



August 3, 2006 DVPC Meeting Announcement

Alan Bradley of Access Video How to Transfer Film to DVD

OK, you have that shelf or box in your closet or garage with all of those videos you took on film. You don't want to drag out the projector to show them, and each one is so short that it seems you're rewinding and rethreading and mucking around with the projector more than actually looking at what you took. Your family, growing up together, places you've visited, relatives, picnics, trips to Disneyland and the Santa Cruz Boardwalk and Yosemite... memories that would be great to look at but it such a huge deal to do so. Alan Bradley of Access Video is going to show us how to his company transfers video from film to DVD or Mini-DVD tape or VHS. Then what you can do with the transferred video, how to use video editing software like Adobe Premiere Elements or Ulead VideoStudio to make your films look like they were professionally shot and edited. You'll see examples of transfers to DVD, and Alan will talk about some of the things to consider before you start. As usual, we're going to have a very interesting presentation, so be sure to be at the August 3 DVPC meeting!

DVPC meetings are held at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill; see the maps and directions on pages 4 through 6 in this issue of Diablo Blue, and on the DVPC web site at www.dvpc.org/about.html. Our meetings are once again being held in room H109 in the Humanities building, on the north side of the campus adjacent to parking lot 7.

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. As usual, we'll have those great DVPC mugs (version 2) for sale, SIG news, and some of our usual great door prizes and extra raffle tickets for sale.

What's Inside

DVPC Calendar	Page 2
Email Notification	Page 2
Information About DVPC	Page 3
Articles Needed! Ron Ogg	Page 3
Membership Application	Page 4
Directions, DVC Campus Map, and Maps to DVPC Meetings	Page 4, 5, 6
Special Raffle Promotion	Page 6
PC101 Information Craig Peterson	Page 7
SIG News Nick Chase	Page 8
Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition Barb Bowman	Page 9
DVPC Board Meeting Minutes Tom Krauss	Page 11
Computer Puzzle Craig Peterson	Page 12
Computer Renaissance Ad	Page 13
Internet SIG Meeting Craig Peterson	Page 17
Photoshop Elements SIG Meeting Peggy Johnson	Page 17
Managing Device Drivers Vinny La Bash	Page 17
Tired of Spam? Go to www.dvpc.org and Buy Qurb	Page 19
Tweaking Windows' Taskbar Gabe Goldberg	Page 20
Legal Bytes: Do Shield Laws Extend to Bloggers? John Brewer	Page 21
"A Favorite Utility" Feature Ron Ogg	Page 22
Ken Nash Cartoons APCUG	Page 22
An End to Computer Annoyances — Book Review Gabe Goldberg	Page 23

President's Message: ON VACATION!

by Alan Mildwurm, DVPC



DVPC August 2006 Calendar

DVPC Calendar

August 2006 ▼

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">DVPC Monthly Meeting 7:00 pm</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">New Users SIG 6:30 pm</div>	4	5
6 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">See SIG News starting on page 8 of Diablo Blue for more information about SIG meeting dates, times, topics, and locations</div>	7 <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">Windows SIG 7:30 pm</div>	8	9	10 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">DVPC Board Meeting 7:00 pm</div>	11	12 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">PC101, Computer Renaissance, 4 pm to 6 pm</div>
13	14	15	16 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Internet SIG 6:00 pm</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Photoshop Elements SIG 7:00 pm</div>	17 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Advanced Users SIG 7:30 pm</div>	18 <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">Diablo Blue Deadline. Email articles and ads to the Editor: rogg@value.net</div>	19
20	21 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Genealogy eSIG (See SIG News on page 8 of Diablo Blue)</div>	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Created by [Calendarscope™](#)

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, check your favorite SIGS, 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 list 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		PC 101 Classes
Genealogy eSIG		Photoshop Elements SIG
Internet SIG		Video SIG — New SIG!
New Users SIG		Windows SIG

Start a new SIG — See Nick Chase, DVPC SIG Coordinator

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, email newsletter editor Ronald Ogg at rogg@xemaps.com. 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 2 of each issue of *Diablo Blue*.

DVPC Officers and Directors

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

Barry Brown, Publicity, barrybrown@gmail.com

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

Charlie Crothers, At Large, 829-2237 (home), ccrothers@sbcglobal.net

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

James Lundgren, Publicity, 355-0646 (home), philador@comcast.net

Melody Lundgren, Publicity, 355-0646 (home), philador@comcast.net

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

Ron Ogg, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster, 952-4987 (office), rogg@xemaps.com

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 an award winning Web site – 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, or by email to bod@value.net.

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

Editor: Ronald Ogg, Membership: Peggy Johnson

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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

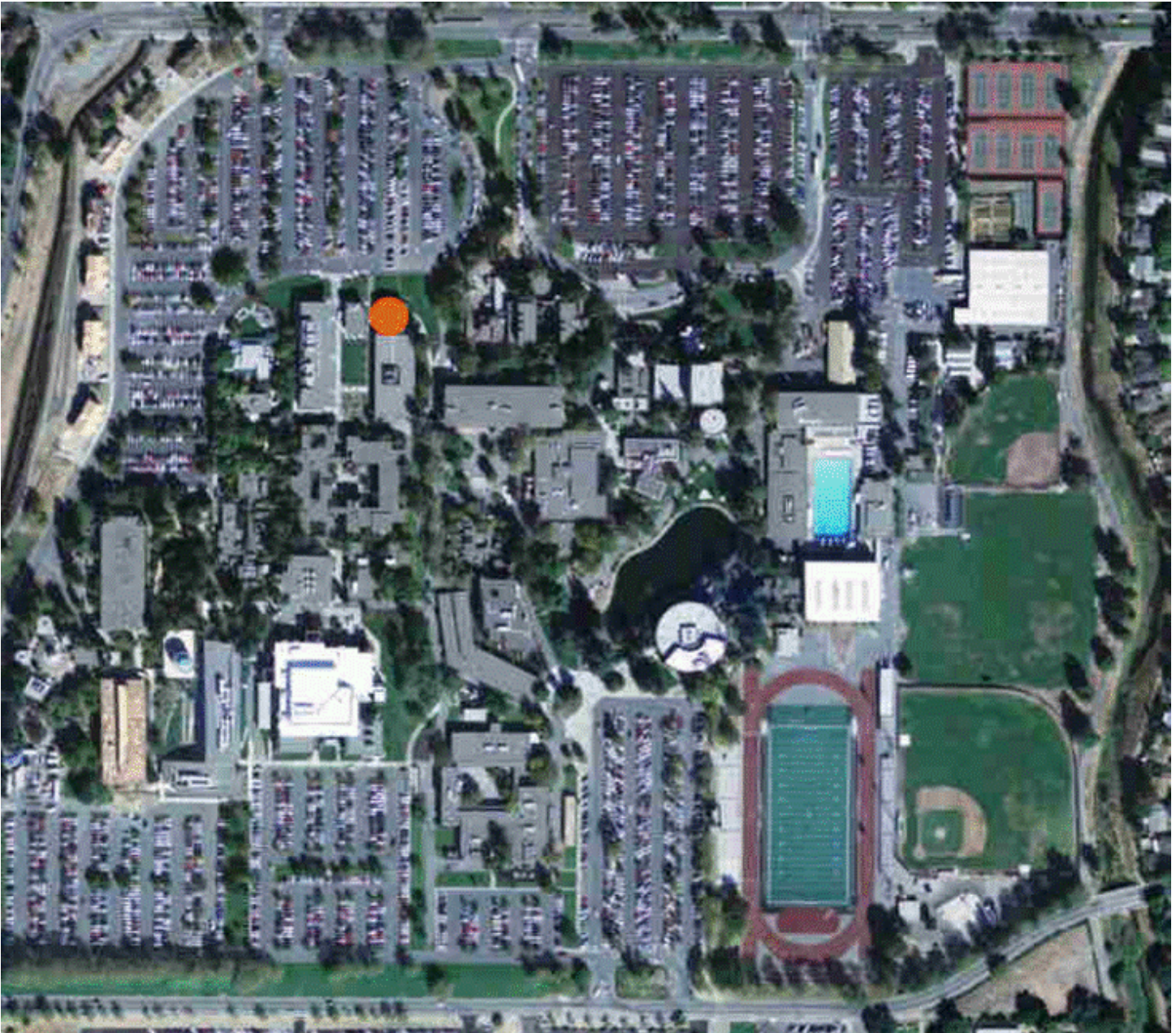
Articles Needed! by Ron Ogg, DVPC**Calling all potential authors in DVPC!**

We need articles by DV:C members that we can publish in *Diablo Blue*. So, how about YOU? You have certainly had a some strange or interesting computer experiences, if you're a newbie or a long-time PC user. How about getting that under-utilized keyboard warmed up and putting your favorite (or most disastrous) experience down in electronic format and submitting it to your friendly Editor for publication? You will have fun (hey, it IS fun, I do it all the time!), other members will be inspired by your story, and it might even be picked up and published in other user group newsletters across America. See the information at the top of this page that tells exactly how to submit your Great American Article!



A view of our meeting room, H109

Aerial View of the Diablo Valley College Campus
(DVPC monthly meetings are held in room H-109 in the building marked with the red circle)



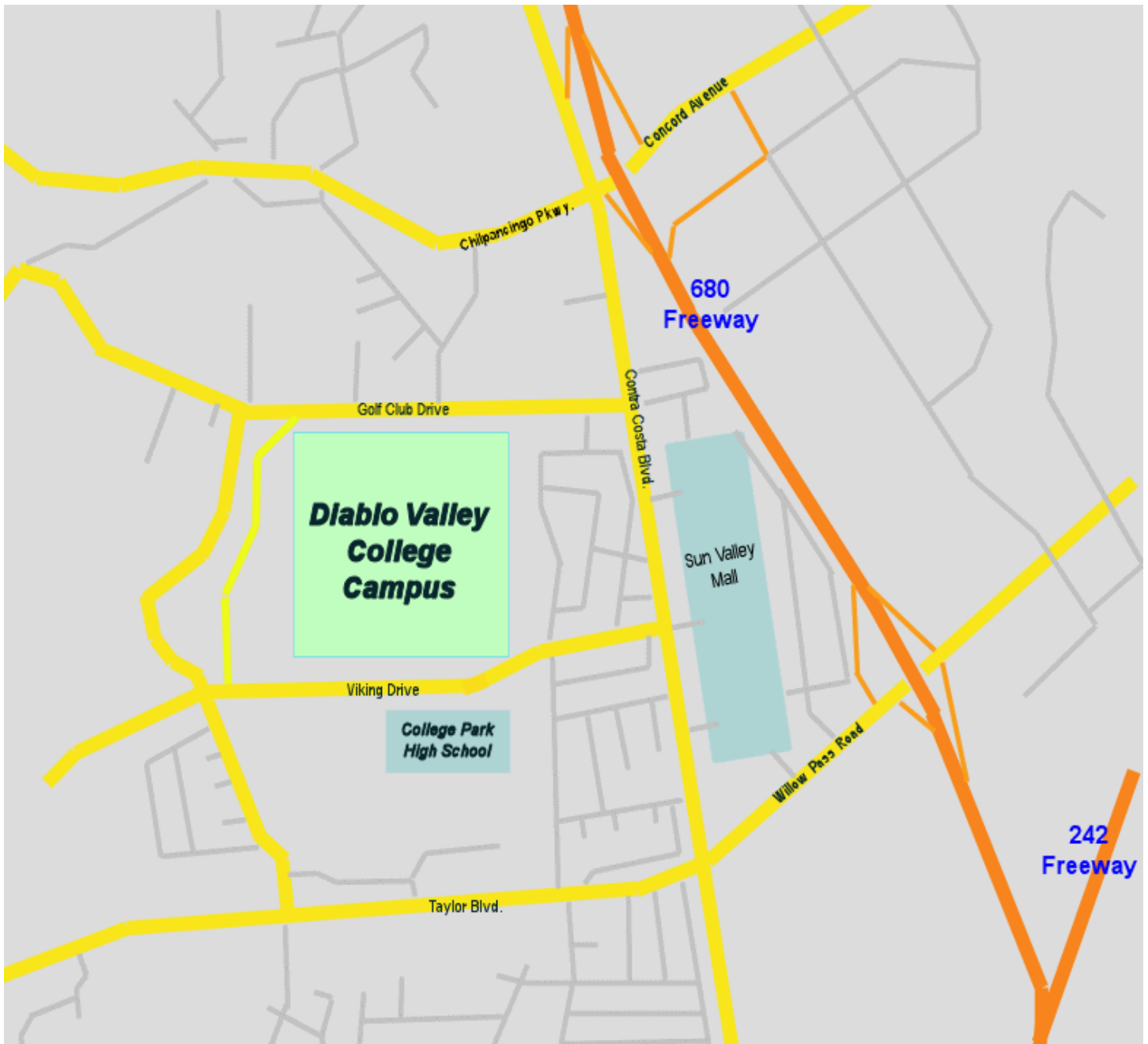
DVPC Winner of APCUG 2004 Awards for Web Site and Diablo Blue by Ron Ogg, DVPC

DVPC is a member of APCUG, the Association of PC User Groups. Each year the APCUG holds two contests, one for the best PC user group web sites, and one for the best PC user group newsletters, at their annual meeting at CES, the Computer Electronics Show. In January, 2005 DVPC won two 2004 Recognition of Excellence awards for medium-size user groups from APCUG. We won first place for our web site, www.dvpc.org, and also won honorable mention for our Diablo Blue newsletter. It's always nice to get recognition!

You can see the 2004 award logos we received at the right.



Map for Driving to the Diablo Valley College Campus

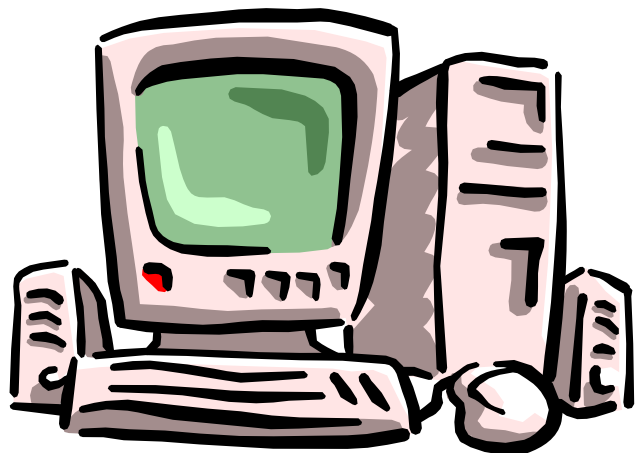


Special Raffle Promotion

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!!

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



DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE YOUR COMPUTER? ARE YOU GETTING THE MOST OUT OF IT?

NO ONE STARTS OUT KNOWING HOW TO USE COMPUTERS.

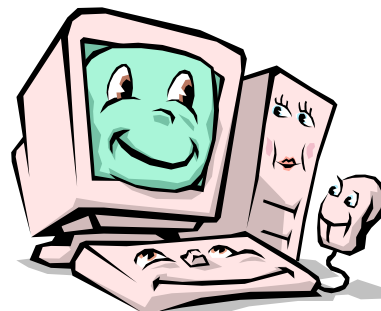
Like every other tool, users need to learn how to use it. Many of us learn what we can on our own or try to find a teacher who can show us how to use it the right way. Some of us have the time and money to take a class, but are not even sure what classes to take.

BEGIN YOUR EDUCATION WITH PC 101

This **FREE** class will help any student who needs basic information on computers. Diablo Valley PC User's Group and Computer Renaissance have joined together to offer all who would like to be introduced to computers, learn more about the basics, or just have a place to ask questions. Come to Computer Renaissance at 1936 Linda Dr. in Pleasant Hill from 4 to 6 p.m., usually on the second Saturday of every month. For more information, contact Craig Peterson (compmail@pacbell.net or 925-671-7025).

August 12, 2006 PC 101 CLASS

This month we will continue the pc 101 class. Contact Craig Peterson at 925-671-7025 to find out what the topic is going to be this month, then join us at Computer Renaissance in Pleasant Hill on August 12 from 4 to 6 p.m. If you are new to the class or want a refresher join us on the second Saturday of each month at Computer Renaissance.



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! For more information and directions, phone Jeff and Sharon at 925-778-4348 or email them at sgn94@comcast.net.

Genealogy eSIG Peggy Johnson, SIG Leader – 676-7522

The Genealogy eSIG 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 a research facility, email the group with the details so all 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

The Internet SIG meets at Computer Renaissance in their store at 1936 Linda Drive in Pleasant Hill. We meet the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. For meeting details, read the *Internet SIG Meeting* article each month by checking the Table of Contents on page 1 of *Diablo Blue*. Hope to see all of you there.

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. The New Users SIG 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 Classes Craig Peterson, SIG Leader – 671-7025

The PC101 class is usually held from 4 pm to 6 pm on the second Saturday of each month at Computer Renaissance, 1936 Linda Drive off Contra Costa Blvd. in Pleasant Hill. **PC101** is a beginning class on computers. This class helps introduce computers to and empower anyone not comfortable with the technology. For class meeting dates, times, and topics, see page 7 in this issue of *Diablo Blue*.

Photoshop Elements SIG Peggy Johnson (676-7522) and Barry Brown (930-8206), SIG Co-Leaders

The Photoshop Elements SIG meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the home of Peggy Johnson, 4278 Satinwood Drive, Concord, CA. For meeting details, read the *Photoshop Elements SIG Meeting* article each month by checking the Table of Contents on page 1 of *Diablo Blue*. Anyone wishing to attend can contact Peggy at pegszone@aol.com. Most of us have digital cameras, and this is an opportune time to discover all the wonderful photo correction, manipulation and enhancement tools found in Adobe's Photoshop Elements software. We can learn from each other and enhance our skills and enjoy our photos more.

Video SIG Nick Chase (680-4211) and Charlie Crothers (828-2237), SIG Co-Leaders

The DVPC Video SIG is getting started. For the next meeting date, time, and location contact Nick Chase by email at nchase@astound.net. We will discuss the latest digital video hardware and software, and how to take advantage of what you have. Everyone who uses, is interested in, or is curious about digital video hardware and software is invited to join the Video SIG.

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 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 Cowell Road.

Start a New SIG Nick Chase, DVPC SIG Coordinator, 680-4211

What SIG are you looking for? A Digital Photo SIG, a Palm/PDA SIG, a Microsoft Office SIG, a Home Networking SIG, or some other topic? If there's a SIG (Special Interest Group) that you would like to start, or join, contact SIG Coordinator Nick Chase by email (see the email addresses on page 3), or see him at the next DVPC monthly meeting. Nick will help you with all of the details about how to set up your new SIG and let the DVPC membership know about it. So, decide on what SIG you would like to start, and contact Nick.

Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition by Barb Bowman, Windows XP Expert Zone Community

With Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005, Xbox 360, Windows Media Center Extender, and Windows Media Center Extender for Xbox, you can now enjoy media content in new ways in your home. Whether it's live TV, recorded TV, or music ripped from your collection of music CDs or downloaded from an online music store, you can broadcast digital entertainment throughout your home. Media Center Extender devices connect a Media Center PC with TVs and monitors in the home, so you can enjoy TV, photos, music, and movies on any TV in your house.

You'll need a Media Center PC running [Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005](#) to operate the [Media Center Extender](#). Also, you'll need a fast and reliable network to stream content from the Media Center PC to the Media Center Extender devices or to your Xbox 360; otherwise, the viewing and listening experience could be marred by connectivity interruptions and network dropouts. Microsoft recommends a wired network for best performance on a Media Center network. That's where you get the high data rate transfers needed for streaming live TV from a Media Center PC to a Media Center Extender.

However, using a totally wired Ethernet network just isn't possible for many of us. Your significant other may forbid wires in the living room, or your landlord won't allow holes drilled through the walls, or you're put off by the amount of work needed to run cables through the ceiling. That's when you need to go wireless.

My experiences using Media Center Extenders and helping other users with network connectivity highlighted the need for a Media Center Extender wireless networking guide. With the introduction of the Xbox 360 and built-in Media Center capabilities and accessory wireless 802.11a/b/g adapter, many people will be setting up wireless networks for the first time. In this column, I assume that you have a broadband connection. Although connecting the audio and video components from a Media Center Extender to televisions or home theater receivers will be easy for most people, I'll provide the basic rules for Media Center/Xbox 360/Media Center Extender networks. I'll also cover how to do the following tasks:

- ◆ Set up Media Center/Media Center Extender/Xbox 360 networks with a single 802.11a/g router
- ◆ Add wireless capabilities to an existing network using an 802.11a/g access point.
- ◆ Wirelessly enable an Xbox 360.
- ◆ Explain why 802.11a is the best choice for going wireless with Xbox 360.
- ◆ Super charge a wireless 802.11g Xbox connection with Super G.
- ◆ Create advanced segmented networks for multiple Extender/Xbox 360 environments.

I'll point you in the right direction to get more help too.

Use Wired 100 Mb Ethernet for Network Configuration

Mbps stands for megabits per second and measures the transfer rate of data over a network. Microsoft recommends a wired network that supports 100 Mbps (also called Fast Ethernet) as the best choice for a Media Center network. If you're a gamer and a Microsoft Xbox Live user, you probably already know that a wired 100 Mbps connection is the best option when split-second timing counts.

The ideal Media Center broadband home network starts with a router that minimally supports 100 Mbps Ethernet. Home routers sold today (both wired and wireless) all support 100 Mbps Ethernet. Media Center Extender, Xbox 360, and Media Center Extender for Xbox both support 10/100 Mbps wired Ethernet. Media Center Edition 2005 computers that are available in retail stores include a minimum of 10/100 Mbps-capable connectivity. By default, most home routers will assign an IP address to connected devices via DHCP. Just plug-in your Ethernet cables and using out-of-the-box default settings, standalone Extenders and Xbox 360 consoles should just work.

Planning a Wireless Media Center Network

Although wired Ethernet is recommended, Microsoft recognizes that many users may prefer wireless. The Microsoft specification for the standalone Media Center Extender therefore includes 802.11a/g dual band wireless. If you plan to use wireless, a router that supports both 802.11a and 802.11g is ideal. You can learn more about 802.11a and 802.11b in my earlier column on [802.11a Wireless Networking with Windows XP](#) and about 802.11g wireless in [Raising the Speed Limit with 802.11g Wireless Networking and Windows XP](#). The Media Center Extender comes with everything you'll need for making a wireless connection using both 802.11a and 802.11g.

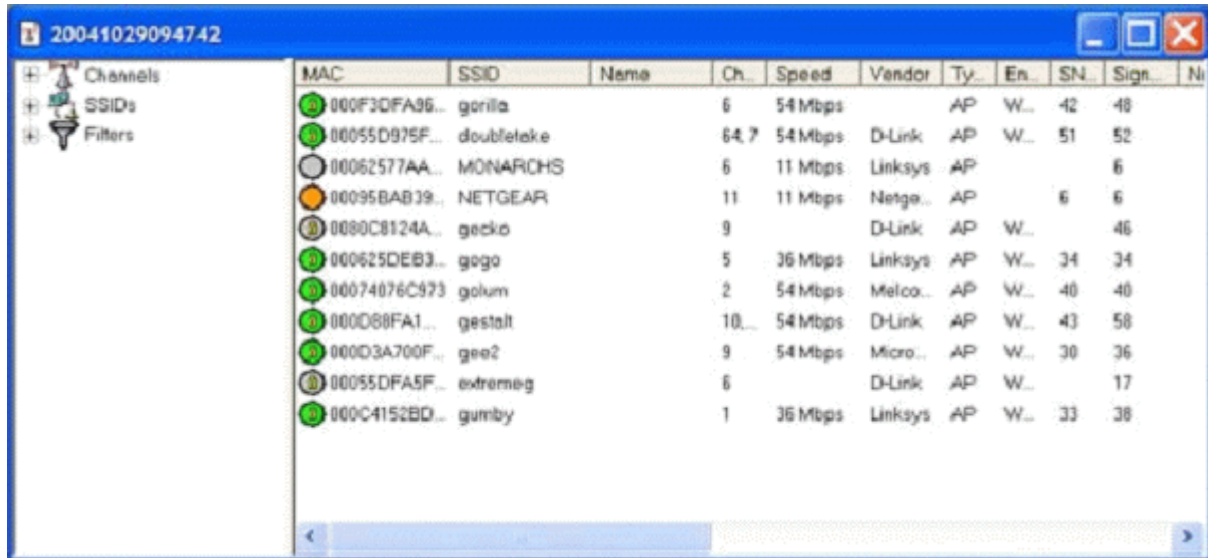
You can also add additional access points to any wired or wireless router you already have and run them as separate access points using different SSID names and channels. There are some limitations to wireless connectivity that you need to consider before purchasing wireless equipment. The number of walls and/or ceilings that the wireless signal will pass through can be a limiting factor. The construction of your home may be a limiting factor. Modern wood structures are great environments for wireless networks. Older homes with chicken wire embedded in plaster walls are poor wireless environments. You'll also want to keep your wireless devices away from large metal objects, duct work for HVAC, and any electrical appliances that generate RF noise, especially microwaves.

The presence of an 802.11b device on a mixed 802.11b/g network will slow down your network. The 2.4 GHz band in which 802.11b/g wireless operates is also used by cordless telephones, microwave ovens, and other devices. Also, 802.11b/g has prolifer-

Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...

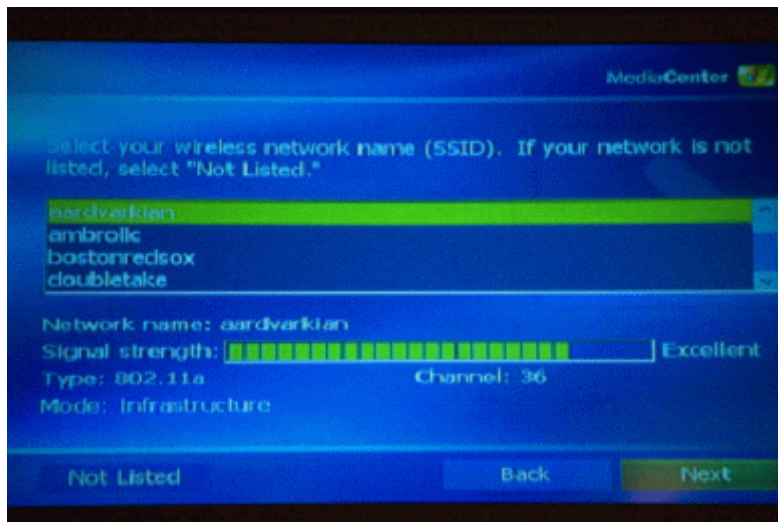
(Continued from page 9)

ated to the point that many neighborhoods are saturated with wireless access points and routers close enough to disrupt your own network. I use [Netstumbler](#) to try to find the best channel to configure on my wireless equipment. You can see how saturated my neighborhood is in the figure below.



MAC	SSID	Name	Ch.	Speed	Vendor	Ty.	En.	SN.	Sign.	Ni
000F3DFA96...	gorilla		6	54 Mbps		AP	W...	-42	-48	
00055D975F...	doubletake		64.7	54 Mbps	D-Link	AP	W...	51	52	
00062577AA...	MONARCHS		6	11 Mbps	Linksys	AP			6	
00095BAB39...	NETGEAR		11	11 Mbps	Netge...	AP		6	6	
0080C8124A...	gecko		9		D-Link	AP	W...		46	
000625DEB3...	gogo		5	36 Mbps	Linksys	AP	W...	34	34	
00074076C973	golum		2	54 Mbps	Melco...	AP	W...	40	40	
000D88FA1...	gestalt		10...	54 Mbps	D-Link	AP	W...	43	58	
000D3A700F...	gee2		9	54 Mbps	Micro...	AP	W...	30	36	
00055DFA5F...	extremeg		6		D-Link	AP	W...		17	
000C4152BD...	gumby		1	36 Mbps	Linksys	AP	W...	33	38	

You can view available wireless networks in the Media Center Extender as shown below, but you won't see an overview of all access points and channels without moving the onscreen cursor or by using the handheld remote to display each one individually. This feature works similarly to the View available wireless networks command in Windows XP. If you have a wirelessly enabled computer, I highly recommend Netstumbler as a time saver.



You may already have laptops, PDAs, or other devices that use wireless on a home network. All the computers and devices share the wireless bandwidth of the wireless radio inside your wireless router or access point. 802.11a is not as widely used and over shorter distances of 20-30 feet, it has greater sustained throughput than 802.11g. For these reasons, 802.11a is the preferred type

(Continued on page 11)

Give a *DVPC* Membership Gift Certificate!

See Peggy at the membership table at the *DVPC* monthly meeting.

DVPC Board Meeting Minutes by Tom Krauss, DVPC

The DVPC Board of Directors is not your typical group of people struggling to lead an organization. At least I hope not. You have probably heard the expression that managing a particular group of people is like "herding cats". Think of us as the cats.

Charlie shared that he is contemplating a job offer that offers the temptation of international travel. Unfortunately, that travel commences with a trip to Tel Aviv in a couple of weeks. There have been worse times to be an American traveling in Israel, but not many. It was I'm certain reassuring to Charlie to hear on the news that Hezbollah probably has very few rockets that can reach that far south from Lebanon. At least if he has to be behind someone's "lines" in the Middle East, it is doubtless safer to be behind Israel's than anyone else's.

Despite this pending decision Charlie was able to focus on our meeting, sharing with us that he had bought the new vacuum cleaner for the Crothers' home since he is the one who does the vacuuming. Since Charlie is a Board member I'm sure you guessed that we had a brief conversation regarding the pros, cons and bandwidth of various appliances. All this talk depressed Mel. She had been looking forward to her monthly night out with the boys (and Peggy) and household chores were the last thing she wanted to hear about.

Nick, too, is contemplating a career change. This difficult decision has prompted Nick to wax philosophical. Instead of regaling us with obscure technical detail he attempted to stimulate our thought processes with a synopsis of something he read wherein the author debates whether we are today better off than our parents. The author admitted that in terms of life expectancy, the ability to deal effectively with various diseases and other medical issues, the availability of goods and information, we are better off. But he then argues that in more esoteric areas such as quality of life, family and other relationships, wealth and so on, we are not better off than Mom and Dad.

This got me thinking, generally something not easily accomplished. I spent the rest of the meeting listening to the conversations around me in the context of Nick's author's assertion. Nearly everyone I know lives in a home with more square footage per resident than their parents' ever did. Two cars today are a mandatory minimum. Our kids and grandkids have to get new bicycles, play-stations, clothes, toys and so on because these items are now available. There is hardly a garage in the country that does not have at least one SUV in front of it (not necessarily in the garage: generally that is filled with other things we had to have). When we decide to build a one foot square planter box our first shopping stop is to buy electric saws, drills, sanders, spray painters and so on.

I was led to reminisce on my childhood. My Dad loved anything electronic. He built a couple of radio kits. We had the first television on the block, and I remember neighbors coming over to watch it. We were early converts to a power lawn mower. My brother and I each got bicycles as soon as we were big enough to reach the pedal.

(Continued on page 24)

Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...

(Continued from page 10)

of wireless connectivity for the Media Center Extender.

Set up a Media Center Extender Network with a Single 802.11a/g Router

The most important advice I can give you in this column is to segment your network to provide dedicated wireless connectivity between a Media Center PC and a Media Center Extender, the Xbox 360 or Media Center Extender for Xbox. If you have multiple Extenders that will be used simultaneously, you'll optimize performance by putting each device on its own dedicated network segment.

When you first set up a standalone Extender, it automatically checks connectivity first for a wired network. If none is found and wireless is available, you'll be presented with options to set up a wireless network.

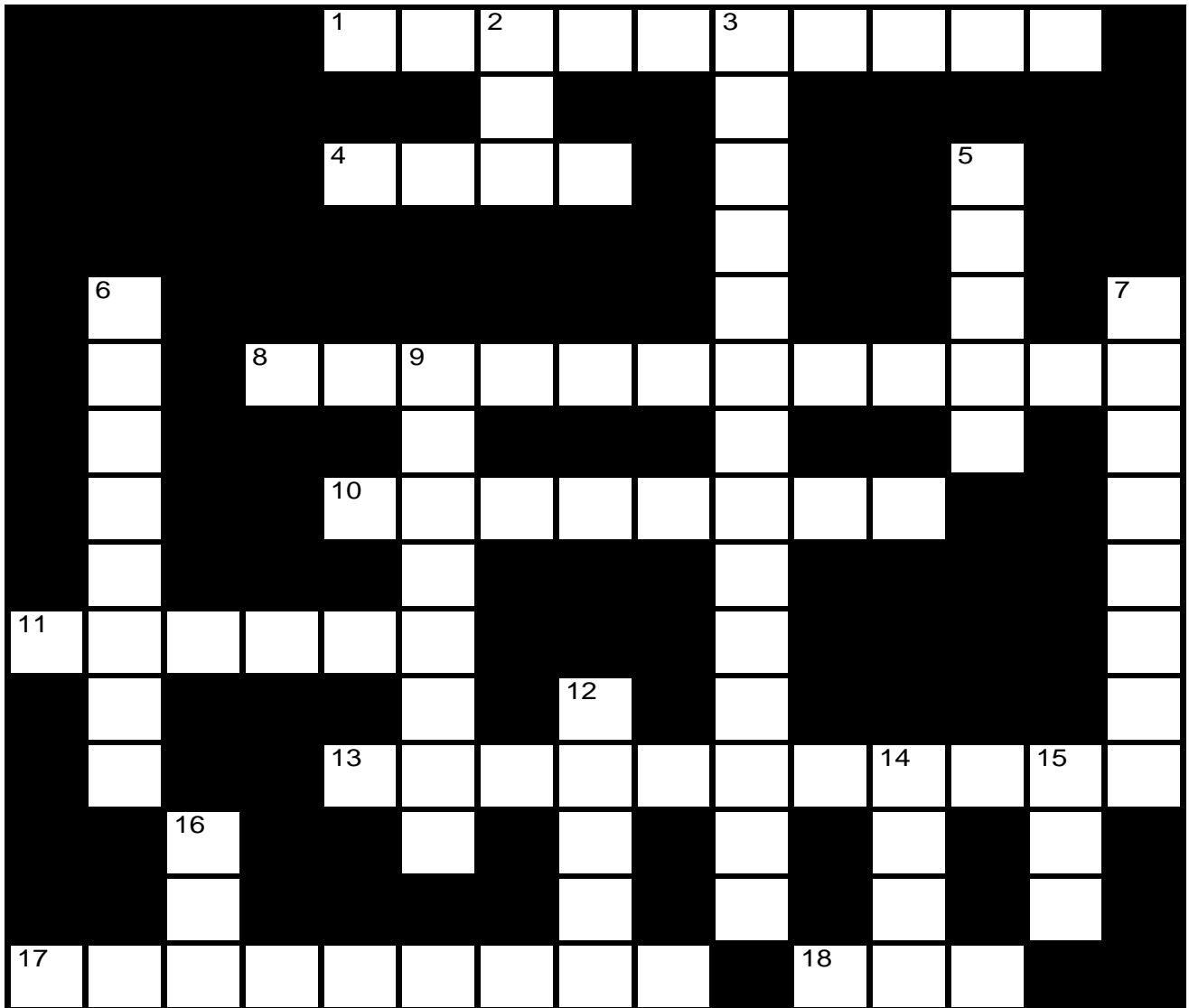
The easiest way to segment a network is to use a single device dual band a/g wireless router. Use the 802.11a side for the Extender and the 802.11g side for computers, PDAs, and other devices. Because there are so few devices that support 802.11a other than computers and Extenders, this is a logical arrangement. This gives the Extender the entire available wireless bandwidth of the 802.11a channel. You'll be able to move large files around over the 802.11g side of the network and not impact streaming video over the Media Center network.

Important: If you use the built-in wireless of the Media Center Extender or the accessory 802.11a/b/g adapter for Xbox 360, you'll need to disable any built in "super" or "turbo" modes on your router or access point.

(Continued on page 14)

Support DVPC – Get a friend to join!

A Classic DVPC Computer Puzzle
by Craig Peterson, DVPC
"Hot Summer Nights"



We've had so much hot weather in the Diablo Valley that we're all telling our friends and relatives how hot this year has been. The puzzle this month is a Diablo Blue Classic all about the heat and trying to keep cool. If you need help solving this month's puzzle, or just don't want to expend the effort, go to www.dvpc.org/solution.html.

Across

- 1 What helps keep everything cool (10)
- 4 The most important factor in keeping things cool (4)
- 8 Where not to use your laptop (12)
- 10 Important for chips in your computer (8)
- 11 Where #14 down can be found (6)
- 13 Best outfit to use while programming (or using #8 across) (11)
- 17 What never to leave on your computer while operating (9)
- 18 Needed by systems to keep heat down (3)

Down

- 2 The cause of the hot weather (3)
- 3 The item that causes most of #7 down (14)
- 5 Used in many #3 down (5)
- 6 Not a good thing for data or systems (8)
- 7 Complete loss of power (8)
- 9 Even though it is good for cooling down the programmer, it is not advisable to use on the computer itself (8)
- 12 Helpfull in keeping #2 down off your computer (5)
- 14 The number one choice of hot geeks everywhere (4)
- 15 DO NOT use this inside your computer to cool it down (3)
- 16 Needed for your system if #7 down happens (3)

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Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...

(Continued from page 11)

The 802.11a/g wireless router that performed the best for me during the Media Center Extender beta and that I have used on my own home network is the [D-Link DI-784](#). This is one of the most reliable routers I've ever used. It has every imaginable feature I could possibly need and an easy-to-understand interface. For a basic segmented network, I use the 802.11g wireless for computers and other 802.11g devices, and use the 802.11a wireless exclusively for the Media Center Extender. The D-Link DI-784 supports WPA-PSK on both the 802.11g and 802.11a sides, so I have great wireless security. I've been advised that the Linksys WRT55AG Dual-Band Wireless A+G Broadband Router Version 2 with firmware upgrade v1.61 or higher also works well, and it carries the [De-signed for Windows XP Media Center Edition logo](#).

Add Wireless Capabilities to a Network Using an 802.11a/g Access Point

No matter what you use as the base router on your home network, you can add one or more wireless access points (not additional routers) to provide dedicated network segments for one or more Extender devices. While most wireless is interoperable, there can be variables between vendors using different user interfaces. It's advisable to use products from a single vendor and from the same generation of products. This helps provide a consistent user interface for configuring equipment and the wireless capabilities should be the same. To prepare for this column, I asked D-Link to supply me with additional wireless networking hardware suitable for a multi-Extender environment. I found great performance, a consistent interface, and a great user experience mixing and matching the various pieces of equipment they provided.

I've used and tested two much newer 802.11a/g wireless access points plugged into various routers to provide dedicated wireless network segments for Media Center Extender devices. Both the D-Link DWL-7200 (which also provides power over Ethernet) and the DWL-7100 work well to provide 802.11a connectivity for Media Center Extenders. The 802.11g side can be used to provide connectivity for computers and PDAs. Both of these access points provide WPA-PSK encryption on both the "a" and "g" side

Set up an Xbox 360 on your Wireless Network

While I've not had hands on experience with an Xbox 360 yet on my own network, I've attended workshops on Microsoft's Redmond campus and the information that follows is based on those sessions. The first step is to connect your Xbox 360 to your wireless network. To do this, navigate to the **System blade**, select **Network Settings**, **Edit Settings**, and then choose **Wireless**.

After your Xbox 360 is connected to your network, go to the **Media Blade** on your Xbox 360 and select the **Media Center** option (the green button).



A check will be performed to ensure you have a solid network connection. An 8-digit setup code will be displayed, as well as information on where to download the necessary software for your Media Center 2005 computer.

Write that code down and go to your Media Center PC and get and install the software.

Note: You can find the software at <http://www.xbox.com/en-US/pcsetup> (for the US). This download will contain everything you need to update your Media Center Edition 2005 to connect to your Xbox 360 (it will contain MCE 2005 Rollup 2, Xbox 360 images, service packs, and the Media Center Extender/Xbox 360 Extender setup and network performance monitor.) Follow the instructions and the wizard prompts to add the Xbox 360 as a Media Center Extender to your network.

(Continued on page 15)

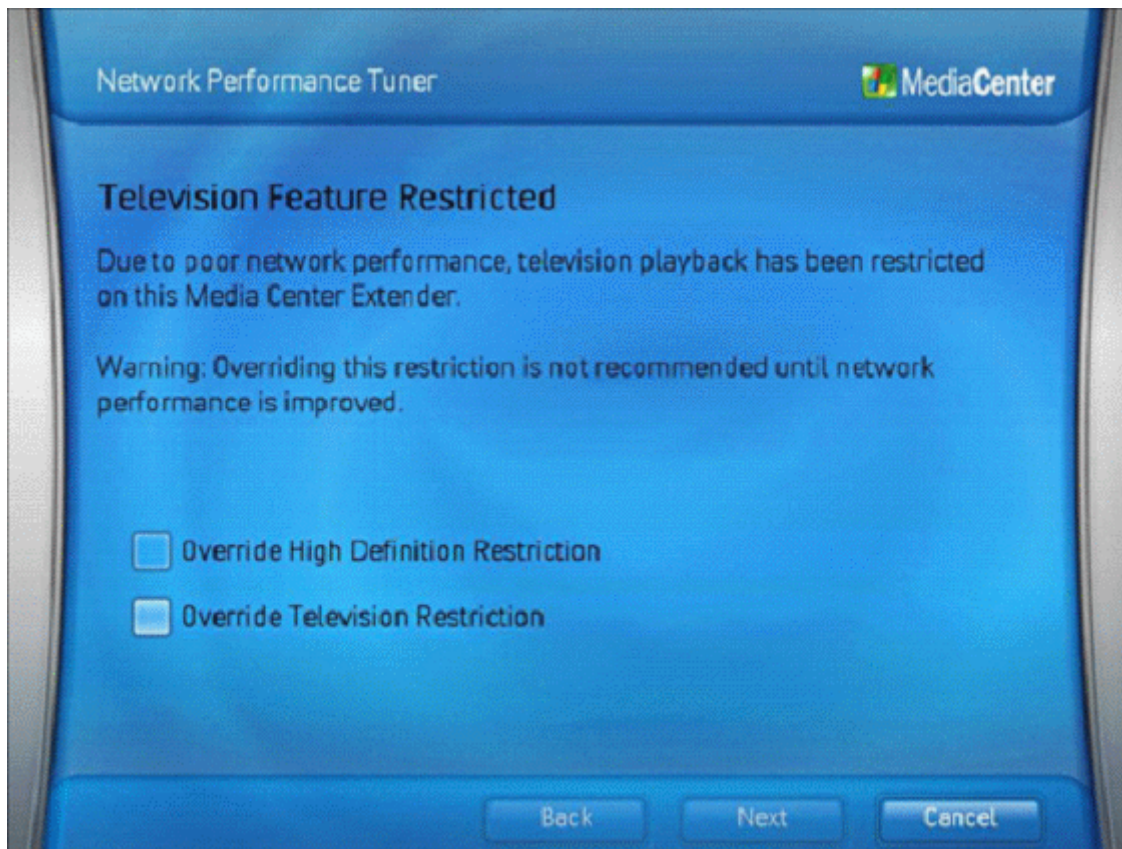
Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...*(Continued from page 14)*

Wireless 802.11a for your Xbox 360 is the best wireless option

Note that you'll need at least 22 mbps for an effective Xbox 360 wireless network. If the reported speed is less, the Network Performance Tuner application on the MCE host machine will display options that may help you improve conditions. The Xbox 360 will offer options as shown below. You will be presented with options to override the reported network restrictions. With the High Definition capabilities of the Xbox 360, you'll definitely want 802.11a connectivity, if at all possible. Microsoft's own [802.11a/b/g adapter](#) should be an option to consider because it's designed explicitly for the new Xbox 360. I'm sure that the D-Link DGL-3420 I already own and use on my network will work quite well as I'm seeing 22-24 mbps throughput. Linksys has a log'd wireless a/b/g gaming adapter that I understand works quite well, but I have not tried it myself.

Super Charge a Wireless 802.11g Xbox Connection

I don't allow network cables in my living room where my legacy Version 1.0 Xbox resides. To add wireless capabilities to an Xbox,



an external gaming adapter or wireless access point client is required. I originally configured a D-Link [DWL-G820](#) gaming adapter to use WPA-PSK, attached it to my Xbox, and associated it with the 802.11g side of the DI-784. (A newer gaming adapter, the <http://games.dlink.com/products/?pid=383&-DGL-3420> 802.11a/g, also works perfectly with my Media Center network).

I don't find 802.11g fast enough for Xbox Live gaming and I was not happy with the Media Center live or recorded TV performance of 802.11g wireless using the [Media Center Extender for Xbox](#) kit. I experienced some network congestion and dropouts. Here is an explanation of [network throughput versus maximum data rate](#) to help you understand network performance.

For better wireless performance, I configured both the DI-784 and the DWL-G820 to use Atheros [Super G](#) modes. I've experimented

(Continued on page 16)

Please note: Until further notice we are once again meeting in room H109 in the Humanities Building. This change (from MA101 in the Mathematics building) was required to accommodate summer session classes, and will continue until we have to move again. Please check the maps on pages 4 through 6 of each issue of Diablo Blue!

Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...

(Continued from page 15)

with Super G with Turbo disabled, Super G with Dynamic Turbo, and Super G with Static Turbo. Static or Dynamic Turbo provides near wired network speed performance for me with between 40-44 Mbps throughput with bursts that add another 10+ Mbps. This also works with the DGL-3420. The Super G table below compares the various operational modes.

Table 1: Super G Operational Modes and Compatibility Matrix

Although Super G is totally interoperable between the various D-Link products (and should work with other vendors who use

Turbo State	Capabilities
Disabled	Standard 802.11a/g support, no enhanced capabilities
Super A/G without Turbo	Capable of Packet Bursting, FastFrames, Compression, and No Turbo mode
Super A/G with Dynamic Turbo	Capable of Packet Bursting, FastFrames, Compression, and Dynamic Turbo. This setting is backwards compatible with non Turbo (legacy) devices. Dynamic Turbo mode is only enabled when all devices on the wireless network are Super A/G with Dynamic Turbo enabled
Super A/G with Static Turbo	Capable of Packet Bursting, FastFrames, Compression, and Static Turbo. This setting is not backwards compatible with non-Turbo (legacy) devices. Static turbo mode is always on and is only enabled when all devices on the wireless network are Super A/G with Static Turbo enabled

Atheros wireless radios and advertise Super G), this special mode won't work with wireless equipment powered by chips from others such as Broadcom or Intersil. As it turned out, my neighbors using channel 6 were far enough away that I had no interference and I was able to use Static Turbo with great success. Super G with Static Turbo uses channel 6 (as shown in the image below) and bonds with a small portion of both channel 1 and 11. Super G with Dynamic Turbo picks the best available channels with the least traffic.

Construct Advanced Segmented Networks for Multiple Extender Environments

If you don't happen to have an 802.11a/g router or are already using an 802.11a/g router for computers and devices, you can add wireless access points to any existing router to create multiple network segments. If you are going to use more than one Extender for Live and Recorded TV simultaneously (a Media Center 2005 computer can support up to five Extenders depending on the PC's hardware configuration), each Extender should really be on its own dedicated network segment. I've tested and used the equipment below and highly recommend it.

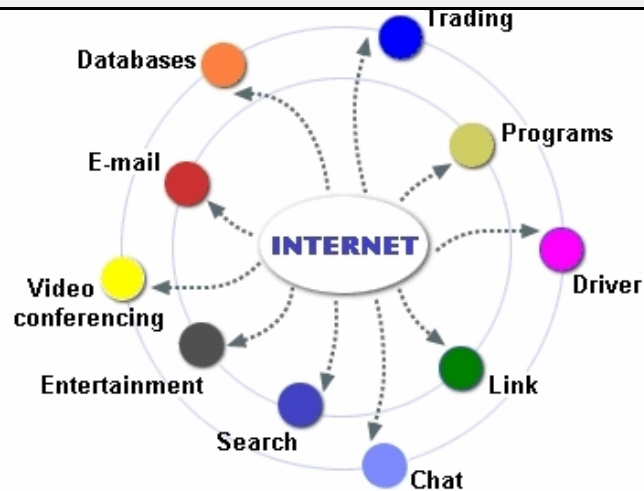
To add 802.11a and g segments to my network (in addition to the DI-784), I've successfully used these 802.11a/g access points plugged into my router:

- ◆ [DWL-7100AP](#) (supports WPA-PSK and Super G)
- ◆ [DWL-7200AP](#) (supports WPA-PSK and Super G and Power over Ethernet)

To add wireless 802.11g Super G, I've successfully used these access points plugged into my router:

- ◆ [DWL-2100AP](#) (Supports WPA-PSK and Super G)
- ◆ [DWL-2200 AP](#) (Supports WPA-PSK and Super G and Power over Ethernet)
- ◆ [DWL-G800](#) in access point mode only (Supports WPA-PSK and Super G)



DVPC Board Meeting Minutes by Tom Krauss, DVPC**Internet SIG:*****"Your Pit Stop on the Information Superhighway"***

Maybe you think you've been missing the on-ramp to the Information Superhighway... or perhaps you are just curious about what the Internet is all about. If either of the above apply, then you should join the Internet SIG. The Internet SIG meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at Computer Renaissance, 1936 Linda Dr. in Pleasant Hill. Please join us as we explore the "wild, wild world of the web".

Our meetings are held at Computer Renaissance on Wednesday, July 19, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. For more information about the Internet SIG and this month's topic, email Craig Peterson at compmail@pacbell.net or call him at 671-7025.

Photoshop Elements SIG Meeting by Peggy Johnson, DVPC

The August Elements SIG is scheduled for 7 p.m., Wednesday, August 16, 2006, at 4278 Satinwood Drive, Concord. If you have pictures you would like posted on Barry's website, bring them to the meeting on a thumb drive, providing a brief description of what was done — before and after pictures would provide inspiration to the group. Also check Barry's website at www.bkbrown.net for the latest tutorial.

Managing Device Drivers by Vinny La Bash, Sarasota PCUG

Windows is the most widely used operating system (OS) in the personal computer world.

For each piece of hardware that's connected to a Windows based computer, somebody somewhere has written a piece of software to make the device work with a computer. This piece of software is called a "Device Driver." One of the most useful features of a well-written device driver is making itself all but invisible to whoever is using the computer. You create a document, send it to your printer, and somehow the document prints. Your device driver takes care of all the little details necessary for the printing operation to occur.

Drivers are one of the three most important broad categories of software in computers. The first is the operating system, the second is whatever applications are installed, including communications, and the third is device drivers. Drivers are important for two reasons. First, your peripherals won't work without them, and second, corrupted or out-of-date device drivers are responsible for most system crashes.

There are other reasons why it's important to keep your device drivers up-to-date. Sometimes a manufacturer will become aware of some kind of defect or glitch in the driver software and issue a fix. You will need it. A different manufacturer may have a driver for its own device that will cause a conflict with an out-of-date driver on your device. Over time, updates for Windows may eventually cause problems with an out-of-date driver.

(Continued on page 19)

Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...

(Continued from page 16)

To provide wireless Super G for my Xbox or super connectivity for a standalone Extender:

- ◆ [DWL-G820](#) (Supports WPA-PSK and Super G)

Note: You can also attach a wireless adapter, such as the DWL-G820 or DGL-3420, to the wired Ethernet port of a standalone Media Center Extender or Xbox 360, which will improve performance over standard 802.11g.

Basic Rules for Optimizing Media Center/Xbox 360/Media Center Extender Networks

Don't buy or use an obsolete router that uses a 4-port hub (as opposed to a switch) from an online auction for \$5. All modern routers use 10/100 switched Ethernet ports.

Use a 10/100 switch if you need to expand an existing network. Never buy or use a hub since a hub is slower than a switch. A hub needs to broadcast traffic through all ports. A switch learns what clients are attached to each port and optimizes network traffic accordingly.

Don't put **both** a computer running Windows XP Media Center 2005 and a Media Center Extender or Xbox on wireless connections. If you need to use wireless, it's best to use a wired connection on your Media Center Computer and use wireless on the Extender device. Remember, to wirelessly enable an Xbox to use as a Media Center Extender or for Xbox Live, you'll need to add an external gaming adapter.

Don't use wireless repeaters to cover large distances. Most wireless repeaters have a single wireless radio, which means they have to communicate in two directions. This divides your effective throughput by two.

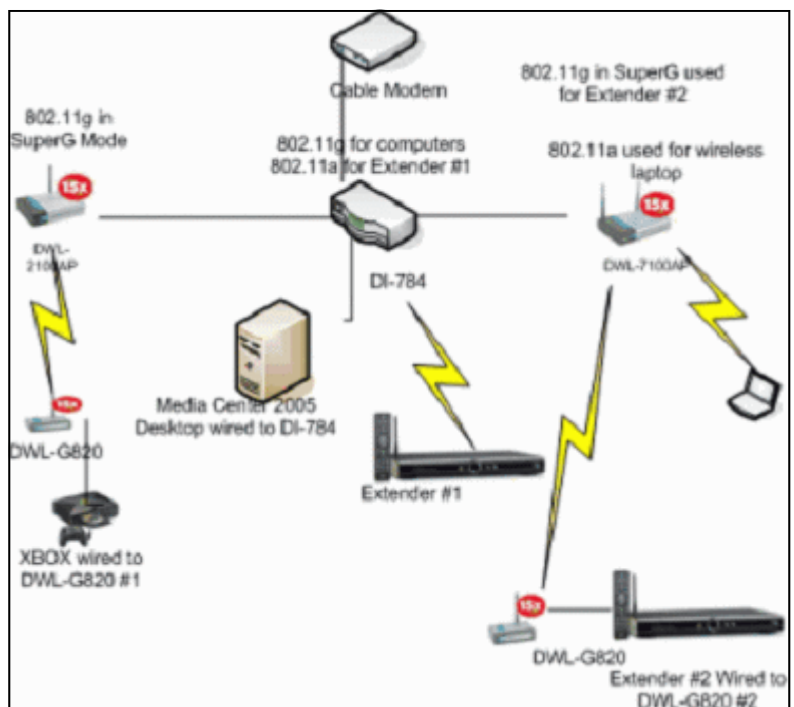
Segment your wireless network. Although casual activities such as Web surfing won't significantly impact a connection shared by computers and Media Center with Extender networks, intensive network activities like gaming and large file transfers can consume a large part of the shared wireless bandwidth. In my testing, I've experimented with segmenting and giving each Extender dedicated bandwidth. Below is a diagram of a three-Extender network where all three Extenders use wireless connectivity. (You can connect up to five Extenders to a single computer running Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005). Note that the Media Center PC is wired to the router so that only one end of the connections is wireless.

Experiment with different locations for your wireless router and/or access points. Changing the location by three or four feet may make the difference between network drop-out issues and solid connectivity. Place the wireless device on a high shelf or attach it to a ceiling if your devices are on a floor above.

The position of the external antenna of a wireless device can make a huge difference. Experiment to find the best position. If you have a wireless device that has no external antenna, change the position of the device itself.

Before putting any wireless router/access point/gaming adapter online, check the firmware revision and update to the most recent firmware available from the vendor.

Be sure to use WPA-PSK as the encryption method for Extenders if at all possible because it provides far more security than WEP. Don't let a sales person tell you that



(Continued on page 19)

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Optimizing Windows XP Media Center Edition...

(Continued from page 18)

wireless security isn't as important for devices as it is for computers. These devices are still part of your network and if you don't use security or use weak security, you've provided an entrance point to everything on your network, computers with your personal data included. If you shop carefully, you'll find gaming adapters and access point clients that support WPA-PSK.

Getting More Help

For the best networking experience, Microsoft recommends using networking equipment that carries the Designed for Windows XP Media Center Edition logo. The list of networking equipment submitted for compatibility testing on the [Designed for Windows XP Media Center Edition Logo Partner List](#) is currently a short list, but is being updated regularly, so check back before making any purchases. Check with others who have already had experience or ask about specific network hardware and pose your Media Center networking questions in the Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 [newsgroup](#). You'll find quick and accurate answers from Media Center Edition MVPs and Microsoft employees. See you there!

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Managing Device Drivers...

(Continued from page 17)

Proper device driver management is essential to keeping your computer crash proof. If device driver management is unfamiliar territory, please pay attention. You'll be glad you did. Microsoft introduced the concept of Signed Drivers with Windows 2000 and continued with Windows XP. If a device driver is "signed" by Microsoft, it means that the driver has been subjected to meticulous, painstaking, extensive testing to ensure compatibility with your Windows operating system.

Anytime you install a signed driver, Windows checks it by default and also guarantees it has not been altered or changed in any way. If the driver is not signed, Windows alerts you with a strong message that the driver has not passed Microsoft's rigorous certification tests.

Windows will also ask if you want to install the driver anyway, and will do so if you give it permission. Keeping your computer safe from unstable software is always a good idea. Fortunately, changing the Windows default is relatively easy, but you need Administrator privileges.

Right-click the My Computer icon on the desktop, then select Properties. Click the Hardware tab and then the Driver Signing button. Choose Block to let this be the new default, and you're done. Windows will now block any device drivers that it does not recognize as signed.

Not all manufacturers send their drivers to Microsoft for testing. For small firms this can be an expensive proposition. Does this mean you should never install an unsigned driver? No, but you should do some checking of your own to ensure that the company has a good reputation in the industry. Sometimes a new device driver will prove unstable for various reasons. Windows XP has the ability to delete the driver and install a previous version. Open the Device Manager, and double click the drive that's causing problems. Switch to the Driver tab and Roll Back the driver to the previous version.

What we've discussed so far is fine if you're using relatively new equipment, but suppose you're having trouble with something that's old and the manufacturer has gone out of business. Chances are good that the original installation disk is lost or deteriorated to a point where it is no longer useful. There are many other reasons why you could have difficulty finding a device driver, but these are the most common.

In the past, finding the right device driver or firmware was often a tedious, time consuming, and frequently impossible task. Nowadays, we have web sites such as www.driverguide.com to help us. The site has been around since 1997, and has seen many improvements. It has a unique membership base of thousands who collectively compiled a massive database of drivers, firmware, and support documents that is the largest and most comprehensive on the Web.

(Continued on page 20)



Tired of Spam?

Go to www.dvpc.org to download QURB!

Managing Device Drivers...

(Continued from page 19)

Recognizing that most people who use computers are not experts, they have devised an easy step-by-step process that will help you find and install drivers. There is an archive of hundreds of thousands of files containing not only drivers, but voluminous information on manufacturers including links to other sites with driver information. Also useful are the discussion boards where you can chat with others who have the same hardware, and learn from their experience.

After you search for a driver and find it, help doesn't stop. The Driver Summary provides you with a rundown of all the information you're likely to need to make the decision about whether or not to download and install the driver. This information is put together from the original manufacturer, plus ratings and comments from those who have previously downloaded and installed the file. It's nice to have everything in one place.

There are many web sites where you can find information about device drivers, but this is one of the best places to use as your starting point. Managing device drivers does not have to be a search in the dark. Use the tools available to you, and your system will be stable and a lot less prone to crash.

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Tweaking Windows' Taskbar by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG

Fun with Windows' Taskbar

I've read reports that most people can't accurately draw their car's dashboard, no matter how many hours or years they've stared at it. Similarly, many of us look at and use a key part of Windows' screen real estate — the taskbar — without paying much attention to it.

Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components — Start button at one end, notification area icons at the other, and application buttons in between — summarize what's happening on your PC and give quick access to running software. But the taskbar is more interesting than a car dashboard: you can customize it for your individual needs and preferences.

This article describes Windows XP's taskbar; other Windows versions have mostly similar facilities. People sometimes worry when their taskbar disappears or suddenly looks odd — or moves to an unfamiliar place on the screen. We'll see how such glitches are easily fixed.

Right-clicking a blank taskbar area displays Windows' familiar context menu, showing available options. Clicking Toolbars lets you display or hide built-in toolbars (groups of icons representing programs, folders, or files) or create your own. My favorite toolbars are Desktop (a handy pop-up list which duplicates desktop icons) and Quick Launch (which holds the few key icons I always want immediately available). Other standard toolbars are Address and Links.

Cascade and Tile options specify arrangement of open application windows: fanned like playing cards or arranged in a grid.

A key option — Lock the Taskbar — controls whether you can change the taskbar. When the taskbar is unlocked, you can change its size by dragging its edge away from or towards the screen's edge. You can move individual toolbars by grabbing their handles (perforated line near each one) and move the taskbar by grabbing a blank area.

Clicking Properties brings up a detailed options dialogue box. It's safe to experiment but only change one thing at a time until you learn your way through all the choices.

The Taskbar tab customizes the taskbar itself and its notification area. You can auto-hide the taskbar — handy on small monitors to reclaim space for application windows. When it hides, moving the mouse near it makes it visible. You can always keep the taskbar on top of other applications, or allow it to be covered. If it's hidden, pressing ctrl-esc displays it.

Similar task bar buttons — for example, representing multiple Word documents — can be grouped to save taskbar space, or spread out. If they're grouped, left-clicking the group displays all open files, and right-clicking lets you manipulate the files simultaneously.

You can add and delete Quick Launch toolbar icons by dragging them on or off the toolbar. I trimmed mine to two icons: Show Desktop and Windows Explorer. From a Windows keyboard, these are available by pressing Win-D and Win-E, respectively.

The notification area (called the "tray" in earlier Windows versions) shows icons for small applications or utilities that are running, plus your clock. Mousing over an icon pops up its name. You can control which icons are displayed and whether inactive icons (representing programs you haven't used for a while) are hidden. Each program running consumes PC resources so it's worth monitoring these icons and pruning any which aren't necessary. Right-click an icon to display options. Closing some applications prevents them from automatically starting at system boot, while others offer an explicit option.

Continuing our tour through taskbar properties, the Start Menu tab lets you specify Start Menu appearance and operation. You can pick large or small icons and determine how many shortcuts are saved in it for recently used programs. Key programs can be

(Continued on page 21)

Twinking Windows' Taskbar...

(Continued from page 20)

"pinned" to the Start menu by right-clicking a desktop icon or dragging an icon to the Start button and placing it in the permanent top area. The Advanced tab determines Start menu behavior and lets you select modern or "classic" Start menu format.

Finally, when the Taskbar is unlocked, three extra toolbar right-click options are available: View, Show text, and Show title, for fine tuning your PC's "dashboard".

While Windows operates just fine as it's installed, tweaking taskbar settings and other options can make it faster and more pleasant to use. And since there are usually multiple ways to accomplish tasks in Windows, it's worth exploring — for example, right-clicking to explore context menus and clicking various options/customize/advanced buttons to see what's available. Don't be afraid to tinker, but remember what you change so you can undo it!

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Legal Bytes: Do Shield Laws Extend to Bloggers? by John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

The first amendment to the US Constitution contains a number of important personal rights. It reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Analysis of the amendment confirms why the courts have been given the task of interpreting the language through the years.

One of the important parts of the amendment is freedom of the press. In order to protect the press, approximately 31 States have enacted "shield laws." Journalists are protected by a qualified (limited) First Amendment right protect their confidential sources. Many of the federal circuits have held that a qualified privilege exists. However, journalists are frequently challenged to reveal their confidential sources. This privilege has received attention recently in the New York Times Co. v. Gonzales case that involves the phone records of Judith Miller. An interesting variation to this issue is whether Internet journalists have the same protection as print journalists. A recent case in California has examined this issue. The case involved some Internet web site and Apple Computer.

Apple brought an action in California alleging that persons unknown caused the wrongful publication of secret plans on the World Wide Web to release a device that would facilitate the creation of digital live sound recordings on Apple computers. In an effort to identify the source of the disclosures, Apple sought and obtained authority to issue civil subpoenas to the publishers of the Web sites where the information appeared and to the email service provider for one of the publishers. The publishers moved for a protective order to prevent any such discovery. The trial court denied the motion on the ground that the publishers had involved themselves in the unlawful misappropriation of a trade secret. A California Court of Appeals held that his was error because (1) the subpoena to the email service provider could be enforced consistent with the plain terms of the federal Stored Communications Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 2701-2712); (2) any subpoenas seeking unpublished information from petitioners would be unenforceable through contempt proceedings in light of the California reporter's shield [note: California has a shield provision in the State Constitution] and (3) discovery of petitioners' sources is also barred on this record by the conditional constitutional privilege against compulsory disclosure of confidential sources. The Court of Appeals issued a protective order.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is directly involved in the litigation. The following is extracted from the EFF web site. "The whole mess began in December 2004, when Apple filed suit against 20 unnamed and presumably unknown individuals, referred to in the court filing as "Does," for leaking confidential materials on an Apple product under development to several Web publications. As part of its investigation, Apple subpoenaed Nfox -- for communications and unpublished materials obtained by PowerPage publisher Jason O'Grady. A Santa Clara trial court upheld the subpoena in March of 2005 and the EFF appealed.

"In a 69-page ruling, the 6th District Court of Appeal ruled that bloggers and webmasters are no different in their protections than a reporter and editor for a newspaper. "We can think of no workable test or principle that would distinguish 'legitimate' from 'illegitimate' news," the judges wrote.

"Any attempt by courts to draw such a distinction would imperil a fundamental purpose of the First Amendment, which is to identify the best, most important, and most valuable ideas not by any sociological or economic formula, rule of law, or process of government, but through the rough and tumble competition of the marketplace," they wrote.

"Today's decision is a victory for the rights of journalists, whether online or offline, and for the public at large," said EFF Staff Attorney Kurt Opsahl in a statement. Opsahl argued the case before the appeals court last month. "The court has upheld the strong

(Continued on page 23)

A Favorite Utility

How Can I Convert an AVI File to DVD?

by Ron Ogg

OK, at this month's meeting we're going to see Alan Bradley of Access Video demonstrate how your video film can be converted to files that can be burned to a DVD. But what if you have AVI (Audio Video Interleave) files that you want to burn to DVD? How can you do this? And without spending a lot of money for specialized software?

Here's my suggestion. There's an article at www.afterdawn.com/guides/archive/avi_to_dvd_avi2dvd.cfm that tells everything that you need to know, step by step. It also has links to download two freeware programs:

- ◆ Avi2DVD – This will do most of the work.
- ◆ DVD Decrypter – This will be used to burn a resulting ISO image.

While this is beta software (see the disclaimer at the beginning of the web page), Avi2DVD does work, and accomplishes the conversion quickly and easily, in five steps: Input, Output, Encoders, Subtitles, and Add Job and Begin Process. This is followed by using DVD Decrypter to burn your DVD, with three settings (Select Source, Output Target, and Write Speed), and then Burn the DVD. Output formats supported include AVI to DVD, SVCD, or VCD; or DVD to DVD, SVCD or VCD. The cost? Free. The documentation? Web-based (see link above) and clearly written. If you need to burn AVI files to DVD, give it a try.

Almost everyone who uses a PC probably has a favorite utility. This is our new feature, "A Favorite Utility". DVPC members are asked to contribute a short article listing one or more of their favorite utilities. Here's the minimum information we'll need:

- ◆ Your name
- ◆ Name of the utility
- ◆ Publisher (or source) of the program
- ◆ Cost
- ◆ What it does
- ◆ Why you like it

Send your favorite utility articles to me at rogg@xemaps.com.

Ken Nash Cartoons from APCUG



Legal Bytes: Do Shield Laws Extend to Bloggers?...

(Continued from page 21)

protections for the free flow of information to the press, and from the press to the public."

"Apple argued its right to trade secrets trumped Constitutional rights, and it had exhausted other sources to determine the source of the information, even though Apple had not deposed employees who were in a position to know, Kevin Bankston, a staff attorney for the EFF told internetnews.com. The lower court decision agreed, and said Apple's trade secrets rights would trump any journalist's rights to source confidentiality.

"Bankston said the ruling is a win for anyone who uses email. "A lot of people will hear about this decision and think it doesn't affect them since they are not journalists, but it has a broader impact because of the number of email providers, particularly the number based in this district," he said.

"The court read Federal privacy law to forbid civil litigants like Apple from subpoenaing an individual's e-mail from e-mail providers. Instead, the court said civil litigants must subpoena you directly, and if you are a journalist, you can assert your rights of confidential sources.

"So they have to subpoena you rather than doing an end run around your rights and going straight to your e-mail provider," said Bankston.

If Apple chooses to appeal, the case goes to the state Supreme Court. Thus far, the sources for the original story have not been revealed, "and hopefully based on this decision they never will," said Bankston.

This is an interesting issue. The California case is far from over and this issue will continue to be litigated across the country.

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(at)jnbrewer.com.

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An End to Computer Annoyances – Book Review by Gabriel Goldberg, APCUG

Many of us have mixed relationships with computers and technology. They enrich our lives but can be maddening at times. Books and magazines often tell us how great they are, but an O'Reilly book series addresses the dark side of the story by describing their annoyances and offers "help for newbies and powerusers alike."

The format of the books is similar to Q&A dialogues or lists of FAQs (frequently asked questions). They're not meant to be read from cover to cover but explored based on a particular need or curiosity. This search is assisted by good tables of contents and full indexes. The books are written in conversational English, pairing annoyances with their fixes, and include an abundant amount of clear and helpful screen shots.

While flipping through these books, the handy tips boxes lead to many "aha" moments and I was able to identify many solutions to current and future problems. Some of the content overlaps between books, such as Internet topics being addressed in its own book, Internet Annoyances, also being mentioned in both PC Annoyances and Home Networking Annoyances. You may want to read a general book along with those specific titles that address your main interests. Some books are in their second edition, making it worthwhile to check print dates and edition numbers before purchasing them.

Steve Bass, author of PC Annoyances, provides a good introduction, stating that "Many people are now realizing that they've been putting up with programs that have downright annoying features and yes, bugs. It's high time they learned they aren't alone, it's not their fault, and, most important, there are solutions and workarounds."

Bass' book isn't overly technical. It addresses topics such as e-mail, Windows, the Internet, Microsoft Office, Windows Explorer, music, video, CDs, and hardware. Many all-too-common problems are identified and solved, but it's not all-inclusive. For example, it doesn't mention Thunderbird e-mail or Firefox browser, both of which I like a lot, but they can be annoying too! Coverage of Windows XP SP2 is localized and not mentioned places where it would be appropriate. Varied software is recommended, free and

(Continued on page 24)

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

Help Grow DVPC Membership!

An End to Computer Annoyances – Book Review...

(Continued from page 23)

purchased, downloaded and store-bought, and advice is provided on configuring Windows and applications. And non-annoyance bonus material, such as "IM Netiquette rules," which was both entertaining and valuable. I was happy to learn how adding a work menu to MS Word gives instant access to frequently-used documents.

Another book in this series, PC Hardware Annoyances, covers diverse topics including computer setup, keyboard, mouse, startup, BIOS/CMOS, memory, processor, maintenance, and battery. Some annoyances are offered up as questions, such as "Do I need specialized PC cleaning supplies?" The helpful and short answer is "no", since common materials, used appropriately, work just fine. Because everyone has unique interests and concerns, even the book's specialized items are useful and thought provoking.

Other Annoyances titles address computer privacy, home networking, the Internet, the Mac, Windows XP for geeks, and some Microsoft applications (Access, Excel, and Word), all of which are listed on the O'Reilly Annoyances Central Web site. This site also offers additional resources to combat computer-related annoyances with its Experts' Blogs (a good way to get your unique questions answered before they appear in a book), the Daily Fix (a stream of individual items from the books), and Robert's Rant (the slow-paced blog of Robert Luhn, the Annoyances series Executive Editor, who addresses topics such as whether Wikis can be trusted and the origin of his book series). Specifications

Title: PC Annoyances

Author: Steve Bass

Paperback: 252 pages

Publisher: O'Reilly Media

ISBN: 0596008821

List Price: \$19.95

Title: PC Hardware Annoyances

Author: Stephen J. Bigelow

Paperback: 266 pages

Publisher: O'Reilly Media

ISBN: 0596007159

List Price: \$24.95

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DVPC Board Meeting Minutes...

(Continued from page 11)

But there were significant differences between then and now. When my Dad built a radio he used it until he could not repair it. We did not get a color television until the current black and white went out. Our first, and second, power mowers were used ones. My brother and I did not get replacement bicycles because there was "nothing wrong" with our old ones. (I once took a two day, hundred mile bike ride in Illinois in the heat and humidity of August on a single speed Schwinn with 24" balloon tires to earn Cycling merit badge. And I did it without bottled water!)

Granted, my Dad was frugal. He spent the first five years of his life in post-World War I Germany experiencing staggering inflation, then came to America in time for the Great Depression. But we today are at the opposite end off the continuum. Our parents tried to give us the things and the kind of life that they couldn't have as children, and we have continued that trend both with our children and with ourselves. No one went to my high school graduation prom in a limo. Today no kid would show his face without one.

Going to take up jogging? You must buy jogging shoes, an outfit, water bottle, heart monitor, pedometer, proper food supplements and so on. Giving up and switching to jogging? Throw all that jogging stuff out and buy all walking things. All of us in DVPC have a strong interest in things electronic, especially computers. This is even more true of the Board members. I would venture to say that almost every Board member has purchased hardware and/or software not because we needed it but because we could not resist the temptation. When it comes to conspicuous consumption we right there in the lead. How many digital cameras can one person use? Is it worth the cost of a new cell phone so that I can surf the internet on a screen the size of a walnut?

Think of the money you spend on such "necessities". Think of the balance of your savings account. Are you "better off" than your parents?

There's a lot more to read on DVPC's web site. Go to www.dvpc.org.