NIBBLES & BITS

Orange County IBM PC Users' Group

MARCH PROGRAM

Save money on software and hardware by using PriceGrabber

A representative from PriceGrabber.com will be on hand at our March 11 meeting to show us how PriceGrabber can save computer users money and take the effort out of comparison shopping for computer equipment and software.

Pam Swathmore, Communications Manager at PriceGrabber, told us that the company was founded in March 1999 with a single goal — to provide online buyers with the best and most complete information about computer products.

The company has since expanded its product coverage to include software, consumer electronics, DVD and VHS movies, music, books and PC and video console games. Additional product channels will be added, based on their popularity and the availability of the products.

PriceGrabber displays huge amounts of merchants' information in a clear and organized way on the company's web site and is a leading online shopping guide for millions of active buyers. Besides complete product and shopping information, PriceGrabber supplies: BottomLinePrice™, technical specifications, professional and consumer product reviews, side-by-side product comparisons, merchant reviews, and uses email notification for the best prices.

Yahoo! Internet Life, the world's largest consumer lifestyle magazine, recently selected it as Best Shopping Comparison Site 1.

At PriceGrabber, users have the ability to filter through results during product category searches using specific product traits or features. The resulting list will contain only products that meet the shopper's criteria. For example, while reviewing televisions, the shopper can specify the screen size, input/output support, manufacturer, price, etc. and thus narrow the range of products presented. In addition, buyer's can perform side-by-side product comparisons to evaluate products feature-by-feature and decide which will best meet their needs.

Buyers are encouraged to write reviews of products listed on the site and rate them on PriceGrabber's five star rating system to help future shoppers make purchase decisions.

Users are also encouraged to report on their experiences with merchants found through PriceGrabber. If a merchant receives excessive negative feedback, PriceGrabber will

March 2003
Volume 21 - Number 3

Award Winning Newsletter

Notepad

by Linda Gonse
editor@orcopug.org

This month, I'm ceding this column's space to an excellent article about buying a laptop computer (see article at right). Along with the author, I have been asked if buying a laptop is a good thing. This article may help you decide. It is brought to you by The Association for Computer Users' Groups, to which this group belongs.

Letters to the editor

■ Member says "good-bye"

Thank you for all the help you have given me over the years. Since we moved to Wrightwood, it is just too far for me to come to the meetings. So I would like to resign from your club. I do appreciate all the help from everyone.

Trudy Morrill-Ives
morrswiss1@earthlink.net

■ Popups get nastier

Check out this link… *http://news.com .com/2100-1023-978616.html.*

Describes popups that activate just by passing the mouse cursor over the window! Moving your mouse over the window to click the "X" in the upper right corner will instead take you to the advertiser's site. Bleeeagh!

Ted Wirtz
twirtz@pacbell.net

■ APC swap meet date changed

On page 6 of the February newsletter, the "Giant Computer Swap Meet" is listed for March 23, 2003. It has been changed to April 6, 2003. Also May

2003 is changed to June 15, 2003.

These changes were necessitated by the vendors…to eliminate conflict with other shows.

Charlie Moore
charlie@orcopug.org

Time to consider a laptop computer?

by Ira Wilsker, ira@apcug.org

One of the questions I often have been asked on my weekly radio shows, and emails from readers of this column is, "What would be better (for me); a new laptop or a desktop computer?"

A simple review of the Sunday sale-books from the major office supply and electronics stores clearly shows that there is an abundant supply of notebook computers available. Standing in the security lines at the major airports also shows the popularity of notebook computers.

So, which one is better? Desktop or notebook? As I have consistently replied, "What are you going to use it for?"

If a computer is intended for home or office use, likely in one location for a period of time, a desktop computer is more practical. Usability features, such as a full size keyboard, large screen monitor, and readily accessible drives, coupled with significantly lower prices for comparable machines, make the desktop the clear choice in this scenario. Another factor is longevity. The average useful life of a desktop computer, according to both personal experience and published reports, is typically four to six years. Desktop computers are also usually easy and relatively inexpensive to upgrade or repair. The average desktop computer becomes functionally obsolete long before it physically fails.

Notebook computers, commonly called "laptops" by many, have some very strong advantages, compared to

desktop computers, as well as some very strong disadvantages. The obvious advantage of a notebook computer is portability. At Golden Triangle PC Club meetings, when I would have to present, I would often have to drag my desktop from home to the meeting place; it was heavy, bulky, and easy to break. Lugging around the computer, monitor, keyboard, and mouse was a headache. I was not the

February raffle winners named

Stardock Window Blinds, $49*
Terry Terrazas, Not Present
Jim Curtin, Not Present
Stan Leese, Winner

PQ DriveImage 2002, $35*
Don Gilbert, Not Present
Walter Jackson, Winner

PQ DriveImage 2002, $35*
Harold Wann, Not Present
Glenn Emigh, Not Present
Gary Covington III, Winner

Broderbund Movie Shop, $69*
Leroy Kaump, Not Present
Donald Bickel, Winner

Discovering Hard Drive video, $20*
John Bednarski, Expired
Frank Balazs, Not Present
Linda Gonse, Not Present
Ralph Seymous, Winner

Extreme Media CD Maker, $49*
Ted Wirtz, Winner

Avery DesignPro, $20*
Sharon Graham, Not Present
Sid Liptz, Not Present
Greg Koch, Winner

Quick & Easy Spanish, $10*
Joe Gionet, Not Present
Linda Gonse, Not Present
Trudy Morrill-Ives, Expired
Harold Wann, Not Present
Donald Bickel, Prev. Winner
Jim Curtin, Not Present
Herman Beverburg, Winner

Handspring cap, $5*
Walter Jackson, Prev. Winner
Leroy Kaump, Not Present
Terry Terrazas, Not Present
Charles Burgwin, Winner

Letters & Numbers, $10*
Leroy Kaump, Not Present
Frank Balazs, Not Present
Sid Liptz, Not Present
Lloyd Boutwell, Winner

Handspring frisbee, $5*
Ted Wirtz, Prev. Winner
Sid Liptz, Not Present
Terry Terrazas, Not Present
Leroy Kaump, Not Present
Carl Westberg, Winner

SAMS Teach Yourself Adobe LiveMotion, $25*
Frank Balazs, Not Present
Tony Lake, Winner

*Estimated value

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Member passes away

Long time member Bill La Mont passed away February 21, 2003. Memorial services were held at Calvary Baptist Church in Anaheim.

Some of us will remember Bill for his jokes, continuing presence at meetings, and the surprising new hair growth on his head! We'll miss him.

Laptop computer

only one hauling a monster around. For a while, I had a "lunchbox" computer that I used for my presentations. It contained a standard sized PC motherboard, hard drive, floppy, and other internal parts, along with an integral 7" monitor. The keyboard snapped over the front of the computer, closing it. While mine was a home built, no-name generic, it was the early lunchbox computers that gave Houston's Compaq its early competitive edge. While still large and heavy, it was portable.

Today's notebook computers are a far cry from my long-gone lunchbox. They are a fraction of the size and weight of the old lunchbox machines, but contrary to other high-tech

electronic items, have not dropped substantially in price. Feature for feature, it is not rare for a notebook to be twice the price of a comparably equipped desktop computer. The relatively small size, and light weight is what makes today's notebook computer popular. They are convenient portable, and can often run for a few hours on their internal battery, but those are about their only major advantages. For those who need portability, such as businesspersons who travel and need computing power, or people like me who frequently do presentations, a notebook computer is a near necessity. For those who want the power of a modern PC, in an even smaller and lighter package, the next generation of "Pocket PCs" is

PriceGrabber

investigate. If a merchant does not adhere to good business practice, they are removed from the merchant list.

Finally, PriceGrabber's notification feature makes shopping online easier, because buyers may track pricing and availability of any product in the PriceGrabber database. The buyer customizes a shopping agent to "watch" a product until it reaches a desired price. The agent then notifies the buyer via email, with a link back to the product on the PriceGrabber site when a price hits the target.

Members' Renewal Dates

FEBRUARY — John Bednarski
MARCH — Frank Balazs, Sharon Graham
APRIL — Joe Holtz, Lothar Loehr, David Musser, Dan Sheffield
MAY — Lloyd Boutwell, Terry Schiele, Harold Wann
JUNE — Dan Cadish, Don & Jane Gilbert, Richard Metzger, Terry Terrazas

Submitted by Charlie Moore

Members' email directory

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Wirtz, Ted
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If you would like your name and email address added to the members' directory, please email your request to me: *editor@orcopug.org.*

Don't miss ORCOPUG news & announcements

If you aren't receiving your mailed or emailed information and announcements, you may need to update your addresses. Please send updates to Charlie Moore, Treasurer/Membership Chairman, at *charlie@orcopug.org.*

————

A complex system that does not work is invariably found to have evolved from a simpler system that worked just fine!

Submitted by Anita Leicht

Heartland Regional UG Conference scheduled

by Peter Hess, Co-Chairman, Heartland Regional User Group Conference @ Computerfest

The second annual Heartland Regional User Group Conference and Computer fest is set for Friday through Sunday, March 14–16, at the Dayton Airport Hotel in Dayton, Ohio.

The event is hosted by the Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc. with support from The Association of Personal Computer User Groups, Inc.

Any active member of a computer or software user group is welcome to attend.

For more information about the Heartland Regional User Group Conference @ Computerfest®, please visit the web site: *www.heartland conference.net* or email *ask-heartland @computerfest.com.*

Membership Application

New Member ☐   **Renewal*** ☐

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

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 for meeting location and map, program announcements and contact information.

Make check payable to ORCOPUG
Mail to ORCOPUG, P.O. BOX 716, Brea, California 92822-0716

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

What do you know about the Registry?

Simply speaking, the Registry is a database of nearly all the settings for your Windows operating system and your installed applications (programs).

Where can the Registry be found?

In Windows 95, 98, and Me, the Registry is contained in two hidden files in your Windows directory, called USER.DAT and SYSTEM.DAT. In Windows 2000 and Windows XP, the Registry is stored in several hives, located in the \windows\system32\config and \Documents and Settings\{username} folders.

How is the Registry constructed?

The Registry directory structure looks like the one in Explorer. Each branch (which appears as a folder icon in the Registry Editor) is called a Key. Each Key can contain other Keys (displayed as subfolders), as well as Values. Each Value contains the actual information stored in the Registry.

There are three types of values; String, Binary, and Word which vary according to their use.

Following are the names of the six main branches (five in Windows 2000 and Windows XP) of the Registry, and a description of the information contained in each one.

1. HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT — Contains all of your file types as well as OLE information for all your OLE-aware applications.
2. HKEY_CURRENT_USER — Points to the part of HKEY_USERS appropriate for the current user.
3. HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE — Contains information about all of the hardware and software installed on your computer. You can specify multiple hardware configurations so the current hardware configuration is specified in HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG.
4. HKEY_USERS — Contains certain preferences (such as colors and control panel settings) for each of the users of the computer. In Windows 95/98/Me, the default branch here contains the currently-logged in user. In Windows 2000/XP, the default branch here contains a template to be used for newly-added users.
5. HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG — Points to the part of HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE appropriate for the current hardware configuration.
6. HKEY_DYN_DATA (Windows 95/98/Me only) — Points to the part of HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE for use with Windows' Plug-&-Play subsystem.

A word of caution: You should **always back up** the Registry before making any changes to it, because any mistake you make could keep your system from booting up or running. If you backup the Registry before doing anything to it, you can eliminate major problems. (To backup the Registry in Windows 95/98/Me, make copies of the Registry files. In Windows 2000 and Windows XP, you'll need special backup software to make a complete Registry backup.)

Things computers can do in movies

1. Word processors never display a cursor.
2. You never have to use the space-bar when typing long sentences.
3. Movie characters never make typing mistakes.
4. All monitors display inch-high letters.
5. High-tech computers, such as those used by NASA, the CIA or some such governmental institution, will have easy to understand graphical interfaces.
6. Those that don't have graphical interfaces will have incredibly powerful text-based command shells that can correctly understand and execute commands typed in plain English.
7. Note: Command line interfaces will give you access to any information you want by simply typing, "ACCESS THE SECRET FILES" on any nearby keyboard.
8. You can also infect a computer with a destructive virus by simply typing "UPLOAD VIRUS". (See "Fortress".)
9. All computers are connected. You can access the information on the villain's desktop computer even if it's turned off. (See "True Lies").
10. Powerful computers beep whenever you press a key or the screen changes. Some computers also slow down the output on the screen so that it doesn't go faster than you can read. (Really advanced computers will also emulate the sound of a dot-matrix printer.)
11. All computer panels operate on thousands of volts and have explosive devices underneath their surface. Malfunctions are indicated by a bright flash of light, a puff of smoke, a shower of sparks and an explosion that causes you to jump backwards.
12 People typing on a computer can safely turn it off without saving the data.
13. A hacker is always able to break into the most sensitive computer in the

User group deals

Magazine discounts just for computer user groups

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
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Computer Shopper	$16.97	$32.95	$47.95
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Maximum PC	$ 9.95	$18.95	
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PC Gamer	$11.95		
PC Magazine	$25.97	$48.95	$68.95
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Revised 9/27/2002

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   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. As an extra service I will mail a renewal notice to every subscriber about 3 months prior to their expiration date.

Submitted by Carl Westberg

Partition Magic 8 is offered at UG discount price

by Gene Barlow

PowerQuest Corporation recently announced a new version of their highly popular product, Partition Magic. Version 8 is a significant new release of this excellent product and one you should have on your system.

   If you have purchased from us in the past at the user group discount price, you can now purchase PartitionMagic v8 for only $35. The normal list price is $69.95 and the upgrade price is $49.95, so the user group price is the best you will find on this outstanding product. To order your copy, simply access our secure web order form at *www.ugr.com/order* and complete the form using the special code — UGPM8ANN. We have product available to ship immediately and you should have your package in 2-3 days. Don't delay. Order now to get your copy of PartitionMagic v8.

   While you are at our web site you should also check out the excellent prices we offer on many other exciting hard drive utilities. As a special offer, you can purchase our four most popular products for just $99, an even greater savings. If you have questions about the products or how to order them, please contact me at *gene@ugr.com* and I'll try to respond promptly to your questions.

20% off MS Press books

User group members are entitled to 20% off all Microsoft Press books. To receive your discount, place your orders by phone by calling 1-800-MSPRESS. Give them the code **MCPC** to identify yourself as a user group member and receive 20% off.

More on TAX SOFTWARE, RECALLS and SCAMS

by Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club

Last week in the *Examiner*, I had a column on the two most popular income tax software preparation programs, H&R Block's TaxCut, and Intuit's TurboTax. Since I wrote that column, some new information has been released.

First, the good news; the IRS recently announced a program that may allow millions more taxpayers to calculate their taxes online for free, and file them at no charge with the IRS on the IRS E-FILE system. The IRS has created the "Free File Alliance," a cooperative arrangement between the IRS and several private organizations to provide free online federal income tax preparation services to qualified individuals, along with free electronic filing. The goal of the IRS and the alliance is, according to the IRS website, to "…provide free tax preparation and filing to at least 60 percent of the American taxpayers, or approximately 78 million people."

Generally, those using the short 1040EZ form qualify, but each provider is free to set their own qualifications. H&R Block is offering the free service to eligible taxpayers with an adjusted gross income of less than $28,000, and Intuit is offering its online version of TurboTax free to qualified individuals with an adjusted gross income less than $27,000, or to most taxpayers qualified for the "Earned Income Tax Credit." Some companies, such as "TaxSlayer" are offering free services to all active duty military personnel. Another company, "TaxAct", is offering the services to individuals with an income greater than $100,000. "TaxBrain" is offering the service to most taxpayers over the age of 50, while "OnlineTaxes" is offering the service free to anyone younger than 20.

Some other providers are offering free services to all residents of specific states, but so far, Texas and Louisiana are not listed. A full list of free providers, and their individual eligibility requirements is available online at *http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp*. While this is an online program, requiring internet access, it is accessible from public computers commonly available in libraries, schools, and other public places with internet access. Several community service agencies, including many religious organizations, will also be providing public access to the service.

According to the IRS website at www.irs.gov, those eligible will benefit by quicker tax preparation, faster refunds, built in accuracy and error checking, and acknowledgement of receipt of electronically filed forms. The private providers of the service have pledged to strictly respect the privacy and confidentiality of filers.

Now, there is some possible bad news about one of the popular income tax programs, TurboTax, regarding a controversy about a utility included in TurboTax. Several media websites are reporting that TurboTax is using a product activation and copy protection system called "Safecast" or "C-Dill.a" A product key based on the computer's configuration is transmitted to Intuit once the software is installed, and Intuit sends back a code that unlocks the software. Safecast possibly prevents the software from being run on a computer after that machine has been upgraded, and monitors the CD-RW drive, preventing backup copies of the CD.

Concerns have also been expressed that if a user upgrades his hardware after filing his taxes, TurboTax will only have limited functionality. Anecdotes are also appearing online that users who installed TurboTax, and recently purchased a new computer, have been unable to reinstall their TurboTax on the new computer. If installed on a new computer, some reports claim that tax forms cannot be printed or amended. Simply, taxes can be prepared and filed only from a single computer; if the computer is upgraded or replaced, TurboTax will not fully function. Safecast supposedly also monitors the computer even when TurboTax is not running, consuming about a megabyte of memory. It has also been alleged that Safecast remains on the system and monitors even if TurboTax is uninstalled. To help soothe over the controversy, Intuit, the publisher of TurboTax, recently released an uninstaller for Safecast. According to the Intuit website, the uninstaller will automatically be provided TurboTax users when the user updates the software. Intuit, which has a reputation of being responsive to consumers, says that they will monitor the situation, and respond accordingly.

Product Recall

American Power Conversion, also known as "APC", announced the recall of some if its "UPS" or uninterruptible power supply products, due to a potential fire hazard. About 900,000 of the units were sold in the US, and manufactured between November 2000, and December 2002. These UPS systems were sold through office supply and electronics stores, catalogs, and other retail outlets, and are models BACK-UPS CS 350 and 500. The recalled units can be identified by the model markings on the front, and by the serial numbers located on the bottom. Only units with serial numbers having the first six characters in the

HP launches PC recycling program with $50 incentive

HP rewards you with up to $50 when you recycle your consumer computer hardware through HP's recycle center and then purchase a new product on HPShopping. This program is designed to encourage and reward the responsible recycling of your old computer equipment. HP's state-of-the-art recycling process ensures that your unwanted hardware is recycled in a way that protects the environment and conserves resources. Offer good on recycling orders placed between February 1, 2003 and April 30, 2003.

Customers must fill out an online form *https://warp1.external.hp.com/recycle/ hardware_id.asp* and pay the Palo Alto-based computer manufacturer to pick up, transport and recycle computers or related products, including printers, servers and scanners from any manufacturer.

The cost of the 2-year-old service ranges from $17 to $30, depending on the size of the equipment to be recycled in HP's facilities near Roseville, Calif., and Nashville, Tenn.

Customers will receive e-coupons ranging from $20 to $50, depending on the amount that they spent on recycling, and the coupons will be valid on new products purchased through HP's online store. (Coupon info at: *http:// www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment/recycle/ecoupon.html)*

Values HP has placed on recycled items are: Ink printer, $20; laser printer, $30; all-in-one, $30; PC without monitor, $20; monitor, $30; scanner, $20; hand-held PDA, $20; pc with monitor, $50.

Renee St. Denis, HP's recycling manager, said the program will help HP determine how to deal with the growing problem of obsolete computer equipment. According to the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, 315 million computers are expected to become obsolete nationwide by 2004.

"This is a way to learn what our customers want," St. Denis said Wednesday. "Do they even want an incentive? Or do they just want to fill out a form and leave a box on their doorstep? We know that waste is a growing problem in the industry, but no one has really studied what consumers want to do to get rid of their computers."

"Instead of getting married again, I'm going to find a woman I don't like and just give her a house." — Steven Seagal

Submitted by Tony Lake

Hewlett-Packard Co. has launched a computer recycling incentive program that gives consumers coupons for new products if they dispose of old hardware through the company.

So you think your laptop is the fastest, huh?

Intel said it will release its notebook chip — which will be sold under the more mundane Pentium-M name — on March 12. Three versions of the Pentium M, which will run at speeds from 900 MHz to 1.6 GHz, will be released.

Unlike earlier mobile processors, which were essentially desktop chips tweaked for portables, the Pentium-M chip family is designed especially for notebooks to conserve power and lengthen battery life.

(Sign up for one of the free newsletters offered by TechWeb at *http://www.techweb.com/newsletters/)*

Tax software…

☞ *page 7*

following ranges are affected; AB0048 through AB0251, BB0104 through BB0251, and JB0125 through JB0251. Units with an "R" at the end of the serial number are not being recalled. More information on the recall can be found on the APC website at www.apc.com, or by calling APC toll-free at 866 272-7359.

Online Scam Alert

The National Council of Better Business Bureaus has issued an alert about an online service offering to file consumer complaints with the BBB and other agencies for a fee. The service calling itself "Consumer ProtectionAgency.us" is a business, not a consumer protection agency.

"There is no need for consumers to use third parties or to pay a fee in order to file a complaint with the BBB," said Ken Hunter, president and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus. This business, which uses paid sponsorships and ads on search engines under the search term "consumer protection," has an unsatisfactory rating from the BBB.

Travelers keep in touch with home using Internet cafes!

by Lothar Loehr

Everybody knows that computers and the Internet have revolutionized the world. But, one advantage of it that has not received much credit, is the impact it has on international travelers.

In the past it was difficult for anybody who traveled to underdeveloped or remote countries to keep in touch with their home base. The phone or fax was more or less the only way of fast communication. It also could get expensive — a short phone call from Mexico could cost you $30 to $50.

A typical Internet cafe in Thailand.

That all has changed with the Internet. Now you can travel anywhere in the world and you will find an Internet café. These places, which are often a very small room with some PCs or are bigger with as many as 40 or 50 PCs, are the best and easiest way of communicating. You find these Internet centers in most hotels, on cruise ships, in department stores, shopping malls or just in the street. We even found one in Ushuia, which is the most southern place in the world just by Cape Horn in Argentina.

Contrary to the high expense of phone calls in the past, the Internet connection is very inexpensive. For instance, in Ushuia we paid about 50 cents (US) for half an hour. The prices in Europe (Spain, Ireland, Germany, and some other countries) are slightly higher — but, still only about $1 for either 15 or 30 minutes of connection. In Asia, it can be a bit more of a challenge when you have to find a PC with our Engish keyboard, but it was available.

So, what can you do during that 15 or 30-minute time period? For one thing, you can access email you would have received via your home computer. We have AOL at home. It is not the most popular connection you will find, but by using any available Internet connection, you can get to your AOL account and pull up your email like you would at home. In most cases, you will have the mail on your screen within several seconds. At the most, it takes a minute or so. This way, you can communicate with your office, friends and family at home, and send and receive messages and pictures.

We found some Swedish tourist in Thailand, who were on a three month vacation in Asia and were sending pictures with comments home to their families in Sweden and all for about 50 cents (a lot cheaper and faster than mail).

One other good thing is that you don't have to worry about the time difference. Often you can have a 12 hour time difference. You send your email and they will have it the next morning.

So, on your next trip, think about it…

Lothar Loehr is ORCOPUG's Program Chairman, and a veteran world traveler. Recently, he kept in touch with our newsletter editor, by using an Internet cafe in Chile. His email is: *lothar@orcopug.org.*

Laptop computer

speculated to do to the contemporary notebook the same thing that the notebook did to the lunchbox; render them functionally obsolete. Pocket PCs will be covered in a future column.

The disadvantages of a notebook computer are many, yet still they are a necessity to many users. Other than their relatively high cost, notebook computers are also typically fragile, difficult to repair, hard to upgrade (other than swap hard drives or add memory), and according to widely published tests, have a much shorter operational lifetime than do desktop computers.

Notebooks are also subject to easy loss or theft. In a recent news article, citing a report from Safeware, an insurance company that specifically insures computers for loss or damage, notebook computers have a far higher rate of loss. In 2001, for example, Safeware states that an estimated 600,000 notebook computers were lost or stolen, up 53% from the year 2000. A large part of this increase is due to the rapid increase in sales of notebook computers.

Notebook computers are also one of the most obvious items to steal (and stolen) at airport security checkpoints, due to their small size, high value, and obvious nature. By comparison, while there is an estimated seven times as many desktop computers in use than notebooks, only 15,000 desktops were reported stolen in 2001, according to Safeware.

While there are "ruggedized" notebook computers, such as Toshiba's Toughbook series marketed to law enforcement, utility, and construction companies, the majority of notebooks are very easy to break, and expensive to repair. The notebook reviews published in the major

Did Microsoft send it?

by Siles Bazerman

Return-Path:
<**1. spar.metzger@wanadoo.fr**>Received: from mel-rto6.wanadoo.fr ([193.252.19.25]) by orval.sprint.ca (InterMail vM.5.01.02.00 201-253-122-103-101-20001108) withESMTPid
<**20030225200401.DVUI26901.orval.sprint.ca@mel-rto6.wanadoo.fr**>for <**xxxxxxxxxx@sprint.ca**>; Tue, 25 Feb 2003 15:04:01 -0500Received: from mel-rta10.wanadoo.fr (193.252.19.193) bymel-rto6.wanadoo.fr (6.7.015) id 3E0C343F02651838; Tue, 25 Feb 2003 20:59:47 +0100Received: from JJElGO (81.50.38.12) by mel-rta10.wanadoo.fr (6.7.015)id 3E26DAA6016CCA66; Tue, 25 Feb 2003 20:59:46 +0100Date: Tue, 25 Feb 2003 20:59:46 +0100 (added by **postmaster@wanadoo.fr**) Message-ID: <**3E26DAA6016CCA66@mel-rta10.wanadoo.fr**> (added by **postmaster@wanadoo.fr**) FROM: "Microsoft Corporation Internet Security Division" <**zgyegdwd201593@AvVyZc.com**> TO: "MS Customer" <SUBJECT: Newest Internet Security Update> Mime-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="cGwarduOGAAVvQYBK"

From: Microsoft Corporation Internet Security Division
To: MS Customer
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2003 2:59 PM
Subject: Newest Internet Security Update
MS Customer this is the latest version of security update, the"February 2003, Cumulative Patch" update which eliminates all known security vulnerabilities affecting Internet Explorer,Outlook and Outlook Express as well as five newly discovered vulnerabilities. Install now to protect your computerf rom these vulnerabilities, the most serious of which could allow an attacker to run executable on your system. This update includes the functionality of all previously released patches. System requirements Win 9x/Me/2000/NT/XP. This update applies to Microsoft Internet Explorer, version 4.01 and laterMicrosoft Outlook, version 8.00 and laterMicrosoft Outlook Express, version 4.01 and later.
Recommendation: Customers should install the patch at the earliest opportunity.How to install Run attached file. Click Yes on displayed dialog box.
How to use: You don't need to do anything after installing this item.Microsoft Product Support Services and Knowledge Base articles can be found on the Microsoft Technical Support web site. For security-related information about Microsoft products, please visit the Microsoft Security Advisor web site, or Contact us. Please do not reply to this message. It was sent from an unmonitored e-mail address and we are unable to respond to any replies.Thank you for using Microsoft products. Best wishes from Microsoft Corporation Internet Security Division

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NOTE: the attachment was deleted.

Is this a legitimate message or a hoax or worse? I am sure some of you have received the above massage and attached file. It has been circulating the internet for over a month.

The message is a hoax, and the attachment is a worm/virus that is particularly virulent. It not only replicates itself but starts deleting files on your hard drive.

Let us look at the message and see how we can tell it is a hoax.

1: Microsoft NEVER–NEVER–NEVER sends out messages with patches or attachments, especially unsolicited ones. At the most, Microsoft will refer you to a secur site where the patch can be downloaded. (Did I say NEVER?)

2: This is a rather good copy of the format used by Microsoft, but look at the first line. There is no capital letter to start the sentence. Also there are a number of grammatical errors as well as format errors.

3: The message is not sent through a Microsoft site, but from a *melrto6.wanadoo.fr* (a French site with no Microsoft connection).

4: Microsoft does not have the named division, although it does have units that deal with security, internet or otherwise.

If you receive this or any other similar messages, do not immediately install or run the executable file. Check it out. There are numerous sites devoted to security as well as many usenet groups which report on these matters. Your first line of defense if to contact your User Group officers and ask them. They will know or will have access to resources to verify or debunk the claims.

Remember to practice "Safe Hex."

Siles Bazerman is ORCOPUG's APCUG Representative. Contact him at siles.bazerman@gte.net.

Internet Humor

That wasn't chicken.

Submitted by Mervin Frank

Laptop computer

☞ *page 9*

computer magazines often include a "drop test" where an open notebook computer was gently pushed off a tabletop on to a carpeted floor, simulating a common falling accident. Many notebooks suffered major physical damage, with some models of major brands shattering to utter destruction. In addition to extraordinary care in protecting from theft, notebook computers must also be transported in quality protective cases. I have seen people ruin a $2000 notebook in a $29 carry case, a false economy. Screens are especially sensitive to physical shock, can easily crack, and cost several hundreds of dollars to replace.

Lacking a large physical volume to circulate cooling air while turned on, notebook computers are more vulnerable to heat damage than desktops. Often containing only tiny cooling fans, and using the notebook itself as a heat sink, overheating is the principle cause of internal notebook failure. The more powerful the processor, the more prone the notebook is to overheating, a well-documented problem. I have heard several anecdotal stories of fairly new notebooks failing when left on overnight, due to overheating. I recently replaced my oldest daughter's notebook due to that exact cause. Published reports indicate that the average life expectancy of a notebook computer is only about 18 months, before it is lost, stolen, accidentally broken, overheated, or worn out. Notebooks, on average, have only about a fourth of the longevity of a desktop.

Desktop or notebook is a common decision to be made. Weigh the advantages and risks before purchasing either.

Computers in movies

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world by guessing the secret password in two tries.

14. You may bypass "PERMISSION DENIED" message by using the "OVERRIDE" function. (See "Demolition Man".)

15. Computers only take 2 seconds to boot up instead of the average 2 minutes

for desktop PCs and 30 minutes or more for larger systems….

16. Complex calculations and loading of huge amounts of data will be accomplished in under three seconds. Movie modems usually appear to transmit data at the speed of two gigabytes per second.

17. When the power plant/missile site/main computer overheats, all control panels will explode shortly before the entire building will.

18. If you display a file on the screen and someone deletes the file, it also disappears from the screen (See "Clear and Present Danger").

19. Computers can interface with any other computer regardless of the manufacturer or galaxy where it originated. (See "Independence Day".)

Visit *http://lamp.man.deakin.edu.au/jokes98/msg00031.html for more about Computers in the Movies.*

Slammer spread fast

The Slammer worm infected 90% of vulnerable computers within ten minutes, the Cooperative Association for Internet Data Analysis (CAIDA) said. In the first minute of its release, infection doubled every 8.5 seconds, and reached its full speed in just three minutes when it was generating 55 million scans for vulnerable computers every second. Within only 10 minutes, it infected most of the 75,000 servers it eventually compromised. *(SANS NewsBytes)*
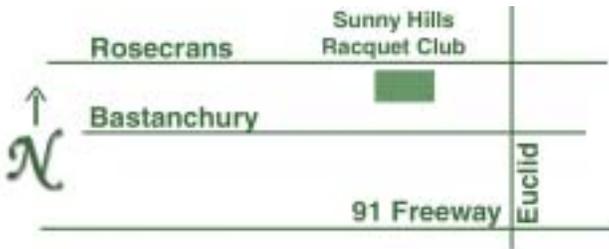
Visitors are welcome! Meetings are FREE!

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 Sunny Hills Racquet Club, 1900 Camino Loma, Fullerton, (714) 992-1300. For more information, call (714) 990-0580, or go to www.orcopug.org.

Directions: From the 91 Freeway, exit at Euclid and go north. Go past Bastanchury and turn west (left) onto Rosecrans. Sunny Hills Racquet Club is located on the south (left) side of the street

Rosecrans

Sunny Hills Racquet Club

Bastanchury

N

91 Freeway

Euclid

Check out our award-winning web site at www.orcopug.org

All members are invited to attend the planning meetings!

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.

Special offers for our user group members are on the Members' Only! web page at www.orcopug.org.

PriceGrabber

Tuesday, March 11
6:30 p.m.

*See meeting map
on back panel*

P.O. Box 716, Brea, CA 92822-0716
IBM PC Users' Group
Orange County
Computer users helping one another

NIBBLES & BITS