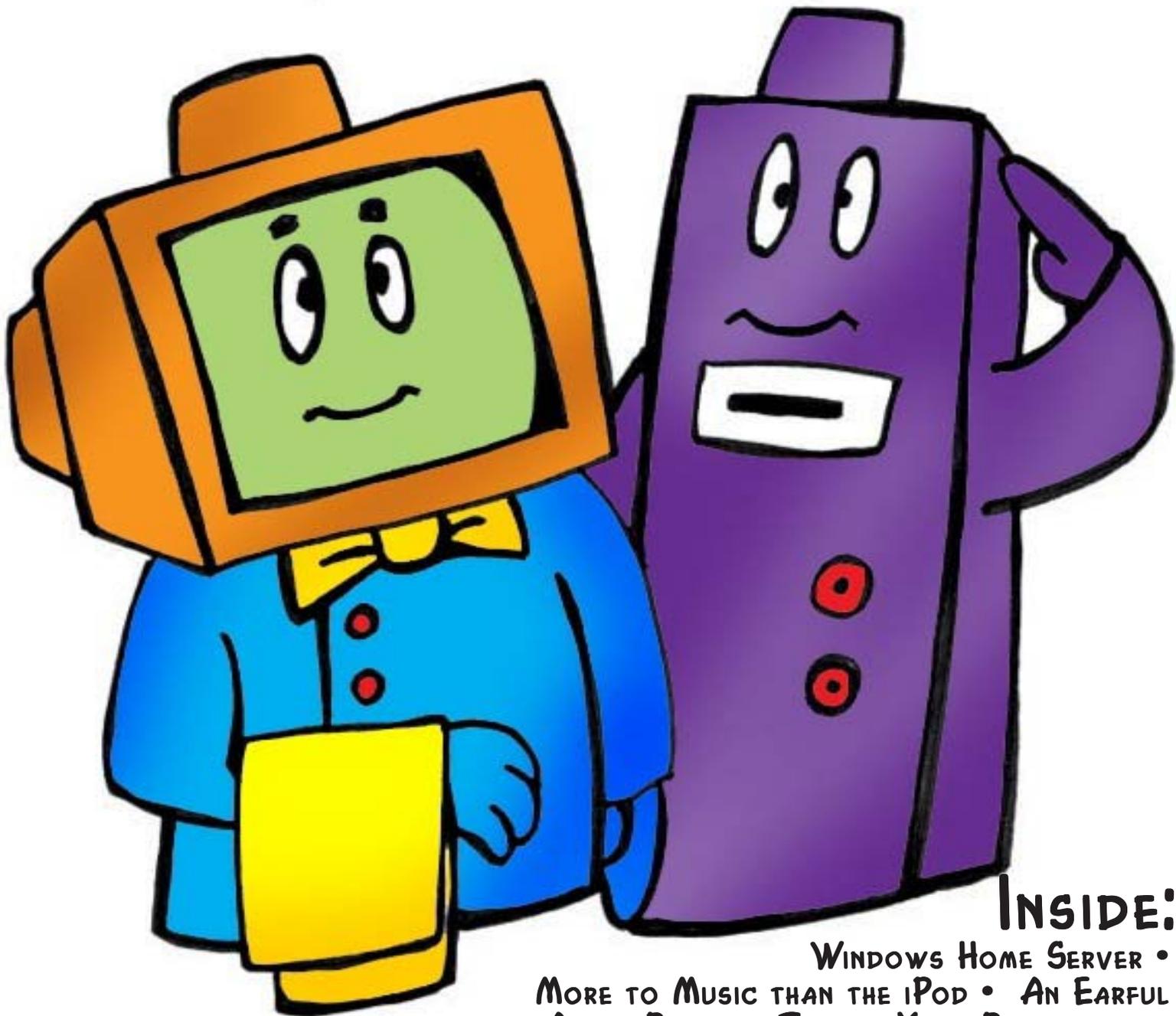


**NEXT MEETING, MARCH 2:**

**IS IT TIME TO CONSIDER A HOME SERVER?**



**INSIDE:**

WINDOWS HOME SERVER •  
MORE TO MUSIC THAN THE IPOD • AN EARFUL  
OF AUDIO BOOKS • JUICING YOUR BROADBAND •  
SWITCHING INTERNET BROWSERS • PLUS, MORE SIG NEWS,  
COMMENTARY, AND ANSWERS TO YOUR COMPUTING QUESTIONS

# President's File



It appears I made an error in last month's message. It was numbered '3.0' when it should have been '2.10.' In the grand scheme of things, it doesn't make a difference. But, since I had to correct it for my file name, it made sense to note the error here.

Everyone was worried about the DTV switch. I'll bet some of you are thinking "Ha! I knew my TV was fine in spite of all that digital TV hoopla!" But, did you know that the February 17 deadline was changed to June 12, 2009, instead? If you didn't make the switch from Analog TV to Digital TV, you now have a few extra months to shop for TV's. For more information check out: <http://www.dtvtransition.org>

Officer elections are this month. We will be electing President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer. These roles are voluntary but are required for DACS to operate as a 501c3. Contact the board at [dacsboard@dacs.org](mailto:dacsboard@dacs.org) to be added to the election roster. Your fellow members will greatly appreciate it!

In April, we'll be taking a look at Windows Home Server. It has been available for over a year now and has grown up a bit. Those of you with small home networks and multiple machines may be interested in seeing how you can centralize files, backups, and security in an

easy-to-manage and affordable solution.

DACS needs member response regarding some proposed newsletter changes that have been discussed over the past several months. Member input is critical in determining the future distribution options of the printed newsletter. The survey can be accessed from the DACS home page or through <http://tinyurl.com/ckcofp>.

Special offers extended to DACS members are posted in the DACS "Special Offers" forum. The most recent offer is a 35% discount to members on books from O'Reilly Media, Inc. (<http://www.oreilly.com>), as well as discounts to conferences and tutorials.

On a related note, there are offers from vendors who are willing to give free products to members who are willing to evaluate and write reviews. Interested persons can email me directly. Please indicate the types of hardware and software you are willing to review.

The newsletter team urgently needs individuals to help with newsletter layout. We also need more article submissions from members with which they can share their area of expertise to benefit us all. Contact [dacseditor@dacs.org](mailto:dacseditor@dacs.org) to find out how you can help.

DACS has groups on Facebook and LinkedIn. Search for 'Danbury Area Computer Society' and request to join the group. Once we confirm you're a member of DACS, you'll be added as a group member.

Tax season is upon us! Spring is around the corner! Easter holiday items are already in the stores! I best get moving before those things pass me by—see you at the next meeting!

Rob Limbaugh

[relimbaugh@dacs.org](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org)

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## New Members

William Saturno

This is Your Last Newsletter

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP 1/2008 or earlier**

You need to renew your DACS membership **NOW**

## Membership Information

*dacs.doc*, ISSN 1084-6573, is published monthly by the Danbury Area Computer Society, 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430. Annual subscription rates: \$45 to regular members, \$30 electronic access (included in dues).

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Send address changes to Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc., 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430.

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DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement, or other item in this newsletter.

The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Patrick Libert at 860-567-9586 ([dacseditor@dacs.org](mailto:dacseditor@dacs.org)). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 ([aam@mags.net](mailto:aam@mags.net))

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## Technical Support

*dacs.doc* is prepared using PageMaker 7.0 and Acrobat 7.0. Software packages used to publish *dacs.doc* include: Microsoft Windows XP, Office 2003, TrueType fonts, Calendar Creator 8.0 for Windows. Internet access provided by *Mags.net*

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



Patrick Libert  
APCUG Liaison  
[plibert@dacs.org](mailto:plibert@dacs.org)



Apple User Group

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**VICE PRESIDENT:** Sean Henderson

**SECRETARY:** Annette van Ommeren • **TREASURER:** Charles Bovaird

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**APCUG LIAISON:** Patrick Libert ([plibert@dacs.org](mailto:plibert@dacs.org))

**RESOURCE CENTER:** (203) 748-4330 • **WEB SITE:** <http://www.dacs.org>

## 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**

Program	Name	Phone #	
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	( e )
ASP.Net	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	( d )
C#, VB	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	( d )
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	( d e )
Interface-Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	( d e )
PhotoShop/Dreamweaver	Annette van Ommeren	(914) 232-0149	( e )
SAS	Lewis Westfall	(203) 790-0229	( e )
Statistics/Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	( d e )
SQL	Lewis Westfall	(203) 790-0229	( e )
SQL Server, MySQL-5	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	( d )
Malware	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	( d )
VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	( d )

## Directors' Notes

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, February 9, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. Present were Howard Berger, Richard Corzo, Sean Henderson, John Lansdale, Rob Limbaugh, Joseph Tobin, Annette van Ommeren, Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef. President Rob Limbaugh presided and Secretary Annette van Ommeren kept the record. Treasurer Charles Bovaird was not present and the financial report was unavailable at this meeting.

The Board accepted the January minutes "as published", and the majority of those present accepted the minutes of December 8, 2008.

Rob announced the projector bulb has been replaced in the resource center. He also confirmed the successful move of the DACS website to the new host, and a future date will be set to discuss the customization and integration with Drupal.

Rob mentioned DACS liability insurance coverage was updated for an annual saving of \$150.

Regarding the resource center alarm system, Rob suggested DACS switch to Safe Home Security at a cost of \$25/month for a 3-year contract. Several issues need to be decided and it was decided to continue the discussion by email.

Rob next brought up the newsletter subject. He suggested DACS conduct a survey of the members to obtain comments regarding the color versus black & white covers. Richard mentioned he had received positive response to the BW issue. If the newsletter is printed in BW and reduced to 16 pages – by removing the colored center page – and folded, the production/ mailing costs could be covered by the membership fees. The newsletter options will be followed up at future meetings.

Sean mentioned business card advertising for members in the newsletter - membership benefit or fee based. The cards were placed on the center page - now removed to lower printing/ mailing costs, therefore the policy for advertisements needs to be updated. As there is no information publicized at this point, members can contact Sean for advertising rates.

Richard mentioned DACS recently received an email from PremiumMemory.com, a company which may be interested in sponsorship opportunities. They usually offer product giveaways or exclusive group coupons to technology related user

**DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. on page 4**

**DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. from page 3**  
groups. Richard suggested DACS follow up to explore the possibilities.

Rob also reminded the board that members are entitled to a discount when purchasing O'Reilly books. Information will be posted in the members-only DACS forum.

Regarding the general meetings presentation schedule, Rob mentioned he is researching August meeting topics, perhaps to be centered on photo enhancement techniques. Authors for the meeting preview and review articles were tentatively established for the coming months.

March also brings up elections for Officers. Rob reminded the Board the positions of President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer are to be elected.

Howie reported on the DACS collaboration with the GDNRC Technology Committee. Five organizations have enrolled, and will enjoy access to the virtual environment. A computer equipped training center is available and DACS has the opportunity to offer software training in MS Office 07. Several suggestions were put forth as to the best level of training for DACS to provide. The logistics will be determined at future meetings.

Sean started a discussion about the roles and definitions of the DACS directors. He suggested the board consider renaming and/or reorganizing the structure of duties and the naming of committees to help clarify each position and role.

—Annette van Ommeren

Smart advertisers  
can reach over  
225  
active computer  
users and  
software buyers  
by taking  
advantage of  
the attractive  
advertising rates  
in  
DACSDOC

## Meeting Review

### IP Telephony—Vantage Communications

By Richard Corzo

FEBRUARY'S presentation by Robert Andresen, VP of Sales at Vantage Communications (<http://www.vantageip.com>), was on the subject of IP

telephony; but before he dove into that subject, we got to hear about some other interesting things that the parent corporation Vantage (<http://www.vantage.com>) is doing. Vantage Linguistics provides software solutions that could help a user who typed in "your" but really meant to say "you're" by analyzing the context of the sentence. They also developed a search engine for Quicken to help those with tax questions. Taking the next step beyond spell check, grammar and thesaurus capability, Vantage Learning helps students learn the English language.

Search turned out to be a lead-in for the company into IP telephony, giving the ability to search voice mails, for instance. Robert explained how the Internet has driven change in the voice and data communications industry. We've gone from telephone company central offices, PBX machines on the premises, and trunk lines, to leveraging the Internet access companies already have to provide telephone service.

Vantage Communications has improved on a software switch which runs on a server. They also compete in customer relationship management (CRM) software. They provide customized billing information that allows one to drill down into billing details.

Vantage Communications provides a hosting platform, so should anything happen to a customer's facilities, their calls would still be handled offsite by way of voicemail. Unified communications allows employees to be reached wherever they are, so a caller doesn't have to try multiple numbers to reach someone. A soft phone can use the built-in speakers and microphone of a laptop. Unified messaging goes a step further to incorporate chat and instant

messaging. Convergence also allows audio and video conferencing.

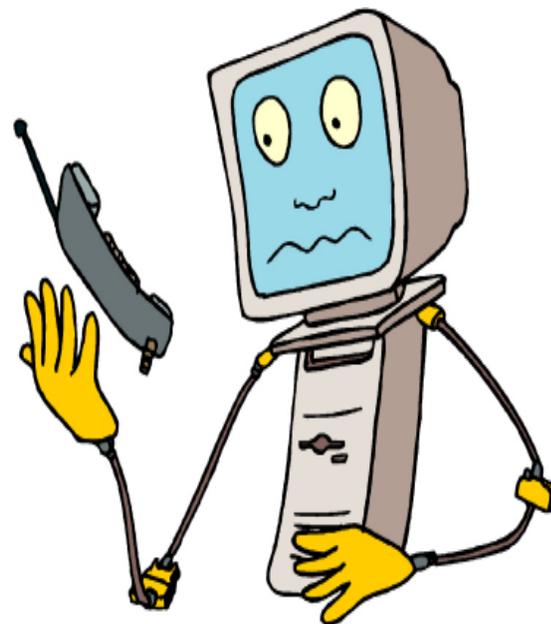
Vantage IP and similar services offer a flat rate billing model which can be attractive for companies.

One of the productivity benefits Robert explained is called simultaneous and sequential ring. A desk phone and cell phone can ring at the same time. "Follow Me" allows calls to be automatically forwarded to a cell phone.

Unified messaging and Microsoft Outlook integration allows viewing of all messages, incoming call pop ups, and even out-calling from Outlook.

A hosted IP telephony solution can relieve a lot of work from IT staff, and allow smaller companies to provide services to their customers that normally only a larger company could afford to provide in house. Robert explained the advantage of using "the cloud" in a disaster recovery situation, enabling business continuity.

So, February's presentation really drove home how much further IP telephony, with quality of service guarantees, can take a company beyond voice over IP.



# Meeting Preview

## Jay Ferron – Windows Home Server

by Sean N. Henderson

**WHAT IS A SERVER?** It's a computer specifically configured to listen, log and reply to requests. Usually, servers are deployed in office environments or corporate server farms. What's the point of having one at home? Plenty, it seems. DACS is fortunate this March to have Jay Ferron come share with us an often misunderstood server operating system.

Windows Home Server was designed for households and home-based businesses that have more than one personal computer. Obviously, modern life has gone digital, and Windows Home Server attempts to simplify life so family and home-office dwellers can easily access files, photos, videos and music from any PC or TV in the home, or even while away from home.

Jay Ferron is CIO for Interactive Security Training, LLC. He is working on various projects that include training, Windows and Unix security designs, Network infrastructures, enterprise designs and installations. Jay's awesome client list includes Microsoft, big-box retailers, banks, government agencies, health agencies and more.

As a speaker, Jay has presented at APCUG, Comdex, Tech Forum Managers meetings, Future Forum 2000, ISPCON, Corporate Advisory Board, CTEXPO, Web Developer conference, and many computer user groups. Jay travels the around the world teaching and training users of computer technologies. He has been

- Co-author of HIPAA Manual-2002 HIPAA Associates, Inc
- Co-author of Active Defense Advanced Tools Course
- Author of Migrating NetWare to Microsoft Windows 2003(Microsoft)
- Author of Converting GroupWise to Microsoft Exchange(Microsoft)
- Author of Security Challenges and Solutions Workshop Series for Microsoft Partners (Microsoft)

- Author of Security Business Decision Sales Maker (Microsoft)
- Author of Security Class Business Decision Maker (Microsoft)
- Author of numerous Articles in technology magazines

Jay is currently a President of APCUG, a past Regional Advisor and Vice president, and has been on the Board. He is an Advisor of The PC Users Group of Connecticut and current board member of the CT-Information Systems Audit and Control Association. In the past Jay has help to start up 5 different user groups around the

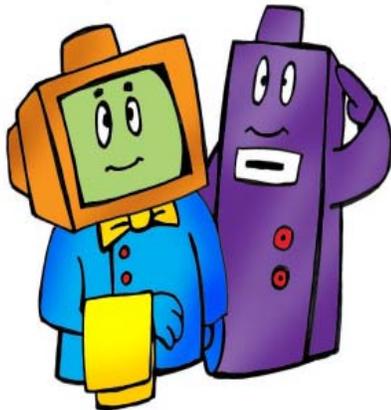
county, being president of 3 of those groups. Jay has been quoted in trade magazines PC Week, CRN, and CNET.

Join us at our March 2009 meeting to learn more about this new and improved server software.

DACS meetings are held at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. (Click here for directions.) Activities begin at 6:30 p.m. with registration and casual network-

ing. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with a question and answer period (Ask DACS), followed by announcements and a short break. The main evening presentation begins approximately 8:00 p.m. The meeting is scheduled to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

DACS General Meetings are free and open to the public. Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) is a registered non-profit and has been serving the region since 1990. Members receive an award-winning newsletter, members-only workshops and events, and access to volunteer phone support.



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](mailto:askdacs@dacs.org), and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.



# There Is More to Music than the iPod®

by Mike Morris

**T**HERE IS MORE TO MUSIC—and more to life—than the iPod. I think I can prove that statement with the words that follow. Please don't misunderstand me. I admire the iPod as a successful product—a success technically and financially—even though I don't have one. However . . .

I need to start my “proof” by saying that in previous articles that I have written, I made a claim to being an Old Analog Guy (as a reminder, the acronym = OAG and is pronounced “ogre”). It is with that persona that I bring this subject to your attention.

I just completed a catalog of nearly 300 old LP's that belonged to a family member who died last year. And when I say old, I mean some of those LP's have release dates more than 50 years old. Some of the recordings are much older than that. There are many memorable, and even historic, performances recorded on those albums.

A small part of that music has been re-released on CDs. But there is much of that music—almost all Jazz—that you will not currently find in any digital format. So put down your iPod (or one of its imitators) and please listen to what I have to say.

I decided to create a database for this catalog using Microsoft Access®. One significant issue, as you might expect, is just how much information to include in the database. This database is for family use—not for radio station or other broadcast use. I did, however, want to make a record (no pun intended) of whatever information was necessary to properly document the collection. The most significant decision was related to the track (song) names, sequence and times on each side of each LP. Clearly, if I needed to document that information, both the data entry task and complexity of the database were going to be much higher. If the average number of tracks per side is 4 (it is

probably higher), and I wanted to include all that information, then I was faced with a data entry task of  $4 \times 2 \times 300 = 2400$  entries (plus all the other information I wanted to include).

“No big deal”

you say—there are many much much larger databases in the world. You are correct. But remember, I am an OAG (please correctly pronounce that acronym). Therefore I was looking for an “easy” way to complete this task. Credit is due to Ken Campbell of

radio station KRFC (more on that in a moment), a local public radio station, for a solution. Ken told me about an online music database called allmusic.com (<http://www.allmusic.com>) (yes, it is spelled with all lower case letters). It turns out there are many online music databases (a Google® search turned up more than 68,000, using the phrase “online music database”). The allmusic.com database was the best for my catalog project for the following reasons:

1. A successful search for an artist will provide an Overview, a Biography, a Discography (a list of all albums by the artist known to the database, with title, date and label), Songs, Credits, and Charts and Awards.

2. From the discography, one can click on an album and get information (usually) on the album tracks (including times), composer(s), recording date(s), release date, label, format (LP or CD), the label's catalog number, and, for some albums, a review of the album.

3. The search options include artist/group, album, song, classical work.

4. There is substantially more information about the Jazz genre that just a list of names and dates. For example, on the Jazz “home page,” there are a number of “Related Essays” on Jazz, including “A Brief History of Jazz.”



For a project such as the cataloging of an existing music collection, with LP's that are up to 50 years old, this database is the best choice by far of all of the databases examined or considered. It is the equivalent of an encyclopedia, and the functionality makes searching easy, with related data presented on a single page. The ability to link from a list of albums (discography) to a single album (or CD reissue) provides very efficient searching for a project of this type. That is not to say that it is error free. There are albums not included in the database—the web site makes no claim that it contains every album ever released. There are also tracks missing from some albums (or the track order in the database doesn't match the order on the disk). An album may be in the database, but not in the artist's discography. And, there are numerous problems with release and recording dates. Still, the “pros” far outweigh the “cons.”

There is a feature offered by this web site that is unique. Each page (any of the choices listed in item 1 above) has a “Corrections to this entry?” option, allowing the user to submit corrections. Those corrections are then researched for confirmation (if the web site statement is correct) before they are added to the database. That feature was used extensively during the research for this music cataloging project—although not every error or missing item was submitted.

For my project, the search by artist was the most effective. If an album was not listed in the artist's discography, a search by album was the alternate choice. Although the database has many very early jazz albums, there were a few albums in the collection, both old and new—or at least “newer”—by well-known artists that were missing from the allmusic database. So, although not perfect, the allmusic database is an excellent research tool, and you don't need the iTunes media player (or any other media player) to use it.

The database is not limited to research, however. You can listen to short sound bytes from some tracks, and there are links that allow you to buy selected tracks or albums (correction—CDs).

OK, so your iPod and the iTunes media player are great for listening to (and buying) current and even “relatively” old music. But the iTunes media player is not going to help you—to same extent as the allmusic database will—find classic old Jazz performances (and perhaps classic performances from

other genres). And, you must have the iTunes media player installed on your computer before you can do any searching with it.

You may be wondering why I am talking about online databases and why I consider a good online database important to my “proof.” Yes, there is a relationship. But before I offer the conclusion, I have several comments on other databases.

Another online database used rarely was Gracenote®, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America. Gracenote is used “...for digital media recognition of CDs, digital music files, and streaming audio. With the most comprehensive database of music information in the world, the Gracenote Media Database contains information for more than 80 million tracks and 6 million CDs....” This database is normally linked to media players, such as Winamp®, to automatically identify music on a CD or from a download. It provides album title (and, in some cases, an image of the album cover), and track names—if you connect through a media player (or other audio/video equipment with the enabling software installed that is connected to the internet).

If you connect to Gracenote directly from a browser (<http://www.gracenote.com/>), the search options are artists, albums, tracks. A successful search on an artist returns a list of albums (a lot less than the allmusic database) released by that artist that are known to the database. It is important to note that the quantity information in the Gracenote advertisement makes an explicit reference to CDs. The album information is similar to that in the allmusic database, except that there are no track times. There are, however, links to the lyrics of some tracks—for those songs that have them. Also the “Buy” buttons are much more prevalent, and much more obvious in the Gracenote database, compared to the allmusic database.

Another online database examined briefly was Rhapsody®, <http://www.rhapsody.com/home.html>, a service provided by RealNetworks.com, better known for its Real® media player. The company claims to provide “Technology and services that help people enjoy digital entertainment whenever and wherever they want.”

Connect to the Rhapsody website and the first thing you will notice are the annoying animated ads. Get beyond

that and the search options are artist, keyword, track, album, composer, video, lyrics, and playlist. If a search for an album is successful, you can, for most albums, get track information by clicking on the album image—but that track information (no times) is very probably going to be from a more current CD release, not from the original LP, depending on how old that original LP is and how popular the album was. However, there is nowhere near the same level of information available from this database, compared to the allmusic database. The Rhapsody database is organized for listening to (or buying) music that is already known to the user, either by song name or by artist (in my opinion). It is not an effective research tool for finding information on old LP’s.

It is not necessary to have the Real player installed in order to search the Rhapsody database.

Now listen up everyone! Here is my reason for talking about music databases:

There is some great old music out there! In all genres. Please don’t get so comfortable with your iPod that you ignore that music. Especially when you have a resource such as the allmusic online database to help you identify it, catalog it, find reviews on it and find some history of it.

I suspect that many of you reading this article (I hope there are many readers) have some of that “great old music” sitting on your shelves or in your

cabinets. Or perhaps stored away somewhere. If so, “unstore” it. You will, I am certain, enjoy that music, especially with the added information available from the allmusic database.

And that is what I mean when I say “There Is More to Music than the iPod.”

Here is the additional information I promised on radio station KRFC:

Front Range PC Users Group

(FRPCUG) has a partnership with KRFC, 88.9 FM in Fort Collins, CO. KRFC provides “Community powered music, news and entertainment.” For more information, connect to <http://krfcfm.org/>. FRPCUG provides computer maintenance help to KRFC, and, in return, KRFC helps expand the knowledge of FRPCUG activities within the local community. An internet audio stream is available from the KRFC web site.



MIKE MORRIS is editor, Front Range PC Users Group, CO, <http://www.frpcug.org>; [twriterext@gmail.com](mailto:twriterext@gmail.com)

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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 PIG SIG.

# Special Interest Groups

## SIG NOTES: March 2009

**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](mailto:cfizer@snet.net).

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

**Next Meeting:** March 4

**Digital Imaging.** Digital cameras, retouching and printing.

**Contact:** Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 [graffic@bigfoot.com](mailto:graffic@bigfoot.com).

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

**Next Meeting:** No program for March

**Jobs.** Networking and jobs search

**Contact:** Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 [aam@mags.net](mailto: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:** Drew Kwashnak 203-910-6477 (Cell)

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

**Next Meeting:** March 18

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

**Contact:** Richard Corzo [macsig@dacs.org](mailto:macsig@dacs.org).

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

**Next Meeting:** March 5

**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:** March 16

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

**Contact:** Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 [aam@mags.net](mailto:aam@mags.net).

Meets irregularly, at the DACS Resource Center, announced by e-mail.

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

**Contact:** Jim Scheef [jscheef@telemarksys.com](mailto:jscheef@telemarksys.com)

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

**Next meeting:** March 12

**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](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org)

**Next meeting:** Cancelled

**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](mailto:cfizer@snet.net) or Greg Austin, 845 494-5095 [greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org](mailto: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:** March 4

**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](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org), 203 648-9176

**Next Meeting:** March 24

**Web Design.** Applications for designing and creating Web sites.

**Contact:** Annette van Ommeren [avanommeren@dacs.org](mailto:avanommeren@dacs.org).

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

**Next Meeting:** March 17

**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](mailto:relimbaugh@dacs.org), (203 )648-9176

**Next Meeting:** March 19

## SIG News & Events

**ASP.Net & C#VB.Net** Our session was excellent!

We need a line from a song to capture the mood of technical expertise: "Do you know, where you're going to? Do you like the things the world is showing you?"

Chuck set forth an example on what it means to know how to place a form with business information in a database. We reviewed an application he had built to manage schools by supporting information needs of teachers. We reviewed details of coding strategy used to place storage information in a form. This form data, presented in a Web page, was transferred to storage in a relational database in a server. There, SQL programming was modularized in stored procedures. Naturally, a connection string is needed

to effect connectivity to that server where data is to persist. The goal of this discourse was to illuminate the challenges of a visitor's new application, now a work in progress.

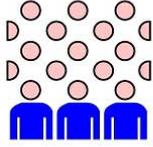
Much refreshed by our snack break, we pressed onward through a review of the CAPTCHA add-on previously reported. We gained further insight into coding strategy for blocking spam from a Web page. A core advantage of this improved feature is to preserve user information in a feedback form by avoided a reload in a life cycle. No information is lost in case the user makes an invalid entry in an access effort.

With this review well in hand we shifted to discussion to show how C# is type-safe in its capability to use generic entities. For example, a list could be coded to preserve its charac-

**SIG News, Cont. on page 15**

# March 2009

## Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																												
1	 <p>7:00 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>		 <p>4 PM ASP.Net 7 PM C# VB.Net Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996</p>	 <p>Macintosh 7:00 PM Richard Corzo maesig@dacs.org</p>																																																																														
8	 <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>			 <p>7:00 PM Server Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>		 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																												
15	 <p>Opensource Web Program. 7:00 PM John Lansdale 914-533-2002</p>	 <p>Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	 <p>7:30 PM Linux Drew Kwashnak 203 910-6477</p>	 <p>7:00 PM Windows Rob Limbaugh 203 826-8196</p>																																																																														
22		 <p>Virtual Computing Rob Limbaugh 203 826-8196</p>		 <p>7:00 PM PC Maintenance Charles Bovaird 203 792-7881</p>																																																																														
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# Audio Books - Reading with Your Ears

by Bruce Preston

I'VE BEEN LEGALLY blind for about 3 years, and have thus become a consumer of audio books, delivered via several modes. But, I'm reminded of that advertising campaign for a rye bread - "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's." Well, you don't have to be blind to enjoy audio books. They are great to listen to at any time or place—I know of people who get their "reading" done while commuting by car or train. If this is unfamiliar territory for you, perhaps you will find this of interest.

Audio books have been available for years, but usually at a premium cost over printed media. There are several publishers such as Recorded Books who make books available on cassette tapes, or now more commonly, CDs. The tape cassettes are the standard 60-minute audio cassettes that will play in any cassette player - be it home audio system, "boom box", or car radio/tape player. A CD typically holds just over 60 minutes of audio, and may be played in any standard CD player. Many libraries have books on cassettes or CDs available for lending. One drawback is that the tapes are very fragile and susceptible to damage, and CDs get scratched. An average novel is about 6 to 8 hours playing time.

Downloadable audio books—here is where things get interesting. If you have a broadband connection (dial-up will work, but is painfully slow) you may download audio books to your computer and then in some cases transfer to a portable device such as an MP3 player or iPod. There are fee-based sources, and several free sources. I'll discuss the free sources I have used.

eAudiobooks from *NetLibrary.com* - many libraries (such as Ridgefield) have entered into a contract with *NetLibrary.com*, one of several distributors. A typical arrangement is that you activate an account through your library, and once activated you may browse their catalog and download books from the *NetLibrary* site. The

audio files are protected by way of Microsoft's WMA/DRM technology, such that they have a 21-day lifespan, after which they won't play unless you obtain a renewal license for the file.



A typical account may have 10 audio books (licenses) 'checked out' at any given time. There is no need to return the book; in fact, there is no mechanism for returning books before the 21 days. (In three years, I have never hit the 10 book limit.) Once downloaded (typical book - 250MB or so), you open the file with Windows Media Player (version 10 or newer)

which will connect to *NetLibrary* and obtain a license for the file thus unlocking it. Once unlocked, you may play it using Windows Media Player, and/or transfer it to a single mobile device (i.e. MP3 player) provided that the player meets these requirements:

- It must understand Microsoft's WMA/DRM (Secure) technology. Look for Microsoft's "Plays for Sure" logo.
- It must display elapsed time and total track time in either HH:MM:SS or MMM:SS format. Unfortunately most players fail this requirement. This is needed so that you may position anywhere within the file. If the player doesn't support this, it may play until it reaches an hour (passes 59:59) after which it will crash. Protected books are treated as a single very long "song". For example, Doris Kearns Goodwin's book about Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet - "Team of Rivals" - is more than 40 hours playing time!
- It should have a 'bookmark' capability. The MP3 player that I use supports 12 bookmarks.

Optional but recommended - removable storage. My MP3 player has a slot for an optional microSD card. With it I can store more than 80 hours of material. Note that the Apple iPod family of devices do NOT support Microsoft's WMA/DRM, so you would be restricted to unprotected MP3s or audio books purchased from the iTunes

store. Curiously, Microsoft's own Zune player doesn't support their copy protection scheme either!

My first eAudiobooks-capable player was a Creative Labs Zen V (about \$90 in 2006) which worked fine but had a very hard to use manual control - a joystick about the size of a pin head - which broke off after several months of use. I now use (and love) Best Buy's Insignia Sport 2GB MP3 player with Bluetooth. Insignia is Best Buy's house brand. This player also has a very good FM radio built in. (It was about \$90 in 2007; I've since seen it on sale for about \$20 less.) Unfortunately, at the time of writing this article I find that this particular model has been discontinued. In looking for other models on the internet, I find many in the \$50 to \$99 range that have the PlaysForSure certification indicating that they work with WMA/DRM (Secure), but none of the specification sheets indicate the format of the time displays. Thus, you really must examine the physical device before purchase.

Check with your local library to see if it has a contract with *NetLibrary* or a similar service. By the way, about two years ago our neighboring Westchester County library system had a blanket contract with *NetLibrary* that covered all libraries in the county. I do not know if it is still in effect. Most libraries will issue a card and account if you either live or work in their area.

*Librivox.org* - [www.librivox.org](http://www.librivox.org) - is a nonprofit, completely volunteer organization with the goal of recording and distributing all literature that is in the public domain. Books published before 1924 are now in the public domain and the text for many of them is available via the Gutenberg Project. The recordings are available in several formats - MP3 at high and low quality levels, plus two other formats. *Librivox*'s books are usually divided into chapters, each a separate file of typically 20 to 25 MB. You may play them directly off the internet using Windows Media Player, but I find it more convenient to download them by the usual right-click/save as process. Recordings are all done by volunteers (volunteers needed!) with simple and free recording software such as Audacity - the same software Scott and I demonstrated at a DACS General Meeting when we did our LP to CD/MP3 presentation. Volunteers may do either a chapter as part of a team, or after they have experience, may sign up for a full book. I have found many classic books this way. I've recently downloaded Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series, works by Jules Verne, Edgar Allen Poe, and Dickens. I've also found some rarities - for example

I'm currently working on the memoirs of a gentleman who was with the North West Mounted Police (now Royal Canadian Mounted Police – the "Mounties") for 30 years, it was published in 1920. Project Gutenberg and Librivox books are available in many languages as well. As the audio books are standard MP3 files, any PC, Mac, iPod or MP3 player will work, so the player hardware requirements aren't quite as restrictive as those needed to support copy protected media. In addition you shouldn't have a problem with the elapsed and/or total time indicator. But, you may still want a bookmark and/or fast-forward capability. Since there is little if any difference in price between an MP3 player that supports WMA/DRM (Secure) I'd suggest getting one with this capability so that you aren't locked out of this source.

National Library Service / Library of Congress. - Not everyone qualifies for this source - you must be legally blind or physi-

cally handicapped. If so, then you are eligible to order books from the NLS/LOC. The catalog is on-line and is very extensive. New books typically appear within a year of publication. The books are distributed by a participating central library, one in each state. For Connecticut, it's in Rocky Hill. They are delivered and returned postage free. Currently the books are on "4-sided" cassette tapes - monophonic recorded side 1 and side 2, left and right tracks yields 4 "sides". They are also recorded at a considerably slower speed, requiring a special (provided) tape player. (Without the slow-speed player they would sound like "Alvin & the Chipmunks" on steroids). The provided tape player is about the size of a lunch box, and due to its large rechargeable battery is quite heavy. The NLS/LOC is in the process of converting to digital media (USB flash drives) such that the recordings will be made "on demand" rather than requiring a library to maintain an inventory.

The digital recordings are copy protected and require a special player about the size of a paperback book. Distribution is expected to start fourth quarter 2009. The NLS/LOC is also conducting a pilot program that will provide participants with the ability to download books directly to a USB memory device.

#### Links

<http://www.netlibrary.com/>  
<http://librivox.org/>  
[http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page)  
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>  
<http://www.loc.gov/nls/>

**BRUCE PRESTON** is president of *West Mountain Systems, Inc.*, a database consulting firm in Ridgefield. He was a long-term board member of DACS and conducted the *Random Access sessions at the General Meetings*, as well as chaired the *Microsoft Access SIG*.

## Tips & Tricks

### Juice Your Broadband Speed

by Vinny La Bash

**P**EOPLE PREFER broadband internet connections because of the obvious speed advantages over dial-up and satellite links. Then why is it that broadband never seems to be fast enough? Are you getting the speed promised by your ISP? Broadband can cost \$100 a month or more, but does the provider really provide the advertised speed? Is the connection reliable or does the modem need a reboot several times

a day? Fortunately, there are ways to achieve high, reliable throughput without having to have an engineering degree. Here are some suggestions to get every bit per second possible from your modem without any technical hiccups or interruptions in service.

Start with your computer and TV equipment. A common source of line noise can be traced to improper grounding of anything that plugs into household electrical circuits. This can seriously degrade performance of cable equipment. Every electrical device, especially those in the same room as the cable modem, should be plugged into properly grounded outlets. The best con-

nections are with polarized plugs oriented in the correct direction, and please don't use any three prong to two prong adapters. Get up-to-date gear. Electric outlet testers are cheap. Buy one and use it to test for excess voltage on your cable wiring. Any problem could indicate a serious safety hazard. Engage a licensed electrician to fix it.

Almost anything manufactured today in the consumer electronics world is light years ahead of its predecessors manufactured only two or three years ago. Cable modems are no exception, so if yours is more than three years old get a new one from your provider. Most providers will make a free exchange, but some will require an extension of your contract. You want to do this because the latest modems conform to the DOCSIS 2.0 standard. This offers higher upload and download capabilities and supports other advanced broadband applications, including online gaming and peer-to-peer computing.

Ask your ISP if they automatically update firmware for the modem. If they don't, have them supply the website address of



your modem's manufacturer so you can download the most recent firmware. Check the website about twice a year for new updates.

Next, go to a test site such as PC Pitstop, and check your upload and download speeds to see if they match the terms of your service contract. If they don't, give your ISP a call and have them reset the modem's settings. While you're at it, have them check the signal-to-noise ratio. Too much noise can cause interference, and your modem will then have to resend information cutting down on your throughput.

It's possible that your cable wiring may contain too many splices or simply be too long. That can be fixed by a visit from your ISP technician. Have the technician check the line quality leading to your house. If the signal is good and you're having problems, the house wiring may be the culprit. The definitive answer for cable modems is to create a split directly after the junction box and then run a new cable directly to your modem. The other side of the split will take care of your television sets which aren't nearly as sensitive to line noise.

After you've done everything from a hardware and firmware standpoint, and your cable connection is as clean as possible, you're ready to fine tune the system for best performance. Vista users don't have to do much of anything to optimize the operating system since Vista does TCP stack tuning dynamically. Any internet performance adjustments can be made through the browser. Firefox users may

**BROADBAND, Cont. on page 12**

# Web Wisdom

## How To Switch Internet Browsers

by Sandy Berger

**M**ICROSOFT'S Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of visitors to our Web page currently are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. For example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet

Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions.



Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

**SANDY BERGER, CompuKISS: [www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com); [sandy@compukiss.com](mailto:sandy@compukiss.com)**

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### **BROADBAND, Cont. from page 11**

want to try Firetune or Fasterfox. They are both free utilities and allow adjustment to cache memory, capacity and other settings such as pipelining.

If you do a lot of downloading, you can save time by installing a download manager like Flashget. This widely used utility claims the highest number of users on the internet. It uses MHT (Multi-server Hyper-threading Transportation) technique. It's very easy to use and comes with exceptional document management features. Best of all, it's free.

After all this work, it would be a tragedy if you didn't keep in mind that sometimes the simplest solutions are the best ones. Most cable modems and routers have reset features. Many a mysterious internet ailment has been corrected simply by resetting the equipment. Turn off the computer and the modem. Un-plug the modem for a few minutes and then power everything back on. You may be pleasantly surprised.

**VINNY LA BASH is a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL - [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org); [vlabash@comcast.net](mailto:vlabash@comcast.net)**

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# Circuit Writer Version 6.7

by Jim Scheef

**T**HIS MONTH WE take a short break from "the cloud", although these items may seem so obscure that they appear cloudy nonetheless.

### Apple and the DMCA

Apple has claimed that "jailbreaking" an iPhone infringes on their copyright of the iPhone software and thus violates the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Jailbreaking is the term used to describe the process of unlocking (OK, call it hacking) an iPhone so that applications can be installed from sources other than the iPhone Store and it can be used on a cell phone service other than AT&T. According to a story on CNET ([tinyurl.com/bct969](http://tinyurl.com/bct969)), the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF.org) has asked that the U.S. Copyright office grant an exemption to iPhone owners who have unlocked their iPhones. EFF argues that jailbreaking an iPhone is a "fair-use", and the Copyright Office should grant an exemption because "the culture of tinkering (or hacking, if you prefer) is an important part of our innovation economy." Apple counters that few users actually jailbreak it themselves. They do so by downloading software tools created by other parties to make the modification.

Now, I do not own an iPhone and I would like to get comments about this from those who do. It's interesting because of the open software aspect. The article implies that many users jailbreak their iPhone solely to free it from the Apple App Store (or I read this into it). This opens the device to applications that have not gone thru Apple's vetting and may not exactly play by Apple's rules. In other words, they explore new ways of doing things and... innovate. Isn't innovation a key part of "Truth, Justice and The American Way"? A great example is OpenClip ([openclip.org](http://openclip.org)) that works around the iPhone SDK (software development kit) agreement to implement copy and paste between iPhone apps – something that I would have assumed was baked in from the beginning. Access to the UNIX that underlies the iPhone user interface is another good reason to jailbreak your iPhone or iPod Touch. All you command line gurus out there, wouldn't a term window be cool on an iPhone? The alternative iPhones app source I found first is [appleiphoneapps.com](http://appleiphoneapps.com). There is no

Apple logo and at the bottom of each page the copyright notice includes: "Not affiliated with Apple Inc."

From the release of the original iPhone, Apple has battled to prevent hackers from unlocking any aspect of the iPhone. Since the iPhone license agreement allows Apple to update the iPhone software without the user's express permission (you gave it when activating the phone), Apple has updated the OS (operating system) to block each new jailbreaking tool. With the opening of the App Store where users could legally install applications, Apple eased off this cat and mouse game. Now I read in Tom Yager's InfoWorld column ([tinyurl.com/5kvv86](http://tinyurl.com/5kvv86)) from August 8, 2008 (OK, I'm not up to the minute on iPhone issues) that the 2.0.1 firmware update for iPhone, iPhone 3G, and iPod touch disables any alternative to Apple's App Store. Read the entire article for a good insight to the issue and a link to InfoWorld's special report on iPhone issues.

Remember the EFF from the start of this section? Many times ([dacs.org/archive/0402/presidents\\_message.htm](http://dacs.org/archive/0402/presidents_message.htm)) I have urged you to visit EFF.org or even become an EFF member to support them in protecting your digital rights. No matter your position on the iPhone, there are many other issues that matter, so now is the time to support the EFF.

### Dr. Dobbs no longer a print publication

Dr. Dobbs Journal, perhaps the longest running computer magazine on the planet ceased publication this past month as a separate printed publication. The web- and email-based editions will continue. What first began as a Xeroxed newsletter entitled Dr. Dobb's Journal of Tiny BASIC Calisthenics & Orthodontia (subtitled Running Light without Overbyte) has morphed several times over the years to become the highly respected DDJ ([ddj.com](http://ddj.com)) now published in the U.S. by CMP Technology which also publishes InformationWeek ([informationweek.com](http://informationweek.com)). Bob Albrect of People's Computer Company fame, started DDJ in 1976 following a flood of requests for a publication about microcomputer software. Early content was from volunteer contributors including Steve Wozniak, Gary Killdall and Jeff

Jaskin. Read about this on Wikipedia ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr.\\_Dobbs\\_Journal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Dobbs_Journal)) and, of course, on the DDJ Portal ([ddj.com](http://ddj.com)).

### When Robots Attack

There is a new book called *Wired For War: The Robotics Revolution And Conflict In The 21st Century* by P. W. Singer. It is not about robots like in the movie "I, Robot" but about the use of robotics on the battlefield of today. I found this in a Mitch Wagner column in *InformationWeek*, February 16, 2009 (<http://tinyurl.com/co237s>) and it is a topic ripe for discussion. For instance, there are now 7000 drone air systems in use by our military – from mere dozens just a few years ago. Initially ground-based robots were used for surveillance and rescue; but they are rapidly becoming deadly and the same goes for the much larger aircraft drones. Now I'm all for not getting our soldiers or pilots killed, but the video recorded by these drones (when do we start calling them droids?) is appearing on YouTube as entertainment set to music and that cannot be good. The current systems are the Model T's of battlefield robots; there is little or no autonomy. Naturally that will change, but how long before "strong" artificial intelligence (AI) becomes a reality and robots really do become droids? The debate about stem cell research is loud and clear. However there are other issues that need to see the light of day and before an army of autonomous droids is created to fight an army of clones. Are we headed toward Commander Data or his brother Lore? Isaac Asimov, where are you when we need you?

### Another for the "I Told You So" department

You have got to read this article on Dark Reading. Our personal privacy and security should not be treated as a tradeoff, because giving up one will likely reduce the other rather than what is intended. Case in point is the RFID chip in the new U.S. passports issued by the Department of Homeland Security. A researcher has demonstrated a drive-by attack that can clone "a half-dozen passports within an hour". Chris Paget is scheduled to demonstrate the technique at the February Shmoocon hacker conference in Washington, D.C. Paget developed the technique using "affordable" equipment and can read passports from twenty feet in a moving car. Read the article (<http://tinyurl.com/djocbl>).

# Ask DACS

January 2009

by Jim Scheef

**W**E 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](mailto: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.

There was one email question this month. DACS members can post questions on the DACS Community Forums at [dacs.org/forum/](http://dacs.org/forum/) where other members can respond. These will also be considered at the next meeting.

**Q: I am using an ACER TravelMate 2423WXCi laptop. My wireless LAN works well in AC mode but when I switch to battery power, I lose my wireless connection. When I boot in battery I have no wireless LAN. When working in AC mode, if I pull the plug I lose my wireless LAN. It will connect again as soon as I reconnect the AC power plug. How can I fix this problem so that I can have a wireless LAN in both AC and battery?**

A: At the meeting, the member confirmed that the power management features of the wireless network card were set to protect the battery and turn off wireless when the computer is on battery power. Changing this setting solved the problem. Where to find the power management setting will depend on what software is doing the power management and possibly the wireless device driver. If the wireless network connection is configured using software from the computer maker or the wireless card manufacturer, then that is the place to look. If you are using the wireless setup built in Windows, then the power management check box is probably part of the device driver configuration dialog. Open Device Manager and right-click on the wireless network adapter in the list under Network Adapters. Click properties and then look for the Power Management tab. Uncheck the option to "Allow the computer to turn off this device to save power." There may be other options in other places. If all else fails, check the manual that came with the laptop or the manufacturers' support websites.

**Q: I have seen advertising recently for external hard drives at dramatically lower prices. Are these products as good as the ones at higher prices? Is this too good to be true?**

A: The consensus was that these products are just as good. The discussion followed on to diagnosing a failed external drive, with the warning that a failure is often in the enclosure rather than the hard disk itself. Hard drive prices have been dropping dramatically, as recording density (and thus the capacity of a single platter) has increased. For drive diagnosis, I mentioned a handy adapter I use to connect a bare SATA or PATA (IDE) hard drive to USB. This can be really handy when moving to a new computer or replacing the drive in a laptop. Because there is no need to install the drive in an enclosure, these adapters cost less and are easier to use than an external enclosure.

**Q: When downloading pictures from my digital camera, a picture failed to complete. After aborting the process, all the picture files on the camera were gone. Has anyone had this experience and what did you do?**

A: Several members suggested using a memory card reader to unload pictures rather than the 'download' process as a simple move from memory card to hard drive is more secure. Recova ([recova.com](http://recova.com)) is a freeware utility to recover erased files. This utility may find the files if the memory card was not "toasted" (technical term?). It may be necessary to reformat the card before it will work again in the camera. Formatting it using Windows and then a second format in the camera will often give the best compatibility.

**Q: On Windows Vista after closing Internet Explorer, it would reappear many, many times in rapid succession. The solution we found was to**

**uninstall and reinstall the Adobe Flash Player. Has anyone else had this problem?**

A: One suggestion was to look in the Windows Event Viewer for any messages produced at the time of the incident. Messages may be in both the Application and System logs that give clues to what is happening. Severe errors are flagged in red. If you find a likely error, copy the text into your favorite search engine or the Microsoft website search to find more information. The search results will often include technical bulletin boards; be sure to consider the source when following the advice on such sites. This type of behavior is often the result of a malware infection so updating your antivirus program followed by a thorough scan is always a good idea.

**Q: Can someone recommend a program to take screen shots and partial screen shots on Vista and send them directly to the printer?**

A: Personally, I have used SnagIt (\$50, shareware - [snagit.com](http://snagit.com)) and HoverSnap (free - [hoverdesk.net](http://hoverdesk.net)) for years. HoverSnap does everything I need these days and can easily capture a portion of the screen. However these utilities produce a file for each capture. The file, generally a JPEG file, must be formatted to send to the printer, so that is a separate step in another application.

**Q: Has anyone tried the Windows 7 beta?**

A: Several people reported they have tried it. I installed it in a VM using Microsoft Virtual PC (free); others use VMWare. One member reported a problem installing the Open Office suite. The OO install "tanked" Windows 7 — not a good compatibility report. Another member also installed in a VM and does not like Internet Explorer 8. The questioner reported trouble with installing some device drivers, but once installed Win7 seems pretty fast.

**Q: This discussion morphed into a discussion of Open Office on Vista with reports of slow performance. A member then suggested using Windows ReadyBoost, a feature of Vista. ReadyBoost uses any flash drive as a disk cache to improve performance.**

A: Windows ReadyBoost ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ReadyBoost](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ReadyBoost))

uses flash memory as a disk cache to improve disk performance. I've seen reports that it is particularly effective on laptops with slower hard drives. At the time of the Vista launch, there were many reports that "hybrid hard drives" would become popular. A HDD ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybrid\\_drive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybrid_drive)) incorporates non-volatile flash memory into the drive electronics as a disk cache. Because files can remain in the cache between reboots, performance on boot up is supposed to improve dramatically. Vista's poor acceptance seems to have quelled demand for these drives.

**Q: I use Open Object REXX (<http://www.oorexx.org/>) on Vista to write small utilities and process files. It seems to hang when processing directories on Vista. Can anyone help?**

**A:** REXX is a language developed at IBM in the 1980s. IBM included it with OS/2 as a replacement for DOS batch files. A member suggested that Vista may require administrator rights to access directories in this manner. Giving the REXX runtime administrator rights may solve the problem. This is an excellent example of how the wisdom of the group can provide what I suspect is a very good answer to an incredibly esoteric question! (Back in my mainframe days, REXX was my favorite language.)

**Disclaimer:** Ask DACS questions come from members by email or from the audience attending the general meeting. Answers are suggestions offered by meeting attendees and represent a consensus of those responding. DACS offers no warranty as to the correctness of the answers and anyone following these suggestions or answers does so at their own risk. In other words, we could be totally wrong!



## SIG News, Cont. from page 8

ter as a list of elephants or integers. In contrast, a Java Script program lacks this capability and will allow errors to be seeded. We arose from our conference table with firm, pragmatic convictions to savor time well spent to garner valuable insight.

**Macintosh.** February's Mac SIG meeting seemed to strike a chord among attendees.

Before the meeting, a member had written in about a failing LaCie external drive. I promised to bring in a hard drive enclosure if he brought in his LaCie, so we could determine if it was the drive failing, or rather just the LaCie enclosure.

This subject is relevant to PC as well as to Mac users. For all of us, external drives seem to fail more often than a computer's internal drive, which is ironic since we often buy external drives to back up our computer. The job of the external drive enclosure is to translate the interface used by the drive to one used by an external connection on your computer. New drives today use a faster serial ATA (SATA) interface, whereas not so long ago they used a parallel ATA interface, also known as IDE. This needs to be translated to a USB, FireWire, or the new eSATA (external SATA) interface. So consider that there are two failure points in an external drive, the drive itself as well as the electronics that translate to the enclosure's external interface.

I also had some LaCie drives that failed at home, but failure seems to be a common occurrence among other brands. After hearing about the meeting's topic, another member brought in his failing Western Digital My Book, and my sister also had her Western Digital My Book fail. Based on a coworker's advice that it might be the enclosure and not the drive, I bought some Vantec (<http://www.vantecusa.com>) Nexstar enclosures. Sure enough, for all three LaCie drives at home, I found that when I removed the drives from the LaCie enclosures and popped them into the Vantec enclosures, they all worked perfectly.

So our task in the meeting was to check out if the LaCie Bill brought in really had a bad drive. First we connected it to my MacBook Pro and found it wasn't recognized. It was time to remove the drive from its enclosure. There are two screws to remove at the rear of the LaCie enclosure, one covered by a label that warns about the warranty being voided if the label is removed. If you plan to do a warranty exchange, you won't be able to try this yourself. John, who brought in the My Book, had done some Internet research on how to open his drive—it's a lot more challenging than the LaCie—but then learned his drive was still under warranty. So he planned to pursue that route.

In the case of the LaCie we went ahead and easily removed the hard drive. We discovered the drive inside was using the older IDE interface, so it wouldn't work in my Vantec enclosure expecting a SATA drive. Instead someone suggested to try putting it in our trusty PowerMac G4. We temporarily disconnected one of the IDE drives inside and connected Bill's drive. We confirmed that the G4 would not boot with Bill's drive. So it seemed most likely that his drive really was dead. So he'll have to decide whether to get an older IDE drive to replace it, or get a newer SATA drive and enclosure.

If you're interested in a Vantec Nexstar 3 enclosure like the one I got that supports FireWire 800 ([http://www.vantecusa.com/front/product/view\\_detail/354](http://www.vantecusa.com/front/product/view_detail/354)), I have ordered them from both Newegg (<http://www.newegg.com>) and Provanage (<http://www.provanage.com>). Vantec makes different models that support either 3.5" desktop drives or 2.5" laptop drives. If you need just USB and not FireWire the enclosures will be cheaper.

John, with the My Book, had another question about a problem with a .pps file (PowerPoint Slideshow). He had Microsoft Office 2004 and was unable to get any sound played along with the slide show. He placed the file in his Public folder and I copied it to my computer where I was able to use Office 2008 for Mac to play it with the accompanying music.

We ran out of time, so next month we will show VMware Fusion which allows you to easily run Windows or even Linux on your Intel-based Mac at the same time as Mac OS X.

**Server and Networking.** At the February 2009 meeting, we compared notes on Windows 7 and running Vista and 7 in VMs.

As part of this, we experimented with media sharing using the features in both OS's. The goal was to allow music and video sharing between machines on a home network. We came very close but could not get it going.

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> in the DACS Resource Center.



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## Future Events:

**March 2**

Jay Ferron, APCUG -  
Home Server

**April 6**

Drew Kwashnak -  
The Latest on Linux

**May 4**

Gary Spring, Ritz  
Camera - Digital  
cameras

**July 6**

NYPD - Where  
Technology Can Mean  
Life or Death