

NEXT MEETING: ERGONOMICS AND THE PAINLESS DESKTOP

INSIDE:

ERGONOMICS AND THE DESKTOP
MEETING REVIEW: ALL ABOUT HDTV
BENEFITS OF THE COMPUTER SANDBOX
E-MAILING DIGITAL PHOTOS
COMPUTER GAMES AND HARDWARE REVIEWS
PLUS, MORE COMMENTARY AND ANSWERS
TO YOUR COMPUTING QUESTIONS

President's File



It's probably too soon to mention this, but the Holiday Season will soon be upon us. That means we have upcoming Board Member elections and our December 'Annual Meeting' at which the membership is needed to vote. It's also the time to look forward to John Patrick giving his annual presentation about where internet technologies are headed. At the moment, I'm sort of stupefied about how much faster this year seemed to go and how much of that I should thank (or blame) on technology.

Clearly, our group is full of people who love tech toys. We have plenty of time to get a list together, so how 'bout it? Have you picked up a slick computer and/or tech related gadget or gizmo that others might like to put on their wish-list? Please be sure to include a website link and a few sentences about why you like it. Then we can post this list on our site and share it with everyone who is looking for gift ideas.

A forward moving DACS

Well, you've heard discussions about a DACS' 'online community'. We're several steps closer and are now testing some ideas about how to structure it. For now, Jeff Setaro has donated some web server space at <http://www.jasetaro.com/dacsforum>. There is also a link to it from our

main website. Be sure to check it out. This test area is where we'll start posting announcements and 'Member Only' information. While this is only a temporary springboard, we will be exporting it to the final site in the coming months. At this time, this is a 'beta test', but it is functional.

To register, click 'Register' at the top. Be mindful of what username is chosen as it will be used in the forums to identify you. If you haven't updated your email address in a while, please send Charlie an email with the correct info (and any other changes needed). This is necessary because the validation process requires human intervention to compare the email address used for registration to the one on file in the Membership list.

Don't worry; we're going to step through this at the next General Meeting. We'd also like some opinion, comments, questions, and suggestions from everyone.

Vista, video, and other projects

I've been satisfied enough with Vista that I put Vista Ultimate on my Home Theater PC. It has been more than stable, easy to configure and use, and the out-of-the-box recording features are pretty cool! My next step is to add new HDTV tuner cards. We'll be doing a make-up Windows SIG for this sometime in September as both the August and September SIGs had to be cancelled for scheduling conflicts.

Part of my Home Theater PC project has also turned into a minor endeavor into Home Automation. While I don't intend to cover that in the make-up SIG, I do plan to touch on it soon, so stay tuned.

With summer almost at an end, I'm not sure if I'll get much accomplished on my arcade cabinet this year. I've picked up some new toys for it, but have yet to do much with them. Headway is being made, though. Last week I worked on reverse engineering a dot matrix display from a cash register (it's an eye catching vacuum fluorescent display). The intention is to add it to the cabinet's array of visual effects.

On the road...

Work has me at our North American Headquarters to go over some disaster recovery planning. Tomorrow will be another long day, so I need to pack it in for the night. Hope to see you at the next SIG and at our General Meetings!

—Rob Limbaugh
relimbaugh@dacs.org

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Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.



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Apple User Group

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HelpLine

Volunteers have offered to field member questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours indicated below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; evening means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Please be considerate of the volunteer you are calling. HelpLine is a free service. If you are asked to pay for help or are solicited for sales, please contact the dacs.doc editor; the person requesting payment will be deleted from the listing. Can we add your name to the volunteer listing?

d = day e = evening

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Malware	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	(d)

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was conducted as a conference call on Monday, August 11, 2008, from 7:00 - 9 p.m. Present were Howard Berger, Richard Corzo, Patrick Libert, Rob Limbaugh, Annette van Ommeren, Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef. President Limbaugh presided and secretary Annette van Ommeren kept the record. Minutes of the last meeting held July 14, 2008, were presented and approved. Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$6,543.48, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$6,467.77 plus postage on hand of \$75.71. Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$3,210 left a net equity of \$3,333.48. He also reported that the current membership is at 227 and there are 188 members with valid email addresses.

In response to audience comments submitted to the Board, the issue of cell phone disturbance at the August general meeting presentation was discussed. Due to ringer disruptions at the meeting, it was decided to remind the audience to mute their cell phones at the start of the meeting. Richard discussed questions posed by the audience during the presentation, he felt questions can enhance the show, however, the Board suggested they should pertain to current slide and/or subject being discussed. It is also up to the presenter to decide how to handle questions during the presentation.

Rob brought up the issue of the alarm system of the resource center. Although located within a secure building, it is necessary for insurance purposes. He mentioned he is looking into changing the security provider and will research several security companies for pricing options. He will schedule a walkthrough to discuss whether the present equipment needs to be changed or updated. If deemed necessary the cost of new equipment and/or upgrades may be included with a new plan.

The option of using conference calls was considering for Board meetings and SIG's. This could allow more people to participate on SIGs or meetings, but would require a good speaker phone in the resource center. Several options were discussed; however, the long distance telephone costs may be an issue. In the future Video conferencing might be another desirable feature although bandwidth has to be considered. The discus-

DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. on page 4

sion about conferencing will be continued.

Next up for review was the DACS hosting plan, it was suggested moving the DACS site to a new host allowing additional functionality and dynamic features. Jeff reported about his experience with inmotionhosting.com, and mentioned the reasonable fees, helpful support, fast response time, unlimited bandwidth, and a 90/day refund guarantee. The Board members will investigate inmotionhosting.com to determine features and suitability. Rob suggested a hosting budget and made the motion to allow up to \$200/yr. for hosting. A vote was taken and approved by Rob, Jeff, Jim, Patrick, Howie and Annette. (Richard was no longer present.) This fee is to be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis. Jeff also offered to set up a temporary PHPBB forum for the DACS membership. Details of the forum will be mentioned at the general meetings, and published in the DACS.doc newsletter and website. Once a new hosting provider is selected the forum will be migrated to the new host.

Annette reminded the Board that due to a scheduling conflict she cannot fulfill her duties as recording secretary at the Board meetings for September 08 through January 2009.

Patrick brought up the issue of a "general flyer." He has discussed this with Allan Ostergren, and although a "generic flyer" would be good to have, it should not replace the monthly flyer, as this has the current meeting subjects highlighted. Some suggestions on how to offset the annual clipart.com expense included sponsoring a drawing contest or maybe setting up a scholarship. Jim felt that DACS should explore the scholarship option, as this may also attract younger people. It was agreed to discuss this subject later.

Howie reported on the progress being made at the Greater Danbury Non-profit Resource Center meetings he is attending. It appears there will be funding for 5 nonprofit groups who will get selected for the pilot program. Their entire IT structure will be moved to a virtual environment, and the role of DACS will be to help train the participants on "Best Practice" and how to use the available software. An added benefit is that this working relationship is improving DACS' position in the community.

—Annette van Ommeren

Meeting Review

What you Always Wanted to Know about HDTV, but May be Afraid to Ask

by Patrick Libert

THE TITLE SAYS IT all... I consider myself to be knowledgeable in many technical areas but not this one. Given the fact that my 13-year-old 27" Panasonic will certainly want to be buried locally, I have to know what and how to purchase my first HDTV.

Enter Mark Weiss, our presenter at the August General Meeting, as the guru on the often murky subject of High Definition Television (HDTV).

Mark's organized and captivating presentation was just what I needed.

Mark began mentioning the misconception that if we have an HDTV, it will automatically give us high definition(HD). That is true if the source we receive is in HD and if the connections to the set handle HD. Presently, we can receive signals on the air, by cable, from a satellite or from the Internet. Interestingly, satellite TV was an early HD provider, before cable companies began their coverage. Effective February 17, 2009, most on-the-air broadcasters must convert their signals from analog to digital. This does not necessarily mean that the digital signal will be in High Definition which requires a substantial investment by the broadcaster.

Some of the most interesting points were:

• **Display distance versus screen size** - To see the most details on an HDTV screen, at ten to fifteen feet from the screen a 47" set would be ideal. The higher the resolution, the closer one should be to the set. The higher the resolution, the larger the screen should be.

• **What resolution should we look for?** We should look for a set that produces 1080p (pixels vertically) since the HD broadcasts are in that resolution. Choosing a set that handles only 720p will filter out some of the details in the 1080p signal.

• **Aspect Ratio** - Most of the traditional TV sets use an aspect ratio of 4:3. HDTV sets, on the other hand, use a 16:9 aspect

ratio, i.e., a greater width than height of the screen. As an example, if we are converting from a traditional 27" TV screen to an HDTV and we want to keep the same height of the image, we would have to choose a 32" HDTV.

• Pros and Cons of the different technologies

LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) - Uses less energy, generates less heat, brighter, no burn-in, but has less contrast.

Plasma - Has better contrast, wider viewing angle, faster response

time, uses more energy and generates more heat, can have image burn-in.

DLP - used primarily for projectors on very large screens.

O-LED (Organic Light Emitting Diode) - It is still in the development stage but it could be the future of HDTV. Since it does not need backlighting, it consumes much less power than the previous technologies.

• Connections - From best to worst:

HDMI cables - carry the full digital signal

Component Video Cables - carry an analog signal

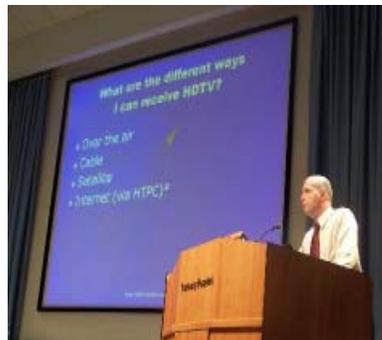
S-Video Cables - carry only a picture signal, no sound.

Composite (RCA) Cables - carry analog sound/video.

Consequently, if we want to transmit the best signal to our HDTV, it is best to use HDMI cables.

• **Deep Color** - Some sets will mention that they have "deep color." This refers to having a color bit depth between 30 and 48 in the display which assures a smooth color transition in certain types of pictures, such as a sunset shot.

• **DVD as a source** - One should use an HDMI connection and have a DVD player with 1080p upscaling capability. The DVD player should also be set at the same output as the HDTV, i.e., 1080p



Meeting Preview

Ergonomic Solutions - Work Painlessly!

By Flo Ferrara

EVERYONE KNOWS a friend or a coworker who suffers from carpal tunnel syndrome or from lower back pain. Or, we may even have suffered ourselves. And how about those days when your eyes are straining to see the screen and the thought of another minute of computer work drives us mad?

Chuck Masi, Vice President of Sales and Service at ErgonoMix Associates (EMX) will show us how best to reduce or eliminate these risks from our work environment. That alone makes this September 2 General Meeting a "Must Attend."

There are many things to keep in mind as we hunch over our keyboards at our desks all day. Proper posture, made easier by good lumbar support; the correct height of the keyboard and monitor; a particular mouse for best wrist positioning. These are just a few issues on which Chuck can enlighten us.

EMX has been around since 1992 designing ergonomic solutions for people seeking to address the issues of health risks and productivity loss related to office computer use.

Headquartered in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, EMX was founded by C. E. ("Bill") Ridenour after a long career as a Senior Executive Director of Manufacturing and Human Resources for Olin Chemicals.

EMX maintains long-standing relationships with ergonomic academics, product design firms and manufacturers that are constantly reviewing new

and improved ergonomic solutions. Their web site shows us a large collection of products designed to make us more comfortable.

EMX provides a one-stop solution for corporate accounts as well as the small businesses group, home office users and telecommuters. Training programs are available as well.

A perusal of www.ergonomixusa.com clearly shows that ErgonoMix Associates are prepared to help you tackle whatever ails you in your workspace—wherever that may be. Who knows? - With Chuck's help, you could feel like dancing a jig or throwing a Frisbee around on the grass at the end of your



workday; instead of sitting in a Jacuzzi nursing your office wounds.

DACS meetings are held at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. Activities begin at 6:30 p.m. with registration and casual networking. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with a question and answer period (Ask DACS), followed by announcements and a short break. The featured evening presentation begins at 8:00.

As a reminder, our General Meetings are free and open to the public so invite anyone you know who would be interested in this topic.

FLO FERRARA is acting program director of DACS.

MEETING REVIEW, Cont. from page 4 on the HDTV will need 1080p set up on the DVD Player.

• **Calibration** - One should not assume that the set has been properly calibrated at the factory. You should use a calibration DVD which is sometimes included with certain DVD movies such as those from Disney or with a THX encoding. I see on Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/Monster-ISF-HDTV-Calibration-Wizard/dp/B000EEXEIW>) that this can be bought for just over \$25.

There were many other fascinating points mentioned by Mark which made his presentation captivating. Questions from the audience led to his giving us even more information on a topic that will eventually relate to all of us.



Do the DACS General Meetings leave you thirsting for more? Find all that plus food for thought at the meeting after the meeting—the DACS PIC SIG.

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Internet Security

Benefits of Using a Computer Sandbox

By Gene Barlow

A COMPUTER SANDBOX is newer technology that is not very well known, but, it can be quite useful in many situations. By using a Sandbox utility, you can place your computer in a protected state where you can try some rather risky things on your computer and not have your computer damaged in the trials. Once you place your computer into Sandbox mode, you can safely run anything on your computer, knowing that all changes to your hard drive will not be permanently made to your computer. While in Sandbox mode, your computer runs as if all changes to the hard drive were actually made to your system. But, at the end of using the Sandbox, you can throw away these changes, putting your computer back exactly the way it was before entering the Sandbox.

Let's take a look at some real life situations to better understand the benefits of using a Sandbox utility.

Installing New Software

Everyone knows that when you install a new software product on your computer, parts of the product are placed all over your computer's hard drive. Entries are made to the Windows Registry, special supporting files are placed in certain directories of the operating system, and other shortcut and setting files are scattered in various places on your hard drive. These are in addition to the main folder that is installed on your hard drive with the software programs. Most software will uninstall easily, but often pieces of the product are left behind on your hard drive. These leftover pieces of orphaned software can build up and slow down your computer. Some software products include hidden viruses or other bad programs as you install them. The end result is that installing new software on your computer can be a risky thing to do.

Using a Sandbox to install and test new software is a much better approach.

With a Sandbox, you put your computer in Sandbox mode before you downloaded and installed the new software. Since the Sandbox lets you use the newly installed software just as if it had been permanently installed on your computer, you can run the new software to try it out and see if you like it. You can also run virus utilities to see if the installation gave you a virus you were not expecting. If you find viruses on your computer or just decide you do not like the newly installed software, you can get out of the Sandbox and throw

away all traces of that software product and any hidden virus that came with it.

Letting Others Use Your Computer

Another reason to use a Sandbox is to let others use your computer. Other users may change your computer to match the way they like to use computers. For example, many of us have grandkids that come to visit and want to play on our computer. They may download games they like, change your wallpaper and default font sizes. They may pick up viruses in the process of getting your computer changed to their needs. When they leave, your computer no longer is the same as it was before they arrived. It may take you days to get it working again like you want it to. With a Sandbox, you can place the computer in Sandbox mode before they arrive and then let them play on your computer to their hearts content. When they leave, you simply exit the Sandbox and throw away all changes that they made to your computer. It is instantly back the way it was before they started to use it.

Computer Labs and Classrooms

User groups that have computer labs or classrooms have a similar situation. The classroom computers are setup carefully by the instructors before the class begins. Once the students have used the computer throughout the day, the computers are different and modified from what they were in

the beginning of the day. This may cause problems for the students that follow them, so the instructors will often restore the computer's hard drives to put them back to normal. With a Sandbox, this long restore process is not needed. Instead, put the computers in Sandbox mode at the beginning of the day before the students arrive. Then at the end of the day, exit the Sandbox and throw away all hard drive changes made by the students. The computers are quickly returned to their normal state as you exit the Sandbox.

Browsing the Internet

Much of the Spyware that you pick up on your computer comes from simply browsing the internet. Some web sites are designed so that simply passing your cursor over a part of the screen is enough to activate a download of Spyware to your computer. Not only that, but your privacy is at risk when you browse the Internet. Windows automatically saves all of the places you browse to and all of the screens you see on the Internet. Browsing the Internet in a Sandbox is a much better approach. Place your computer in Sandbox mode before you start to browse the internet. Then browse all of the sites you want to. When you are done browsing the internet, exit out of the Sandbox and throw away all Spyware and traces of web sites you may have visited.

We offer three excellent Sandbox products that you may want to use on your computer. Let's look at each of these briefly to help you decide which one would best meet your needs.

StorageCraft ShadowSurfer

The smallest and least expensive Sandbox we offer is ShadowSurfer by StorageCraft Software. This product is the quickest product to install and the easiest product to use of all of our Sandbox products. With ShadowSurfer, all changes to your hard drive are always thrown away when you exit the Sandbox, which is what you want in most cases anyway. This excellent product runs on Win2000 and WinXP systems and is available from us at the discount price of just \$20. This is an excellent beginning Sandbox product for most home users.

Acronis True Image 11 Home Try&Decide

The next step up in ability and price is a feature that Acronis has added to their new True Image 11 Home backup utility. This feature is called Try&Decide and it is



a Sandbox feature built into this award winning backup utility. Try&Decide requires that you create and use the Acronis SecureZone on your hard drive to contain the temporary changes to your hard drive. When you exit the Sandbox with this product, you can choose to keep all changes to your hard drive or throw them all away. This excellent product runs on Win2000, WinXP, and WinVista operating systems and is available from us at the discount price of just \$29 for a download or \$33 on a CD. This is a very good Sandbox feature that comes with an outstanding backup utility.

StorageCraft ShadowUser Pro

The most advanced Sandbox utility we offer is ShadowUser Pro by StorageCraft Software. This is a professional-level Sandbox product that has many options and features to it. With this product, you can password protect the controls of the Sandbox, so that nobody can disable the Sandbox unless they know the password. Perhaps the biggest differences between this product and the other two Sandbox products is that you can pick and choose what files to throw away and what files to keep as you exit the Sandbox. This top of the line Sandbox product runs on Win2000 and WinXP operating systems and is available from us at the discount price of \$47. This is the product you should use if you are running a public computer workstation that needs tight controls.

A Sandbox offers you a new way to protect your computer from damage from the software you install or access on the internet. It also keeps your hard drive safe from damage caused by others using your computer. The selection of Sandbox products we offer lets you pick and choose which one is right for your needs. To order your Sandbox product, go to www.ugr.com and find the Sandbox product you are interested in. Then click on the Buy Now button on that product page to place your order using our secure web shopping cart. As you complete your order indicate the order code of UGNL0108 to qualify for these excellent discount prices. If you have questions about this new technology or about any of these products send an email to gene@ugr.com and I will try to help you.

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User Group Relations
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Commentary

SIGNIFICANT BITS

September 2008

by Sean N. Henderson

VIDEO GAMES (consoles, computer-based or coin-op) were exciting, in part, because my friends and I were computer enthusiasts and students of computer technology in our youth. When we started learning about these machines around 1977, the Radio Shack TRS-80 was popular, as was the Apple IIe, and somewhat later the Atari 800. Before these machines, we all started in school with sending punch-cards to an offsite facility. We then waited eagerly for our printouts. These machines changed all of that.

For us, playing computer games was a favorite activity. Some games could be purchased on cassette for loading into these personal computers. Many of the then-magazines (such as Byte) and many newsletters, often published code listings to small games. These could be typed into the computer (and later saved onto cassette tape) line-by-line. Doing this gave us not only insight into the game construction, but prompted us to write our own variants.

So it might be useful to think that computer game playing was usually preceded by some level of game-making back then. So it goes with a number of gaming titles in recent years. It is possible to make a new game using another game and supplying it different maps and objects.

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

OpenQuartz is an open-source and freeware first-person shooter type video game playable on nearly any machine. It requires no special graphics card. Game play options range from the single, simple and introductory to more complex and multiplayer. Obtaining OpenQuartz is by download. The content of the game, like many first-person shooters, is violent and gruesome, and so not recommended for little kids or the squeamish.

Playing the software requires two hands – one for dictating the view and aiming. The other hand is for firing weapons or performing an action. Starting the game brings a console (command prompt), which is for advanced configuration. Just hit the enter key and go straight to the options screen to begin a game.

The game contains its own server to publish your game on the net so that net-

work play is supported. This feature is optional.

The Website indicates that this is an open-source project, and that users are encouraged to find or make “maps” for use in the game. No specific tools or instructions were listed on how to do this. I’m sure the search-savvy and advanced gamers will already know something about this.

If looking for something quick to download to play for a couple moments, or are new to or revisiting gaming, or are looking for an open-source project to tinker with, try OpenQuartz.

HARDWARE REVIEWS

I ordered a generic USB “Gamepad” recently. No model number or anything, but it was fairly inexpensive and I knew I wasn’t going to be spending a whole lot of time gaming. Meaning, if it broke I was only out a couple of dollars. I’m not sure if I ordered it because I had downloaded OpenQuartz (reviewed above) or vice-versa. In any case, this unit came from Geeks.com and it is their “16-button” model. Price was under \$15, which beat out the comparable Logitech unit at a big-box retailer at around \$40. The unit appears class compliant and the game software I was testing recognized it immediately without having to load any drivers or do any special configuration. To me, I would have designed these things in mirror image with the four-way on the right and the buttons on the left.

Also from Geeks.com I ordered a generic USB LCD Phone for use with Skype. At under \$10 I thought it was worth it as an experiment. The unit (model UP-730) is not immediately usable without loading drivers and configuring. The installation instructions on the box differed from the printed instructions inside, but it was not too complicated to get running. I had bought this unit to see if Skype was a possible replacement for having a cell phone, which I’m currently debating. More on that project next month.

SEAN N. HENDERSON is a DACS Director and ice President for Marketing and Public Relations

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: August 2008

ASP.Net. Focuses on Web site/server application development using Microsoft Visual Studio, C#, VB, Javascript and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with Random Access, followed by a programming discussion with examples.

Contact: Chuck Fizer cfizer@snet.net.

Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: September 3

Digital Imaging. Digital cameras, retouching and printing.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 graffic@bigfoot.com.

Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: September 24

Jobs. Networking and jobs search

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 aam@mags.net.

Meets by e-mail.

Next meeting: TBA

Linux. Provides Help in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: John Lansdale 914-533-2002

Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: September 17

Macintosh. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac operating system.

Contact: Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org.

Meets 1st Thursday at DACS Resource Center at 7 p.m.

Next Meeting: September 4

Open Source Web Programming. Focuses on open source tools for Windows and Linux.

Contact: John Lansdale, 914-533-2002.

Meets 3rd Monday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: September 15

PC Maintenance. Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 aam@mags.net.

Meets on 4th Thursday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next meeting: September 25

Server. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook.

Contact: Jim Scheef jscheef@telemarksys.com

Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next meeting: October 9

Tech Projects. This SIG Will work on DACS "Online Community projects as well as other areas from practical application solutions, to brainstorming and to tweeking Commercial products. All skill levels and backgrounds are welcome. The goal is to mix, match and customize technology to fit our needs.

Meets 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS resource center.

Contact: Rob Limbaugh at (203)648-9176, relimbaugh@dacs.org

Next meeting: September 10

VB.Net, Visual Basic-6. Focuses on Smart Client Windows application development using Visual Studio, VB, C# and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with a random access session , followed by Object Oriented discussions and programming with examples.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 cfizer@snet.net or Greg Austin, 845 494-5095 greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org.

Meets 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, preceded 1 hour with a shared cost pizza snack.

Next Meeting: September 3

Virtual Computing. This SIG will explore virtual computing technologies and how to leverage them as additional system resources. Our main focus will be on the free VMWare products, but we will also look at other technologies and tools.

Meets 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center

Contact: Rob Limbaugh relimbaugh@dacs.org, 203 648-9176

Next Meeting: September 23

Web Design. Applications for designing and creating Web sites.

Contact: Annette van Ommeren avanommeren@dacs.org.

Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: September 16

Windows. This SIG will discuss ways to get the most out of your system and applications, how to do new things, and other options in terms of hardware and software to help make life easier. All skill levels are welcomed and encouraged to attend

Contact: Rob Limbaugh relimbaugh@dacs.org, (203)648-9176

Next Meeting: October 16

SIG News & Events

Macintosh. In August we fielded user questions and started to take a look at Microsoft Office 2008 for the Mac.

One member was curious about the reported DNS vulnerability in Mac OS X and other operating systems that could lead an Internet user to the wrong Web site. DNS (Domain Name System) servers are maintained by your Internet service provider and translate addresses like www.apple.com to an IP address such as 17.251.200.32 so your Web browser can load the specified Web site. Your ISP must install a security update to address this latest vulnerability. To see if your ISP is vulnerable, a member found this Web page: <http://149.20.3.33>, from which you can test your ISP for "DNS randomness."

A question came up on how to set an alternate Web browser, such as Firefox (<http://www.getfirefox.com>), as your default browser. Normally a newly installed browser will ask

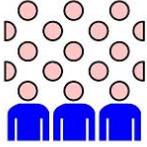
you if you want to set it as the default, when you first start it. If you say no at first, you can choose it later by going into the Preferences. For example, in Firefox, go to the Advanced page, General tab. In Camino, another Mozilla-based browser specific to the Mac, the Default Web Browser is chosen on the General page. You can also choose a different default browser right in Safari Preferences on the General page.

Another browser-related question came up on Adobe's Shockwave plug-in. This plug-in is required to play the daily jigsaw puzzle on AARP The Magazine's game page (<http://www.aarpmagazine.org/games/>). A member was having some trouble with Shockwave not refreshing the puzzle in Firefox after using the Jigsaw menu. To verify that you have Shockwave and Flash properly installed, you can go to this

SIG News, Continued on page 13

September 2008

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																														
	<p><i>1</i></p>  <p>Labor Day</p>	<p><i>2</i></p>  <p>7:00 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>	<p><i>3</i></p>  <p>4 PM ASP.Net 7 PM C# VB.Net Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996</p>	<p><i>4</i></p>  <p>Macintosh 7:00 PM Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org</p>																																																																																																																
	<p><i>8</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>		<p><i>10</i></p>  <p>7:00 - 9:00 PM Tech Projects Rob Limbaugh 203 826-8196</p>			<p><i>13</i></p>  <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																														
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Tips & Tricks

E-Mailing Photographs

By Richard Kennon

FIRST, WE MUST understand that photograph (image) size in the camera and in the computer is measured in **pixels**. These are the basic dots of color that make the picture. **Do not** pay any attention to anything that says “inches” or “pixels per inch.” These terms are meaningless when we are considering a picture either in the camera or in the computer. They may come into play later if we want to print the photo on paper. But, that is another subject for another time. For now, we think only of pixels. Most cameras record too many pixels to e-mail. For instance a 6 megapixel camera will make a picture about 3000 pixels wide by 2000 pixels tall and the file size may be several mega-

bytes (algorithms) to help us. Just remember, you want to resize or resample to get the photo down to a size convenient for e-mailing. I usually use 800 pixels or 900 pixels width for pictures I attach to e-mails.

The second thing to do to make a photo e-mailable is to save it in **JPEG format (.jpg)**. That is a format that reduces file size a lot and picture quality a little so the picture can be downloaded more quickly and still be nice to look at. Some software programs give you choices of compression amount with numbers ranging from 1 to 10. One will result in a very small file but the picture quality will not be good at all. A 10 will give the very best quality but with a very large file size. A reasonable compromise is to use 5 or 6. I usually use 6.

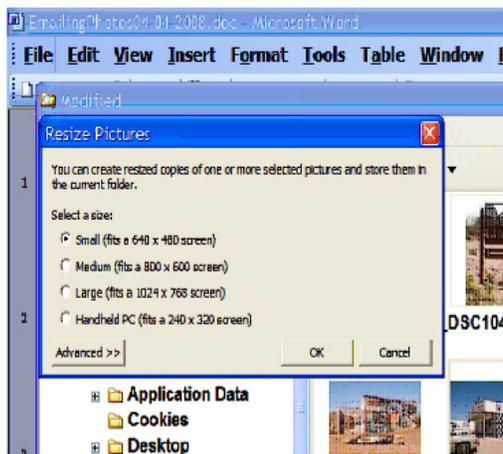
How do you do this? First, I will describe how to do it with a free Microsoft program. Then I will try to look at some other programs.

Microsoft Power Toys for XP has a Resize Pictures toy that is slick and easy but feedback says it only works on XP. It can be downloaded at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx>. Right click on an image name or thumbnail in Explorer or My Computer and choose **Resize Pictures**. You are limited to four specific sizes but they are good choices. They don't tell us what compression they are using but the results look OK. Unless you tell them under **Advanced** to replace the image in the file, it will make a copy. That's good. They will add the word, “Large”, “Medium” or “Small” to the end of the name you have chosen.

If you are happy with this solution, then read no further. But, if you want to use a picture editing program, maybe this will help.

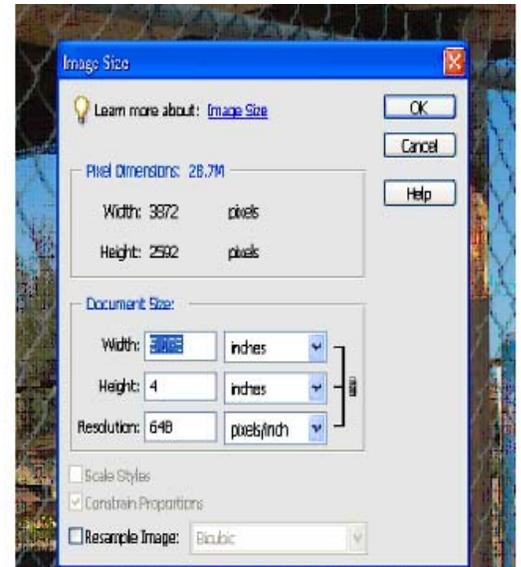
In Photoshop Elements 5, click on **Image>Resize>Image Size** and this window will pop up. Note that there is some garbage at the bottom about “inches” but we will ignore that. First we will click the **Resample Image** box. That puts the Pixel Di-

mensions in play and that is what we want. I selected the Width box and changed the width to 800 pixels. Since the **Constrain Proportions** box is selected, that is all I have to do.

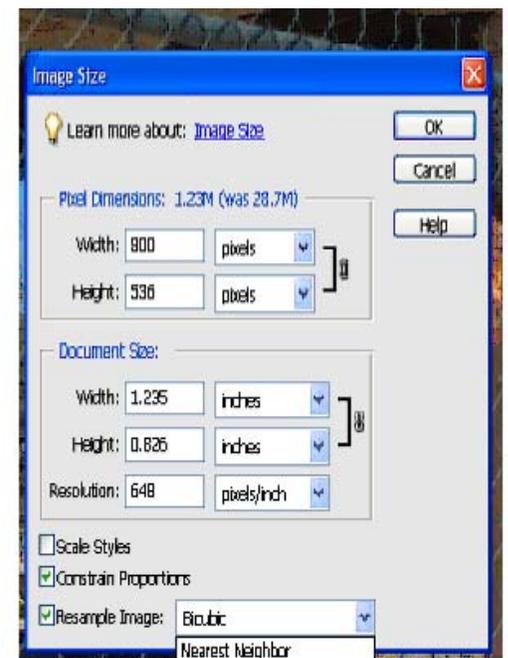


bytes. Our screens are usually only about 1000 pixels wide (some are larger and some smaller). So, if we e-mail the native picture, it will be wider than the screen for the recipient and the file will be so large, it may take “forever” to download to the recipient's computer. It is possible the service provider will not even accept it.

There are two things we must do to make a photo e-mailable. The first is to **resize** or **resample** the picture. We want to change the picture width from 3000 pixels to 800 pixels, for instance. This process is called resizing or resampling. We have to pick the best 800 pixels out of the 3000 to represent our photo. Well, no, that is not exactly correct but it simplifies things to think of it that way. We don't have to worry about it because a lot of very smart programmers have developed



Note, down at the bottom, that we have several choices of sampling algorithms. This is frosting on the cake. I read somewhere that I should use **Bicubic Sharper** when downsizing so that is what I do. Most programs don't give us all these choices. Then we should click on **File>Save As** and give the photo a new name. I often just use the same name and add “.800px” so the next time I will know it is ready to e-mail. Here we can choose the JPEG format and the compression amount.

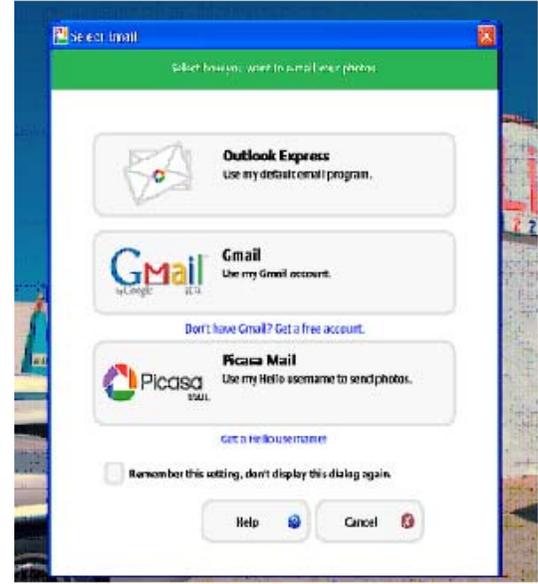
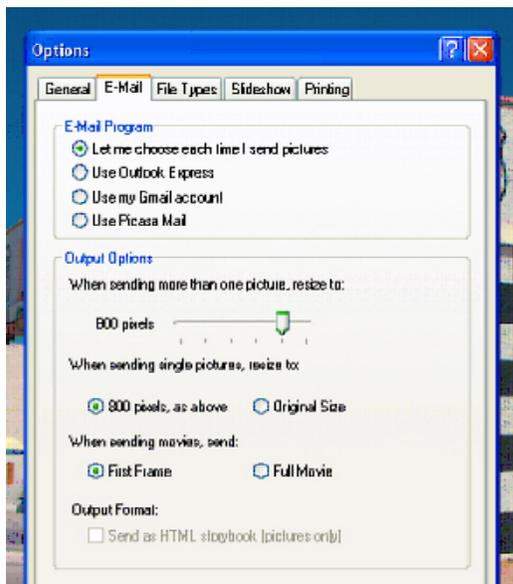


Photoshop Elements 6 is out now and sells for about \$100. If you are able to spend that much and want one of the best editing programs, I highly recommend it.

Let's look at Picasa2. It is a free program from Google and looks really good but I do not have much experience with it. By all means, try it first because the price is right! When it comes to e-mailing photographs, it is a little more automated but not any easier to use than Elements. First, click on **Tools>Options>E-Mail**. Then select the width you want in pixels. There are six choices. Then click on **Apply** and **OK**.

The next step is to click on **File>E-Mail** and you will get three choices of how you want to e-mail your photos. Fortunately, I use Outlook Express so my choice is listed.

When I clicked on Outlook Express, an e-mail page popped up with the photo attached. At this point we can write something else on the e-mail and send it. I recommend this so the recipient will know it is really from you and not something sent out by a virus. When I receive e-mails that only say "Attached", I **Delete** them without looking at the attachment. This saved me one time when



I received a virus from my sister-in-law that she did not know she sent. She spent weeks and dollars getting her computer back up. Oh, I digress. If you want to send more than one picture (and, who doesn't?), you must select the picture and click on the Hold button near the bottom of the screen. Do this for each photo you want to send and they will all be attached to the e-mail. The program automatically chooses JPEG format and a compression ratio but does not tell you. That is OK as the pictures I tried looked good. Picasa2 has considerable capability for editing photos in many respects. Try it!

There are many other editing programs that I haven't mentioned and have no experience with. In all cases you want to change the picture's size in pixels by resizing or resampling. Pay no attention to anything that says "inches" as that will have no meaning for this process. Sometime later we will talk about printing pictures and then we will use inches.

RICHARD KENNON is Editor, *Amador Computer Users Group, CA*; www.acug.net; Dtrtdguy@volcano.net

This article was Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.



Do you have a burning computer question, but can't make it to the meeting or just never seem to get your hand up in time? Email your inquiry to Jim Scheef, the answer guy, at askdacs@dacs.org, and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.



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"We're sorry, but you cannot finish your text message... We have no network up here."

Circuit Writer

Version 6.1

by Jim Scheef

There is just too much important stuff this month.

Is John McCain good for Us?

Again, please note that I define “us” as people using computers both professionally and for pleasure; in other words, DACS members like you and me. Last month we looked at Barack Obama. On the Obama website, technology is a major heading under “issues.” Technology does not make the top cut for issues on the McCain website. Once you navigate to the technology page (OK, it only took two clicks rather than one), the thing that struck me first was that I had to scroll half way down the page before I found anything that dealt with end users like us.

The major technology bullets, followed by my comments, are:

- Encourage investment in innovation (this is part of McCain’s policies to lower taxes, particularly on business)
- Develop a skilled work force (by increasing H-1B visas)
- Champion open and fair trade (deregulation and market-based)
- Reform intellectual property protection (more funding for the patent office, rather than patent reform)
- Keep the Internet and entrepreneurs free of unnecessary regulation (finally! But rather than ensuring net neutrality, McCain would leave it to the market place)
- Ensure a fully connected citizenry (the programs mentioned are mostly oriented to rural areas, where Internet and other digital services are poor)

The main difference between Barack Obama and John McCain from our perspective is emphasis. McCain policies seem oriented more toward business with little or nothing to protect your digital rights. Instead he relies on the availability of competition to preserve net neutrality. I urge you to read the technology pages

of both candidates and judge for yourself. Final comments: John McCain admits he does not use email or the Internet, but he does have an official Facebook page. Anyone want to take bets on whether he has really seen it himself?

The “Is This For Real?” Department



With airlines dropping flights and reducing service on all fronts, even removing the magazines from planes to save fuel, Delta Air Lines is launching a new service. Yes, soon you will be able to use Wi-Fi to surf the web and talk on Skype at 30,000 feet. The service is planned for the entire Delta domestic fleet by summer 2009. The service will cost \$9.95, and lest you think that you might get a better deal on longer flights, it will cost \$12.95 on flights longer than three hours. Now, haven’t we been warned for lo these many years, to turn off any device that might emit a radio signal lest we interfere with the plane’s navigation and electronics? I guess at least one airline can solve this sticky technical issue once the marketing guys develop a reason! The eWeek article (tinyurl.com/5cx5p7) mentions how the equipment provided by Aircell is “extremely light, requiring minimal space on the aircraft, and can be installed overnight” but says nothing about any testing or modifications to the plane’s avionics to ensure that the planes will not fall out of the sky the first time some guy in business class surfs to a porn site.

Comcast, the FCC and Net Neutrality

The FCC, in a 3-2 vote, found that Comcast violated net neutrality principles when it throttled BitTorrent traffic. While this appears to be a great victory for Internet freedom, we should not jump to conclusions. The vote was narrow to give Comcast a slap on the wrist. Meanwhile, Comcast says it is ready to change how it manages its network traffic and the ruling

reduces pressure in Congress to codify net neutrality in legislation – something the large Internet providers do not want. The New York Times article is at tinyurl.com/5pb7v7.

The “Could This Happen Here?” Department

If I said that this could only happen in San Francisco, I’d be lying because I know that’s just not true. Even if I said that it could only happen in government, it would be far from honest. As you may have guessed, I refer to the situation in San Francisco where a consultant held the city’s network hostage when he set up the security so that he was the only one with access to the top-level administrative privileges.

Terry Childs, a network administrator (or network designer or security expert, depending on what you read) set up the city’s new FiberWAN so that he was the only one with top level security access and then refused to give the key (the password) to the city even when sitting in jail under \$5 million bail. The standoff continued for several days while experts (presumably newly hired experts) tried to crack the passwords and other experts speculated that Childs had set up a “logic bomb” that would cripple the city. The network, which contains official city email, payroll, and law enforcement information, continued to function flawlessly while Childs sat in jail. Only a secret jailhouse visit from S.F. Mayor Gavin Newsom finally convinced Childs to give up the password.

Like so many stories, once the juicy parts are resolved, the coverage stops. After nine days of drama, the city regained administrative control of the network. I’m sure there is more to this story. Read the story on the New York Times (<http://tinyurl.com/6hsaa3>) and Dark Reading (<http://tinyurl.com/63whuu>) and see for yourself. I cannot fathom how IT management at the City of San Francisco allowed the situation to reach this point.

Russian Gangs and Malware

Malware needs to be taken seriously. It’s not just an annoyance like the virus that deletes your music files but a product of organized crime. Many large businesses think that it’s OK if their network is penetrated once or twice a month as that level of infection is manageable. Now a security researcher has uncovered a Russian gang that is using the same enterprise tools used by the corporations themselves to distribute a program called Coreflood. Coreflood captures and trans-

mits keystrokes (to capture passwords) and personal information to a central database.

Attacks can start with a single compromised machine on the network, possibly a laptop belonging to a visitor. Once the gang controls a machine with administrative privileges, they configure Microsoft System Center (an enterprise tool to manage networks with large numbers of servers and end user computers) or another tool to deliver and install the Coreflood program to every computer on the network. Note that this is not a flaw in System Center – it is doing exactly what it is told to do which is to install software. The fact that it is not the authorized network administrator who is in command is another matter. Read more on the New York Times at tinyurl.com/6arjgc.

This is not the only Russian Gang malware story by any means. Most of the gangs harvest and control botnets of thousands of malware-infected computers. The botnets are often used to send spam, notably phishing attacks which lead theft of credit card numbers at the low end and identity theft at the worst. The gangs do not use the credit cards themselves. Instead they sell the number to other criminals to manufacture fake cards and sell them to petty thieves on the Internet or even on the street. The person who gets caught with the fake card is so far down the food chain, there is no way to trace the transaction back to the gangs responsible.

While most of the database servers used by these gangs are overseas, the gang at the top of this article had a server in Wisconsin. When threatened, they moved it to Ukraine. Now there is new evidence they have relocated to IP blocks in China. If this is not **global warfare**, I don't know what to call it. Read more at eWeek (www.tinyurl.com/6k4fpg) where there are links to even more.

Domain Name Tasting Will End, and other Fairy Tales

The practice of registering a domain name, setting up a trivial website and then monitoring the hits during the five day grace period is know as domain tasting. Often the domain names in question are ones that expire accidentally. If the real owner wants to recover his domain, the taster will ask an exorbitant ransom. While legal in the narrow sense, the practice is not ethical, especially when practiced by unscrupulous domain registrars – the very people charged with protecting those domain names for the registrant! ICANN, the quasi-governmental organization charged with managing the Internet in-

frastructure (domain name registration and IP addresses) has issued a couple of rules changes that may help – or may not, depending on who you ask. A full explanation is beyond our scope here so read more on eWeek at tinyurl.com/6322ub and at The Coalition Against Domain Name Abuse (cadna.org).

Serious Security Flaw In Internet Infrastructure

Several months back Dan Kaminsky, the director of penetration testing for the security company IOActive, found an incredibly simple and thus incredibly serious flaw in DNS. The Domain Name System (DNS) is what translates the user friendly names we type into the address bar of our browser, like dacs.org, into the IP address of the server we want. The flaw, known as cache poisoning, tricks a DNS server into delivering the wrong IP address to a query. The user making the query then goes to the wrong server which could contain a phishing website. When

this was first discovered, all DNS servers everywhere, even the root servers at the very top of the Internet infrastructure, were vulnerable because the flaw was part of the original design. Kaminsky asked quickly and privately alerted people at Cisco and other major infrastructure manufacturers. Quickly and quietly people worked to design a patch and to implement it throughout the Internet. The patch was released in early July. After the months of work, Kaminsky planned to give a paper at the Black Hat Conference in Las Vegas to announce the flaw and the work done to fix it.

As so often happens, the flaw was leaked early, apparently by mistake. Since then Kaminsky has become a celebrity with an interview on NPR's *All Things Considered*. It's really good to read a story occasionally about someone who acted responsibly when confronted with a problem that affected literally the world.

SIG News, Continued from page 8

test page: <http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/welcome/>. The Shockwave display will show what version of Shockwave is installed. Compare this to the version shown on the download page: <http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/>.

Moving on to the featured topic of the meeting, Microsoft Office 2008 (<http://www.microsoft.com/mac/products/Office2008/default.mspx>) updates the Mac Office suite to support the new Microsoft Office 2007 for Windows file formats. You'll know that you've encountered such a file by the "x" following the usual Office file extension, for example, .docx instead of .doc for Word documents. Of course if you just need to open those files and not create the new formats, you can use Microsoft's Open XML File Format Converter for Mac, available for download from their Mactopia site (<http://www.microsoft.com/mac/>), to convert to the older Office format used by Office 2004 for Mac or Office 2003 for Windows, or open the files in Apple's iWork '08 applications.

Looking in the help for new features in Microsoft Word 2008, we found publishing layout view and publication templates which help create "documents, such as brochures, catalogs, flyers, and newsletters." There was also mention of ligatures or joined characters that look better next to each other when a font supports it.

We also took a peek at Entourage, the combined e-mail, address book, and calendar application in Office 2008. It's most obvious new feature is the My Day window, which keeps you apprised of your appointments and to-dos.

Another Mac question arose on Leopard's firewall, which is now found under the Security System Preference. By default it allows all incoming connections, but this is not a secure setting. "Allow only essential services" is probably too restrictive, so choose "Set access for specific services and applications" and you will be prompted the first time an application requests to allow incoming connections.

Server. We concentrated on a random access question for the entire SIG meeting this month. The question was why Richard Corzo, one of our webmasters, could not reach the FTP server for our website while sitting in the DACS Resource Center. After he demonstrated the failure, we solved the problem with a palliative patch rather than a cure for the disease. Since the problem involves other SIGs, I won't go into the exact solution, but suffice it to say that one can FTP to the website from the RC again.

The September Server and Networking SIG is canceled, so I can drive down early to the Vintage Computer Festival East in Wall, NJ. See midatlanticretro.org for information on VCF East. The next meeting will be Thursday, October 9 at 7 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center.

Ask DACS

August 2008

by Jim Scheef

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. In addition, members who are not able to attend the General meeting may submit questions to askdacs@dacs.org. We will ask the question for you and post the reply in *DACS.ORG*. Please provide as much information as possible since we can't probe during the session.

Ask DACS is a question and answer session held at the start of the monthly general meeting. We solicit questions from the floor and by email (AskDACS@dacs.org). Hopefully we find the answers from those present at the meeting.

We had two questions sent in by email:

Q – The email questioner was present and asked about Vista Service Pack 1 (SP1). Is it safe to install? Are there any gotchas?

A – Nearly half of the audience raised their hand that they are running Windows Vista and many have installed SP1. The first report was that the installation required “a long time” as in all day and nite, but that the system seemed “better” when the installation completed. So there may be some benefits. A second member said it took two attempts. The first attempt “failed” by requiring that anti-virus and anti-spyware programs be disabled before the installation could continue. Jeff Setaro offered the advice to close as many running programs as possible before starting to install any service pack. In addition it is prudent to run Disk Cleanup, especially if your system is low on disk space. I suggest doing as complete a backup as possible before the install. The minimum would be a “System State” backup that copies the Windows Registry and all files in the system root directory (normally `c:\Windows`). Last, if you download the .iso (CD image file) and burn it to a CD, your install is not dependent on communications and is thus slightly more assured of success. The consensus at the meeting was that Vista SP1 is OK to install.

Q – Not really a question: I made a correction to the Ask DACS write-up in the August newsletter where

I said that installing a service pack from a CD would allow doing the install without first installing (and agreeing to) Windows Genuine Advantage. Rather, the Genuine Advantage acceptance is buried in the EULA (end user license agreement) that you click when you start the installation program. When the service pack installation completes, you can be assured that the Genuine Advantage tools will be part of your system. Proving this one way or the other is fairly difficult.

Q – The second email question was a repeat or follow up of the question about whether or not it is necessary to keep the hidden folders in the system root folder (`c:\windows`) created by Windows Updates.

A – When this comes up, I offer my experience. Periodically I sort the contents of the Windows folder by date and then delete the oldest of these folders, keeping only those from the last six months or so. Now, the fact that I do this – often out of necessity due to tight space in the system partition – does not guarantee that this is a good practice. After some searching, I cannot find an article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base on this topic for any version of Windows. This is even more inconclusive (sic).

If you do delete the uninstall folders, you can also remove the corresponding entries in the Add or Remove Programs applet, although this process is less than elegant. The easy way is to open the applet in Control Panel and turn on the list of updates by clicking the “Show Updates” checkbox at the top of the window (as Jeff pointed out at

the meeting). Highlight an update entry with an installation date from the time period you have deleted and click the Remove button. You will see an “Uninstaller Error” dialog that suggests that the update may have already been uninstalled and offers to move the entry from the Add or Remove Programs list. Click Yes and the entry will disappear. If you pick a wrong entry in the list and the uninstaller wizard actually starts to run, just click cancel and be more careful what you click next. Since there could be more than a hundred entries in the list, this can be both arduous and boring.

The other way to remove these entries is to delete the registry key for the update in `[HKEY_LOCALMACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall]`. Each update has a key named with the Knowledge Base article number, like KB911927. This is the only way to remove an Add or Remove Programs entry for an update that cannot be uninstalled from Windows. Those entries do not have a Remove button. I have not determined if such updates actually create an uninstall folder. Once again, I need to give the warning that I have no idea if this is actually a good practice.

Since this list is something one looks at so seldom, these uninstall entries are largely cosmetic and removing every one from the list seems a little obsessive to me. You can read a blog article “Clear space on your hard drive by deleting old Windows uninstall folders” by Dennis O’Reilly on CNET at tinyurl.com/5al35a.

My philosophy on removing these uninstall folders comes from the fact that each update is layered on the previous updates. I believe that uninstalling even one update from more than one or two months back is likely to make your system more unstable than whatever problem you may be trying to correct because the uninstall could replace a DLL that has been patched in another update.

Q – Not really a question: In an email, a member offered to donate or give away some Windows 98 machines to anyone who might be able to use them.

A – Since few DACS members would consider such a machine adequate today, I read a description of how to “properly” recycle a PC so as to recover as much value as possible. This information will find its way to the DACS website where it will add to some options that are more appropriate for the typical member.

Several members also offered suggestions of local businesses that will accept consumer electronics, including computers and monitors for recycling. Costco (costco.com) and Staples (staples.com) have recycling information on their websites. Costco offers a trade-in on some items. Trade-in value for my old Winbook laptop was \$8. From this value, they would deduct for things like a non-functional battery. At the end of the process, you print what appears to be a pre-paid UPS shipping label. You must be a Costco member so I was not able to go thru to the end.

Q – A member related her experience with what at first appeared to be an email from her Bank. The email said that her account had been locked because of unauthorized access.

A – This was a classic phishing email. This led to an extensive discussion about phishing and how to avoid the traps. The final advice was to use the latest version of your favorite browser (Firefox 3, Internet Explorer 7, Opera 9) and to keep it up to date. Last, be sure the phishing filters are enabled.

Q – How can I change my default browser from IE to something else?

A – There two places where you need to make this change. The first is to simply allow the browser to check and to make itself the default browser. Normally this will happen the first time you run a new browser.

The second place applies to Windows XP and (similarly) Vista. In XP open “Set Program Access and Defaults”. Normally this is an option in the Start Menu, but if you got sick of looking at this almost never used program and removed it from the Start Menu, then open Add or Remove

Programs in Control Panel and look at the left side of the window. In the case of Windows Vista look for “Default Programs” on the Start menu or in the Control Panel, and click to open “Set program access and computer defaults.” In either case (XP or Vista), open the “non-Microsoft” or “Custom” configuration and select an alternate browser under “Choose a default web browser.”

Q – I was given a used machine and keep getting a pop up that says it is from AOL. How can I get rid of this?

A – This sounds like a malware program that has become embedded in Windows. One suggestion was to download and burn a bootable scanner CD from F-Secure to scan the PC, but the consensus was to wipe the hard drive clean with a product like Darik’s Boot and Nuke

(dban.org) and then reinstall Windows. If the infected machine will boot, a product like Produkey from NirSoft (nirsoft.net – this website has many useful tools and utilities) will extract and save the CD keys for all Microsoft products installed. Symantec considers this a hacker tool and quarantines it, so special handling may be needed. Once you have the CD keys, wipe the hard drive and reinstall. Be sure to apply the latest service pack immediately and then all updates.

Q – I have AOL and pictures do not always appear correctly. If I use Internet Explorer rather than AOL, the pictures display correctly.

A – The flip answer is: don’t use AOL. The problem involves the compression that AOL uses to speed the display of web pages. This is a holdover from the days of dial-up modems and is not really needed now that we have faster connections. It may be possible to turn this compression off in AOL options.

Recycling – the bane of the Computer Collector

As a collector of vintage computers, I shudder when I hear people talk about recycling old computers. In my imagination I see priceless early computers being crushed. So what is a “priceless early computer”? Well naturally that is all in the eye of the beholder. A few weeks ago I rescued several early Commodore computers. Now these are not the common Commodore 64, but the earlier business machines from the late 70’s and early 80’s. Personally, these are not my “cup of tea” so I will pass them on to others in my other computer club, the Mid-Atlantic Retro Computing Hobbyists, Inc. (midatlanticretro.org) Our real, honest to gosh museum will open on September 13th at InfoAge Learning Center (infoage.org) in Wall, NJ.

My personal interests include early laptops, especially 80286 and physically small 386/486 machines. For instance I just collected an IBM “butterfly” notebook, the one with the folding keyboard. Unfortunately the machine is in poor condition. I also collect anything for the IBM PCjr. My current project is to build a local area network called the IBM Cluster using an IBM XT and two or three PC Juniors. Last, I collect mini-computers like the DEC VAX and early computer networks. I am especially trying to find the non-IBM versions of OS/2. 3COM had 3+Open, DEC had a DECnet version, and Microsoft had the LAN Manager version of OS/2. Please let me know if you ever see any of this software.

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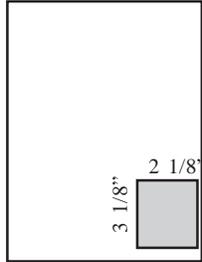
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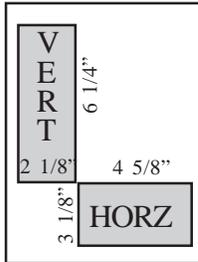
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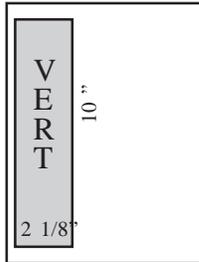
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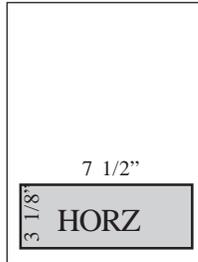
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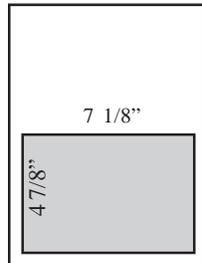
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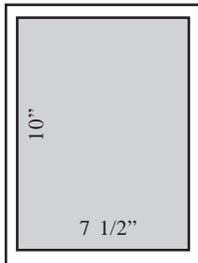
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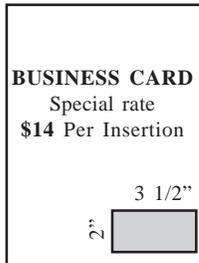
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We sponsor or participate in community support projects by collecting, repairing, and redistributing used computer equipment and software to community service providers such as schools, libraries, and patient/client support groups. DACS members provide pickup, refurbishing, installation, and training assistance as needed. Firms or individuals with equipment to donate should leave a message on the DACS Infoline (203-748-4330). or send an email to recycling@dacs.org.

The Voice for Joanie program was created in 1992 through the initiative of DACS member, Shirley Fredlund. This program provides computer-assisted speech for victims of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis ("Lou Gehrig's Disease"). DACS members have contributed volunteer time and technical assistance since the program began. Voice for Joanie and DACS have earned national computer industry recognition and financial assistance for this vital collaboration.

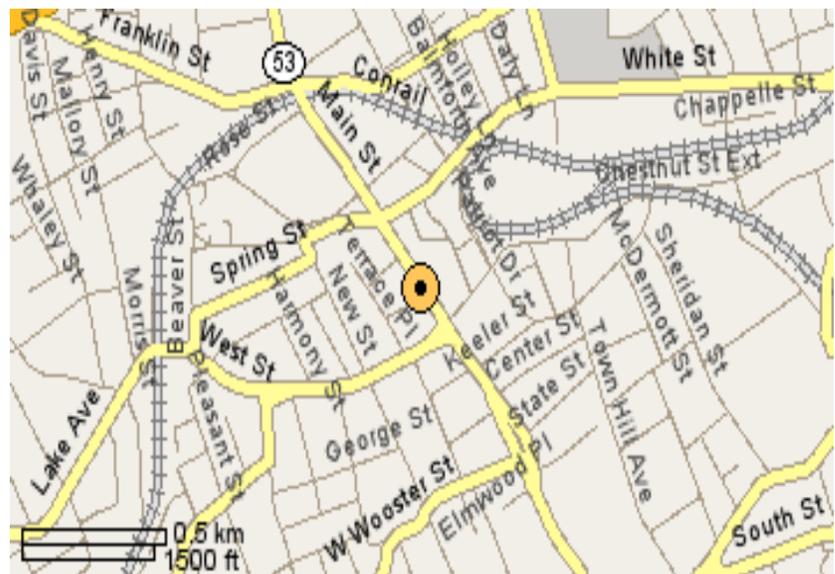
Our general meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Danbury Hospital Auditorium at 7 p.m. These meetings are open to the public. The main presentation is scheduled from 8-9:30, preceded by casual networking, announcements and Random Access, an informal question and answer session. A free product raffle is often held at the conclusion of the main presentation.

In addition to the general meeting, DACS sponsors many special interest groups (SIGs) where members can learn and share information about a specific topic. Each SIG plans its own meeting schedule and program topics.

Our newsletter, *dacs.doc* is published monthly for our members, and mailed to arrive before the general meeting. It features articles written by members and others on timely topics including product and software reviews, issues and trends in personal computing and "how-to" articles on sound, video, digital photography, etc. In addition, each issues includes the calendar of meetings, announcements on SIGs and other DACS events. *dacs.doc* has won numerous prizes over the years for its design and content.

Through its activities, DACS offers numerous opportunities to network both professionals and computer hobbyists. Our Special Interest Groups are an excellent way for members to both learn and share application or hardware knowledge. Any DACS member can form a special interest group on any topic where there is interest. Most SIGs meet in our Resource Center in downtown Danbury.

If you have concerns, requests, or suggestions regarding DACS or its programs, please contact dacsprez@dacs.org. DACS officers and board members' phone numbers are listed on page 3 of *dacs.doc*.



The DACS Resource Center is in Ives Manor, Lower Level, 198 Main Street, Danbury, CT 06810 (203-748-4330).



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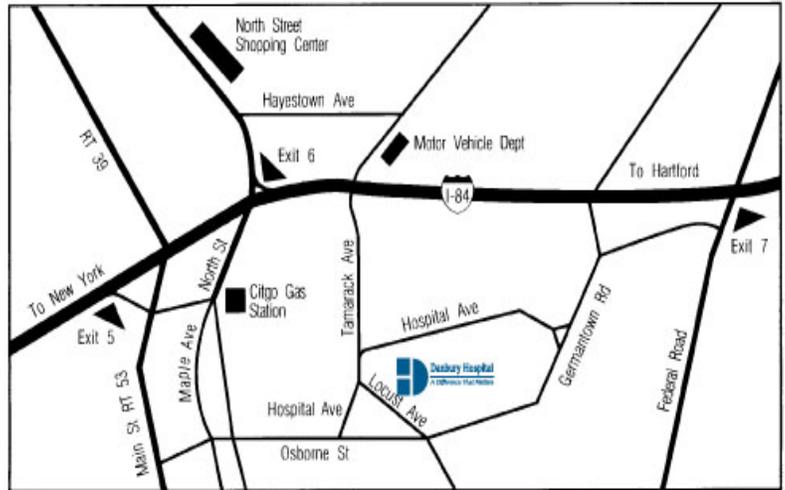
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