



March 4, 2004 Meeting Announcement **Some Taxing Solutions: TurboTax, TaxACT, TaxCut** **3D Photos and the Digital Home Experience**

At the March DVPC meeting we're going to see demonstrations of three popular income tax preparation programs, just in time for getting your taxes done by April 15! First, Walt Parsons, DVPC's own Official Curmudgeon (accept no substitute!), will demonstrate the latest version of Intuit's TurboTax and show the features that have made this the number one selling tax preparation software. Then Ron Ogg will demonstrate the standard version of H&R Block's TaxCut, the second most popular tax preparation software package. Finally, Ron will demonstrate the freeware version of 2nd Story Software's TaxACT. The price is right! But what about the features? Is cheaper also better? Just in time for preparing your Federal and state income taxes, these demonstrations at the March DVPC meeting will help you decide which tax preparation software package is right for you. Then Alan Mildwurm will demonstrate a fantastic new process that lets you take 3D pictures with any camera. See his description in the *President's Message* column at the bottom right of this page. Then, time permitting, Alan will show some material from Intel's *The Digital Home Experience* "presentation in a box".

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. We'll also have a 17" flat-screen CRT monitor from eMachines that we'll auction, so in you need a great monitor be sure to bring cash or your checkbook!

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President's Message

by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

Our March meeting brings with it thoughts of April and taxes. Who better than our own DVPC curmudgeon, Walt Parsons, to give a presentation of TurboTax, and Ron Ogg will give a presentation of TaxCut and TaxACT.

I received an "in the box" presentation from Intel on "The Digital Home Experience" and some training videos. Time permitting, I will show some of this material. I also will show an interesting process for taking 3D photos with any camera that works very well and is very easy to use! Remember the old red and blue anaglyph 3D glasses — well, they're back — in fact, this is the same process that the two Mars explorers (Spirit and Opportunity) are using to create the incredible 3D images we see from Mars.

I am also working to get some new vendors to come and present to our group. Our treasury is doing well and hovering at the \$1,000.00 level — making all of us on the Board think about what we might need next!

Speaking of the Board, elections are coming in April. Here is your chance to assist with running your club. Contact any of us for more info!

See you in March!

DVPC March 2004 Calendar

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|--|--|--|---|
| 1 Windows SIG 7:30 p.m. | 2 | 3 | 4 DVPC Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m. New User's SIG 6:30 p.m. | 5 | 6 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 DVPC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Alan Mildwurm's house | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 15 Genealogy eSIG See SIG News on page 5 | 16 | 17 Internet SIG 7:00 p.m. Clarion SIG 7:00 p.m. | 18 Advanced Users SIG 7:30 p.m. | 19 Diablo Blue deadline: Email articles and ads to the Editor: rogg@value.net | 20 PC101 and PC201 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Concord Library |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | See SIG News starting on page 5 for more information about SIG meeting dates, times, topics, and locations |

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 | <input type="checkbox"/> | New Users SIG | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clarion SIG | <input type="checkbox"/> | PC 101/PC 201 Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Genealogy eSIG | <input type="checkbox"/> | Windows SIG | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internet SIG | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 (*see email address below*).

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 scannable. Send your ad copy as email attachments to the Newsletter Editor (*see email address below*). See the deadline information in the Calendar on page 16 of each issue of *Diablo Blue*.

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

DVPC on the Internet

DVPC has a Web site on the Internet — thanks to our Web Team: Ron Ogg and Stan Umlauf. 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.

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: _____

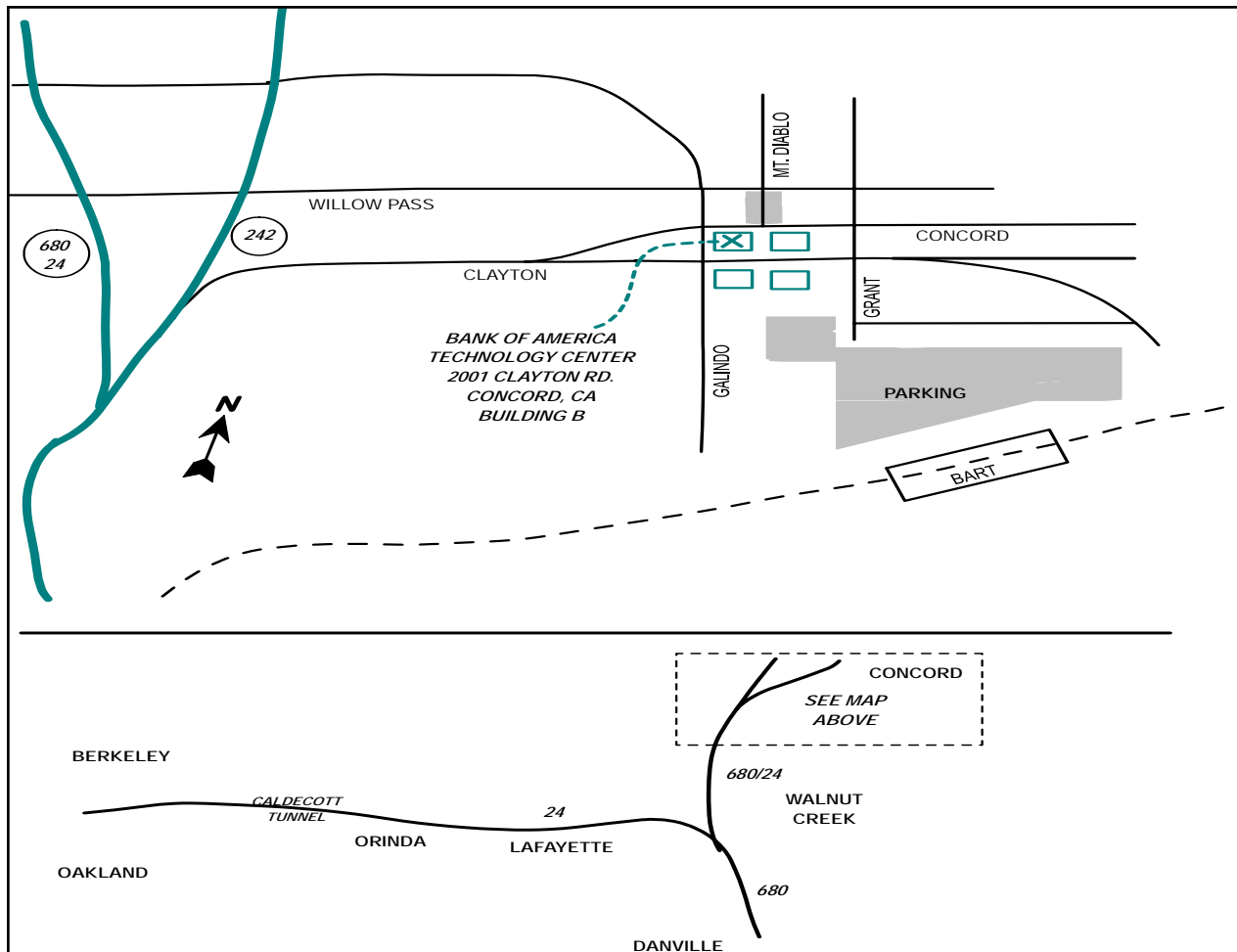
On occasion DVPC publishes a list of members for distribution to DVPC members only. Please check how you would like to be listed: No listing _____ List Name and Home _____ Work _____ phone number(s) _____

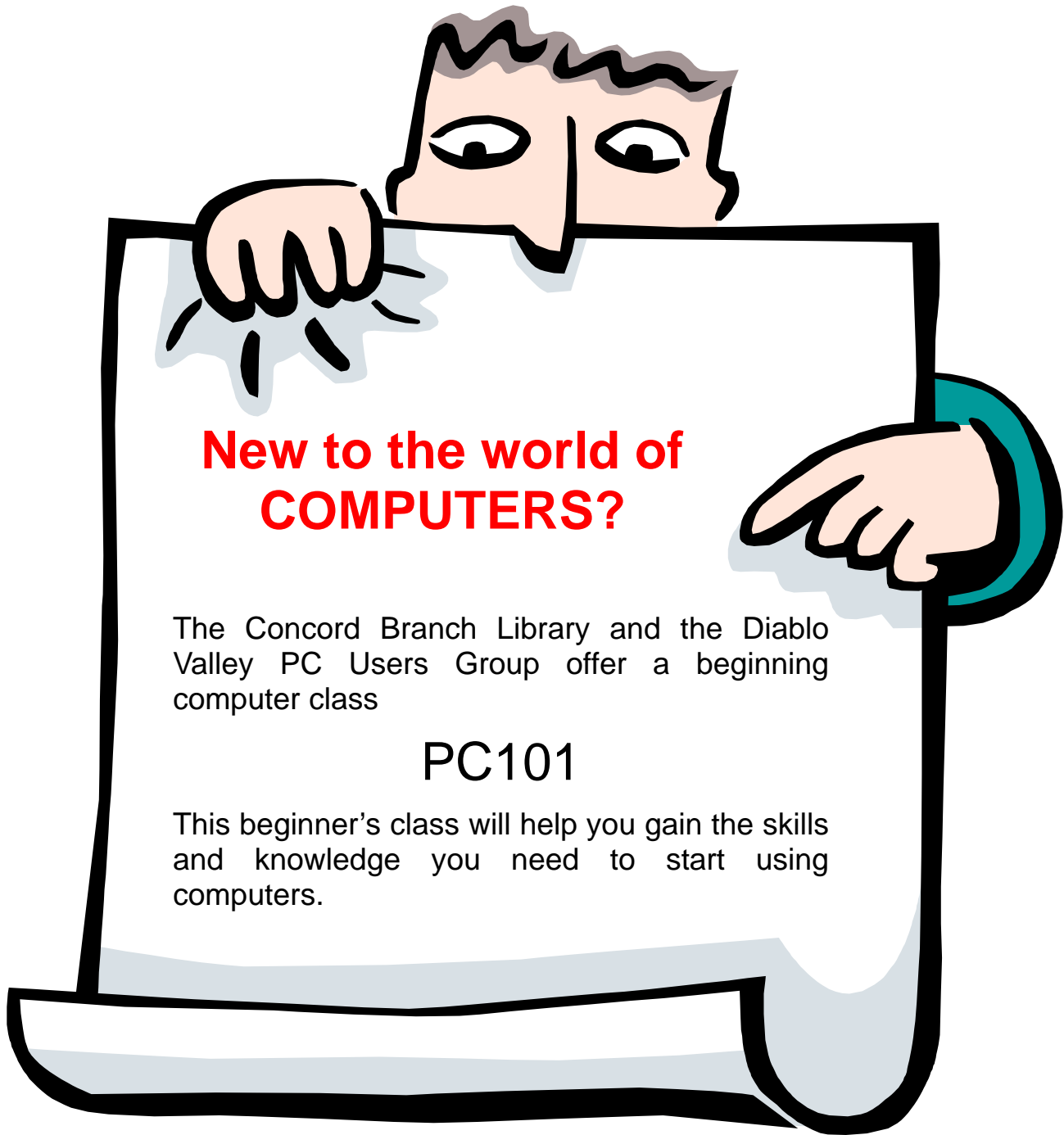
I'm also interested in these SIGs: _____

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!





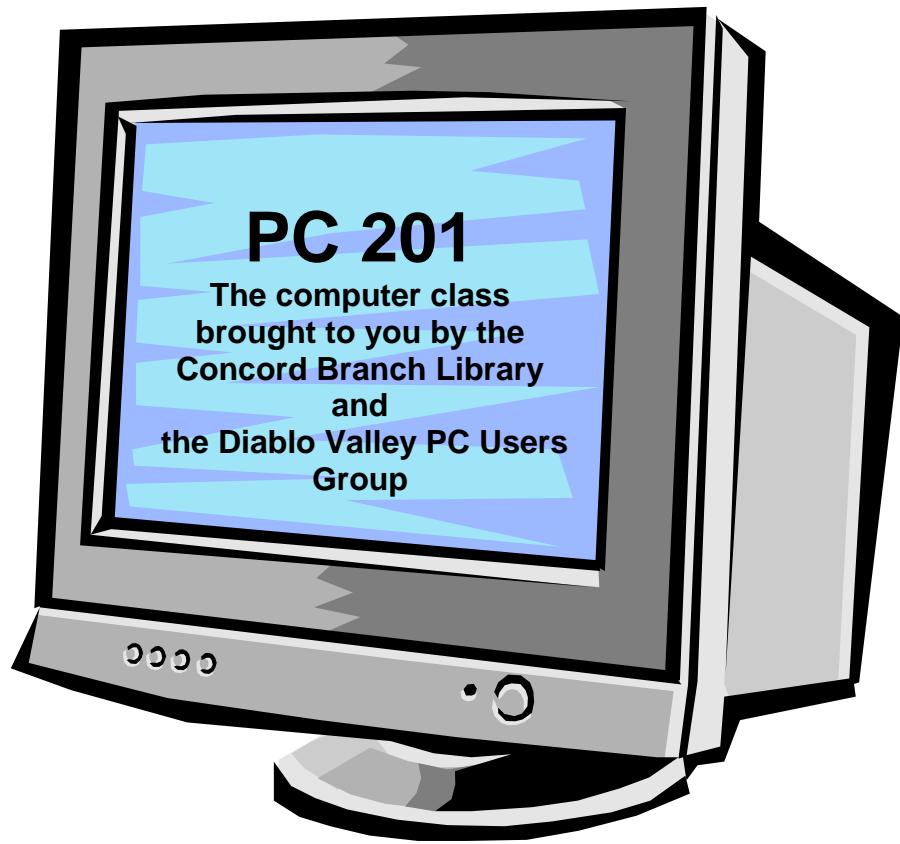
The next PC 101 class will be held on March 20th. The topic is not set yet, so look for an update on the DVPC web site at www.dvpc.org.

The PC101 class is usually held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 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. Space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Branch Library.

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SOFTWARE

The next PC201 class will be held on March 20th. The topic is not set yet, so look for an update on the DVPC web site at www.dvpc.org.

The PC201 class is usually 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. Space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Branch Library.

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 (wcm@soft-trak.com)

The February meeting will be held on the 18th. 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 usually is held from 10 am to 2 pm, and PC201 is usually held from noon to 2 pm, at the Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, on the third Saturday of each month. Look for information on these classes on the DVPC web site.

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. Class space is limited, so sign up at the information desk at the Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA 94519-2597 from 10 am to 2 pm in the community room of the Concord Branch library. For class meeting dates, times, and topics, see page 5 in this issue of *Diablo Blue*.

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 class meeting dates, times, and topics, see page 6 in this issue of *Diablo Blue*.

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.

FlipAlbum 5 Software Review by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC

As a result of preparing a lecture on digital photography for beginners, I have been looking at a lot of programs for the *Digital Darkroom*. We are all familiar with Adobe's Photoshop and its younger sibling, Photoshop Elements, and of course Jasc's Paint Shop Pro for photo manipulation and repair. I also looked at Photoshop Album and Paint Shop Photo Album for organization (and minor manipulation) of digital photos. Traditionally, photos were printed on paper and shared in photo albums-or in my case, stored loose in file boxes in the garage awaiting a very rainy day!

Of course, digital pictures can still be printed out but there are easier and definitely cooler ways to share your thousands of digital pictures. Many new digital cameras have a video (out) port to connect directly to a TV and have the ability within the camera itself to run a slideshow. (A video output is a "must have" option in my mind). There are also several software packages that bundle your pix with fancy transitions, music, etc for burning to CD or DVD, viewing on your computer or publishing to the net.

FlipAlbum by E-Book Systems (www.flipalbum.com) has just released version 5 of their product. FlipAlbum uses a book metaphor to collect and display your photos. Creating a flip album is a very simple 3 step process.

- 1) Select the folder containing your images
- 2) Select your page layout – single image per page or centerfold page
- 3) Select a theme.

It's that simple.

Of course, you can do much more manually. It is easy to add or delete pages, resize, annotate the pictures with a caption and even give them a 3D frame effect. In fact, just about everything – except the basic book metaphor [turning pages in a photo album] – is customizable. It is easy to create your own themes, add music, and frames. You can even add video files to your album.

If you prefer a slideshow you can alter the book paradigm and use terrific transitions to go from "page" to "page."

By customizing the background and adding text, images, music and graphics you can easily create a very professional looking book or catalogue.

Sharing your album is also easy. You can email your album with a free viewer, burn it on a CD or upload it to the web. In fact you can upload your album to a free FlipAlbum server and send emails to your intended recipients – which is great for people with small mailboxes! There is a built-in FTP client so you can also upload it to your own web site, and the program also has the ability to export to TV – i.e., burn in mpeg, avi, or video-cd format.

The FlipAlbum website has loads of user forums containing themes which you can download along with more great ideas. I like the program a lot. I have been using Kai's PowerShow for years to make this type of presentation and this is an excellent replacement.

So what's it like? Check out the FlipAlbum I created using some pictures taken on a recent trip to the S.F. Arboretum at: www.flipviewer.com/popup/?opf=http://members.myflipbooks.com/awm/dvpc.opf&ver=FlipAlbum

Spam Mail Wanted! by The California Attorney General's Office

The California Attorney General's Office is looking for examples of spam e-mails being sent to consumers in violation of California law, particularly from persons operating in California.

While we have valuable leads from spam posted in various newsgroups and mailing lists, we would like to obtain certain examples directly from individuals who would be prepared to verify, in a written statement under oath, information about the spam they received.

Please send your examples (as attachments, with all header information) to:

caspam@doj.ca.gov.

If you prefer to submit spam samples in printed form, you can download and print our complaint form for that purpose, available at:

http://caag.state.ca.us/contact/unsolicited_email.pdf. If you are submitting spam on paper, please be sure to include all headers.

The Attorney General's Office is looking for samples of spam that meet all of the following conditions:

1. You are the recipient of the spam and you are a resident of California.
2. The spam was delivered via servers located in California (sender's, recipient's or intermediary server will suffice).
3. There is some indication that the spammer is operating in California, such as a California telephone number or address for orders. If you can identify the spammer and have information from other sources showing that the spammer is in California, that will also work.
4. The spam fails to comply with the statutory restrictions. To comply, the unsolicited advertising emails' subject line must begin with "ADV:", the first text in the message must offer a toll-free number or functioning email address for

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Spam Mail Wanted!...

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removal of the recipient from further unsolicited emails, and that statement must be in a type size as large as most of the other text.

[Note: The statute also makes it an offense to fail to honor a request for removal included as outlined above, and we would like to get evidence of specific instances of that involving California residents.]

To view California law governing spam, see Section 17538.4 of the Business & Professions Code at:

<http://leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=bpc&group=17001-18000&file=17530-17539.6>.

[I've reproduced the relevant section below. Ed.]

17538.45. (a) For purposes of this section, the following words have the following meanings:

(1) "Electronic mail advertisement" means any electronic mail message, the principal purpose of which is to promote, directly or indirectly, the sale or other distribution of goods or services to the recipient.

(2) "Unsolicited electronic mail advertisement" means any electronic mail advertisement that meets both of the following requirements:

(A) It is addressed to a recipient with whom the initiator does not have an existing business or personal relationship.

(B) It is not sent at the request of or with the express consent of the recipient.

(3) "Electronic mail service provider" means any business or organization qualified to do business in California that provides registered users the ability to send or receive electronic mail through equipment located in this state and that is an intermediary in sending or receiving electronic mail.

(4) "Initiation" of an unsolicited electronic mail advertisement refers to the action by the initial sender of the electronic mail advertisement. It does not refer to the actions of any intervening electronic mail service provider that may handle or retransmit the electronic message.

(5) "Registered user" means any individual, corporation, or other entity that maintains an electronic mail address with an electronic mail service provider.

(b) No registered user of an electronic mail service provider shall use or cause to be used that electronic mail service provider's equipment located in this state in violation of that electronic mail service provider's policy prohibiting or restricting the use of its service or equipment for the initiation of unsolicited electronic mail advertisements.

(c) No individual, corporation, or other entity shall use or cause to be used, by initiating an unsolicited electronic mail advertisement, an electronic mail service provider's equipment located in this state in violation of that electronic mail service provider's policy prohibiting or restricting the use of its equipment to deliver unsolicited electronic mail advertisements to its registered users.

(d) An electronic mail service provider shall not be required to create a policy prohibiting or restricting the use of its equipment for the initiation or delivery of unsolicited electronic mail advertisements.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or restrict the rights of an electronic mail service provider under Section 230(c)(1) of Title 47 of the United States Code, or any decision of an electronic mail service provider to permit or to restrict access to or use of its system, or any exercise of its

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DVPC Board Meeting Minutes by Tom Krauss, DVPC

Nick was holding forth with a spirited discourse on the complex problems associated with converting a TV station from analogue to digital when I walked in, but I stayed for the meeting anyway. The conversation quickly turned to the pros and cons of plasma versus LCD television sets. This was of interest to me as my current TV is giving serious warning signs of imminent failure. Ron's analysis convinced me to go with LCD. Today, anyway. Who knows what will be there in another month or two?

We got down to serious business with Alan announcing that we have just over \$1000 in the club treasury and asking for suggestions on what to do with it. Field trips to Hawaii and other such places were ruled out since there was not enough money for the entire Board to go. Besides, we knew we would never be able to reach a consensus on a destination.

Without resolving the issue of how to spend our money, the conversation drifted to how to get more. Long time club members will realize that vendors are just not as generous as they used to be. We kicked around some ideas about whether raffle prizes or auctions were the most rewarding. We considered using club funds to buy good products for prizes, but it seems unlikely that this scheme would have a positive impact on our bottom line. Ron then offered to donate an unused Lexmark printer to the club for a raffle prize as an experiment and we quickly accepted his generous offer. So if you need a printer, come to the next meeting prepared to buy a few extra raffle tickets!

Exhausted by the prolonged transaction of club business (nearly twenty minutes!) the conversation drifted to spyware and nagging system crashes. I reported on my nightly crash of Windows XP's Internet Explorer, and Alan on regular system crashes due to problems with bad drivers which aren't even installed on his machine. Ron talked about a mysterious Explorer plugin with a four-digit name that he has no idea how it got loaded on his machine and he can't get rid of (he tracked it down to some Japanese website, but swears it was not one of those Asian Nurses-type of sites).

The final general topic was the life expectancy of CDs. I raised this question, as I am in the process of scanning a bunch of old photos to CDs and I want to be sure they will last for a while. Surfing the web, I came across a Dutch study that basically said CDs have a 2-5 year life expectancy, and at least thirty sites and studies claiming anywhere from 50 to 200 years. I figure that I can probably stand to copy my CDs once every ten years or so, and it sounds like they will last at least that long. As one person on the web pointed out, who needs a CD to last 50 years, when by then the device you need to read it will only be found in a museum? Good point. If I had saved anything on 5 ¼ inch floppies ten years ago (and I did), I wouldn't be able to read them today anyway (and I can't). Today, new computers don't even come with a 3 ½ " floppy unless you ask for it to be added.

Spam Mail Wanted!...

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editorial function.

(f) (1) In addition to any other action available under law, any electronic mail service provider whose policy on unsolicited electronic mail advertisements is violated as provided in this section may bring a civil action to recover the actual monetary loss suffered by that provider by reason of that violation, or liquidated damages of fifty dollars (\$50) for each electronic mail message initiated or delivered in violation of this section, up to a maximum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per day, whichever amount is greater.

(2) In any action brought pursuant to paragraph (1), the court may award reasonable attorney's fees to a prevailing party.

(3) (A) In any action brought pursuant to paragraph (1), the electronic mail service provider shall be required to establish as an element of its cause of action that prior to the alleged violation, the defendant had actual notice of both of the following:

(i) The electronic mail service provider's policy on unsolicited

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CALIFORNIA COPY SOURCE

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Walnut Creek, CA 94596

(925) 256-6898

10% Discount for DVPC Members with this Ad!

Spam Mail Wanted!...

(Continued from page 10)

electronic mail advertising.

(ii) The fact that the defendant's unsolicited electronic mail advertisements would use or cause to be used the electronic mail service provider's equipment located in this state.

(B) In this regard, the Legislature finds that with rapid advances in Internet technology, and electronic mail technology in particular, Internet service providers are already experimenting with embedding policy statements directly into the software running on the computers used to provide electronic mail services in a manner that displays the policy statements every time an electronic mail delivery is requested. While the state of the technology does not support such a finding at present, the Legislature believes that, in a given case at some future date, a showing that notice was supplied via electronic means between the sending and receiving computers could be held to constitute actual notice to the sender for purposes of this paragraph.

(4) (A) An electronic mail service provider who has brought an action against a party for a violation subject to Section 17529.8 shall not bring an action against that party under this section for the same unsolicited commercial electronic mail advertisement.

(B) An electronic mail service provider who has brought an action against a party for a violation of this section shall not bring an action against that party under Section 17529.8 for the same unsolicited commercial electronic mail advertisement.

What's Running in the Background? Is It Gaining on Me? *by Dick Curry, DVPC*

I read with interest an article by Bruce Cramer from the Alamo PC Organization in our last month's Newsletter on the subject of how to determine what programs automatically start up and run when we boot-up our computers. I had first given a presentation on this subject in 2001. I have had the occasion to make the same presentation several times since and it still (I think) remains timely.

I would like to add to the discussion because Windows operating system does not permit us to go to a single place and obtain a complete list of applications that launch on computer boot-up. We also have the problem of having once identified the name of a program that launches and runs in the background of determining whether or not that program is good, bad, or just ugly?

Now, I check seven different places to develop a list of applications that launch on boot-up. And this relates only to applications. If you want a better idea of what your computer is doing from the time your POST starts and your desk top settles down take a look at bootlog.txt in your root directory. This is a hidden file so your Windows Explorer will have to be set (folder options) to view "all files".

Okay, but you might first ask, "why should I care what applications load on start-up?". I can offer at least two reasons: programs that load and run in the background when booting a computer use system resources. This is less of a problem with Windows 2000 and XP operating systems but can be a real problem with those of us with older operating systems. (Right click on your My Computer desktop icon, click on Properties, and then the Performance tab. Note what percent of your system resources are free. It is desirable to have approximately 90% free immediately after startup and over 60% at all other times when operating your computer). The second reason is to provide a look-see as to whether or not your computer may have a Trojan Horse malware program installed (or, less sinister, just to become better acquainted with just what's going on within your computer).

I noted 7 (yes, seven!) places that need be checked to ensure you have a complete list of all programs that load and run when you start your computer. You probably could winnow this list down a bit, but I look in all seven places to ensure I have them all.

The first place I look is in my StartUp folder in my Windows Explorer program. Launch Windows Explorer (right click on the Start button in the bottom left hand corner of your computer and click on Explore). In the left frame, find the folder C:\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\StartUp. (It may have a different path in your computer; if so, click on the Tools menu at the top of your computer screen, click on Find\Files or Folders... and type StartUp in the "Named:" box and C:\ in the "Look In:" box. Then click Find Now). Make a note of any files listed in your StartUp folder. These are usually short cuts to computer programs you have installed two or more years ago as more recent programs are more sophisticated and install themselves in ways that make it more difficult for you, the user, to smoke out.

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What's Running in the Background? Is It Gaining on Me?...

(Continued from page 11)

You may get tired of writing down all the programs that are listed here and in the next six places I discuss so, rather than writing down the file names you can copy the names of the programs as you see them on your computer screen by, first, maximizing the window so that it fills up the entire screen, then press the "Print Screen" key on your keyboard (this copies the image shown on your computer screen to your clipboard), open your word processing program (Microsoft Word, Word Perfect or whatever you use) and click on the Paste icon. Your screen image will appear as a graphic in your Word document. To resize the image, click on it, grab one of the corners with your cursor, and pull the corner out making a larger image.

The second place I look is the Task Manager found when you depress the Control, Alt, and Delete keys simultaneously. Again, make a note of programs that you see listed and click on the Cancel button to exit Task Manager.

The third place is found by clicking on Start\Run... and typing msconfig in the white box, and clicking OK. In the System Configuration window that is opened, click on the Startup tab. Note all the programs that have been "checked" in the left column. These are all programs that run when you start your computer.

Yet a more complete list can be found in your System Information program window. Click on your Start button, then Programs\Accessories\System Tools\System Information. Then click on the "+" sign to the left of Software Environment. First click on Startup Programs, then click on Running Tasks. Again, make note of all programs that are listed in the right frame of each of these headings (Startup Programs and Running Tasks).

In the next two places discussed we are looking for programs that very likely will be Trojan Horses. These two places are referred to as Win.ini and System.ini (or sys.ini). Before looking into the innards of these two programs we are first going to check the attributes assigned to these programs. Launch your Windows Explorer program again. In the left pane go down to and click C:\Windows. In your right frame scroll down until you see System.ini. If you do not see any files listed or if the files do not have file extensions you will need to make some changes in the way you "view" this page and in your Folder Options. (I am not covering how to do this in this article.)

Place your cursor over the file name System.ini (or click on it if you do not have your program to "view" as a Web Page). The attribute should be shown on the left side of this frame. If not, right click on the file name, click Properties and note which box is checked under Attributes. What you want to see is the word Normal or the word Archive. You do not want to see an attribute stating Read Only. If the attribute is Read Only you may want to get help you can depend on. If the attribute is Read Only some program has written to this ini program and has changed the attribute to Read Only to ensure that another program does not change it back. There is a strong possibility the program making the ini file Read Only is a Trojan Horse.

Now repeat this exercise for the file Win.ini.

Now we are ready to look at the innards of these two programs. Click on the Start button, then Run ... and type sysedit in the box, then click OK. This will launch your System Configuration Editor. You will see a number of windows cascading on your screen. We'll work first with the Win.ini file.

Click somewhere on the Win.ini file. This will bring the Win.ini file to the front. Maximize the window for ease in viewing/working with this file. We are interested in two line items under the heading [Windows]. They are Load= and Run=. First, drag the horizontal scroll bar at the bottom of the window all the way to the right and check to ensure there is nothing written on these two lines that is not initially visible. Record anything written on either of these two lines. For most computer users there will be nothing written on either of these two lines (and that is good). However, if there is something listed make note of the name and you will need to check to determine what this program is, what it does, and whether or not it is needed (see below).

Now click anywhere on the file System.ini (you may have to close the Win.ini window). This will bring the System.ini file to the front. Follow the same instructions provided above for Win.ini only related to a line item Shell= under the heading [boot] (scrolling all the way to the right to ensure there are no instructions written off the screen). In general there will be a line item Shell=Explorer.exe. This is a Microsoft operating system program and is okay. Shell=Explore.exe which looks very much like Microsoft's program is a virus. Shell=%path%\Explorer.exe where "path" is a folder other than C:\Window will also be a virus.

If you want to know more about Trojan Horses go to <http://www.google.com/> and search for Trojan Horses.

I mentioned seven places to look. The seventh place is in your Registry. With good reason Microsoft and others warn against tooling around in this program. However, having been forewarned, there is a handful of places one can look through for the names of additional programs that may launch when starting your computer. To enter your Registry click on the Start button, Run..., and type regedit in the box. Before doing anything else, [back up your Registry files](#). In the Registry Editor window, click on the Registry menu button. Click on Export Registry File..., provide your backup with a file name and save it in a folder that you will remember.

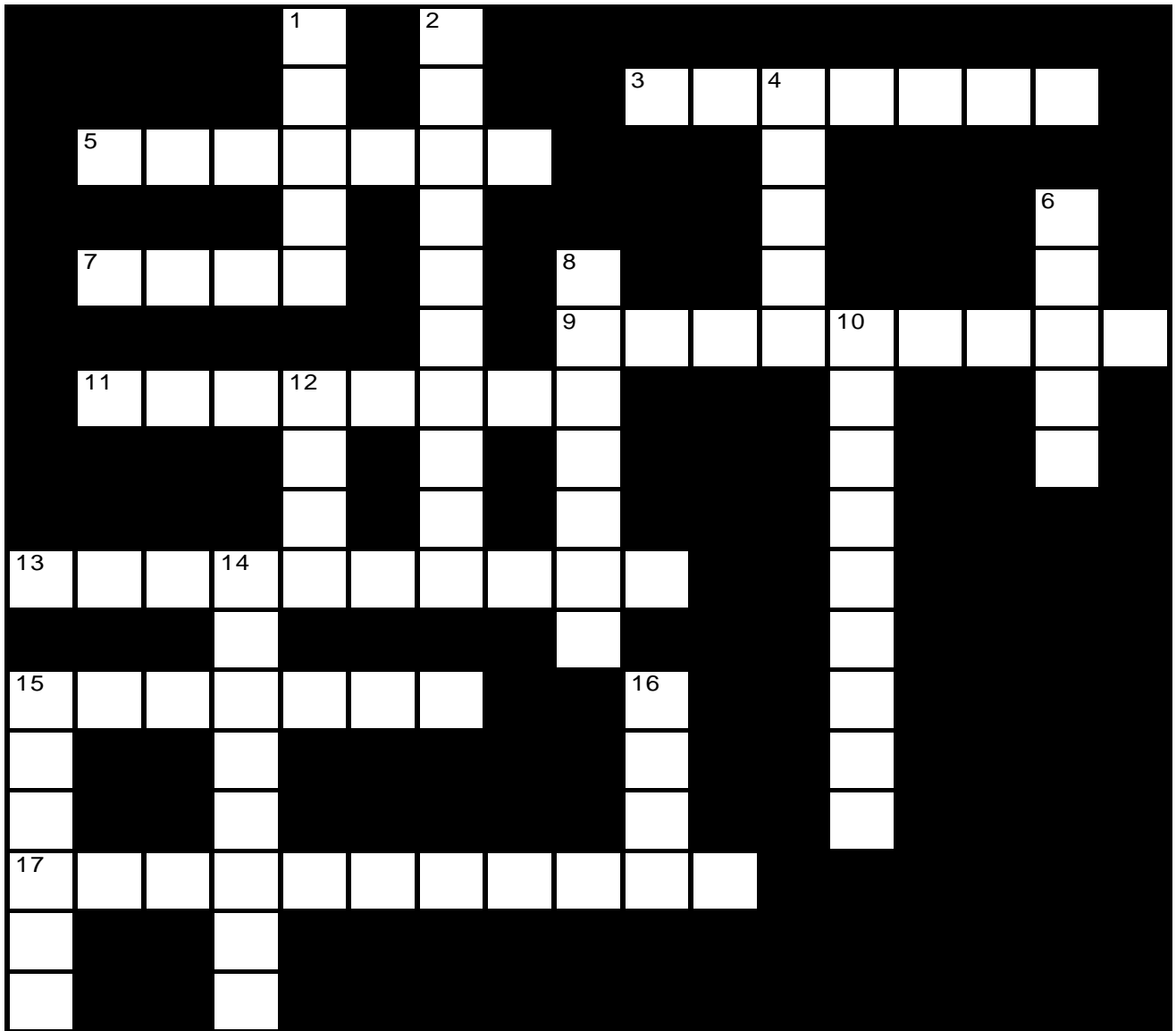
There are six folders in the Registry that contain information relating to programs that are launched at start up. They are:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run

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Give a *DVPC* Membership Gift Certificate!

Computer Crossword by Craig Peterson, DVPC
“Did You Forget Valentines Day – Again?”



I know *you've* never forgotten to get your sweetie a Valentine's Day gift, or even just a card – have you? No, of course not! Neither have I. But it's probably pretty amusing to look back on what might have befallen someone who was so unlucky to, unlike ourselves, forgotten to be attentive enough to make sure their lives didn't become a total disaster due to a momentary memory loss. So, as a reminder for an upcoming birthday, or anniversary, or even Valentine's Day, 2005, begin to hone your memory and remember what love is all about! If the answers don't seem to come into focus, you can find them at www.dvpc.org/solution.html.

Across

- 3. Brotherly love for others
- 5. One who is loved
- 7. What we should all feel for one another
- 9. To love deeply
- 11. To love in a friendly way
- 13. To love and to value greatly
- 15. To love and to find ecstasy
- 17. To love deeply for a short time

Down

- 1. To like or love a great deal
- 2. The one who you love
- 4. The strength of your love
- 6. French for love
- 8. The feeling of love
- 10. What you feel about the one you love
- 12. What you call the one you love
- 14. What you share with the one you love
- 15. An appetite for love
- 16. What love is in tennis

What's Running in the Background? Is It Gaining on Me?...

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HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Runonce
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunOnce
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunServices
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunServicesOnce

In the left frame click on each of these six folder names, one at a time, (Run, Runonce, Run, RunOnce, RunServices, and RunServicesOnce) and record the filenames listed in the right frame.

That's it. At this point you should have a list of all the application files that load when you start your computer and their locations (path) on your hard drive. Now how do you separate the bad, the good, and the ugly?

To do this you can go to www.google.com and search for List of Computer Startup Programs. Two sites that are my favorites are: www.pacs-portal.co.uk/startup_content.php and www.answerthatwork.com (and click on Task List).

I find the list provided at answerthatwork.com to be in greater and more useful detail, but you have to work with the list online. This site also has many other interesting links to issues such as software questions, hardware problems, configuration advice, networking issues, general computer advice, drivers, boot disks, software downloads, recommendations, and a library of answers.

At the Pacman site (pacs-portal) you can download the most current complete list in a compressed (zip) file or in individual uncompressed pages for use offline on your own computer. The detail and information provided is not as complete. I use both. I zero in on programs that I want more detail on using the Pacman list offline and then go to answerthatwork.com with my condensed list for additional detail.

Now as to how to get rid of programs that you have determined you don't want loaded when starting your computer, first determine whether you want to delete the program or only to stop it from loading at startup. Unless you have a good handle on this I am inclined to suggest you get help from someone that does. If you only want to stop the program from loading at computer startup you will be looking at deleting only shortcuts and startup instructions - not deleting the programs themselves. If you want to delete a program, you should first check to see if that program has an uninstall routine (best way is to click the Start button, Settings, Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs and see if the program is listed and follow the uninstall instructions, next best way is to have a program like McAfee's Uninstaller). If you find you have a Trojan Horse installed get help in removing it. If you are not sure, get help. In any event backup your computer data.

Hope this helps and may all your computer experiences be pleasant.

Choosing a Surge Suppressor by Vinny La Bash, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

Let's start with some basics. Standard voltage in the United States is 120 volts. You can think of voltage as a measure of electrical pressure; the higher the voltage, the higher the pressure. It's similar to water pressure that makes water flow through a pipe or a hose. Voltage or electrical pressure is the force that makes electricity flow through a circuit. A sudden, temporary increase in line voltage above 120 volts has the potential to do serious damage to electrical devices.

If a sudden increase in voltage lasts for one or two nanoseconds, it's called a spike. If the increase lasts for three nanoseconds or longer, it's called a surge. A nanosecond is a billionth of a second. How short a period of time is a nanosecond?

Admiral Grace Hopper, developer of COBOL and the first computer compiler, used to use a piece of fiber optic wire in her lectures and speaking engagements to demonstrate a nanosecond. Light travels at about 186,000 miles a second. Her piece of fiber optic wire measured about 18 inches, which illustrated how far light can travel in one nanosecond.

Without getting too deep into technical issues, spikes and surges create excess heat within electrical circuits. If the surge or spike is high enough, it can cause severe damage to electronic equipment. Anything electrical can be fried, from a large mainframe right down to your toaster.

A standard surge suppressor works by diverting power during a spike or surge to the outlet's ground wire. Lightning is the most familiar cause of power surges and gets the most attention because its results tend to be spectacular. In a lightning storm your surge

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Changing Your E-mail Address?
Tell us so you will continue receiving Diablo Blue!
E-mail your name and new information to changes@dvpc.org

Choosing a Surge Suppressor...

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suppressor is likely to be toasted along with anything connected to it. Your best protection is to unplug everything for the duration of the storm.

Surge suppressors are far from useless, but you should understand their capabilities along with their limitations. They are designed to protect you from common causes of line voltage fluctuations. Air conditioners, refrigerators, toasters, and blow driers are the most common sources of spikes and surges generated in the home. You can be affected by faulty wiring, downed power lines or even problems with your utility company's generating and transmission equipment. Because of the sheer complexity of power generation and distribution, power surges are unavoidable.

So why didn't we need surge suppressors 50 or 25 years ago? It is only recently, relatively speaking, that modern electronic devices such as computers and TV sets became controlled by small delicate circuits that are sensitive to surges. Microprocessors can function properly only when line voltage is correct and stable.

What kind of equipment should be protected by a surge suppressor? The short answer is anything that plugs into a wall outlet that is controlled by a microprocessor. That includes, but is not limited to, computers, TV sets, DVD players, and most home entertainment components. If it's expensive to replace, it makes economic sense to protect it with a surge suppressor.

Broadband modems, telephone equipment, and cable TV systems also require protection from voltage spikes and surges. Your surge protector should have phone line input jacks, and if you have equipment hooked up to coaxial cables, look for a cable surge protector.

Be aware that there are three levels of surge protectors, illustrated below:

1. The Basic Power Strip:

This equipment is characterized by low price, up to six outlets, and rarely phone or cable outlets. It offers very limited protection.

2. The Surge Station:

These are physically much larger units offering superior protection and in most cases, line conditioning. They feature internal circuit breakers and protection for phone and cable equipment.

3. The Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS):

These devices have all the capabilities of a surge station plus battery backup in case of a power failure. This lets you to shut down your equipment normally and greatly reduces the chances of lost data or damaged equipment. High quality units filter out noise from your power lines and provide the highest level of protection.

Here's what to look for when shopping for a device:

Clamping Voltage: This is the point at which the device starts shunting voltage to the ground line. The lower the clamping voltage, the better protection you have. Look for an Underwriters Labs (UL) rating lower than 400. If there is no UL label, move on to the next candidate.

Energy Absorption/Disipation: This tells you how much punishment the unit can take before failing. The rating is measured in joules and you want a high number. Most homes can get along with a rating of 200 to 400 joules. Units which can absorb 600 joules or more tend to be expensive, but they are worth the money if you need the protection.

Response Time: This is the time the unit needs to respond to a voltage surge. You want a unit that can respond in less than a nanosecond.

Indicators: Look for indicator lights that will tell you if all components are functioning.

This article is hardly the last word on surge suppressors and Uninterruptible Power Supplies. However, you should now have a basis to find the kind of unit you need for your particular circumstances.

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Excel Annoyances Needed for New Book by Marsee Henon, O'Reilly User Group Program

Dear DVPC Members,

O'Reilly is pulling together a new book called "Excel Annoyances" and we'd like your help! As you might guess from the title, this book aims to identify the problems, snarls, quirks, bugs, and just dumb things about Excel that drive users nuts. Oh yeah — it also aims to solve these annoyances, too. DVPC members who use Excel — be you newbies or Excel masters — if you have annoyances you would like to see solved, email me, Marsee Henon, at O'Reilly (marsee@oreilly.com) with "Excel Annoyance" in the subject line. Note what version of Excel and Windows (or Mac OS) you're using, and describe your annoyance — and, if you know it, the fix. As hanks for sharing, we'll make sure to get copies of "Excel Annoyances" sent to your group for your raffle shortly after publication.

Here's an example:

LET ME COUNT THE DAYS

THE ANNOYANCE: I know you can do date calculations in Excel, whether it's to find how many days late I am on a car payment or to see how long it's been since my last haircut. It's pretty easy to determine the number of days between two dates; just subtract one from the other. But when I do that, the result is another date! Huh?

THE FIX: In a blank worksheet, try this little exercise, which should show your age in days:

1. In cell A1, enter your birth date in MM/DD/YYYY format.
2. In cell B1, enter the formula =today() to display the current date.
3. In cell C1, enter the formula =b1-a1.

You'll notice that the result of the formula in C1 is some other date, which appears to have no correlation to either of the first dates. How come? When you enter a formula, Excel matches the formatting of the formula's inputs. This works well when you're doing calculations on dollar amounts or percentages; the result comes out formatted just the way you'd want. But in our example, Excel formatted the formula result — a number of days — as a date.

PC Hardware Annoyances Needed for New Book by Marsee Henon, O'Reilly User Group Program

Dear DVPC Members:

We have another book in the wings — this one focusing on PC hardware annoyances. We're not just talking about PCs and laptops per se — we also talking about all the hardware that's inside and attached to your computer, such as memory, motherboards, hard drives, printers, scanners, home networks, DSL/cable, CD/DVD, and host of other annoying hardware devices. All DVPC members who have PC hardware annoyances you'd like to see solved, email me (marsee@oreilly.com) with "PC Hardware Annoyances" in the subject. Just note what hardware is giving you grief (e.g. Dell Dimension 8100 with 1.3GHz P4; LaserJet 3150; Verbatim Producer 44 DVD+/-RW; etc.), and any relevant software that's involved (such as the OS, a driver, OCR software, etc.) — and, if you know it, the fix. As thanks for sharing, we'll make sure to get copies of "PC Hardware Annoyances" sent to your group for your raffle shortly after publication.

Here's an example:

Hardware Windows Setting Blocks DVD Upgrade

THE ANNOYANCE: I want to update the firmware for my Sony DRX510UL DVD burner, and the site said to disable the DMA setting in Windows XP before doing so. But it neglects to tell you how.

THE FIX: The Sony drive is terrific — it burns DVD+R and DVD-R discs, and uses both DVD-RW and DVD+RW rewritable media. But ask Sony for support, and it responds with a virtual raspberry — its online instructions are complex and often impossible to understand. Luckily, fiddling with DMA isn't difficult. Here's how to turn it off:

Windows XP/2000. Open the System control panel, choose the Hardware tab, and click the Device Manager button. Double-click "IDE ATA/ATAPI controllers" and double-click "Secondary IDE Channel" (your DVD drive is most likely located on the secondary channel; if not, choose "Primary IDE Channel"). Click the Advanced Settings tab, and under Device 0 (master) or Device 1 (slave) (depending on how your drive is set up), select PIO Only from the Transfer Mode drop-down menu. Click OK.

Windows 98/Me. Open the System control panel and choose the Device Manager tab. Double-click CD-ROM, then double-click your drive. Select the Settings tab, uncheck the DMA option, and click OK. Remember to reverse the previous steps once your DVD drive's new firmware is installed.

Bring a Friend to a DVPC Meeting — Help Them Grow their PC Knowledge — Help Grow DVPC Membership

DVD X Copy Ruling by The 321 Studios Team

If you use DVD X Copy or any of the other 321 Studios software, this will be of particular interest.

Dear 321 Studios Customers & Friends,

As many of you may have already heard, Judge Illston of the Northern District of California Court ruled against us last Friday and in favor of the movie studios. This is the first major decision in the six lawsuits in which we are now involved.

Her ruling included an injunction preventing us from continuing to sell the current version of our popular DVDXCOPY software if it included a ripper. This injunction takes effect 7 days from her order. While we do not agree with the rationale behind the decision, we intend to fully comply with the order and, at the same time, file an appeal and ask her to stay the injunction pending the appeal.

This decision is unfortunate news for us. However, we expected the fight for fair use rights to be a long one when we initiated it almost two years ago. We also expected to face great opposition and to take some hits along the way. Well, we are still here and are not going out of business. Starting next week, we'll sell ripper-free versions of DVDXCOPY as well as all our other popular titles including DVDXSHOW, DVDXMAKER and DVDXPOINT.

If you'd like to read Judge Illston's decision or articles written about us, please go to our web site at www.321studios.com. If you'd like to offer your support, please visit www.protectfairuse.org. Meanwhile, we are making every effort to continue to support you and your 321 products.

Please share this news with your friends and family. We can use all the support we can get to continue fighting for everyone's fair use rights in today's digital world. Thank you for your ongoing support,

The Elections are Coming! The Elections are Coming! by Ron Ogg, DVPC

No, I don't mean the March 2nd California election. I mean the April 1 DVPC Board of Directors election! Now's the time for all members of DVPC to help out our organization by seriously considering a run for office. You'll find fun, excitement, entertainment, the opportunity to do good works, the ability to shape DVPC over the next year, a bit of local fame, new friends, and good food (well, at least pizza at the monthly Board meetings). No fortune — sorry about that! The amount of time required is not excessive, and the duties are not oppressive. Join us! It's always great to someone new join the board. Your ideas will be appreciated and listened to, and you can make a real contribution to making DVPC an even better user group. Take a look at the list of Directors and Officers positions on page 3, and the titles. Surely, there's some position that you could fill. Some of the current Board members won't be running for re-election, and you won't hurt the feelings of any of the existing Board members who will be running again — competition is good! Talk to any of the current Board members at the March DVPC meeting, and toss your hat into the ring!

NBOR – A New Computing Paradigm from www.NBOR.com

"Blackspace is a fundamental change in how we learn, work, play and communicate - as great as the advent of motion pictures. Blackspace is not just a new software paradigm, it is a new media - and active and interactive media."

— John Seely Brown, the former Chief Scientist of Xerox Corporation and director of Xerox PARC (where the GUI was invented)

**Download the free NBOR Player 2.5
at www.NBOR.com to experience Blackspace now!**

A major breakthrough in how a personal computer can be operated with unprecedented simplicity will debut on March 15, 2004. Called NBOR, which stands for No Boundaries or Rules, the software can be experienced now by downloading the free NBOR Player at www.NBOR.com.

NBOR (pronounced na-BOR) has to be seen to be believed. With the NBOR Player, you will actually enter NBOR's unique Blackspace environment where everything - including word processing, desktop publishing, slide show presentations, animation, photo cropping and password protection - is performed with the same simple set of Universal Tools, which are based on ways of doing things we learn as children.

Far more than just a demo, the NBOR Player presents a new type of media (called Event Dyomations), which is the actual software operating itself to give you a true sense of how Blackspace and Universal Tools work. It not only shows you what to expect when the main NBOR software debuts, but everything you see performed in the Player can be reproduced by you using the Player software.

The main software will also include additional one-of-a-kind features and functionality not found in the Player, such as YCAAT - NBOR's online capability for users to share the same Blackspace environment to co-create and collaborate in real-time using Universal Tools over the Internet.

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NABOR – A New Computing Paradigm...

(Continued from page 17)

After seeing NBOR in action last December, John Seely Brown, the former Chief Scientist of Xerox Corporation and director of Xerox PARC (where the GUI was invented), said: "Blackspace is a fundamental change in how we learn, work, play and communicate — as great as the advent of motion pictures. Blackspace is not just a new software paradigm, it is a new media — an active and interactive media."

Ann Hamel, the Director of Technology at Quest Academy, where the software has been in use by the entire student body (kindergarten through eighth grade) since October, recently told the Associated Press: "It took me about a half-hour to wrap my brain around it, but after I took a leap of faith, I said, 'Wow, I can't imagine not using this.'"

Kathleen Hagstrom, the principal at the Walt Disney Magnet Elementary School in Chicago, where NBOR will be introduced into their curriculum next week, calls it "the answer to an educator's prayer. The reality of NBOR is that it takes users to places they never thought they could go."

NBOR will debut on March 15, 2004, for personal computers and pen tablets using the Windows 2000 and XP operating systems. The version for Linux and Mac OSX will be released later in 2004.

To purchase the software at the introductory price of 50% off the regular retail price, please register www.NBOR.com before March 14, 2004.

Tips and Tricks by Ron Ogg, DVPC

How to Print Only Part of a Web Page.

Select the part you want to print using the mouse: point to the left edge of the first character, hold down the left mouse button, and drage to the right edge of the last character, so what you want is highlighted. Don't use the Print icon on the Internet Explorer toolbar. Instead, click on File - Print and under Page Range click the Selection choice. Now click the Print button, and only what you selected will be printed.

Outlook 2003 Junk Email Filter Update

Outlook 2003 has a much more effective junk email filter than prior versions. And it appears that Microsoft is goint go update it on a regular basis. If you use Outlook 2003 (the version that ships with all versions of Office 2003), go to <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=832333> and download and install the latest version. Installation instructions are on the download page.

Outlook Support Site

A great web site for Outlook is SlipStick (www.slipstick.com). SlipStick lists Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Exchange Server problems and how to fix or workaround them. If you use Outlook, or work for an organization that uses Exchange Server, check it out. By the way, "slipstick" is a nickname for slide rules — do you remember slide rules, or even know what one is?

Sarah's Windows Tweak: Outlook Add-Ins by Sarah Lane, TechTV



Back up your personal files or send video mail with MS Outlook goodies.

Although I enjoy testing any new email client I can get my hands on, I run Outlook 2003 at home. This solid, no-nonsense program works better than ever. But as we all know, even the best apps get better with extra goodies. So, from TechTV's "The Screen Savers" I'll show you two invaluable Outlook add-ins.

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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!!

Sarah's Windows Tweak: Outlook Add-Ins...

(Continued from page 18)

Personal Folders Backup (Outlook 2000/2002/2003)

Each Outlook pst file contains your Outlook folders, including your Inbox, Calendar, and Contacts. You can have a single .pst file, usually called Internet Folders or Personal Folders, in your Folder list. You may also have an additional .pst file used for archiving called Archiving Folders.

Personal Folders Backup lets you back up any or all of these .PST files at regular intervals, keeping all your Outlook folders backed up and safe. You choose which .pst files you wish to back up and specify how often you want to back them up. Personal Folders Backup can also remind you to back up your files periodically, making it a giant organizational tool for those who use Outlook heavily and have lots of folder categories.

Once you back up your data, you can copy them to CD or DVD. The backups are exact copies of your original files, saved in the same file format.

Note: Personal Folders Backup only backs up .pst files. If you have a Microsoft Exchange Server mailbox, make sure your server admin regularly backs up your server mailbox folders. For more information, go to Microsoft's web site:

www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=8b081f3a-b7d0-4b16-b8af-5a6322f4fd01&DisplayLang=en

Video Email (Outlook 2003)

Use a Web camera to send a video email to your friends and family. Clearly, you'll only want to use the tool with your real friends and family because of the attachment properties. Think of how happy grandma will be when she checks her inbox and finds a video check-in from you! You won't even have to call anymore. OK, maybe you'll still have to call. I'm not a miracle worker, people. For more information, go to Microsoft's web site:

www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=4F1C4207-8124-46EB-ACC9-A01D7EC946E0&displaylang=en

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Things a Klingon Programmer Would Say *encountered while surfing the Web by Ron Ogg, DVPC*

- Specifications are for the weak and timid!
- This machine is a piece of GAGH! I need dual Pentium processors if I am to do battle with this code!
- Behold the keyboard of Kalis! The greatest Klingon code warrior that ever lived!
- You cannot really appreciate Dilbert unless you've read it in the original Klingon.
- Klingon programmers don't write accounting software. For that, you need a Ferengi.
- C++? Hah! That is for children. A Klingon Warrior uses only machine code, keyed in on the front panel switches in raw binary.
- Indentation? I will show you how to indent when I indent your skull!
- Klingon function calls do not have "parameters"! They have "arguments" and they always win them!
- A TRUE Klingon Warrior does not comment his code!
- You question the worthiness of my code? I should kill you where you stand!
- Klingon software does not have bugs. It has features, and those features are too sophisticated for a Romulan pig like you to understand.
- Debugging? Debugging? Klingons do not debug! Our software does not coddle the weak.
- I have challenged the entire quality assurance team to a Bat-Leth contest on the holodeck. They will not concern us again!
- By filing this bug report you have challenged the honor of my family. Prepare to die!
- What is this talk of "release"? Klingons do not "release" software. Our software "escapes" leaving a bloody trail of designers and quality assurance people in its wake.
- Perhaps it is a good day to die! I say we ship it!
- Our users will know fear and will cower before our software. Ship it! Ship it! And let the users flee like the dogs they are!
- Our competitors are without honor!
- Klingon multitasking systems do not support "time-sharing"! When a Klingon program wants to run, it challenges the scheduler in hand-to-hand combat and owns the machine.
- When they see that Windows XP was written by a Klingon programmer, suddenly they will know that the Microsoft business model makes sense!

IRS Again Offers Free Online Filing Services *by Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club*

We should have received all of our W-2's, 1099's, and other tax forms by now. Many of us struggle filling out tax forms manually, trying to decipher forms that have so many links and connections you feel that you have to be a genius octopus to connect all of the parts. Some of us use one of the popular tax software packages such as Tax Cut or TurboTax, and others use accountants or commercial services to prepare our most dreaded of forms.

For those looking for an alternative, the IRS is again coordinating a variety of free online filing services.

The logical starting place is the IRS website at www.irs.gov. At the top of the page is a link "Free File — Start Here for Free Online Filing".

Clicking on the link opens a new page with pre-filing tips, step-by-step instructions, and a "help center" with frequently asked questions.

While the free filing services are coordinated and regulated by the IRS, the services themselves are provided by a number of individual profit seeking companies or non-profit organizations. Any company listed is prohibited from mandating the purchase of any additional services, and the listed services must be absolutely free to those qualified to use the services.

The IRS site also states, "IRS Free File does not endorse Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) or any other advance refund banking products".

The site also states that your privacy and financial information will be protected by the providers listed, and that these providers must meet commercial privacy and security standards, and be certified as such by a recognized issuer of privacy and security certifications.

The process of getting started is a rather simple three step process.

1. First is the "Start Now" button on the "Free Online Filing" web page.
2. Second is a determination of eligibility, as different providers have different requirements.
3. Finally, the third step is linking to the private provider's website, separate from the IRS site.

If you find that you are ineligible for a particular company's free offerings, simply return to the IRS site and repeat the process by selecting another likely service. It should be noted that while millions of us are eligible for these free services, many of us will find that we are ineligible for any of many reasons. Once a satisfactory service has been selected, then the tax return information is completed online, with the completed documents being "e-Filed", or electronically filed with the IRS.

Fifteen online providers of free filing services are listed. Each has its own requirements that may be based on residence, income, age, military status, and other factors. While some services are clearly for lower income individuals, some of the free services are available for individuals who have an adjusted gross income (AGI) of up to \$100,000. Some are available to residents of specific states, regardless of income level. None of the listed services offered free filing to Texas residents without regard to income level, though an even dozen of the services are available at no charge to Texas residents who meet other requirements. One of the services, FreeTaxUSA, is listed as available to all Louisiana residents at no charge. Several of the companies listed provide free service to all active duty military personnel, regardless of residence or income. Some services provide unrestricted service based on age, either younger than early 20's, or older than 62 years of age.

For those unsure about which service to consider, a button on the IRS page "Guide me To A Service!" uses a simple form to direct the user to appropriate services based on a short series of personal questions. These questions are age, estimated adjusted gross income, state of residence, number of W-2 forms, possibility of using a form 1040EZ, probable eligibility for the "Earned Income Credit", and military service. Once completed, a list of likely service providers is presented, allowing for the user to easily choose a provider.

All of the providers in what the IRS refers to as the "Free File Alliance" provide for electronic filing of tax returns. E-Filing, as the IRS calls it is relatively safe and secure, and, according to the IRS website, can generate refunds in as little as 10 days, with faster refund service available to those who select having their refunds direct deposited to their bank or credit union accounts.

While these services are freely available online at no charge to many, they may not necessarily be the best alternative. Even if eligible to utilize one of these free services, the onus of decision making is solely on the individual, as most provide no comprehensive tax advice, meaning that it is quite possible for the user to miss deductions or credits that he may be eligible for, thus over-paying. It is also the responsibility of the user to accurately and completely enter data, as there is no one to verify the accuracy of the data entered. To use an early cyber cliché, "GIGO", which means "Garbage In - Garbage Out", the final return can only be as accurate as the information entered.

Clearly, the free filing alternatives may be attractive to many individuals, but for many others the more traditional tax preparations resources may be a superior alternative. The choice is yours; choose wisely.

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