of Sony's products sometimes comes with a somewhat artificially higher price, although web searches have revealed deep discounts. The original purchase price I paid was \$680.00 US three years ago.

I have seen this camera advertised for \$340.00 on some web sites. Be aware of some camera dealers offering insanely low pricing. Some of these cameras were manufactured for "overseas customers" and their warranties are no good in the USA!

I have a million other things I could say about this camera, but the best comment I can make is that I carry the Sony with me at all times, and it has yet to disappoint me. The controls are intuitive, and advanced exposure and shutter modes are just a menu button press away. The MPEG video feature is a bit weak, but nice to have in a pinch. Better they should ship the camera with a pair

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Curmudgeon's Corner by Walt Parsons, DVPC's Official Curmudgeon – Do Not Accept Any Substitute!

Rebates

This month I am going to (gasp!) **commend** a merchant for making it easy to claim your rebate. No, it's not Best Buy, or Office Max, or Target. Of all places, it is COSTCO.

At COSTCO if you buy something with a rebate coming you DO NOT have to copy your receipt, cut the bar code off of the box, and fill out a nosy questionnaire. So how do you get your rebate?

You access the COSTCO web page and go to "Rebates". There you answer a few questions such as the COSTCO warehouse number, the register number, and your name and address so they can mail you your check.

What a switch from the usual procedure. On the usual rebate request they ask all sorts of unnecessary information:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| What store did you get the item from? | – Can't they just look at the receipt? |
| What date did you buy the item? | – Ditto |
| Proof of purchase | – Ditto |
| Marketing information such as age | – None of Your Business |
| Income | – Ditto (NoYB!) |

Then there is the advantage that the rebate seems to come much faster. At a recent rebate request from COSTCO I got the rebate in 22 days. Still a little over three weeks, but then a lot better than the usual 8 to 10 weeks.

My hat is off to COSTCO.

Outlook 2003 Attachments by Walt Parsons, DVPC

I have Bad News and Good News

First, the bad news. In the holy name of security Bill Gates has decided that you must be protected against yourself and won't allow you to receive an executable attachment, i.e. exe, bat, mdb, etc. For example, if somebody sends you an e-mail with an Access data base file you're informed that the attachment was dangerous and was removed – without even asking you for your permission to remove it!

And now for the Good News

Just like in Outlook 2002, the user can edit the registry and tell Outlook 2003 to accept certain attachment file types. However when you go into the registry you'll find that all the information for Outlook 2002 was filed under "10" while Outlook 2003 is filed under "11".

Of course, whenever a person plans to edit the registry it is a good idea to save a copy of the registry first.

So take a deep breath and cross your fingers, and let's go.

First make sure that Outlook is not running.

Click on Start/Run and enter:

regedit

In Regedit navigate to:

`HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Office\11.0\Outlook\Security`

Then choose *edit|New|String Value* and name it "Level1Remove". Choose *modify* and for the value enter the list of extensions you want to allow, using semicolons to separate the items. In my case I entered "mdb;"

Close Regedit and you're done. Now the next time somebody tries to send you an Access file it'll be there for you to use.

Note: If you screw up your machine call someone else – not me! ;-}

Sony DSC-S75 Digital Camera Hardware Review...

(Continued from page 16)

of 128 megabyte or larger Memory Sticks, all things considered.

To summarize, all in all I have found the Sony DSC-S75 camera to be a very well engineered product. When I do go looking for my next digital still camera, you can believe I will look at the Sony line first.

Legal Bytes: File Sharing by John Brewer, Oklahoma City PC Users Group

The Pot Continues to Boil

Napster took the cyber-community by storm. The concept of file sharing across the Internet, in spite of the inherent risk, became very popular. The computer literate generation thought that sharing MP3s over the Internet was fun and harmless. The big guns in the media industry thought otherwise. Reps. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich) and Howard Berman (D-Calif) have introduced a new bill in Congress that would impose a prison term and a fine for uploading a single file to a peer-to-peer network. They said the bill is designed to increase domestic and international enforcement of copyright laws.

Wired News reported the introduction of the congressional proposal:

The bill, called the "Author, Consumer and Computer Owner Protection and Security Act of 2003", or ACCOPS, would allocate more money to the Department of Justice to investigate copyright crimes: up to \$15 million a year, compared with the current budget of \$10 million. The bill would also enable information sharing between countries to help in copyright enforcement abroad.

The bill "clarifies" that uploading a single file of copyright content qualifies as a felony. Penalties for such an offense include up to five years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine. In addition, filming a movie in a theater without authorization would immediately qualify as a federal offense.

"We're giving notice that this is something we want specific attention paid to," said the aide. "The current law is very general."

ACCOPS also mandates that file-sharing websites must get consent from consumers to search their computers for content or to store files. In addition, those who provide false information when registering a domain name could also be charged with a federal offense. Last year, Rep. Berman introduced a bill that would protect copyright holders from liability if they impaired or disrupted the unauthorized distribution of their content on P2P networks. The bill is still being debated.

Wired News further reported that:

Jason Schultz, a staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, called the bill "a sign of desperation" by the recording industry and Hollywood as they try to hold on to their business models. Schultz said ACCOPS shows that the recording and movie industries "don't care what kinds of collateral damage they create. Sufficient laws are in place to punish those who violate copyright law," he said. Schultz stated, "The poorly written bill sets up an unnecessarily wide dragnet. It criminalizes the placement of any copyright work on a computer network. If you have a file stored on your computer and your computer is connected to a publicly available network, you may not even know that you are committing a felony, but this law could put you in jail." "There have been hearings, year in and year out, and consumers have not complained about anything that is going on in this bill," Schultz said. "The only people complaining are the content industry folks. The content industry is asking the public to fund this kind of an effort against themselves."

This is a fight that will not go away. The rhetoric gets very intense. Are file swappers a national security risk? Apparently there are members of Congress who think so. In a recent meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee for the US Congress, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) gave his personal opinion about file sharing. According to a report on MSNBC, Hatch said, "By the end of the session, the only committee member in attendance, chairman Orrin Hatch – himself a songwriter who sells CDs on his personal Web site – zeroed in on what really bugged him: people sharing copyrighted songs on the Internet without paying for them. Then he ran an idea by one of the panelists: what if you had a system that could detect whether people were getting songs without paying for them and could warn those infringers that what they were doing was wrong?" And then, if they didn't stop, the system would remotely "destroy" their computers. "No one's interested in destroying people's computers," said the panelist. "Well, I'm interested in doing that," said the senator. "Warn them, do it again, and then destroy their machine! There's no excuse for anyone violating our copyright laws."

Is it possible that the equivalent of a cyber cruise missile would target the offending computer and blow the computer to smithereens? I never knew that P2P file sharing could be life threatening.

The MSNBC website also states that the RIAA (the Record Industry Association of America) sent out hundreds of subpoenas recently to individuals and Internet service providers. Carey Sherman, president of the RIAA, says the time for patience is over. "We've reached a point where we have a legitimate marketplace for downloading music, and we want to give it a chance," says Sherman, referring to the spiffy services like Apple's iTunes Music Store, the new Buy.Com store and subscription services like Rhapsody. But the game is just starting, and the best way to make sure that these services come up with compelling innovations is to match them off against the Kazaas of the world, which are far from perfect (the quality is erratic, they put spyware on your computers, they're loaded with porn). You can compete against free – ever hear of bottled water?"

Eventually, there will be a variety of legal digital music that one will be able to download over the Internet. Until then, the maneuvering of the "powers that be" is fun to watch.

John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to johnb@jnbrewer.com.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member.

Norton AntiSpam 2004 Software Review by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

Byte the Beast!

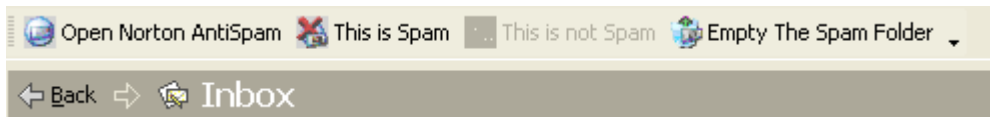
I hate spam. I really hate spam. Not the Hormel variety, I hate the spam that clogs my email box with garbage offering to enlarge things, shrink other things, fix my credit, grant me a diploma, smuggle funds out of Nigeria, get a prescription for anything-and who knows what else. I easily get a 100 spam mails a day and I am fed up. Going through 100 plus emails a day takes time, makes me grumpy and increases the risk that I will miss an important email.

I have tried a couple of different products with varying degrees of success. Some products “plug” into Outlook/ Outlook Express and some are stand alone products which run prior to running your email program. I have also worked with the rules in Outlook but I’d spend all my time writing and refining rules.

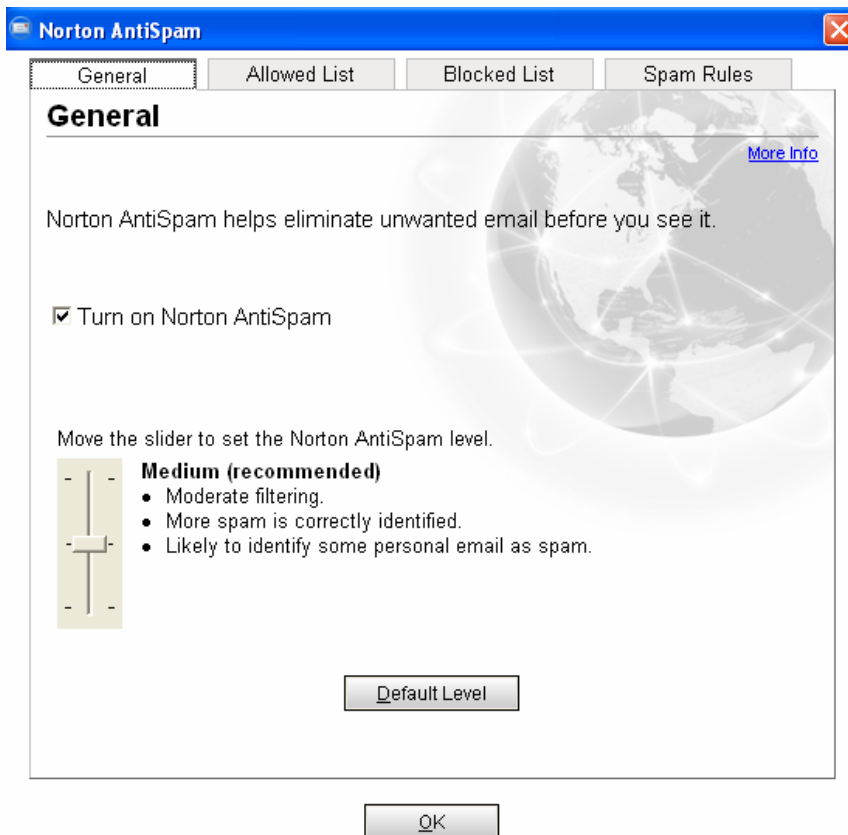
Last week I got so angry I decided it was time to try another product. Since I have been using Norton products since my Apple II days, I decided to buy Norton AntiSpam 2004. (MSRP \$39.00). Installing and authenticating (anti-piracy) was simple and straightforward. AntiSpam runs on any machine faster than a 155 MHz with Windows 98 or newer (except NT4.0).

Like many anti-spam packages, it WILL NOT run on the following types of accounts: IMAP, AOL, PoP3s with secure sockets layers, Web based email (like Yahoo) or Lotus Notes. AntiSpam will work with Hotmail if you pick up your mail through Outlook.

After installation, AntiSpam will add a toolbar to Outlook.



Of course you can configure AntiSpam through the Options menu:



After installation AntiSpam will immediately set up your Allowed List by importing your Contacts or Address List and allow you to include those names you want to receive emails from. You can also manually add any email addresses to either your approved or blocked list.

As email comes in you can further train the program by clicking on the “This is Spam” or “This is not Spam” button. All spam is moved into the spam folder for final review. As you use the program, it more intelligently finds the spam.

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Norton AntiSpam 2004 Software Review...

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Here are my statistics after a few days of use:

The screenshot shows the 'AntiSpam Statistics' window in Norton AntiSpam 2004. The window title is 'Norton AntiSpam'. The interface includes a 'LiveUpdate' button, 'Options', and 'Help & Support'. The main content area is titled 'AntiSpam Statistics' and is divided into three sections: 'General', 'Spam Filtering', and 'Updates'. The 'General' section shows statistics since 12/7/2003, with 181 emails scanned and 0 sent. The 'Spam Filtering' section shows 35 valid emails (19.34%), 31 correctly identified (88.57%), 146 spam (80.66%), and 113 correctly identified (77.4%). The 'Updates' section shows the last update on 8/29/2003. There are 'Clear Statistics' and 'Log Viewer' buttons at the bottom.

| General | | Total |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| Statistics since | | 12/7/2003 |
| Email scanned | | 181 |
| Sent email | | 0 |

| Spam Filtering | | Total | Percent |
|---------------------------|--|-------|---------|
| Valid email | | 35 | 19.34% |
| Mail correctly identified | | 31 | 88.57% |
| Spam | | 146 | 80.66% |
| Spam correctly identified | | 113 | 77.4% |

| Updates | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| AntiSpam Update | 8/29/2003 |

For more control, you can define your own additional rules:

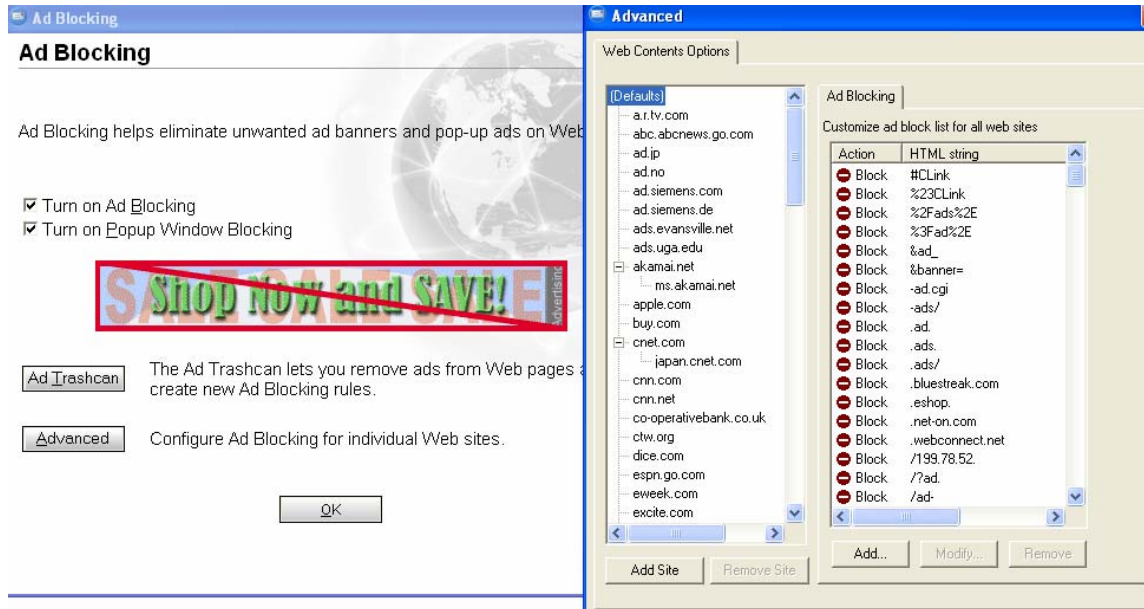
The screenshot shows the 'Spam Rules' dialog box in Norton AntiSpam 2004. The dialog has tabs for 'General', 'Allowed List', 'Blocked List', and 'Spam Rules'. The 'Spam Rules' tab is active, showing a title bar 'Spam Rules' and a 'More Info' link. Below the title bar is a text box explaining that spam rules determine if emails with specific words and phrases are valid or spam. A 'Rule Summaries' list box is currently empty. Below the list are buttons for 'Move Up', 'Move Down', 'New...', 'Edit...', and 'Delete'. A 'Tip' at the bottom states: 'Rules are processed in the order they appear in this list, so put your most important rules at the top of the list. If a message matches a rule, Norton AntiSpam applies the rule and moves to the next message.' An 'OK' button is at the bottom of the dialog.

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Norton AntiSpam 2004 Software Review...

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Along with AntiSpam is an Ad Blocker and Popup Window blocker which can be turned on or off as desired.



As can be seen, this too can be manually configured. With the Live Update feature common in Symantec products, updated info will be incorporated into the program over the one year subscription period.

So far this is certainly the best anti-spam product I have used. I am interested to see if it will accomplish the 90% plus accuracy that other reviews of this product have reported.

By the way, how did the name "spam" come to mean unsolicited commercial email (UCE)? I checked the Hormel site (makers of the meat product "SPAM") and here is their explanation (courtesy of www.SPAM.com):



You've probably seen, heard or even used the term "spamming" to refer to the act of sending unsolicited commercial email (UCE), or "spam" to refer to the UCE itself. Following is our position on the relationship between UCE and our trademark SPAM.

Use of the term "spam" was adopted as a result of the Monty Python skit in which our SPAM meat product was featured. In this skit, a group of Vikings sang a chorus of "spam, spam, spam . . ." in an increasing crescendo, drowning out other conversation. Hence, the analogy applied because UCE was drowning out normal discourse on the Internet.

We do not object to use of this slang term to describe UCE, although we do object to the use of the word "spam" as a trademark and to the use of our product image in association with that term. Also, if the term is to be used, it should be used in all lower-case letters to distinguish it from our trademark SPAM, which should be used with all uppercase letters. This slang term, which generically describes UCE, does not affect the strength of our trademark SPAM. In a Federal District Court case involving the famous trademark STAR WARS owned by LucasFilms, the Court ruled that the slang

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Norton AntiSpam 2004 Software Review...

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term used to refer to the Strategic Defense Initiative did not weaken the trademark and the Court refused to stop its use as a slang term. Other examples of famous trademarks having a different slang meaning include MICKEY MOUSE, to describe something as unsophisticated and CADILLAC, used to denote something as being high quality. It is only when someone attempts to trademark the word "spam" that we object to such use, in order to protect our rights in our famous trademark SPAM. We coined this term in 1937 and it has become a famous trademark. Thus, we don't appreciate it when someone else tries to make money on the goodwill that we created in our trademark or product image, or takes away from the unique and distinctive nature of our famous trademark SPAM. Let's face it. Today's teens and young adults are more computer savvy than ever, and the next generations will be even more so. Children will be exposed to the slang term "spam" to describe UCE well before being exposed to our famous product SPAM. Ultimately, we are trying to avoid the day when the consuming public asks, "Why would Hormel Foods name its product after junk e-mail?"

Position Statement on "Spamming"

We oppose the act of "spamming" or sending UCE. We have never engaged in this practice, although we have been victimized by it. If you have been one of those who has received UCE with a return address using our website address of SPAM.com, it wasn't us. It's easy and commonplace for somebody sending UCE to simply adopt a fake header ID, which disguises the true source of the UCE and makes it appear that it is coming from someone else. If you have or do receive UCE with this header ID, please understand that it didn't come from us.

Other "spam" Websites

This is the one and only official SPAM Website, brought to you by the makers of the SPAM Family of products. All of the others have been created by somebody else. We are not associated with those other websites and are not responsible for their content. As a Company, we are opposed to content that is obscene, vulgar or otherwise not "family friendly." We support positive family values and you can count on us for "safe surfing" by your children.

Thank you for visiting the official SPAM Website!

For more information see [Legal and Copyright Info](#)

[<|home >](#) [< SPAM| >](#) [< SPAM in time >](#) [|< eat SPAM >](#) [< |SPAM stuff |>](#)
[|< re: SPAM >](#) |

SPAM is a registered trademark of Hormel Foods Corporation.

Really Free Software (At Least for a While) by Dick Curry, DVPC

This one's for everyone who complained about how PC Magazine has forced you to pay \$5 a month (or \$20 a year) to get their award-winning PC Magazine Utilities. If you're just not inclined to pay up front for software, they have such a deal for you! PC Magazine has just launched an extensive (and I mean extensive) library full of thousands of shareware and freeware programs you can download and try – without spending a dime! Utilities, music, multimedia, programming, business, and more – it's all there. Go to <http://shareware.pcmag.com/welcome.php?&SiteID=pcmag> and check out what's available. Here are a few choices:

- Digital Physiognomy 1.24: Amazing face reading software that tells you about the character of a person. Great for those with digital cameras.
- ShellToys XP 4.0.1: A suite of 39 shell extensions adding new features to the Windows context menu.
- diskSpace Explorer Home Edition 3.0: Manage your hard disk space, find useless items, and free up valuable space.
- Back4Win 3.6.0.0: Easy to use Backup Freeware. Many features including spanned and Huge backups.
- BlackMagic DRE 2.xx: Used to colorize Black & White, Sepia, or IR (infrared) photos, or to color-correct ones with dull or inappropriate colors.
- StampCAT 6.00: A powerful database program designed to help you catalog and manage your stamp collection.
- RouterSim 1.1.3: Allows the wood worker to simulate a wood router table on the PC to build up complex router cuts and view the results in fully rendered 3D.

Highly recommended. Happy Holidays!