

award winning monthly newsletter for orcopug members

pro show gold

august program

by Mike Lyons

Just over a year ago, I demonstrated a free photo slide show program by Microsoft, Photo Story 3. It was amazing to see how easy it was to create a professional looking show in a relative short time. The program allowed you to set the time each slide was on the screen. You could choose from a variety of transitions, zooms and pans. Create title slides, add music, and you are ready to create an auto-start CD or a stand alone .exe file. This program has been fun to play with and has served me well until I went to a friend's wedding and took pictures. I gave them a CD with the slide show on it, but they couldn't play it. They owned Apple computers and a standalone DVD player and Photo Story 3 requires Windows XP.

But all was not lost. A class I was taking was using a program called ProShow Gold by Photodex. I had a copy of ProShow, also by Photodex, but it wouldn't work on their equipment. In fact, the main differences between MS Photo Story 3

ProShow are: ProShow has more transitions, allowed audio editing, and allows including video clips within the program.

ProShow sells for \$30 and ProShow Gold sells for \$70. ProShow Gold provides more control and gives you more options, including the ability to create DVD's. So I upgraded my copy to ProShow Gold and started in. The first thing I noticed was that Photo Story 3 hand-holds you through each step of the process whereas ProShow Gold presents you with a blank

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next meeting: tuesday, august 8, 6:30 p.m. placencia library, placencia



Choose the image order you want to build your presentation.

canvas and you choose the image order you want to build your presentation.

Once you get into the program, you will discover all kinds of things that you can do to the image. You can tilt, pan, zoom and spin the image. There are 288+ transitions to choose from. This program uses two settings to display your photo. The first sets how long the image is on the screen and the second regulates how long the transition will take.

Another big difference is the ability to do audio editing within the program and use a variety of audio formats. There are two channels, so you can play background music in one channel and do a voiceover in the other. You can fade one song into another. There is also a menu option to get the song off a CD so it isn't necessary to have your audio files prepared before you start.

The program also includes simple editing tools. You can adjust brightness, contrast, white point, black point, hue and sharpness. There is an option to flip the photo vertically or horizontally or both.

You can add text to any slide. The font features are more full featured than MS Photo Story 3 and you can animate and add motion to text on entry, what it does on screen and how it exits.

At our Tuesday meeting, we will put ProShow Gold through its paces and build a slide show. We will drag and drop slides (videos can also be used) onto the timeline, add music, select transitions and motion, make title slides, easily create CDs, DVDs and an .exe file. The program will also create programs for the web and you can sign up at Photodex to have your slide shows run at their web site.

Photodex offers free trials of their products. These are fully functional programs, good for 15 days. Amazingly, they also include free support, either online or by phone. The trial version has a banner on the screen, but if you decide to buy the program, the banner is removed and your trial efforts won't have to be redone.

WARNING: This program is highly addictive.

Our group is more fun, meaningful, and spontaneous through the efforts of so many of our members. Some are writing articles for the newsletter, taking photos, sending ideas and items for the web, bringing news and funny slide shows to the meetings, showing us examples of their work, and producing wonderful instructional and program demonstrations.

Thanks to all of you who come early to the meetings and grab chairs to set up, and thanks to all of you who stick around and help to put everything back.

The workhorses, of course, are Charlie Moore and Mike Lyons. They do just about everything, do it well, and have been for years!

That's why it is even better to jump in and do something we all benefit from and enjoy. You are relieving a couple of people from overload and a risk of burning out.

Speaking of Mike... He is presenting ProShow Gold this month, and it is sure to fascinate you. This amazing program was unthinkable only a couple of years ago. Even if it had been available, none of us could have afforded it. Now look what \$69.95 can get you! Be sure to check out the users' shows that are featured on the PhotoDex.com website. They are awesome! And, that *isn't* a superlative. In fact, after you see them, you might create your own show for us to enjoy on the site. With this program, it'll be a cinch to create it!

photo by Hank Dart



Warm regards...

Linda Gorse
editor@orcopug.org

your favorite shot



Orange County, California – 2006

I had no idea what kind of flower this is, but I liked its very pre-historic look and took this picture. (Addendum: The nice man at Armstrong Gardens told me the plant is a Caesalpinia or Mexican Bird of Paradise.)

Photo by Larry Klees,
ORCOPUG

Everybody has a photo that they believe is their best photo-taking effort. Or they have a shot that isn't technically great, but it is their favorite nevertheless. We'd like to publish a member's special photo (or photos) each month in this space. Won't you please send us your photo for our next "Your Favorite Shot" page?

Submitting your photo is as easy as emailing it. Send a low resolution 3" x 4" or 4" x 3" digital image to editor@orcopug.org. Please provide a short description of the photo, the story behind why you took it, or the photography trick that you used in capturing the image. We can all enjoy the photos on this page and learn something about taking photos at the same time! Photo subjects can be whatever you choose.



feedback

MIKE LYONS **ORCOPUG PRESIDENT**

Due to a scheduling conflict, the club's November meeting has been changed to the first Tuesday of the month, November 7, instead of on the second Tuesday, November 14.

JUDY TAYLOR/PATRICIA HILL **SWUG Co-CHAIRS**

User group leaders and members are invited to attend this year's Fun in the Sun & Computers, Too! The 13th Annual SW User Group Conference (SWUG) offers fun-filled days packed with vendor presentations, great food, workshops, talking with members from other UGs, and much more. SWUG begins Friday evening, August 11, and ends with Sunday, August 13 after lunch. Workshops are for UG leaders and members, as well as enhancing attendees' computer knowledge.

The conference will be held at the Town and Country Resort Hotel & Convention Center, 500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego 92108. The conference rate is \$99/night, single or double. It is guaranteed for three days before and after the conference. The host hotel has an RV parking area. Please make your reservations by July 19 for the

conference rate. Call for reservations at 800-772-8527 or go to <http://www.towncountry.com>, Make a Reservation, select Group and enter Group Code SWUSR0806 to make an online reservation.

Registration is \$50.00 if post-marked by July 19; \$60.00 if postmarked by July 26; or \$75.00 after July 27 and at the conference. The fee includes six meals, vendor presentations, workshops, conference T-shirt and Welcome Bag.

Download and complete the registration (one for each attendee, please) at the conference website <http://www.swugconf.org>, under Registration and return it to the address on the bottom of the form with your check.

There are vendor-sponsored meals and presentations and over 20

workshops (updated workshop listings on the website). Saturday evening's Vendor Faire gives you the opportunity to talk to sponsoring vendors and to sign up presenters. Don Baker, Klassic Specialties, is giving each entrant a sample pack of photo paper.

www.klassicspecialties.com And, John Iasiuolo and his crew from the Computer Outlook Radio Talk Show will be at the conference – you might have a chance to be on the show! <http://computeroutlook.com/>

The entry deadline is July 28 for a 'winners' logo that can be used by UGs on the websites and/or newsletters for 1st, 2nd or 3rd place in the respective contests. The graphic will also be used on all

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email addresses
for swug:
[swugconf@socal.rr.com/](mailto:swugconf@socal.rr.com)
swugconf@aol.com

website:
www.swugconf.org

contest certificates. The prize is one free 2006 conference night at the Town and Country. See the Contest page on the conference website for more details.

Guests/spouses can participate in outside activities and there will be a central meeting location to gather to walk to the Fashion Valley Shopping Center, or take the trolley to The Gaslamp Quarter in Old Town San Diego, etc. The resort has a day spa and a salon, plus four swimming pools, and many areas to walk and enjoy the beautiful gardens. See you in San Diego.

JACKIE HILL
PEACHPIT PRESS UG LIAISON

Peachpit will be present at the upcoming Photoshop World Conference & Expo September 7 through September 9 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Our Peachpit/NAPP bookstore will be stocked with all the latest books on Photoshop, and we'll have around-the-clock demos by some of your favorite authors: Scott Kelby, Bert Monroy, Ben Willmore, and Jack Davis, just to name a few.

At Photoshop World, you'll learn the latest cutting-edge techniques, the fastest and most effective ways to work in Adobe Photoshop, and the hottest and most amazing new Photoshop tips from a hand-picked team of the industry's most talented and creative instructors.

This conference brings together photographers, designers, artists, educators, motion graphics designers, and Photoshop users of every kind for a three-day Photoshop love fest of training, learning, and fun. For more info see: www.photoshopworld.com/ .

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JUDY TAYLOR
APCUG REGION 11 ADVISOR

It's not too early to start making plans for APCUG's Annual Conference to be held at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, January 4-7, 2007 — featuring roundtables, educational forums, a host of vendors, as well as activities for spouses and guests.

The kick-off event for the 2007 Annual Conference will showcase the talents of our member group photographers! All of you digital photo enthusiasts have until September 30 to enter your photos in this contest.

Somewhere inside of all of us is a creative genius just waiting for the chance to grab the spotlight and we want to give you that chance. There will be multiple chances to win, professional judging and our own "Photo Idol" chosen from our conference attendees! So, grab those cameras and start shooting! <http://www.apcug.net/events/photocontest/index.htm>

TONY LAKE
HAPPY RETIREE IN UTAH

Did you ever need a password and could not think of one? How about a secure password from GRC's Ultra High Security "Password Generator"? Try this link. <https://www.grc.com/passwords.htm>

FRANK BOLLINGER
ORCOPUG MEMBER

I came across this article about a new (at least to me) type of memory.

Depending on cost, it may some day replace hard drives or other types of memory for some applications. It might be of interest to some of our members. (Ed: Download the article that Frank sent from www.orcopug.org/pdf/Mram_article.pdf)

THESE ARE things you should know

where are they?

A wireless electronic locator with 8 radio-frequency receiver disks you can attach to keys, cell phones, eyeglass holders will locate missing items within 40 feet! Spot them by a flashing light and beeps. Costs \$49.95 to be stress-free. www.sharperimage.com, 800-344-3000.



If your hand falls asleep while you're driving or sitting in an odd position, rock your head from side to side. It'll painlessly banish your pins and needles in less than a minute. A tingly hand or arm is often the result of compression in the bundle of nerves in your neck; loosening your neck muscles releases the pressure. Compressed nerves lower in the body govern the feet, so don't let your sleeping dogs lie. Stand up and walk around.

Submitted by Tony Lake

websites also known as...

All of these are legitimate companies that didn't spend quite enough time considering how their online names might appear...and be misread.

1. Looking for a pen? Look no further than Pen Island at www.penisland.net/
 2. And the designers at Speed of Art await you at their wacky Web site, www.speedofart.com
 3. Experts Exchange is a knowledge base where programmers can exchange advice and views at www.expertsexchange.com/
 4. Need a therapist? Try Therapist Finder at www.therapistfinder.com/
 5. There's the Italian Power Generator company, www.powergenitalia.com/
 6. And don't forget the Mole Station Native Nursery in New South Wales, www.molestationnursery.com
 7. Who Represents is where you can find the name of the agent that represents any celebrity. Their web site is www.whorepresents.com/
- Submitted by Kay Gutmann



A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office.

"Is it true," she wanted to know, "that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?" "Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her. There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied, "I'm wondering, then, just how serious is my condition because this prescription is marked 'NO REFILLS'."



Re-defining the "pocket PC" — Can anyone say "good-bye laptops"?

Submitted by Ted Wirtz

hard drive, class action settlement and hp recalls

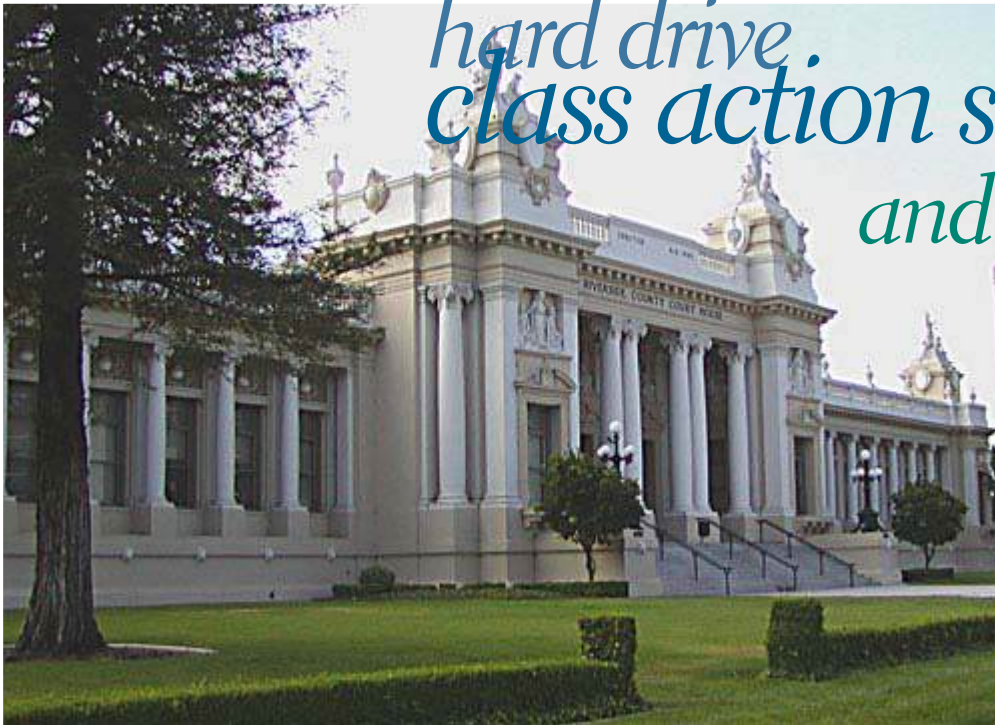


photo by Tom Carnes



by Ira Wilsker

According to a recent press release, about one million users of Western Digital hard drives, both internal and external, may be the beneficiaries of a class action settlement. Apparently, according to the settlement, Western Digital did not include an adequate disclaimer on its packages that it uses a different method of measuring hard drive capacity than some of its competitors and industry standards. The method used by Western Digital yielded about seven percent less usable storage capacity than what many users expected.

Many software companies, such as Apple and Microsoft, measure capacity in binary terms, meaning that a gigabyte is 1.07 billion bytes. Western Digital, as well as some other hard drive companies, uses a decimal system, such that a gigabyte is exactly one billion bytes, a

difference of seven percent. Because of the difference in nomenclature and identification, a Western Digital hard drive (as well as some other brands) installed on a Windows computer, will appear to have less capacity than listed on the hard drive box.

This seven percent shortfall can be significant in terms of amount of data that can be stored, as explained in the lawsuit. In the lawsuit an 80GB Western Digital hard drive referenced had an actual capacity of 74.4 GB, as measured by Windows. This shortfall on that particular drive was enough to store about 80 hours of digital music, or 5,600 typical digital photos.

Another issue was the wording on the hard drive package, which did not clearly indicate that the listed storage capacity of the hard drive might not be fully accessible. It is a

fact that partitioning and formatting a hard drive consumes some of its capacity, and this was not made adequately clear to purchasers of Western Digital hard drives. As a part of the settlement, Western Digital will be required to start including this as a disclaimer on future hard drives.

Hard drives included in this settlement were purchased from March 22, 2001 to February 15, 2006. Owners of these hard drives upon confirmation of eligibility will receive a free download of a full featured hard drive backup and restore utility, capable of full and incremental backups, as well as other features. It is projected this software will have a retail value of about \$30. The deadline for applying for the settlement was July 15, 2006.

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Full details of the settlement, along with a link to claim the software, are online at www.wdc.com/settlement. If the serial number of the hard drive is known, or can be easily determined, the claim can be filed online at www.wdc.com/settlement/verify.asp. For those who have installed a Western Digital hard drive, a free utility, "Data Lifeguard Diagnostics" is available for download at support.wdc.com/download/index.asp that will display the serial number.

In another area, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Hewlett-Packard (HP) recently recalled over 15,000 HP and Compaq Notebook Computer Batteries. These batteries were installed in HP Pavilion, HP-Compaq, and Compaq Presario computers, or sold as aftermarket and replacement batteries, and have a prefix of "L3" on the serial number of the battery. This is the second recall on HP computer batteries. A full list of the computer models affected that may have the recalled batteries from both recalls is online at bpr.hpordercenter.com/ebpr/landingpage.aspx. The batteries will be replaced at no charge by calling HP at (888) 202-4320.

In still another recall involving HP branded products, the CPSC and HP recently recalled 679,000 HP Photosmart R707 Digital Cameras sold between August 2004, and April 2006. According to the CPSC, "The digital camera can cause certain non-rechargeable batteries, such as the Duracell CP-1, to overheat when the camera is connected to an AC adapter or docking station, posing a fire hazard. ... HP has received one report of a

camera catching fire, damaging the camera and its docking station, and causing minor smoke damage to the room. No injuries have been reported." HP has information available on the recalled cameras at http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/newsroom/recall_r707.html, or by calling HP toll-free at (866) 304-7117. The fix for this problem is a software update for the camera, which can be downloaded for free from HP. The CPSC and HP asks that consumers not use single-use, non-rechargeable batteries until the software in the camera has been updated.

There have been other HP branded products recalled, and information on those items is online at www.hp.com/hpinfo/newsroom/recalls.html.

The CPSC has a variety of services available on its website at www.cpsc.gov which consumers should periodically reference. One useful item is a mailing list where recall notices are sent via email as soon as they are announced. The CPSC also has a search utility online to quickly and easily locate any recalled consumer items, including computers and cameras, at www.cpsc.gov/cgi-bin/recalldb/prod.asp.

websites:

<http://www.wdc.com/settlement>
<http://www.wdc.com/settlement/verify.asp>
<http://support.wdc.com/download/index.asp>
<http://www.wdc.com/settlement/docs/claimform.pdf>
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml06/06145.html>
<http://bpr.hpordercenter.com/ebpr/landingpage.aspx>
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml06/06176.html>
http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/newsroom/recall_r707.html
<http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/newsroom/recalls.html>
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cgi-bin/recalldb/prod.asp>
<http://www.cpsc.gov>

more recalls...

abit recalls premium-class mainboards

Universal Abit said it would recall certain mainboards due to improper installation of cooler, which may have cause overheating of core-logic. "The two mainboards to be recalled are AN9 32x and Fatal1ty AN9 32x based on Nvidia nForce 500-series chipsets with multi-GPU scalable link interface (SLI) technology support. Units with the following serial numbers will be recalled:

Fatal1ty AN9 32x:
 FAN93UDC000001 —
 FAN93UDC002713
 Fatal1ty AN9 32x:
 FAN93UDD000001 —
 FAN93UDD001648
 AN9 32x:
 AN932UDC000001 —
 AN932UDC001407
 AN9 32x:
 AN932UDD000001 —
 AN932UDD001000

Units with the following serial numbers are certified problem free and will not be recalled:

Fatal1ty AN9 32x:
 FAN93UDC002714 —
 FAN93UDC005422
 AN9 32x:
 AN932UDC001408 —
 AN932UDC002612

Shipping costs will be covered in full by Universal Abit and its world-wide branch offices. All affected end-users should return motherboards to the store where purchased or directly to Abit. Abit will examine and repair them if needed.

...and more recalls
*some lexar jump drives
 may be burn hazard*

Lexar JumpDrive® FireFly and 1GB Secure II highspeed flash drive units have been voluntarily recalled by the company because they could overheat, posing a risk of burns to consumers and property damage. "Incidents/Injuries: No incidents or injuries have been reported. This recall only includes Lexar JumpDrive® FireFly, sold in various colors, and Lexar JumpDrive® Secure II 1GB, with a metallic silver housing. "Lexar" is embossed on the front of the plastic housing and the capacity is marked on the back. The part number is located on the FireFly's packaging, and on the back of the Secure II 1GB drive. "JumpDrive® FireFly" 256MB (red) JDF256-431RU, JDF256-264, JDF256-445RU; 512MB (lime green) JDF512-431EM; 1GB (blue) JDF1GB-431T0; 2GB (black) JDF2GB-431BK; JumpDrive® Secure II 1GB JDSE1GB-00-500 Rev H, and 3052-1GBA-2006, 3052-1GBA-2106, 3052-1GBA-1906, 3052-1GBA-1806. The recalled JumpDrive® Firefly drives were sold at discount department, office supply, and electronics stores, and by web retailers, including www.lexar.com, between April and May 2006 for between \$30 and \$110. The recalled JumpDrive® Secure II 1GB drive was sold exclusively at Fry's Electronics in May 2006 for about \$80. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled JumpDrive® Firefly and Secure II devices and contact Lexar for a free replacement product. Call (800) 248-2798 anytime, or visit the firm's website at www.lexar.com

(Check on other recalls at Consumer Reports.org. <http://tinyurl.com/r7uqr>)

**users who did not apply
 patch still get "bitten"**

An online banner advertisement that ran on MySpace.com and other sites in mid-July used a Windows security flaw to infect more than a million users with spyware when people merely browsed the sites with unpatched versions of Windows, according to data collected by iDefense, a Verisign company.

Michael La Pilla, an iDefense "malcode" analyst, said he first spotted the attack while browsing MySpace on a Linux-based machine. When he browsed a page headed with an ad for DeckOutYourDeck.com, his browser asked him whether he wanted to open a file called exp.wmf. Microsoft released a patch in January to fix a serious security flaw in the way Windows renders WMF (Windows Metafile) images, and online criminal groups have been using the flaw to install adware, keystroke loggers and all manner of invasive software for the past seven months. The Deckoutyourdeck ad launching the WMF exploit.

Internet Explorer users who visited a Web page containing this ad and whose IE was not equipped with the WMF patch would not get that warning. Rather, their machines would silently download a Trojan horse program that installs junk software in the PurityScan/ClickSpring family of adware. This stuff bombards the user with pop-up ads and tracks their Web usage. Only a little more than half of the anti-virus programs used at anti-virus testing service AV-Test.org flagged the various programs that the Trojan tried to download as malicious or suspicious. Data indicates that the adware was installed on 1.07 million computers.

What is clear from this attack is that there are plenty of people who still haven't installed this security update from Microsoft. It's also fairly obvious that scammers and online criminals are targeting high-traffic Web sites. Alexa currently rates MySpace as the sixth most-visited site on the Web.

Hemanshu Nigam, Myspace.com's chief security officer, said: "This is a criminal act. ...We strongly urge all Internet users to follow basic Internet security practices such as running the latest version of the Windows operating system, installing the latest Windows security patches, and running the latest anti-spyware and anti-adware software. If users have applied the simple patch available from Microsoft.com, they will not be vulnerable to this criminal act."

"what is clear from this attack is that there are plenty of people who still haven't installed this security update from Microsoft."

Excerpted from Brian Krebs "Security Fix" Washington Post blog <http://tinyurl.com/ehyen>





*adobe user
conference
october 23-26, 2006*

The Adobe user conference, MAX 2006, will be held at the Venetian Resort Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Learn new skills, explore emerging technologies and connect with peers.

The conference includes over 100 different hands-on and workshop sessions presented by Adobe experts and other industry leaders on best practices and new technologies. Exchange ideas with designers, developers, and community members at networking sessions and “birds-of-a-feather” sessions.

Explore Adobe technology at a variety of events and venues, including all-day pre-conference training sessions, test drive and product support lab, and sneak peek sessions.

Register today for the \$200 Early Bird discount at <http://www.adobe.com/go/IGIU> or learn more at <http://www.adobe.com/events/max>.

Submitted by Judy T aylour



Sign in at last year's Raincoast Conference at the La Quinta Inn, Tacoma, Washington.

Members of computer user groups from throughout the Pacific Northwest are invited to attend Raincoast 2006 Conference, October 6-7-8 at the La Quinta Inn, Tacoma, Washington.

Workshops offer a chance to explore, learn, and share ideas. See the latest solutions for web design, presentations, images, music, networking, and security. Discover how some user groups are managing to keep their membership active and involved.

Raincoast 2006 Conference registration is \$60 which includes four meals. Please look us over and register now. Details about the events and plans can be found at www.raincoast.info.

Submitted by Bob Moffat



Chicago Mini-Expo

The Chicago Computer Society presents its Fifth Annual Mini-Expo, “Enjoying the Digital Revolution,” Saturday, September 16 at Prairie State College, Chicago Heights, Illinois. For additional information, <http://tinyurl.com/mjs7y>, or contact Al Cheeks, alcheeks@bigfoot.com.

the new, the best, and the worst



by Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

are the gates crumbling?

Various major business periodicals, including The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and The Economist, expect that the retirement of Bill Gates may be a sign that Microsoft is preparing to change course.

MS Windows, its flagship operating system, is a dinosaur, still living in a world where households had at best a single computer with a telephone modem to access a bulletin board. At least, the old DOS and Windows systems were moderately priced and could be installed on more than one computer if you owned them. Now each computer in the house requires a separate copy of the expensive operating system. Between the need to catch up on security issues and to add more bells and whistles to justify profitable updates, Windows has grown into an expensive, bloated monster.

Using its monopoly position with Windows, Microsoft coerced major computer manufacturers to include various versions of Windows Office Suite with each computer sold, creating yet another monopoly position. But marauders are gathering outside the gates of the Microsoft estate, and the sound of battering rams is heard inside.

Anti-trust sentiment in the present US government runs at a low ebb, and efforts by the Justice Department to rein in the Microsoft monopolies predictably have gone nowhere. Legal efforts by the European Union

have been more successful in forcing Microsoft to at least open up some of the secrets of its Windows operating system to third parties. But the real threat comes from multiple small developments joining forces to get their share of the loot.

free! come and get it!

Amazingly, the most severe attacks on the Windows monopolies are generated by uncounted numbers of volunteer programmers generating Open Source software. The freely downloadable Firefox browser and Thunderbird email client, based on original Netscape/Mozilla software, are generally considered to be equivalent or superior to the corresponding Internet Explorer and Outlook Express and have taken significant market share away from Microsoft. OpenOffice, an office suite containing word processor, spreadsheet, database, presentation, math and calculation programs, is mostly equivalent to, and compatible with MS Word (including its earlier versions) and WordPerfect – and free. It is still struggling for recognition

It is clearly to the advantage of the average computer user to switch to those free programs, as a cost savings and for increased security. And since these programs are available in other operating systems also, the next step might be to abandon MS Windows altogether. MacIntosh OS X and Linux are likely alternatives.

New Macintosh computers, based on an Intel CPU, use a native operating system based on Unix. Using a utility called Boot Camp, these computers can also run MS Windows in a dual boot setup (one or the other, decided at boot-up). I even read about a utility that allows the Macintosh to run Windows and the OS X system simultaneously. The major drawback of this choice is that MacIntosh computers are notoriously expensive. This option offers few advantages.

Recent Linux distributions give easy access to major Open Source programs such as Firefox, Thunderbird and OpenOffice. The Gimp, available for Windows, Macintosh or Linux, is a powerful program for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring, comparable to the expensive Adobe Photoshop. For easier photo editing and organization, Picasa has recently made a Linux version available that easily self-installs in various flavors of Linux. GnuCash is a complete accounting program, simple enough for simple checkbook maintenance and powerful enough to do the bookkeeping for a small business. Gramps is a full-fledged genealogy program. A capable Linux distribution such as my favorite, Linspire 5.1 with its library containing thousands of programs of all kinds, makes it possible to perform most day-to-day computer

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tasks just as well as MS Windows. You can still safely use Windows offline via a dual-boot arrangement for those tasks that are not easy to transfer to Linux, such as upkeep of a large, established genealogy database. No need to use the latest version of Windows – what you already have is all you need! And you can use your Linux distribution on as many computers as you like.

computing on-the-go

Computer usage is no longer restricted to use on a single, dedicated computer. Travelers expect to use the Internet wherever they go, using public-access Internet connections available in hotels, public libraries, popular eateries, and elsewhere. In response to that need, free Internet-based office applications are appearing online that run in your browser, independent of your operating system. Online document sharing allows collaboration between people traveling in different parts of the world. Google has recently bought Writely, an online word processor, and is developing an online spreadsheet program and other office-type programs. Michael Roberts, CEO of Linspire and known for his earlier involvement with MP3, has started an online office suite called ajaxLaunch that is to include ajaxWrite, a word processor, ajaxXLS (spreadsheet), ajaxSketch and ajaxOS. A quick Google search reveals several other developments such as these. All of these are free thus far, although ajaxLaunch hopes to charge for online document storage in the future.

Microsoft is putting a major effort on Windows Live and Office Live, while pooh-poohing the competitors' efforts. Ray Ozzie, anointed to succeed Gates as Microsoft's chief

software architect, earned his admission to the Computer Museum's Hall of Fame because of his pioneering work in collaboration software, starting with Lotus Notes many years ago, and more recently with peer-to-peer networking. It is not hard to guess in what direction he'll be leading Microsoft.

linux.google?

With all this free stuff around, why don't users come running to snatch it up? The reason is a classical Catch-22. Since it is all free, there is no money available for big promotional campaigns. Linspire, a leading Linux distributor, has 85 employees. Most people assume that it must be better if it costs more and are reluctant to change. Over time, word-of-mouth may overcome that reluctance, but in the short term only advertising can make it happen.

Allow me some wild speculation. Google is quietly adding all sorts of useful and interesting software to its basic search function. Think of Google Mail, Picasa (now also available for Linux), Writely, Spreadsheet, and more to come. The one major tool needed to achieve its (presumed) aim in overtaking Microsoft is an operating system of their own. Considering that Google's principals were weaned on Linux and that the whole Google shebang runs on Linux servers, a Google Linux distribution would be a real threat to the Microsoft empire. With billions of dollars to promote it, thousands of software experts to perfect it, and advertising to pay for it, a Google Linux distribution could be the next disrupting software development. Just speculating ... but remember

you heard it here first if it comes to pass!

music intelligence?

To me contemporary pop music, devoid of melody, harmony, or emotional impact, sounds like anything but music, unless its deafening rhythms act as a pacemaker to speed up your heartbeat. Not surprisingly, computer analysis of popular songs has succeeded in finding common traits in terms of melody, harmony, tempo, rhythm, pitch, chord progression, fullness of sound, cadence, frequency ranges, texture and timbre. After all, George Orwell already predicted, in his 1949 novel "1984," a machine that automatically generated music for the hapless masses.

The major music studios are using several programs, referred to as "Music Intelligence," to shape and predict the expected success of new pop creations. The whole thing gets ridiculous when the music scientists claim to find a close kinship between some of U2's hit songs and some Beethoven compositions. No kidding. But if the computer says so, it is so. Maybe I should have my ears reprogrammed.

Anyway, the lawyers love it because it gives them spurious evidence to claim that a certain song infringes the copyright of another. After all, if the computer says so no judge or jury is going to question it! (Based on an article in *The Economist*, June 10, 2006; thanks to Louis Ritz.)

Pim Borman is website editor for the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. at <http://swipcug.apcug.org>. Email Pim at swipcug@sigecom.net.

“If you've always wanted to sample what HDTV content is available“over-the-air in your area, but weren't quite ready to pay \$1,000-plus for that "privilege," ADS Tech's InstantHDTV PCI card is a terrific alternative that offers plenty of bang-for-the-buck.” Making Money Magazine

ads tech instant hdtv pci



by Terry Currier, winnersug@aol.com

I really like being able to watch TV on the PC. It's easy convenient, and saves me time when I record the shows and zip through the commercials. The TV cards include software that acts like a TiVo and allows me to not have to pay the monthly TiVo fees. Now I have another reason, High Definition (HD.) I've look at the units and thought they really look great but they are expensive. Plus, I'm already paying over \$100 to the cable company, and I certainly don't want to pay more for HD.

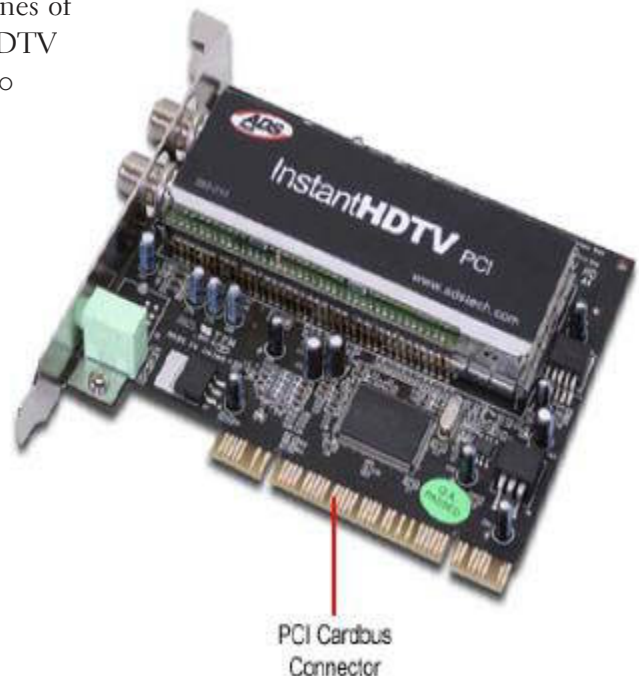
I know you're thinking the same thing I was "How can I get HDTV for free?" According to ADS "Today 95% of all households in the U.S. can receive HDTV from at least one network broadcaster. And more than 85% can receive an HDTV signal from three or more network broadcasters." Jon Peddie's Tech Watch said "Ninety-one percent of the more than 100 million households in the U.S. are in markets with five or more

broadcasters airing HDTV. More than 71% of households are in markets with eight or more HDTV broadcasting stations."

The next obvious question is "How good is it?" Of course, you have to wonder how good can HDTV over the air be. I was really impressed. I could see the better quality right away. Standard televisions have 480 lines of vertical resolution, HDTV offers resolution of 720 lines or 1080 lines, depending on the programming feed. The "p" and "I" behind the numbers represent the scanning method used. The "p" is for *progressive* scan which scans every line of the

screen once; the "I" is for *interlaced* scan where alternate lines are scanned on each frame. With progressive format, the full picture

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updates every sixtieth of a second. In interlaced format, half of the picture updates every sixtieth of a second. Analogue television uses the interlaced scan format. In standard broadcast TV the aspect ratio is 4:3 (4 across 3 down). With HDTV the aspect ratio is 16:9.

Installing it I had no problems, other than one thing. I had no antenna to hook it up. I had cable to get the standard channels, but that would not help for the HDTV.

They tell you to go to www.checkhd.com to see what is needed. I looked at what they recommended, which the best cost \$49 at Radio Shack. I instead tried the cheaper route and brought an antenna at Home Depot (they have more at Wal-Mart) for \$21. It was an RCA antenna which said HDTV on the box. It did connect and I was getting HDTV – yippee. But, something was not quite right. It was choppy in the video with the audio still going on. When I defragged the drive it would work better but for only a short while. I checked the ADS

website and got a couple answers. The best answer I got from a support request - get a good antenna. So I looked around and found on Buy.com the recommended antenna for \$23. Dang, should have looked there first. It totaled \$34.16 with taxes and shipping.

ADS includes Beyond TV Express from SnapStream. It makes it easy to see what is on TV, because it goes in and downloads the program guide from the cable provider in your area. With that done I could see what is on TV, or schedule to record the shows I want. I can look ahead and schedule to record shows up to

three days in advance. I can also setup to do a manual recording of a certain channel at a specific time. Beyond TV Express is very easy to setup and work with. With it looking at a recorded show I can pause, fast forward, and rewind. It also lets the user search the Electronic Program



HDTV Signal Strength

Please adjust your antenna to maximize the number of channels you can receive. Click "stop autoscans" when you are satisfied with your antenna placement. Check the boxes in the "Display" column next to the channels you would like to have displayed in your Program Guide. When you are done, click "Next".

Cycle Channels

Display	Channel	Callsign	Signal Strength
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1042	WX-Plus	80
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1044	Coming	81
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1051	KTLA-D1	78
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1052	"TUBE"	78
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1053	KTLA-D2	78
<input type="checkbox"/>	1091	KCAL-DT	53
<input type="checkbox"/>	1341	KMFx DT	45

for shows by title or keyword. I can also watch a previously recorded show while it is recording another. But, I have to say I like SageTV more, because I tell it which are my favorite shows and it will automatically record them without my having to program it.

After setting up the RCA antenna I told it to start looking for HDTV stations. It does a scan for such broadcast over the air. Really cool how it does a scan over and over again until you tell it to stop. The reason for that is it shows you the signal strength. If the stations that you want are coming in weak, you then can turn the antenna in another direction to improve the signal. That way you can find the best possible positioning of the antenna.

After doing the scan I was able to find all of the major networks

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broadcasting HDTV and more. In fact I found up to 23 HDTV stations broadcasting over the air free. Not all of them I wanted to keep on the program guide (I can choose what to keep.) A couple of them were just weather, one infocommercials, a few Spanish, and a number of public TV stations.

ADS Tech includes NeroVision Express to edit the videos recorded. The HDTV recordings have an extension of .tp, and one hour of recording can take 10GB of space. The NeroVision is not the easiest to use.

To load in a recording I have to



tell it to look at *.* , since it will not find it otherwise, but it will work. I read about the new Ulead VideoStudio 10 Plus which will edit HD video. If you really want to edit high-definition video, spending a little extra for the more advanced



program would probably be a good idea. It includes Smart Proxy that will automatically convert HD video to smaller proxy files for faster editing. Beyond TV Express records non-HDTV shows in wmv format. They mention in the help file the ability to change to mpeg format, but I could not. It probably requires an upgrade. I can however change the quality of the recording.

ADS even includes a IR sensor and remote control. Kind of weird using a remote control when you're sitting right in front of the computer and can just use a mouse, but it

comes in handy.

PC Requirements:

- Pentium IV 2.4 GHz or higher recommended
- Available PCI slot
- Microsoft Windows XP SP2 (Home or Professional), or Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005
- 512MB of RAM recommended
- 15 GB of available hard drive space - for software and record space.
- Sound Card (AC97 compatible sound card)
- Microsoft DirectX 9.0 or later
- CD-Rom drive for software install
- CD-RW or DVD-Recordable drive required for saving movies onto CD or D
- HDTV Antenna and available HD signal in your region
- ATI Radeon 9550 or NVIDIA GeForce FX 5200 or above video card

Conclusion

Cost you more than an standard TV card, but that is not standard. If you got all the PC requirements I think you would be very happy with this, I know I am.

By the way if you want one to compare it to, you can look at Happauge, at only \$299.

The ADS Tech InstantHDTV PCI is \$129 www.adstech.com

Terry Currier has been involved in computer user groups since 1984, and is the past president of North Orange County Computer Club, and founding president and current president of WINNERS (WINDOWS usERS) user group in Fountain Valley.

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time for your membership renewal?



JUNE 1– Bud Barkhurst (3rd month)

JULY 1– Herman Beverburg, Walter Jackson (2nd month)

AUGUST 1– Stan Leese, Michael Moore

SEPTEMBER 1– Leonard Prince

OCTOBER 1– Siles Bazerman, Gary

Covington III, Larry Klees, Ed O'Donnell, David Sander

submitted by Charlie Moore

NOTE: You must be a member in good standing to access our Members' Only page or to win raffle prizes. Web page passwords are deactivated the first day a membership expires.

Please bring your empty HP, Sharp, Xerox, Dell, Canon and Lexmark printer ink cartridges to the next meeting for our ongoing fundraiser! No Brother or Epson cartridges, please.

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Leroy Kaump, Winner

NTI Shadow, \$29*

Leroy Kaump, Previous Winner

Milton Gorham, Winner

Comdex Yo-Yo, \$40*

David Sander, Not Present

Frank Bollinger, Winner

ViaGrafix Letter Opener, \$5*

Dick Tooley, Declined

Glenn Emigh, Not Present

Michael Moore, Winner

PowerQuest DataKeeper, \$29*

Sid Liptz, Declined

Richard Metzger, Not Present

Linda Gonse, Not Present

Ann Carnahan, Not Present

Pete Romeo, Not Present

Leonard Prince, Winner

Computer Bath, \$5*

Charles Burgwin, Winner

Computer Bath, \$5*

Lloyd Boutwell, Winner

*Estimated value

submitted by Mike Lyons

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secret keyword

No one found July's secret keyword. You can now win three prizes if you find the keyword in the newsletter or website: O'Reilly's "PC's The Missing Manual" (June), Indoor/Outdoor Wireless Temperature Station (July), & NTI Shadow, backup software, (August). prizes!

last chance to enter!

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Deadline for Sept. issue is Aug. 19

computer swap meet scheduled for September 24

The ACP Computer Store swap meet is held every other month, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1310 E. Edinger, Santa Ana. Admission is free. www.acpswapmeetbyhyperactive.com

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ORCOPUG membership entitles you to access the Members' Only page at www.orcopug.org for special discounts. User name is first initial+last name (lower case). Password is member letter+number.

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You have to pay extra for your email to be delivered sooner rather than later. And, certain companies won't allow you to access some websites. Don't like that? These are only two reasons why net neutrality should matter so much to you. Write your senator to support S.2917 that guarantees net neutrality (<http://tinyurl.com/jqko4>). Tell the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, where this bill is right now, how important it is to you. (<http://tinyurl.com/om3zq>)

are you helping to stamp out spyware?

Have you written letters to the media and your legislators? We all have the power and the responsibility to stamp out spyware. Find California lawmakers' contact information at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>; get information for other states and Federal officials contact info at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>



thanks to our generous vendors

We sincerely thank the following companies for donating prizes to our 2005 fundraising raffle: AirLink 101, Aviar Inc., Blue Squirrel, Brother, Cerious Software, Corel, Ink Dot Lady, iolo Technologies, Microsoft, Microsoft Press, Microvision Development, O'Reilly, Prentice Hall, Que & Sams, RoadWired, Roxio, Smart Computing, SmartDraw.com, Solid Documents, Stardock Systems, Sunbelt Software, and User Group Relations (Gene Barlow).

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Revised August 2006

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User groups represent the spirit of the frontier, a community getting together to do things that no individual ought to have to do alone. The pioneers of the American west got together for barn raisings, cattle roundups, and the occasional party. The pioneers of new technology get together for installfests, new user training and support, and just plain fun. Being part of a user group is the best way to get more out of your computer, and lets you make friends while you're at it.

Tim O'Reilly
President, O'Reilly & Associates

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where are the meetings and when are they held?

Regular meeting are the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the **Placentia Library**, 411 East Chapman Avenue. Placentia, California 92870, (714) 528-1906. Call (714) 990-0580, for information, or go to www.orcopug.org. Meetings are free and the public is welcome!

Planning meetings are held the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at Downey Savings & Loan, one block east of Harbor at Bastanchury in Fullerton. All members are welcome to attend *planning meetings*!



Definition at www.orcopug.org/wiki.html