

January 2006



# NIBBLES & BITS

Tuesday, January 10, 6:30 p.m. at Placentia Library, Placentia — Bring a friend!

## JANUARY PROGRAM

### Antics 3D program to be demonstrated

**O**n Tuesday, January 10 a representative from Antics 3D will demonstrate an amazing program called Antics Pre-viz.

Antics Pre-viz allows the user to create 3D animated pre-visualisations of live action or animated productions in real-time for film, TV, theatre, and gaming. 3D animated storyboards and movies consisting of scene layouts, characters, props, actions, and camera choreography can be created by professional and non-professional creators in a very short time.

Building scenes and stories in Antics Pre-viz is facilitated by the intuitive user interface and control mechanisms. With a couple of mouse clicks, content can be dragged and dropped from asset libraries and placed in scenes, characters can be instructed to pick up props or open doors, and close up shots of characters' faces can be orchestrated.

- Controlling and directing scenes is incredibly easy and quick
- Simple and intuitive interface and control systems
- For the first time animators and non-animators can realistically create 3D animations in pre-viz time frames
- There is a very short learning curve with Antics Pre-viz

Download a fully functional version of Antics Pre-Viz which will allow you to try out the software for 30 days using a limited set of characters and



props provided with the download at [www.antics3d.com/sales/demo.asp](http://www.antics3d.com/sales/demo.asp).

Antics Pre-Viz is a brand new, and unique product so take some time to watch the Quick Start Tutorials before you start working.

Antics is a UK company with headquarters in Cambridge, England. It is a pioneer in the field of real time intelligent 3D animation technology, which it uses to develop products that bring characters and worlds to life quickly and easily.

### Xmas raffle is a success

*by Mike Lyons, president*

The Christmas raffle was successful in bringing in \$610 dollars for our treasury. The biggest money maker appeared to be the P-Touch labeler. The KVM switch and the 12-in-1 card reader also did well. System Mechanic probably brought in the most money overall (there were eight programs).

I want to thank all the vendors for their generous donations. They were essential in helping us to raise funds for our club for this coming year.

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**The Annual Fundraising Raffle results are on the Members' Only! page at [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org)**

**Or by request from [charlie@orcopug.org](mailto:charlie@orcopug.org).**

# Notepad



**Thank you to everyone** in our group and other user groups who sent “get better” wishes to me after I broke my arm.

At the beginning, the cast was a welcome feeling of security and protection. But, I knew when it was time for the cast to come off. I was able to do more with that arm, and the cast kept getting in the way! I even bonked myself a couple of times when I reached up to touch my head!

Now that the cast is off, I’ve had to do stretching exercises to regain all the movement I had before the break. Evidently, tendons tighten during weeks of non-use.

**At the beginning** of this new year, I’d like to ask you all to make a resolution with me. Resolve to *just once* speak up or write a letter voicing opposition to and concern about spyware. It’s time that this menace to our privacy and property gets kicked in the butt and knocked flat. It **can** be done. But, it will take all of us, and all our efforts, to do it.

Don’t wait for “somebody” else to come along to protect what is yours. Your right to privacy is worth your effort to preserve it.

Write to me and let me know what you have done — no matter how small — to promote a spyware-free world. I’ll pass along word about the ways in which you’ve helped to other members and other user group newsletter editors.

Sometimes people need to know others are already doing something, in order for them to decide to join in and help.

**Please join me now in knocking out spyware in 2006! Our motto: We don’t want it! We don’t have to have it!**

Linda Gonse, [editor@orcopug.org](mailto:editor@orcopug.org)

## Letters

### Get well soon

Sorry to hear about your accident. Hope all is well soon. I always look forward to getting your newsletters.

**Jerry Clarke**  
LBIBMUG

**Long Beach IBM User Group**

### Arizona user group shares newsletter article

I am the webmaster and editor for the Mountain View Computer Users Group’s web site and online magazine.

I recently received from APCUG a copy of an article you or one of your members wrote. This article was included in the November Article Push (package).

I writing you to let you know that your article has been posted in the November edition of our online magazine, Mountain Views. You may find Mountain Views at [www.mvcug.org/magazine/index.html](http://www.mvcug.org/magazine/index.html). Follow the link in the TOC to your article.

If you have any questions or comments, especially regarding the presentation of your article, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As with almost any web site, you are welcome to browse our site and learn more about the MVCUG.

I hope to read and post more of your articles in the future.

Take care,

**Jim Emmons**  
Vice President, MVCUG  
[vicepresident@mvcug.org](mailto:vicepresident@mvcug.org)  
Mountain View Computer  
User Group

### PC users get 50% discount to Linux Expo in February

If you’ve read about Linux and are interested, the Fourth Annual So Cal Linux Expo will be February 11 & 12, 2006, at the Radisson LAX hotel. The Expo will have seminars on advanced topics, plus beginner sessions. And there’s an expo floor where vendors

rub elbows with various Open Source groups such as the maintainers of KDE and GNOME, the two major desktops used in Linux.

There’s a discount code for readers of this article, too: When you register for SCALE4x, use discount code **PCUG** for a 50% discount in admission fees.

To register, or for late-breaking info, go to <http://www.socallinuxexpo.com>.

**Orv Beach**  
[orv@orvsplace.net](mailto:orv@orvsplace.net)

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The opinions expressed herein are the writers. They are not reflective of the Orange County IBM PC Users’ Group position, and are not endorsed by inclusion in this newsletter.

Submit items to the newsletter editor at:  
[editor@orcopug.org](mailto:editor@orcopug.org); or Linda Gonse, 22655  
Valley Vista Circle, Wildomar, CA 92595-8334

### Directors

**President, Mike Lyons**  
[mike@orcopug.org](mailto:mike@orcopug.org)  
**Vice President, OPEN**  
**Treasurer/Membership/SYSOP, Charlie Moore**  
[charlie@orcopug.org](mailto:charlie@orcopug.org)  
**Editor/Webmaster, Linda Gonse**  
[linda@orcopug.org](mailto:linda@orcopug.org)  
**Reviews, Terry Schiele**  
[terry@orcopug.org](mailto:terry@orcopug.org)  
**Programs, Lothar Loehr**  
[lothar@orcopug.org](mailto:lothar@orcopug.org)  
**Membership, Carl Westberg**  
[carl@orcopug.org](mailto:carl@orcopug.org)  
**APCUG Rep, Siles Bazerman**  
[Siles.Bazerman@gte.net](mailto:Siles.Bazerman@gte.net)  
P.O. Box 716, Brea, CA 92822-0716  
(714) 990-0580  
[info@orcopug.org](mailto:info@orcopug.org)

Club information, review guidelines, updates, and members’ pages at [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org)



Member of  
The Association of  
Personal Computer User Groups

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## December raffle winners

December raffle winners and prizes are on our Members' Only webpage in a pdf file. You can also view the file by requesting a special link from Charlie Moore, [charlie@orcopug.org](mailto:charlie@orcopug.org).



**4th Special Prize Drawing! Look for a new keyword hidden in Nibbles & Bits or on the ORCOPUG website each month.** If your name is drawn at the next meeting and you know the keyword, you will take home a prize! If no one knows the secret keyword, or the person whose name is drawn is not at the meeting, the prize will added to the next month's drawing.

## Member expiration dates

**3rd month, NOV. 1–Terry Terrazas**

**1st month, JAN. 1– Leroy Kaump**

**FEB. 1–** Charles Burgwin, Ann Carnahan, Mike Lyons, Ron Schultz

**MAR. 1–** Frank Bollinger, Milton Gorham, Bill Pampaniya

**APR. 1–** Lothar Loehr, David Musser  
*Submitted by Charlie Moore*

## Members' Only! page is benefit of ORCOPUG membership

ORCOPUG membership entitles you to access the Members' Only page for dozens of special discounts and offers. Go to [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org). Click on "Members' Only." The username is your first initial and last name (lower case, no spaces). The password is **R** followed by your member number. If you forget your member number, send an email to Charlie Moore, [charlie@orcopug.org](mailto:charlie@orcopug.org).



## Members' email

Please send a request to be added to the list below. Email: [editor@orcopug.org](mailto:editor@orcopug.org).

**Bazerman, Siles**  
[siles.bazerman@verizon.net](mailto:siles.bazerman@verizon.net)  
**Bollinger, Frank**  
[frbollinger@earthlink.net](mailto:frbollinger@earthlink.net)  
**Boutwell, Lloyd**  
[LloydB8@aol.com](mailto:LloydB8@aol.com)  
**Covington III, Gary**  
[garyiii@hotmail.com](mailto:garyiii@hotmail.com)  
**Francis, Joe**  
[joefran1@earthlink.net](mailto:joefran1@earthlink.net)  
**Gonse, Linda**  
[editor@orcopug.org](mailto:editor@orcopug.org)  
**Gorham, Milton**  
[m4gorham@home.com](mailto:m4gorham@home.com)  
**Jackson, Walter**  
[wvjxn@charter.net](mailto:wvjxn@charter.net)  
**Kaump, LeRoy**  
[leroy\\_kaump@hotmail.com](mailto:leroy_kaump@hotmail.com)  
**Klees, Larry**  
[lklees@dslextreme.com](mailto:lklees@dslextreme.com)  
**Leese, Stan**  
[stanleese@dslextreme.com](mailto:stanleese@dslextreme.com)

**Loehr, Lothar**  
[lothar@orcopug.org](mailto:lothar@orcopug.org)  
**Lyons, Mike**  
[mike@orcopug.org](mailto:mike@orcopug.org)  
**Moore, Charlie**  
[charlie@orcopug.org](mailto:charlie@orcopug.org)  
**Moore, Michael**  
[MichaelR\\_Moore@yahoo.com](mailto:MichaelR_Moore@yahoo.com)  
**Musser, Dave**  
[dmusser@worldnet.att.net](mailto:dmusser@worldnet.att.net)  
**Tooley, Richard D.**  
[tooley@alum.mit.edu](mailto:tooley@alum.mit.edu)  
**Wann, Harold**  
[WANN.HSW@worldnet.att.net](mailto:WANN.HSW@worldnet.att.net)  
**Westberg, Carl**  
[carl@orcopug.org](mailto:carl@orcopug.org)  
**Wirtz, Ted**  
[twirtz@pacbell.net](mailto:twirtz@pacbell.net)

*\*Updated info 11/05 by Charlie Moore*



please recycle this newsletter —

**Send it to a friend!**



## Membership Application

New Member  Renewal\*

\* Please fill out all the blanks below to help us keep your information updated in our database.

**Don't lose your membership benefits... renew now!** Expired members are not eligible to win raffle prizes or to access the Members Only web page.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest/Comments \_\_\_\_\_

ORCOPUG meets the second Tuesday of every month starting at 6:30 p.m. **Dues are \$25 per year.** Please see our website at [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org) for meeting location and map, program announcements and contact information.

Make your check payable to **ORCOPUG** and mail to:  
**ORCOPUG, P.O. BOX 716, Brea, California 92822-0716**

(Please fill out this application and mail it today!)





## User group deals

### Thanks to the 22 vendors that donated prizes for our 2005 fundraiser!

We sincerely thank the following companies who donated prizes to make our 2005 fundraising raffle possible: **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).**

### Magazine discounts only for user group members

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Computer Games	\$10.95	\$20.95	\$29.95
Computer Gaming World	\$14.95	\$28.95	\$41.95
Computer Shopper	\$16.97	\$32.95	\$47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	\$15.95	\$30.95	—
Mac Addict	\$10.97	\$19.97	\$28.97
Mac Home Journal	\$15.97	\$29.97	—
Mac World	\$12.95	—	—
Maximum PC	\$ 9.95	\$18.95	\$27.95
Microsoft System Journal	\$21.95	\$39.95	—
PC Gamer	\$12.95	—	—
PC Magazine	\$25.97	\$48.95	\$68.95
(22/44/66 issues)			
PC World	\$16.95	—	—
Videomaker	\$11.95	\$21.95	—
Wired	\$ 6.00	\$12.00	\$17.00

Revised November 2005

These prices are for new subscriptions and renewals. All orders must be accompanied by a check, cash or Money Order. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to: **Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496.** Call or write: 561-488-4465, [hgoodman@prodigy.net](mailto:hgoodman@prodigy.net).

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. I will mail a renewal notice to every subscriber about 3 months prior to their expiration date. I carry over 300 titles also at excellent prices. Just email me for a price and I'll email a price back.



**ACP**  
Computer Show

**March 26**  
**8 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

1310 E. Edinger, Santa Ana, CA • 714-558-8813  
[www.hyperactivecomputersinc.com](http://www.hyperactivecomputersinc.com)\*

Free Admission • Free Parking • 100's of Sellers

\*New website address

Submitted by Carl Westberg

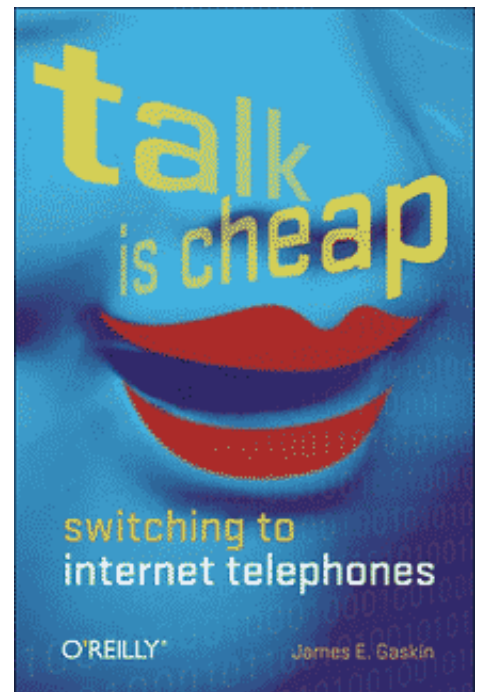
## Review

### Talk is cheap

Reviewed by John W. Powell  
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

Talk is Cheap by James E. Gaskins is a book about switching to internet telephones. The author gives detailed comparisons of costs with conventional telephone service and using various internet phone options. The book is very easy to read with technical terms clearly defined. The reader is lead through the process of choosing and using an online phone system.

The user must choose whether to use Vonage or other broadband internet carriers or a computer centric system such as Skype. If you feel that, you may want to switch to internet phone service instead of land lines this book will prove invaluable in answering your questions and defining new terms for you.



Talk is Cheap by James E. Gaskins, \$19.95, O'Reilly Press, ISBN: 0-596-009607, 272 pages, \$19.95 US, \$27.95 CA.

## The New, the Best, and the Worst

Collected by Pim Borman  
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.



for better support of multi-core, 64-bit CPUs. Media enthusiasts will love the new features, but why use them on a general-purpose computer?

For the rest of us, we're probably better off waiting until we need to buy a new computer that is almost certain to include Vista, whether we like it or not. At least we'll get it at a discount. I estimate that MS Windows, Office and Media Player contain at least 50% bells and whistles that are of no interest to 75% of its users.

Last year Microsoft announced a crippled version of Windows, called Windows XP Starter Edition, being made available at low cost in certain developing countries. According to CNet News.com (<http://snipurl.com/winstart>) the local versions of the program were made available in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Russia. Cost in Thailand was reported to be \$36, not including MS Works. Its intended use is in local schools for the obvious reason: catch 'm young. Read on...

### ...Or Else?

"The MIT Media Lab has launched a new research initiative to develop a \$100 laptop—a technology that could revolutionize how we educate the world's children. To achieve this goal, a new, non-profit association, One Laptop per Child (OLPC), has been created."

"The machines, which will run a version of the Linux operating system, will also include other applications, some developed by MIT researchers, as well as country-specific software. 'Software has gotten too fat and unreliable, so we started with Linux.'" (<http://snipurl.com/mitlap>)

These two quotes from recent MIT press releases point at new directions in the Computer Revolution. First of all, there is the realization that computers are here to stay as a basic necessity in a civilized society. To the three Rs of basic education we need

(Continued to page 6)

### Vista...

"A distant view or prospect, especially one seen through an opening, as between rows of buildings or trees." (*Dictionary.com*)

It is also the name of the long-awaited next version of Microsoft Windows, not available until at least the second half of 2006 but already widely previewed and discussed in the PC magazines. What do we glimpse in the distance? Should we fight or switch?

The most significant improvement in Vista might well be security, stated to be a primary goal. Only time will tell – we'll still be facing continuing patches, updates and periodic Service Packs, I expect.

New Internet Explorer 7 will be a major make-over, mostly to catch up with features long since available in Opera and Firefox. It will also be available to current Windows XP users. Windows Media Player gets a boost, but will also be available in Windows XP.

Vista will appear in 32 and 64-bit versions, to accommodate the new 64-bit CPUs now available from AMD and Intel. Visually, the windows will sport new folder icons that show thumbnails of their contents, although I wonder how they handle folders with dozens of subfolders and files. If your graphics card can handle it, the icons will also be semi-transparent, wow!

Originally, Vista was supposed to support a new file system, WINFS. I understand that this file system does away with branching directory trees to store files. Instead, files all get dumped in large containers, maybe such as the

current "My Documents" areas. Instead of assigning unique file names you label the files with any number of suitable tags, similar to the labels currently used in Picasa2 (see the minutes in this issue to read about Larry Goss's presentation in October). The contents of the files are also indexed on the go to facilitate a search for keywords such as already provided by Google Desktop Search and Yahoo Desktop Search. Vista is expected to include a similar search function even before WINFS eventually is implemented. But WINFS will not initially be part of Vista.

As *PC Magazine* puts it "... it increasingly appears that Vista's differentiating features, aside from the sleek new shell interface, will be the ones that are less visible to typical users: hardened security, better diagnostics, and improved manageability in enterprise environments."

Vista will require an up-to-date computer system, with plenty of processor speed, memory, and graphics capability. Manufacturers of scanners and printers will surely provide the necessary drivers for newer equipment, but older peripherals may no longer work. Will it be worth the additional cost and aggravation to upgrade?

Dedicated gamers will love it – they need all the speed they can get, at any cost. Also, if you work with demanding graphics programs, large databases or similar CPU-intensive programs you'll probably want Vista

## The new...

(Continued from page 5)

to add a fourth Requirement, computer liteRacy. The cost of general purpose computers has to come down further to make them available to every school child, even in this country, let alone in the developing nations. That clearly includes the need to eliminate the high cost of the MS Windows operating system and commercial productivity programs written for MS Windows. Essentially free Linux is the obvious alternative.

Here is another quote, from desktop.linux.com (<http://snipurl.com/INaccess>): “A number of Indiana high school students returning for the fall semester will find brand-new Linux desktops in their classrooms. Under the Indiana Access Program, which uses desktop Linux systems and standard hardware configurations to keep costs low, Wintergreen Systems Inc. and Linspire Inc. are providing computers for classrooms. The arrangement could result in as many as 300,000 Linux machines being deployed during coming years, the companies said in a statement.” And Indiana is arguably not a third-world nation.

When a new generation of students gets weaned on Linux, they are likely to continue using that operating system in the future, creating the critical mass that it takes to become generally accepted as an alternate desktop tool. Some of the students will inevitably be interested in hacking the system, resulting in new and improved programs, as well as some new Linux viruses, I fear. Their efforts will be facilitated by the availability of all the underlying code, in contrast with MS Windows programs that jealously hide the source code.

Besides the effort to introduce Linux in school computers, several large cities as well as developing nations, notably China, have made it a priority to deploy Linux-based desktop

computers. In the near future most of the growth of Linux will probably take place in developing areas of the world. Acceptance in the USA and other Western countries will be slowed by the difficulty or reluctance to transfer databases from MS Windows-based programs to comparable Linux programs. It may take another generation, but after maturing overseas Linux is likely to return in force to the Western world.

## AJAX

AJAX stands for “Asynchronous JavaScript and XML,” the technology behind what some call **Web 2.0**. In this new version Web pages are no longer static downloads but allow live interaction with the user. See it in action in Google Maps ([maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com)) that allows you to drag the maps seamlessly around the screen and pop up details about locations of interest. The Internet edition of a newspaper may display a front page with headlines; moving the cursor over a headline pops up a small window with a summary of the article. Google’s Gmail uses Ajax to streamline message retrievals. The Backpack Web site ([www.backpackit.com](http://www.backpackit.com)) allows you to jot down notes and reminders that can call your cell phone at a time you specify.

Yahoo provides an interesting site, [Widgetgallery.com](http://Widgetgallery.com), that hosts over 1000 widgets, small downloadable apps that run on your desktop and are built with JavaScript and XML, like many Web pages. You need to download and install a small program, Konfabulator, to display the Widgets. The Widgets vary from funny nonsense to useful applets such as Web-based dictionaries, local weather reports, system utilities, news feeds, multi media, and more. They are contributed by volunteers, and you are encouraged to modify them or write your own with an included editor. Of course, if you disable JavaScript for security reasons none of this will work any longer. (*PC World*, December 2005).

## Great Tech Service

F-prot is an anti-virus program that goes back to the days of DOS. It is part of the many computer security products provided by Frisk International, based in Iceland ([www.f-prot.com](http://www.f-prot.com)). Its excellent antivirus and e-mail protection program is partially based on the use of virus signature data bases, as well as heuristics procedures to detect virus-like behavior before a new virus has been recognized and described. F-prot is available for use with various operating systems, including Windows (\$29 for individual use) and Linux (free for individual workstations). It updates its databases as soon as new malware is found, often 2-3 times per week.

When I recently had a problem downloading virus database upgrades for my Linux computer, I sent a query to Frisk’s technical support. The next day I received a response, including a patch for the latest download, and brief instructions on how to use it. I sent a message back, confessing that I did not understand the instructions. The next day I received a long email with detailed instructions that were easy to follow and solved the problem. I sent a quick thank you to the technician (clearly a native Icelander, going by the name of Gretar Hreggviósson). Even so, I received a follow-up inquiry from Frisk about my satisfaction with the support provided (for free!). How’s that for service?

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

## WINDOWS TIP

### Create a Personal Screen Saver

1. Right-click an empty spot on the desktop, then click [Properties] [Screen Saver] tab.
2. In the Screen saver list, click [My Pictures Slide-show].
3. Click [Settings] to adjust picture size, display speed and transition effects.
4. Pictures are randomly displayed from the My Pictures folder in My Documents.



# Trend Micro still makes HouseCalls

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; columnist for *The Examiner*, Beaumont, Texas; radio & TV show host [iwilsker@apcug.net](mailto:iwilsker@apcug.net)



## Websites:

<http://HouseCall.antivirus.com>

<http://HouseCall.trendmicro.com>


Much of the current crop of malware currently attacking our computers explicitly attack the major brands of antivirus software, and render it inert. With the contemporary rapid appearance and propagation of viruses, worms, Trojans, and other malevolent digital content, that may assault our computers before our antivirus publishers can disseminate updates to protect us, we may be vulnerable to such attack. The concern is that since it may appear that our antivirus is loaded and running, currently providing the desired protection, we may have a false sense of security as our computers are open to further attack. Unless we perform some sort of secondary antivirus scan with an external product, we will likely not know that our cyber safety has been compromised until the damage becomes so great that our computers will be obviously hampered.


Fortunately for us, there are several excellent and free online utilities, as well as a few downloadable programs, that will scan out computers for malware, independent of the antivirus software installed on our computers. It is considered by many computer security specialists that a periodic or frequent online virus scan is a necessary adjunct to the antivirus software installed on our computers, both to detect any malware that had penetrated our perimeter defenses, and to inform us of the possibility that our antivirus software had been neutralized by some miscreant bent on doing damage to as many computers as possible. It is important that any user who finds from an online scan that his antivirus software has been penetrated, notes the name of the virus, and researches that virus on any of the many online virus encyclopedias; if that virus is listed as one that kills antivirus software, it will be necessary to disinfect the computer removing the virus, and then reinstalling and updating the antivirus software.

My personal favorite for performing a comprehensive and free online virus scan for malware and other security vulnerabilities is Trend Micro's HouseCall.

simple "Scan your PC: Ease your mind and scan your PC for viruses and spyware. Scan now. It's Free." Clicking on the link or icon will open the next window which lists the system requirements to run a HouseCall scan. The system requirements are minimal, and almost all PCs would qualify, as it only requires a computer with a 133MHz speed processor, and 64MB of installed RAM. If run on Firefox, it is necessary that the Java module is installed, and a link is available in case it is necessary to install the Java. Clicking on the "Scan" icon, opens the third page that explains what HouseCall will do, which is quite comprehensive. It will detect and remove viruses, worms, Trojans, "grayware", and spyware.

"Grayware" is an unfamiliar term to many computer users, defined by Trend Micro as "... a blanket term for all applications that cause annoying and possibly undesirable or unforeseen behavior in the way programs run", and includes such items as adware, dialers, hacking tools, joke programs, remote access programs, and some forms of spyware; these are generally considered as minor threats, but may increase the risk of other vulnerabilities. Grayware can also be a privacy threat in that it commonly gathers personal information such as websites visited, and provides this information to



**Scan Your PC:**  
Ease your mind and scan your PC for viruses and spyware.  
 [Scan Now. It's Free!](#)

Please note that by scanning you are agreeing to all of the terms and conditions in the Trend Micro, Inc. License Agreement. [Click here](#) to read the agreement

Available online as version 6.5 (as I type this), HouseCall is among the first of the free online scan utilities that can run either as an Active X application on Internet Explorer, or as a Java application under Firefox. HouseCall will run on Windows operating systems from 98SE to XP (including the new XP Media Center 2005), as well as on Linux (with "libc6"), and Solaris 2.6 and above.

HouseCall is started by simply going to the traditional HouseCall address at [HouseCall.antivirus.com](http://HouseCall.antivirus.com) (there is no "www"). At the opening screen will be a

third parties. HouseCall can also repair much of the damage that the malware may have done to the system.

If a full scan is selected (fourth page), there is also an option to check

(Continued to page 8)



## Informative Tech News

by Bob Elgines; CRCC Editor;  
elginesz@rraz.net

**More Free Spyware** — There is another one out there like Spybot called SpyBlaster which can be downloaded at: [www.javacoolsoftware.com](http://www.javacoolsoftware.com). There is a slight catch, you will need to manually update, unless you pay \$10 for an automatically updated subscription. This, unlike Spybot, will prevent installation of spyware.

**PCI Express vs AGP-8X Graphic Cards** — Are they here to stay? The PCI-Express cards are about the same speed and higher in price. So don't run out and change your motherboard to accommodate the PCI-Express. The only difference right now is the bandwidth, but there are no programs out there to use this advantage. Its main use would be in Gaming.

**Windows 2000 Info!** — Microsoft released an update containing a collection of previous patches. The final service pack for Windows 2000 is SP4, which was released in March, 2003. Support for Windows 2000 will end in 2010.

**What is "Windows XP N"?** — Windows XP N is a version without the MS Media Player. Windows XP Home (the standard version) sells for the same price.

**What is "Windows XP Media"?** — Basically the standard home version with all of the latest photo, music, and movie enhancement pack. This includes such things as Plus!Photo Story, Media Player, Movie Maker, etc. These items can be downloaded from Microsoft for free in most cases.

**New Microsoft Windows Software**

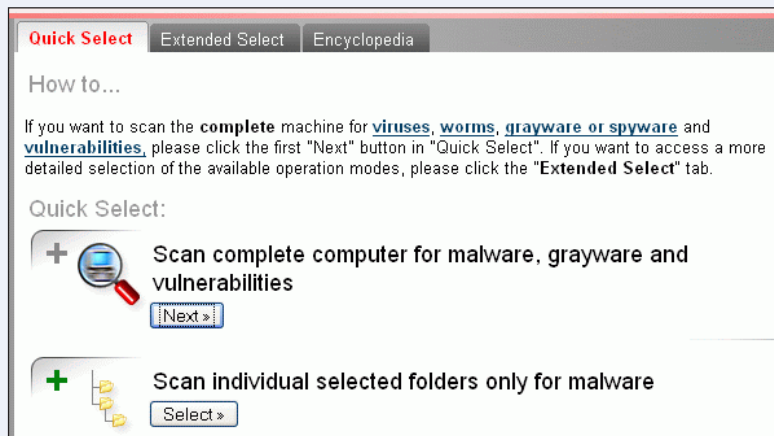
— Microsoft's new operating system called "Longhorn" has been officially named "Windows Vista," and is set to be released to the public in 2006. The three new goals are summarized as Clear (new methods), Confident (better security) and Connected (seamless) by Microsoft developers.

**New WD Hard Drive** — Western Digital released a new high-class series of Caviar drives and announced a new high capacity drive of 400 GB SATA (Serial). This drive has a speed of 7200 rpm, 16 MB of cache, and a transfer rate of 150 MBps. The WD Caviar SE16 400 GB is priced at approximately \$280 with a three year warranty.

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## TrendMicro...

(Continued from page 6)



for known vulnerabilities in installed programs, and connected network services. At the top of each of the HouseCall pages is a tab which will open the HouseCall virus encyclopedia, which is a comprehensive source of information about the tens of thousands of malware products threatening our computers. This is where any malware found by a HouseCall scan can be researched, and will provide information on any damage or security threat that the malware may have caused, as well as steps to mitigate or repair such damage. If one of the types of damage listed for a virus found by HouseCall is the destruction of the type of antivirus software that is installed on the computer, this will be the notice that it is imperative to reinstall the antivirus software, and update it immediately after the threat is removed.

HouseCall downloads a kernel, or software component, from the Trend Micro server to the computer, and then proceeds to run the scan utilizing the latest updates of virus information available. HouseCall is always continuously updated, and as up-to-date as possible. The speed of the download and the scan is dependent on the speed of the internet connection, and the size and speed of the computer, and could take an hour or two to download and run with a dial-up connection and a slow computer, or less time with a broadband connection and a fast computer. This may be one of the best investments in time that any PC user can make.

I try to do a HouseCall scan on a weekly basis to verify my computer security and to give me the peace of mind that a secure computer can provide.



# Ram & Reason: A Virus and Incident Checklist

by Rob Rice, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Much has been said about virus and malicious software prevention, but what if all of your precautions fail? So there you are, happily clicking along the Internet when suddenly a popup ad obstructs your view. You start to close it and then another and then another pops up so that in just a few seconds there are so many pop-up ads that you cannot possibly close them all as they just keep coming. So what do you? Delete them as fast as you can in hopes that they will stop? Turn off the computer? Suddenly a program appears from nowhere and informs you that you have been infected with a trojan virus and the program needs to scan your system so that the trojan can be removed. The problem is that you do not remember ever having installed this program. Do you trust it?

**There are some industry-accepted procedures for dealing with this type of incident and any virus or trojan infection. Just follow these five simple steps in the following order to minimize damage:**

**1. Do not turn off your computer unless you are certain that your files are being actively deleted!**

**2. Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection.**

**3. Write down any error messages and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred.**

**4. Mark the computer "Do Not Use".**

**5. Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened identifying a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus, anti-trojan tools.**

## **Step One:**

Do not turn off your computer. Not every trojan and virus is the same so this rule will have exceptions, but generally you do not want to turn off the computer unless you can see that the virus is deleting your files. If you think that it can be stopped from deleting your files without turning off the computer, then this is a better option than turning off the computer. The reason is that while turning the computer off will temporarily stop the damage more harm can come when you turn the computer back on. System files can be infected when loading, boot sectors contaminated, hard drive partitions erased, registries corrupted. For example, on a Windows system every time you make a major system change one of the first things that it wants you to do is reboot, "To allow the changes to take affect". In the case of a virus or trojan, the last thing we want to do is to allow the changes to take affect.

## **Step Two:**

Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection. Trojans are designed to open a door and let other trojans, spyware and viruses in. Physically disconnecting its link to the Internet stops this behavior, prevents your personnel information from going out and prevents other machines from being infected. Many checklists have this action rated number one and for good reasons. I rate it here as step two because step one is simply a quick decision that can have a significant impact on the recovery outcome.

## **Step Three:**

Write down any error messages that appear and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred. This is important



not only for repairing the system but also for identifying which alerts are real and which ones are bogus. Error messages that contain misspellings and poor grammar are likely bogus and generated by the virus.

## **Step Four:**

Mark the computer "Do Not Use". This is in case you get called away and have to leave the system alone for any length of time.

## **Step Five:**

Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened to identify a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus anti-trojan tools.

It's possible that your antivirus or anti-trojan software may have detected the attack and started running a system scan or is prompting you and waiting for instructions. If you are certain that it is your software then let it do what it wants to do and let it clean the system. If you have any doubts as to whether the program is in fact one of your programs then **DO NOT RUN THE SOFTWARE!**

Some trojans actually install and run a program pretending to be antivirus/anti-trojan software and scan your system all the while claiming to be cleaning your computer. In reality it is part of the trojan. Some of these programs look very commercial and very polished so be careful!

(Continued to page 11)



### Part 3

## Don't be a loser at the rebate games

by Jim Sanders, NOCCC



Jim Sanders

Last month I told the story about the year long, single rebate number, that was offered through several retailers with differing offer dates. The differing offer dates give the impression that it is a new rebate at a different store. In reality it was the same rebate offer and if you bought a second DRU800A DVD burner from any of those retailers during that one year period, your rebate submission was denied. I am trying to find out if the corporate headquarters of a couple of those stores was aware of the (insert your own words here that describes the SONY offer) that SONY was running.

In last month's Part2, I said that I had listed all the ways that I could think of that "they" use to make it difficult to get your rebate in Part1, and the SONY gotcha was a new one. This month I ran into a new and arrogant twist on an old gotcha. The Fry's Electronics Friday 9/16/05 ad included an offer for an Ultra X-Connect 500 watt power supply for \$24.99 after a \$40 and a \$10 rebate. I did a quick Google search and found some positive reviews, good pictures of the outside, the inside, the modular cable connection system, and the UV active modular cables. The street price was quoted as being anywhere from \$100 to \$130. The one significant negative listed was the lack of a 2x12, 24 pin main power connector that a number

of the latest high performance motherboards require. One site said the company was addressing that issue by offering a special 2x12, 24 pin cable by mail order.

As is common with rebate offers, this seemed like a great deal on a nice power supply. As my travels were going to take me by the store anyway, I decided it was too good of a deal to pass up even if I did have to hassle doing two rebates. So I get to the store and pass the first test, they still have it in stock. It is a large, shrink wrapped, sealed box with nice full color printing and pictures of the contents on the outside and surprisingly heavy, all positive signs. A quick perusal of the box finds the expected 'Made in China' notice and the price tag that states the regular price on the unit is \$89.99. So the unit is on sale for \$74.99 plus tax of \$5.81, minus \$50 in rebates, for a total of \$30.80, plus the \$0.37 stamp and the hassle of doing the paper work, still, it should be worth it. Famous last words!

All the new technologies, high bandwidth satellites, very high bandwidth fiber-optics, VoIP and data compression, computer redirection, etc., have made the cost of long distance communication very affordable. This is especially true for large companies that can buy time in bulk. There has been considerable comment about how a lot of companies like AOL, have been using this new technology to out-source their support functions to companies in India. So when you call for help and

the phone is answered with "Hi, This is Dorothy, how can I help you?" and the accent is a little strange, it is because Dorothy isn't in Kansas. In fact you may be talking to Asvika Patel in Bombay or some other city in India that happens to like Dorothy as her phone name because she saw "The Wizard of Oz." I get the impression that Fry's has reversed that procedure. Instead of outsourcing, it is doing 'insourcing' from India for their cashiers.

I knew I was in trouble when I went to Mr. Patel's register and a co-worker (and apparent fellow countryman) is whispering in his ear to explain what to do next. The bar code reader made totaling my purchases fairly easy, but verifying and entering the check information was a challenge. Some mis-stroke on the keyboard resulted in a termination of the session without printing a receipt. This required calling supervisor Ms. Perez. She talked for a minute and did something to cause the system to print out a receipt. She said something that I didn't catch and took off with the receipt. I thought she was going after the rebate forms. After a couple of minutes, Mr. Patel indicated I was supposed to have followed Ms. Perez to the front door. Seems what she printed was a 'REPRINT' receipt that wouldn't get me past the guard at the door without her being there to authenticate that everything was cool. I informed Mr. Patel that I wasn't going anywhere without my rebate forms. The co-worker helps press the right keys and the receipt printer spews out a couple

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## Windows Recovery or Restore Disks: Problems and Alternatives

by Vic Laurie, Princeton PCUG, New Jersey, [victor@vlaur.com](mailto:victor@vlaur.com)

Once upon a time you received a copy of a full Windows installation disk when you bought a computer. This allowed you to reinstall individual system files or Windows components if anything went wrong. But no longer. These days the best you can hope for from many vendors is a so-called “recovery” or “restore” disk”. And many major vendors do not even provide that much. Instead they put stuff on a hidden partition on the hard drive. This is all the backup that you get, and if the hard drive crashes, the hidden partition goes too. Then you have no way of reinstalling Windows on a replacement hard drive without getting a disk from the original PC vendor. From what I read on the Web, this last process can take some time and effort, if you succeed at all. If you are out of the warranty period, you may be completely out of luck.

Some vendors may provide a Windows disk when you buy a PC if they are prodded hard enough. However, there may be some kind of “handling and shipping” fee. Note that, if you do finally get a disk, it will probably be an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) version and may lack some features of a full-fledged version. Also OEM versions of Windows are often not eligible for upgrades.

The failure to provide an actual Windows installation disk with new computers is convenient for Microsoft and the computer vendors but can be a real problem for the PC user. There are many problems that can be fixed by copying a single system file or reinstalling small portions of the Windows operating system. Without an installation disk, PC users need to have some other source for these files. If you put a recovery disk into your CD drive, it will want to reformat your hard drive and reinstall an image of your computer that is a replica of the way your system was on the day you bought it. Any changes that you have made will be wiped out. All those programs you installed, all those Microsoft patches, XP SP2, all of it will be gone. The same thing applies when you restore from one of those hidden partitions.

Therefore, an alternative is needed. At the very least, a source of files for adding and removing Windows components and restoring corrupted files should be available. Sometimes the vendor will have put the Windows installation files in the root of your hard drive or in the Windows folder. In Windows XP look for a folder named “I386” (without the quotes). If you do have one of these folders, burn a copy to a CD for backup. This CD will not have all the functions of an installation CD since it will not auto-run nor will it boot. However, reinstallation can be initiated by clicking the file Winnt32.exe (assuming that you can get your system to boot). If you have a FAT32 disk and can use DOS, Winnt.exe is the appropriate file to access from a DOS boot disk.

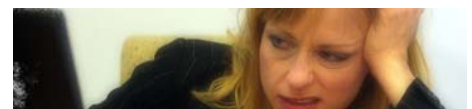
A problem is that you will have a disk that lacks any of the multitudes of

patches and updates that will have come out since you bought your computer. Therefore, you need to “slipstream” with the XP SP2 update. Slipstreaming is a way of merging updates with the original files so that everything is updated. This is not a quick job but it is worth doing. An excellent detailed step-by-step procedure is given at the Elder Geek site. If you can borrow a Windows XP installation disk (almost any version will do) you can extract the image that is needed to make the CD bootable and add that to the disk. Details for using common CD burning software to do all this is given at the reference cited above.

One more problem can be getting the Windows XP product key for your system. It may be pasted or written somewhere in the documentation that came with your computer. Be sure to make a permanent record of it. If you cannot find the product key, there are several free applications that will retrieve it from your system. One is ViewKeyXP. Another is Keyfinder. Also, system information applications like Belarc Adviser can reveal the key.

At the end, you will still have something that provides backup only

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## Ram & Reason...

(Continued from page 9)

Rob Rice is a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at [articles@isp.com](mailto:articles@isp.com). There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



# Open Source software opens up

by Orv Beach

Open Source software is programming code that's generally available at no cost to you. But we should draw a distinction between "freeware" and Open Source programs. The premise of Open Source (and, hence the name) is that the source code of the program is available to you. That's not so much so YOU can modify it (although you could and are free to if you knew how). It's more in order to place the program in "public escrow". Once a program has been licensed under the GPL (General Public License), it can never be retracted, and thus never orphaned. That's an advantage for both individual users and companies; you don't have to worry about future forced upgrades by your software vendor! This licensing arrangement also encourages community development. Coders add features, fix bugs and document applications and return those improvements to the users.

**As a result, Open Source software continues to gain in popularity. The best current examples are probably the Firefox browser, and the OpenOffice office suite.**

(This article was written in OpenOffice.). Both are popular and powerful applications that run equally well on several operating systems. Firefox is generally faster than Internet Explorer, and arguably more secure. Tabbed browsing and a wide array of theme choices are popular features. Patches are generally provided very quickly to rectify any security problem that might appear in contrast to the relatively slow pace of fixes for commercial code. OpenOffice has improved in functionality, and in compatibility with Microsoft Office since its first release about two years ago. It can read from

and write to Word, PowerPoint and Excel formats, compose HTML documents and output to Flash and Acrobat files. Need more? How about a database? Both applications are frequently updated; current version for Firefox is 1.5, OpenOffice, 2.0.1. Best of all, both are free for the downloading.

Some other good examples of Open Source software available for both Windows and Linux are:

- GAIM, the "multi-protocol" instant messaging program
- The GIMP, a great graphics editing program
- Blender, a 3D modeling and animation program

There are Windows applications with no perfect analog in Linux, but the situation is improving daily. Linux has matured in all desktop areas. For example, multimedia programs for manipulating graphics or editing video and audio are often on par with their commercial counterparts. In fact, Linux "distributions" either come with all that good stuff, or if not, they can be downloaded separately. The distributions range from completely free via downloaded CD images, or inexpensively purchased, with some customer support and documentation included. Much of the differentiation between these distributions (Fedora, Ubuntu, SuSE) lies in the graphical installer and system tools, driving development of a more user-friendly experience for even a novice.

Due to the inherent security in Linux, occurrences of viruses happen about once a decade. Spyware, or malware programs aren't a problem because they can't install themselves.

And Linux is stable; it doesn't crash very often. If you leave your Linux box running, several months later you'll realize it's still running, and

hasn't had to be rebooted.

If you'd like to experiment with Linux, but don't want to commit to loading it on a computer, there are "Live CDs" available. These are bootable Linux CDs – everything runs off the CD rather than from a hard disk. This allows you to "try before you install". I'd say "try before you buy", but the buying is optional! Some examples of bootable Linux CDs are Knoppix and Mepis,

If you're still dependent on some Windows applications, or want to be able to use both Windows and Linux, you can "dual-boot" your computer.



That means putting both Windows and Linux on the same hard drive (or separate ones), and when you boot, be able to select which operating system will boot. That gives you a lot of flexibility in what you can do with your computer.

Linux isn't perfect; there are some shortcomings:

- Administration of a Linux system is different (not harder, just different); the methods for installing and upgrading programs have to be learned.
- High end games aren't as widely available for Linux (exceptions include the iD series—Doom & Quake—as well as Unreal Tournament).
- Personal Finance is still weak; there's no direct equivalent for Quicken (although GNUCash is very usable, and of course free to try).

(Continued to page 13)

## Internet Humor



Submitted by Tony Lake

### Why people leave home and move to Southern California

#### Rebate games...

(Continued from page 10)

of rebate forms. One of 27 inches and the other of 29 inches in length.

Knowing that Ms. Perez is waiting for me to show up at the exit, and at the same time, knowing I need to check the fine print, I start reading the five feet of forms as I push my cart to the exit. After only a few minor collisions, just as I get to Ms. Perez, I notice both forms say; "You must include the original UPC CODE that came with the package." I point this out to Ms. Perez and she says; "Well, maybe they have two UPC codes on the box." Wrong! So I say; "This needs to be resolved before I leave!" At this point she takes me back to talk

to rebate person Ms. E. Lloyd, whose comment is that obviously one of them has to be a copy. I point out the sentences that say; "The materials and information listed below are required prior to rebate payment. Failure to submit any of the following items will delay or prevent rebate payment." One of those items, of course, is the original UPC CODE from the box. So she blows me off with; "Just send in the copy. If you have any trouble, come back and see us." Except for the fact that all this makes good fodder for the article, it is probably a very good thing that she couldn't hear what I thought of her advice. I will let you know what happens.

#### Open Source...

(Continued from page 12)

##### Hardware requirements

For good results a modern "full house" installation of Linux intended for desktop use should be installed on a computer that has the following characteristics: 800 MHz CPU (faster is better, of course), 6-10 Gigs of disk space, Minimum 256 Megs of RAM (512 Megs is better if you're going to have more than a couple of large applications open at the same time); A

video card with 8 Megs of RAM or better (shared RAM is ok, if that's the type of video your computer has; A 17" or larger monitor; audio card & speakers.

Note: Inexpensive WinModems are not well supported; neither are WinPrinters; the inexpensive ones that require the CPU to do all the formatting.

Summary: Linux is easy to install, the applications are easy to use, but the system administration is different

than Windows (some would say it's still more difficult than it should be), but like other areas of Linux, it's improving steadily.

Linux puts the "fun" back in computing! Try it! Grab a copy and install it. The only thing you'll spend is some time, and just think of the hardware upgrades you can buy with the money you saved on software!

#### Windows recovery...

(Continued from page 10)

for the Windows operating system. Since I want to be able to restore everything, including software that I have installed, I prefer to spend a few dollars and use disk imaging software. It makes keeping up-to-date backups on CDs or other external media very easy. Norton Ghost, BootIt Next Generation or Acronis True Image are all reasonable choices.

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#### What is pink, in a can, and 28 years old...?



Just kidding about being pink and in a can! The first known spam email was sent in America in 1978. It advertised a new computer and went to several hundred users on what was then known as Apranet. —LG

### THANK YOU!

#### Newsletter Contributors

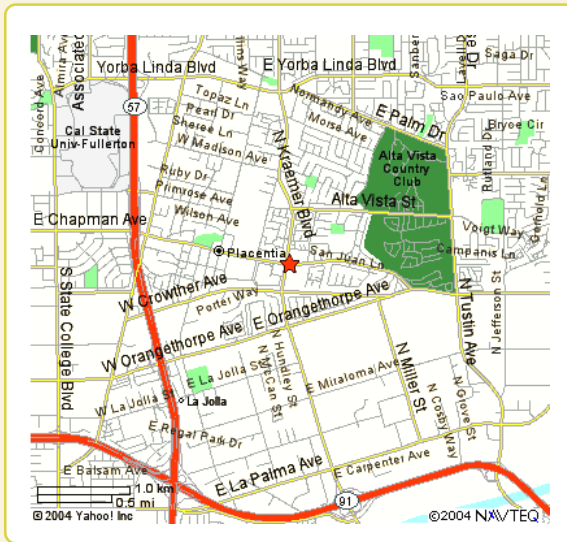
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Newsletter Deadline  
**January 21**  
for February Issue

## The Public Is Welcome! Meetings Are FREE!

The Orange County IBM PC Users' Group regular meeting is scheduled for 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**. The library is 0.4 miles east of Kraemer Blvd. Call (714) 990-0580, for info, or go to [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org).

**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 invited to attend the planning meetings!



## Benefits of Being a User Group Member

- Product & "How To" demos
- Free raffles and magazines
- Help from other members
- Newsletter and web site
- Special offers & discounts
- Monthly meetings
- Affiliation with worldwide group

**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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Send a printed copy of this newsletter to a friend. Use this mailing sheet for the address. Staple newsletter together at top left corner with this last page facing out. Fold in half, so this page is visible. Tape ends together, stamp and mail.

6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 10

Antics 3D

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**IBM PC Users' Group**

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