

**NEXT MEETING,
NOVEMBER 2**

**HEALTHCARE
ENTERS THE
INFORMATION
AGE**



INSIDE: ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS • OVERCLOCKING YOUR PC • PERIPHERAL DAMAGE • 1964 HAS FINALLY ARRIVED • CONVERTING SLIDES TO DIGITAL • INSTALL THOSE UPDATES • PLUS, MORE SIG NEWS, COMMENTARY AND ANSWERS TO YOUR COMPUTING QUESTIONS

President's File



The end of another year is upon us. If you measure your accomplishments by tangible things or goals achieved, then I fell very short of many things this year. It seems inevitable, at times, that no matter how much

effort you throw at something it will appear to be in vain.

For example, one of my 'non-tech' projects is a car restoration project. The car is not anything super special by the standard of many people, but it is mine and I'm happy with my choice. I elected to have the engine replaced due to a crack in the cylinder head. For those of you non-automotive-folks, the head is part of the top section of the engine. At 150,000 miles on the motor, my choice was to replace the head or replace the motor. Replacing the head meant there would be 'zero' miles on the top of the engine and 150,000 on the bottom. To repair the bottom when it would finally go would require tearing the whole engine apart again. So, I opted for the 'simpler' choice that also came with a warranty. That was back in April 2009. I still cannot drive my car. Between wiring issues and a new problem with a seal in my replacement turbo (the turbo crams air into the engine to make combustion more powerful), I have missed all the road trips I had hoped to take with the car this year. As dismayed as I am,

I can only move on and hold hope that my goals to enjoy the car next year will come to fruition.

When your stress relieving outlet now becomes a point of stress, it is clear there should be some reevaluation. It became clear that I needed to scale back and simplify to realize some of my goals and objectives. This has changed many aspects in my day-to-day endeavors already and has started to create a calming effect. Often there is a, "Gee, why didn't I do that sooner?" moment. There have also been opportunities that I would have otherwise missed had they not been amplified by my desire to look for particular things.

Relatedly, I have been on a quest to ditch paper records. Specifically, anything that can be reproduced with a printer should be, in my opinion, able to be backed up remotely. This includes photos, old documents, and receipts—anything that does not require an official seal to be valid. The trick to this is that one must scan existing items. Pictures are easy... just take the film, slides, negatives, or prints to Costco and have them digitize it all. Tax documents from before using electronic methods? Financial records from over five years ago? Well, those require scanning and a standard scanner just doesn't cut it. What I need is a sheet-feed scanner!

Well, those aren't exactly cheap. They start at a couple hundred dollars and go up from there. And, it's another item to plug in and keep at the desk. For that much I'd rather have a color laser printer and just use my digital camera to take pictures of all my documents. Sidebar: Yes, using a good digital camera (10 Megapixel or better) to digitize paperwork works well with a tripod, good lighting, and much patience... it's actually faster than a flatbed scanner!

Then it occurred to me... why not get a fancy laser printer that can scan/copy like the ones at work but only cheaper? After a bit of searching, I finally found the 'holy grail' for the SOHO user that needs color laser scanning, faxing, copying, networking, and more in the Brother MFC-9840CDW. At the time of this writing Costco is selling it for \$529.99 (shipping included). That device will replace two printers and my flatbed scanner, and two mini print servers. I can't wait for it to arrive! When it does get here I'll share my experiences getting it all set up and configured.

The point here is that sometimes you have to wait, look elsewhere, and focus on something else to get where you need to go or take things to the next level.

See you at the next meeting!

—Rob Limbaugh
dacsprez@dacs.org

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Apple User Group

Directors' Notes

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

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, October 12, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. Present were Charles Bovaird, Richard Corzo, Drew Kwashnak, John Lansdale, Patrick Libert, Rob Limbaugh, Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef, and Joseph Tobin.

President Rob Limbaugh presided and Secretary Mary Tobin kept the record. Minutes of the last meeting held September 14, 2009, were presented and approved.

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$6120.61, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$6086.61 plus postage on hand of \$34. Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$250.00 left a net equity of \$5871.61. He also reported that the current membership is at 189, 80 of which receive newsletter.

General Meetings

- Reviews – Patrick wrote the review for the October meeting; Rob will write it for the November meeting.

- Previews – Allan will write the November preview and Sean the one for December.

- Meeting topics: November – Allan confirmed that he has a speaker on Medical Technology. He had also suggested that a panel format with a physician and a spokesperson for Danbury Hospital might be useful, who could share what they are doing with electronic medical records. The discussion would also address digital imaging records, and patients' records.

- December – John Patrick is confirmed.

- January 2010 – Windows 7 is a possible topic which would be presented by Jay Ferron.

- February – Hosting and web publishing to be presented by Jeff Setaro.

- March possible topic - Backing up data.

- General Meeting date considerations for 2010: The calendar will be set soon for either the first Monday or the first Tuesday of each month as soon as Danbury Hospital sets their schedule.

Future topics: There have been requests for a presentation on Social Networking, Portable Devices, Twitter, Facebook, Word Press, etc.

Richard will advise his contact about this presentation request and schedule it for early 2010. Richard will also contact Apple to schedule a presentation on their latest releases.

Operations

- Richard bought a new projector and inquired about the possibility of DACS re-

DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. on page 4

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

DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. from page 3
imbursing the cost and taking possession. After discussion, the request was deferred to next month's meeting.

Announcements

- Bruce Preston has offered to be a Director but meetings would need to move towards utilizing conferencing technologies to accommodate Bruce's limitations. Bruce would finish out Sean's term.
- Drew Kwashnak was unanimously appointed to the board to finish out Howard Berger's term.
- Jim Ritterbusch is taking over the Linux SIG as its primary leader.
- Jim Scheef is taking over the membership duties from Charles Bovaird.

Old Business

- Need to find replacements and backup for: Program chair/VP, PR, and President (this is REL's final term), and an incoming Treasurer to handle the transition from Charlie.
- Since 2010 will be the twentieth anniversary of DACS, a committee should be formed to plan special events.

New Business

- We will have to decide next month about whether or not to continue with a printed newsletter since we are reaching the critical point of 100 issues with only 80 being mailed to members and another 20 sent to Libraries.
 - A suggestion was made for of a Membership drive outside of stores handing out DACS printed reusable bags for groceries.
 - We should also explore the possibility of six General Meetings per year with additional specialized meetings for members only.
- Rob motioned to Adjourn, all seconded.
—Mary Tobin

DACS Elections are coming in December



Be a candidate for the Board

Contact Rob Limbaugh at dacsprez@dacs.org, and say "I want to make a difference for DACS."

From the Editor

Editorial Bits

by Patrick Libert

Program Review

TWEAKING ONE'S system and processor to obtain optimal performance. That was October's very interesting presentation.



There are some who say that it was too technical and not geared to their daily use of their PC and/or Mac. I beg to differ. If we limit ourselves to being exposed only to things with which we are familiar, we are putting on intellectual "blinders" and admitting that we are not open to learning anything new and *different*. Emphasis on the word "different." The mind is always open to learning until its last dying pulsation. If DACS can contribute, so much the better for all of us.

New and Notable

Another Google tool (Oh, no! Not another one!) that I have been using occasionally, is Google Translate (translate.google.com). I am bilingual in French and often read an article on a French website which I would like to forward to family and friends in the U.S.

Using Google Translate from French to English yields a fairly accurate rendition of the original article; it's not perfect but more time saving for me than if I have to literally translate it. In reverse, from English to French, it's a little less exact probably due to the fact that it does not have all the latest colloquial expressions in its databank. At the present time, this application can handle fifty-one languages.

Even though I am a Mac user, I am always concerned about security. I just read about a very worthwhile extension for Firefox called NoScript (<http://noscript.net/>). This extension disables Java, Flash, and other dynamic content often used in attacks. It is extremely effective and, being open source, it is free.

This column would not be complete without an honorable mention for the new releases of various Apple hardware announced on Tuesday, October 20. Given that my five year old iMac G5 has been showing daily signs of early retirement envy, I have been offering daily gifts to the

Gods to keep it operating until the new stuff was announced. My prayers were answered and all you loyal readers can now feel confident that this titillating column will continue to be published. A replacement iMac is foreseen in the coming days.

Compared to my current iMac G5, these new models are smoking. For the 21.5" model (another 1.5" increase), standard configuration goes from a 1.8GHz PowerPC chip to a 3.06GHz Intel Core Duo, from a 180GB HD to a 500GB HD, from 500MB memory to 4GB memory and many other improvements. All this for \$1,199 which is \$700 less than I paid in 2004! Besides the technical improvements, it comes fully loaded with Apple's iLife '09, a suite of applications which would cost many bucks when added to a PC.

November Program Preview

Daily, we hear, read and sleep the healthcare debate. Much of the current cost problems are due to an outdated system for gathering, compiling and storing the medical data which surrounds our lives. If we can convert this salad into an orderly and efficient digital information system, we will be safer and the costs will decrease dramatically.

That is why you should attend our November General Meeting and listen to an expert on this subject. The more you know and understand about what can be done, the more you can influence your lawmaker to vote for the right package.

Monday, November 2 at the Danbury Hospital Auditorium at 7 p.m. Mark your calendars and attend!

DACS.doc

You didn't think that this column would omit another recruitment message, did you? I love parties and if we can get together to put each issue to bed and have fun at the same time, let's do it. But, a party needs partygoers.

Some of us have been doing this for a long time and we need your help. The more the merrier and we'll make this a monthly prepress party. All you have to do is contact me when you see me at the general meetings or send me an email at dacseditor@dacs.org. You too can be a contributor and/or an editor!

Program Review

"Overclocking"

by Patrick Libert

WHEN THE PROGRAM preview mentioned that Pete Basel, the presenter would demonstrate the overclocking process, I did not quite know what to expect. Would the computer tower begin to smoke and emit crackling noises?

On the contrary, Pete's presentation was a fascinating exposé of the progression of computer development from the point of view of the main processor and where we are today in terms of "chip" power. While the 80486 chip in 1990 was rated from 25-66 Mhz, the Pentium 4 in 2001 had reached speeds from 1300-3800 Mhz.



In many cases, the labeled power of the processor can be exceeded safely with the application of additional safeguards to the machine architecture.

This process is called "overclocking." This **should not** be tried on any business or critical computer. Instead, one could do it as a hobby or to learn new technology as Pete Basel did on a computer he constructed himself.

In the course of this project, Pete found that his preferred components were:

- Intel processors
- Asus motherboards
- Antec power supplies
- ATI video cards

• Seagate disk drives with the exception of the Western Digital Raptor which is considerably faster but more expensive.

Pete had his custom built PC tower (using an old Gateway frame) connected to the video and we could watch the monitoring of various elements during the presentation.

The overclocking was generated by launching a benchmark test. The critical measurement is the heat of the processor which we could watch climbing from around 41 degrees Celsius to 59. Beating the heat is critical. Whereas most systems have 1-2 fans, Pete added 3 case fans and larger heat sinks. This keeps the processor cooled and prevents crashes and other problems that could occur.

Pete is now pursuing other projects including:

- Free NAS (Network Attached Software)
- IR Remote Control
- Multimedia PC's
- Ubuntu OS

Hopefully, we can invite Pete at a later date to fill us in on another of his captivating projects.

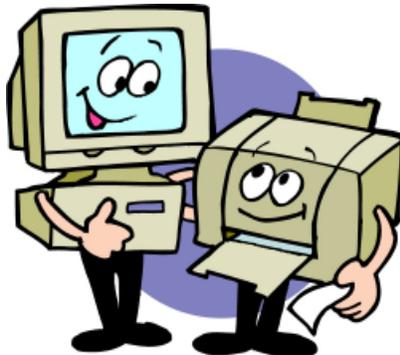
Driver Ed

A Tale of Two Printers, a Scanner, and a CD Drive

by Bruce Preston

Printer #1

ABOUT TWO MONTHS ago, my friend/dentist called to say that he had a problem with his Epson Stylus CX-3810 Multifunction printer. Usually when he printed, a pop-up window would appear showing the level of his ink cartridges. This had disappeared. In addition he could not get it to appear when he went to the printer's property page by way of Control Panel > Printers. He had wasted two hours on the phone with Epson's support "somewhere" — they had him uninstall the printer and reinstall it twice, and finally they used the generic "not my problem" cure — they told him to "reinstall Windows." Fortunately he didn't follow that instruction.



Printer #2

About a week ago, I had a problem with my HP OfficeJet 6310, a multifunction printer. It just ceased to respond to print requests, although the scan and copy functions worked just fine. I tried doing a "repair install." HP's large hourglass thing came up for a while, a screen flashed by too fast to read, and the setup utility concluded before asking me what to do. I went to the HP site and found that they had a 38MB download of basic drivers for "Corporate Use Only." Reading the description, it detailed that this was a lightweight install for distributing over a corporate network such that the printer's functions could be shared over a local area network (which I do) with-

out the baggage (not their phrasing) of all the add-on software that the consumer installation puts on each machine. The consumer install puts "HP Director" - a dashboard application, various photo manipulation software, various photo sharing software, and the ubiquitous automatic check for updates application. The one thing that it would lose would be the ability to send a scan to a desktop application at a selected machine by pushing buttons on the printer's control panel, "pushing" the scan to the computer rather than "pulling" it from the computer. This is a feature I don't need. The lightweight install was just what I wanted. In addition, it said that if it found the consumer drivers it would uninstall them. I downloaded it and cranked up the installation program from the command line as instructed. Again, I got the large hourglass, a too-fast-to-read pop-up, and then nothing.

Scanner

About a month ago there was a Q&A Posting on SmartComputing where a reader had a problem with an Epson Perfection 2580 scanner. Upon pushing the scan button he got a message on his computer's display that a

DLL was unable to save the file. Previously it had worked fine. He too had not gotten a solution from Epson support.

CD Drive

About two weeks ago a friend of mine in Michigan had a problem with a CD drive. It “just disappeared.” When she had installed an upgrade to her antivirus software it had complained about an incompatibility with the CD burner software (the software came with the machine when new). She ran the uninstall program which crashed, and the drive disappeared from the device manager.

What do all of these have in common? It appears that all the problems were caused by corrupted registry entries. It is unknown what might have corrupted the registry entries, perhaps an update from either the vendor or Microsoft—but I won't point fingers without evidence. Whatever the cause, the standard response of “uninstall/reinstall” or “repair reinstall” didn't fix the system.

The good news is that in each case the free RevoUninstaller from [HYPERLINK http://www.revouninstaller.com](http://www.revouninstaller.com) www.revouninstaller.com took less than 5 minutes to remove the broken software, permitting us to then re-install on a 'clean' machine. After uninstalling the broken software we were able to install components without a problem.

RevoUninstaller loads quickly and presents you with a very inclusive list of things that it offers to remove for you. I found it notable that it presented the list within a second whereas the standard Add/Remove Programs takes about a minute to populate on my machine. When you select something to uninstall, it gives you three options:

1) Safe - fast uninstall and a scan of the hard disk for left over files.

2) Moderate — same as Safe with an additional extended scan of the system registry for left over entries.

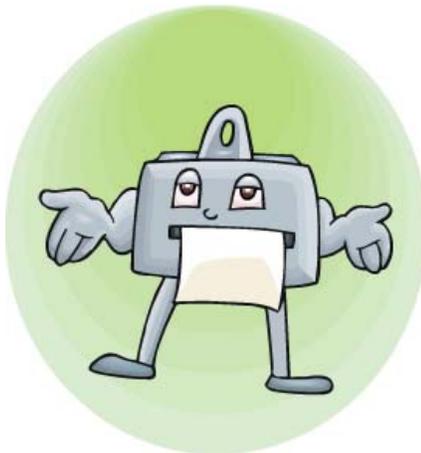
3) Advanced - Same as Moderate but with a deeper registry scan. Takes a bit more time but finds and/or clears more.

I have always used the “Advanced” option. RevoUninstaller analyzes the application for a moment and then uses the application's native uninstall mechanism first. Upon completion it then does its own digging. When done, it presents you with a tree-view of what it found in the registry with full path to the registry keys. The items it suggests for



deletion are shown in bold, and have an adjacent check box. I have always used the SELECT ALL and the DELETE button. Having cleaned the registry of leftover, it then displays a similar page with a list of leftover files, and gives you the same option of selecting files for deletion. Again, I have used SELECT ALL and DELETE to good effect.

Why it works—this is just an educated guess but I suspect it to be accurate. When an application is installed, along with the core .EXE files the vendors often include a multitude of dynamic link libraries—DLLs, which are either provided by the vendor or a third party. These DLLs provide common functionality across products. (For example, almost every application in Windows is likely to make use of COMDLG32.DLL from Microsoft — this Common Dialog module provides the ubiquitous FILE / OPEN, FILE/SAVE, FILE/PRINT dialog boxes. DLLs are activated from the .EXE by way of registry entries. If COMDLG32.DLL has three functions (known as Entry Points) then it would have three registry entries, one for each function. Now suppose an update is installed—it may replace a



DLL with a newer one, and may insert a new registry entry to point to the new DLL. But, if some other application also makes use of the DLL that has been replaced, it may break. For this reason when you uninstall something you may see a warning message that asks for permission to remove a component that might be shared.

I suspect that the first two printer problems weren't cured by the reinstall SETUP because the SETUP found either the leftover files or left over registry entries and decided that it wasn't necessary to continue, and thus either skipped a critical step or just decided to bail out. By running RevoUninstaller the machine was wiped clean in such a manner that the SETUP was forced to do all of its operations.

For what it's worth, the HP installer seems to be a homegrown custom module rather than an installer based upon the almost industry standard InstallShield product. I don't know about the Epson installers or the one for the CD drive. There are several products used for creating installations - InstallShield, Wyse, Microsoft's MSI, etc. I won't go so far as to say that the problem is specific to any particular installer product - in fact, they may all be innocent and victims of a sloppy update.

Lastly, I'm not a fan of the various “registry cleaners” as I have found them to be either a scam (We've found 4,513 problems in your registry. We will remove 33 of them, and if you pay us \$29.95 and we'll remove the rest!) or to work only on the registry without delving into the innards of related applications. Revo Uninstaller seems to approach the registry from the application's side and work from the outside in, rather than from the registry side and work from the inside out. Again, that's just my educated guess. Be that as it may, I highly recommend RevoUninstaller.



Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: November 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.

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

Next Meeting: Nov 4

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: Nov 25

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: Drew Kwashnak 203-910-6477 (Cell)

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

Next Meeting: Nov 18

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: Nov 5

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

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 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

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

Next meeting: Nov 12

VB.Net.. 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: Nov 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, 203 648-9176

Next Meeting: Combined with Server SIG.

Web Design and DTP. Learn about Adobe software for web, graphics and desktop publishing.

Contact: Annette vanOmmeren(avo555@earthlink.net).

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

Next Meeting: September 16 Next Meeting: Nov 17

SIG News & Events

ASP.Net and C#VB.Net. The dotNet SIG had a delayed start, but nevertheless we were able to exhaust the technical questions.

Random questions dig out important truths. What is the difference between C# and JavaScript such that JavaScript has no classes? A deep truth is that C# is strongly typed and classes serve as templates for what is to be done, while JavaScript is flexible and a dynamic object manipulator which allows HTML to do work that otherwise would be unavailable in the browser.

The current SIG project, a calendar control, was a project chosen because it offered an opportunity to examine both server and client programming functionality. We have developed the server code in C#, while the browser client code is a combination of programmer developed JavaScript and the automated compiler inserted JavaScript that is embedded by the web client objects that implement runAt=server directives.

As a work in progress the calendar deserves to be burished with subtle features that mark holidays. Then, a feature can be added so that a user can set selected business rules such as this one: "No orders will be taken or filled on weekends when the shop is closed." In fact, there seemed to

be any number of additional features that could be added to the calendar control. Each of the features tend to illustrate different class and/or object programming considerations.

To help the development, the calendar also has a test program to let a developer test an adaptation to whatever application is needed for mission accomplishment.

The beat goes on, and we in the SIG have great expectations.

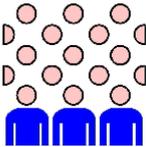
Macintosh. In October for the first time we turned our attention to the iPhone. I first mentioned a few of the apps that are built in and can be seen on the first home screen, such as the Weather app. Of course there is an App Store for loading up on more apps. You can view this on the iPhone itself, or find it in iTunes on the Mac or Windows PC as part of the iTunes Store. You can search for an app using any keyword that comes to mind, and read some customer reviews to decide if it's worth downloading or purchasing an app.

It's not hard to accumulate quite a few apps on your iPhone or iPod touch. These wind up on successive screens as each screen fills up. From the start, you were able to ar-

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November 2009

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
1	 <p>6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>	3	 <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>	6	7																																																																																																		
8	 <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>	10		 <p>7:00 PM Server Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>	13	 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																		
15	16	 <p>Web and Print Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	 <p>7:30 PM Linux Drew Kwashnak 203 910-6477</p>	19	20	21																																																																																																		
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Telecommunications

1964 Has Finally Arrived

by Bruce Preston

ONE OF THE 'Gee-Whiz' attractions at the 1964 New York World's Fair was the AT&T Picturephone http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Videophone#AT.26T_Picturephone which people eagerly awaited for availability . . . and waited . . . and waited..

For a while I have been using Microsoft's Live Messenger instant messaging service, and while it supports video, I have never been really happy with it - audio/video quality were marginal. In addition, Windows Live Messenger (and its predecessors, Windows Messenger/MSN Messenger) doesn't support Mac, and our son Scott, who is away at college, prefers a Mac. He suggested that I try Skype instead. I installed it about a month ago and have found it to be easy to use and have much better video and audio quality. The icing on the cake is that for Skype-to-Skype calls, it is 100% free as well.

What you need: To start with, you need a broadband connection - cable or DSL, both work fine. To support voice calling you need a microphone and speakers. If you want video capability, you also need a webcam. For smooth video a USB 2 webcam is recommended. We recently outfitted my wife's notebook and her sister's desktop with webcams from MicroCenter.com -

WinBook WB-7144 HD Webcam 2-pack - two USB 2 webcams with inte-

gral microphone, as of this writing the two-pack is \$39.99 + S/H. http://www.microcenter.com/single_product_results.phtml?product_id=0308734

It works fine over WiFi (802.11g) at both ends. Windows XP and Windows Vista both recognized the hardware and did not require an installation CD, although the product comes with a pair of identical CDs with ArcSoft photo editing/cataloging software and drivers for earlier versions of Windows. The base of the camera has three spring-loaded fingers which can grasp the top of a flat screen monitor or notebook.

The Skype software is a straightforward download and install. About the only decision you have to make is whether to install the Google Toolbar (which is installed by default.) I declined - I dislike add-on browser toolbars. You need to create and register a Skype name (not your e-mail address) and pick a password (at least 6 characters having at least one digit.) You need to provide a valid e-mail address for use in recovering forgotten password.

For Windows, Skype installs yet another little icon in the system tray down by the clock - but I have found it to be low-impact upon my machine so I have left it active. The image of the icon changes depending upon your computer's status - available for incoming calls, offline, do-not-disturb, etc. The same icons appear next to entries in your contact list showing their availability.

To populate your contact list, you need to provide either the Skype name or e-mail address of the other party. That's about it. Click on an entry in your contact list, select CALL (for a voice only call) or VIDEO CALL (for voice + video) and within about 5 seconds the other end will ring and your correspondent can elect what type of call to accept.

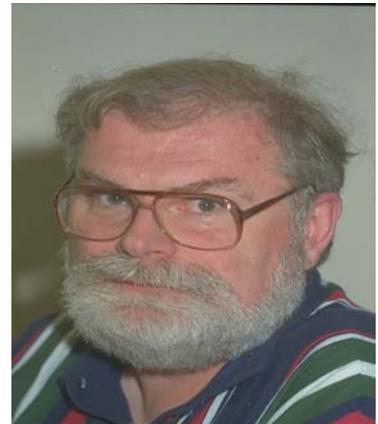
During a video call you have a large image of your correspondent. On a 1024x768 I am going to guess that it is near 800x600. A smaller picture-in-picture image at the lower left displays what your correspondent sees.

There is a small window within which you may type text a la instant messaging.

Recently I was having problems with establishing an account on a service, I couldn't make out the CAPTCHA distorted letters. (As some of you know, I am legally blind.) I called Scott planning on asking him to create the account for me. He pointed out that there was a "share my screen" capability in Skype. I did so, he read the characters for me, and I was able to continue. Nice!

As mentioned earlier, Skype-to-Skype calls are free. There is a charge for Skype to other types of telephone service, i.e. landline, cell etc. I haven't needed that. Lastly, some years ago eBay purchased controlling interest in Skype thinking that buyers and sellers would use it during the auction process - questions about items prior to the sale, shipping instructions after, etc. It never took off. Recently eBay sold most of their interest to an investors group led by Mark Andreessen (originator of Netscape) but the founding partners of Skype sued eBay claiming that eBay had violated the contract. That's up in the air, but it is highly improbable that the service will 'go away' It will be interesting to watch the case work its way through the courts.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT specializing in database applications. A former DACS director, Bruce also headed the Access SIG, hosted Ask DACS, has been a regular presenter at our General Meetings and a prolific contributor to *dacs.doc*. Following a brief hiatus, Bruce is once again on the editorial circuit, and we welcome his renewed participation.



Photography

Converting Slides to Digital Images

by Bruce Preston

Author's Note: This article best appreciated if read while listening to Paul Simon's Kodachrome.

BY MY ESTIMATE, over the last 40 or so years, I have taken about 6,000 slides. Topics include such things as family get-togethers, Formula 1 and Can-Am races at Watkins Glen, SCCA races at Lime Rock Park, bike tours in Vermont, the U.K, Western Europe, and steam locomotives in Colorado, Vermont, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. For all of these I much prefer the color fidelity and permanence of slides over prints.

Unfortunately, slides also require either setting up a projector and screen or using a hand-held viewer, and don't easily lend themselves to sharing. Years ago I had a Polaroid SprintScan 35 film scanner, but it required a SCSI adapter card and Polaroid went under without delivering drivers for Windows 2000 or XP. It was also somewhat slow taking about 2 minutes per scan. I will grant you that it delivered high quality images. My brother in law has scanned a few slides using a flatbed scanner with a light box cover, but the resolution was not great. It was acceptable for distributing by e-mail or posting on a web page, but not satisfactory for full screen viewing.

A few months ago I discovered Ion Audio's "Slides 2 PC" 35 mm Slide and Film Scanner. It is a nifty compact device that consists of housing containing a fixed-focus USB 2.0 camera, a white-balanced light

source and a pair of carriers – one that can hold 3 mounted 35 mm slides, the other for 6-exposure 35 mm negative strips. System requirements are minimal – Windows XP or Vista, and a USB 2 port. (*If you only have USB 1.1 you will need to add a USB 2 card to your desktop or get a USB 2 PCMCIA card for your notebook. I tried it on my old notebook and the driver refused flatly stating that it needed USB 2.*)

Slides 2 PC comes bundled with ArcSoft's Photo Impressions 6, a consumer-friendly image capture/editing/cataloging program commonly bundled with digital scanners and cameras. The scanner appears as a TWAIN device, I happen to prefer the free (for personal use) IrfanView as I have used IrfanView for years. <http://www.irfanview.com/> One thing I disliked about the ArcSoft package was its insistence upon loading an always resident module.

I don't know if the device will work with a Mac – next time Scott is around with his Mac we'll see if it recognizes it. Since it is a TWAIN device there is a good chance as long as your bring your own software.

Operation is simple; I'll describe the process when using IrfanView. Select the TWAIN source from the FILE menu, and then select ACQUIRE/BATCH. The first dialog box asks for a target folder, a root filename, the starting number and the number of digits. I created folder "\My Documents\My Pictures\VBT Tours\1972" as the folder, "VBT_" as the filename root,

1 as the starting number, and 3 as the number of digits. I clicked OK and the scanner loaded with a real-time preview. In this case of a blank white area since I hadn't loaded a slide. Note that since it is a video camera rather than a moving scanner mechanism there are essentially no moving parts within that can get out of calibration.

The carrier is hinged along the long side – open it, place 3 slides in the slide carrier or a film strip in the film carrier and close it. Slide the carrier into the scanner until you feel it click at the first positioning notch. In about a half second the image will appear, then reappear once the auto-exposure kicks in. Tap the top of the scanner and the image is captured to memory. A thumbnail appears above the preview image. Slide the carrier to the next notch and repeat the process. Reload and repeat until you have up to 12 thumbnails. Click on the first, shift-click on the last one to select them all, then click on the 'Transfer' button on the screen and they will be written to disk. Resultant JPEG images are 2592x1680, 24 bit color depth. They average about 2.5MB in size.

If you use Photo Impressions 6 as part of start up you get a configuration screen for the scanner where you may select image size, color depth, JPEG or TIFF, and specify whether you are scanning transparencies (slides), color or B/W negatives. IrfanView just uses the defaults of JPEG at 24 bit color depth.

As far as speed is concerned, on this lazy Sunday afternoon I scanned 60 slides in 33 minutes without rushing. This included taking the slides out of the Bell & Howell 'Slide Cube' and reloading them. I have yet to go into the JPEGs to rotate the images that need to be turned from landscape to portrait orientation – IrfanView can do that with a single key-press.

For those who like spec sheets:

- 5 mega-pixel scanner
- USB 2.0 interface
- f/6.0 four element glass lens
- Fixed focus, auto-exposure and color balance

More information at <http://www.ionaudio.com/slides2pc>.

Sources – I did a little web searching while wrapping up this article. The average eBay auction over the last 60 days closed at \$85 including shipping. J&R has it for \$79.99 plus shipping which I suspect will put it right about \$85. If you like rolling the dice, from time to time a factory refurb shows up on eBay at about \$65.

If you have many slides or negatives that you'd like to convert to digital, give this unit some thought. I'm very happy with it.



Circuit Writer Version 7.2

by Jim Scheef

Help rejuvenate DACS

ALERT READERS among you noticed that DACS published a combined August/September issue of DACS.doc.



Then in October, I went on my rampage about the impending collapse of DACS so I have three months of “normal” material to cover. Well, DACS is still in trouble, but this month we’ll get

back to more normal topics.

Before we move on, however, I would like to point out how easily you can help DACS. Bring your friend, neighbor or co-worker to a meeting. It can be that simple. Do you know someone who enjoys tinkering with his (or her) computer? Or maybe your neighbor is always grumbling about the trouble he has using his PC or Mac. Offer to bring him or her to the next general meeting. My younger brother would be an excellent candidate for this but he lives near Chicago. Who knows, your neighbor may enjoy it!

It’s time to get political again

While the media obsesses about healthcare reform, the renewal of the incredibly misnamed USA Patriot Act is working its way thru committees with no mention at all on television by either the major network news or the cable pundits (one exception noted below). It is getting coverage in the print media and on the Internet.

While the problems caused by the current healthcare industry are at the root of just about everything that is wrong in our country, none of it will be worth a tinker’s damn without our civil liberties. A democracy can only be strong when its citizens are well informed. The most insidious threat to being well informed comes not from blatant censorship, but from the implied threat that comes from a government that can search your records and records of your activities and never tell you that search took place. How do you know if you are doing something wrong if there is no apparent record of an investigation until you are thrown in a jail

cell without any charge, and they throw away the key? All of this is expressly allowed by the USA Patriot Act. You have nothing to fear, you say? You have done nothing wrong. Yet, how do you know when your library or book purchases when combined with your grocery buying habits (ever try a falafel?) might cause your name to pop up on someone’s radar? Worried about some government bureaucrat coming messing with your healthcare? Well if that would be bad, then you should really be worried about some bureaucrat data mining your credit card, bank, employment, Internet search and email records. All of this can be done using a national security letter (NSL) that does not require review by a judge yet carries a gag order forbidding the person or organization requested to turn over their records from ever telling anyone. Forever is a very long time.

Have you ever read the news on Al Jazeera (english.aljazeera.net)? If not, how can you know if they present an honest perspective on news events? No one is looking over your shoulder to see what you are reading, right? How can you be sure?

On October 8, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to send to the full floor a Patriot Act bill that reauthorizes the three key provisions in the Patriot Act that are due to expire at the end of this year. Surprisingly, this was with the recommendation of the Obama Administration.

Here are a few articles, in no particular order:

- As Congress Prepares to Reauthorize the Patriot Act, Reader Privacy Must be Protected, Judy Platt, Huffington Post (tinyurl.com/yhgcd6n).
- What next for the Patriot Act?, Andrew Wander, Aljazeera.net (tinyurl.com/yd5khuq)
- D.C. businessman accused of disrupting flight faces 20 years, Scott McCabe, The (Washington) Examiner (tinyurl.com/yllp659)
- Obama Versus Obama on the Patriot Act, Leslie Harris, Huffington Post (tinyurl.com/yulgjsxr) – this article explains some provisions
- Patriot Act: A Chance to Commit to National Security, Jena Baker McNeill,

The Heritage Foundation (tinyurl.com/yjxkhtq)

- Senators Vote to Renew Patriot Act Spy Powers, David Kravets, Wired (wired.com/threatlevel/2009/10/patriot-act-renewal)

- Judge Refuses to Lift 5-Year-Old Patriot Act Gag Order, David Kravets, Wired (wired.com/threatlevel)

- Fact Check on FOX News’ Misleading PATRIOT Act Reporting, Kevin Bankston, EFF.org (tinyurl.com/yfdg434)

- Al Franken Reads the 4th Amendment to Justice Department Official, Daphne Eviatar, The Washington Independent (tinyurl.com/lud45m) – for a little touch of irony

- I have 37 additional citations that cannot be included here, but will be on my blog at <http://circuitwriter.spaces.live.com>.

You know what I think and so do my Congress-people. This summer I spoke with two of them personally. You should let your representatives know what YOU think as well.

Back to the strictly technological

Amazing as it might seem, the universal package code (UPC) is 35 years old (see New York Times, tinyurl.com/nqg15b). Back in the early seventies I was working at the General Foods Kool Aid Plant on the southwest side of Chicago. In my first career I was a Packaging Technologist responsible for the structural design of the packaging used for such products as Good Seasons Salad Dressing, Shake ‘N Bake, and Open Pit Barbecue Sauce. The UPC code requirement was fought tooth and nail by the packaging industry as an impossible requirement that would never be reliable. It was claimed that printing presses could not reproduce the bar codes with the accuracy required for the codes to be read by scanners in supermarkets. The UPC requirement would increase costs or force packaging producers out of business. Well, like so many industry protests, once they had to, they got down to business and the bar codes were implemented with nary a glitch. Today these bar codes are what allow nearly all retail stores, food and non-food, to function efficiently.

In the “you won’t believe this prediction department”: after first reading about how the grocery trade expected some day to use scanner data to better control inventory and reduce store shelf out of stocks, I predicted that someday some-

one would swipe a box of Shake 'N Bake in a supermarket and that would trigger a shipment from the chain's warehouse to the store, now out of stock the warehouse would place an order at the GF distribution center, which in turn would prompt us, meaning the production facility, to schedule production of that flavor – all to keep the pipeline filled. Such direct integration is still not the case even with extranets and web services on which it could “easily” be based. Back in those days, GF maintained large inventories in regional distribution centers and orders from the trade were filled from that stock. The producing plant shipped to the distribution centers by railcars that in some cases took weeks to arrive. It was the value of that inventory, in the warehouse and the railcars that drove the need for integrated systems like SAP to manage the production process from raw materials to finished goods.

Windows 7

As I finish up this column, today is Windows 7 Release Day. I was surprised that this was not plastered all over the default MSN home page in Internet Explorer. Maybe if I was running Chrome on Linux...

Open a command prompt in Windows 7, type the ver command and it returns “Microsoft Windows [Version 6.1.7600]”.

Huh? Windows 7 is version 6? Yessiree, Bob. That is what it is and we'll ignore any references to Microsoft Bob.

Version numbers in Microsoft Windows can be a telling indicator of how much has actually changed under the covers. Vista is 6.0.6002 so the code base in Win7 is pretty close to Vista in the same way that XP was a refinement of Win2k. XP is version 5.1.2600 which indicated that it did not change all that much from the version 5.0.2195 in Windows 2000. Since Microsoft is not trumpeting a raft of new features (unless you consider simplicity a feature) the way they did with Vista, my take is that Win7, despite the moniker, is really a bug-fix version of Vista.

The majority of the AskDACS discussion at the October meeting was about Windows 7 and whether it would be a good idea to jump in headfirst or wait for the dust to settle. The personal computer industry would really like you to jump right in – particularly if you do so by buying a new computer with Windows 7 pre-installed. In my humble opinion (IMHO), this would be the way to go.

On the other hand (OTOH), XP – the best Windows yet – was an update to its predecessor, so there is a precedent to expecting good things from Win7. Another indicator that this is a refinement

version is the fact that Microsoft did not even bother to change the name for the server version of Win7, calling it Windows Server 2008 R2. The “R2” indicates release 2, an update with new features; not a whole new version.

So I'm going to take a lesson from the turtle and stick my neck out with some recommendations that I intend to stick to at least until next month. Here goes:

- Vista users: update anytime you want, particularly if you have a “free upgrade” coming with your PC.

- If your current machine is showing its age and you want a new computer, then go for it and buy that new machine with Windows 7 pre-installed. There has never been a better time to buy a new computer. I suspect the deals will be fabulous as the Christmas-Chanukah-Kwanza-Solstice-Festivus season approaches.

- If you're running XP and are happy with your current hardware, then I suggest that you wait for the dust to settle. Why rush when you've had the patience to bypass Vista anyway? Waiting will also allow reviewers to test and report on third party solutions to ease the apparent hassle involved in upgrading directly from XP to Win7.

Remember these are my opinions and are worth every penny I get for writing them!

SIG NOTES, Cont. from page 8

range the order of these apps or move them to another screen by pressing down on an icon for a few seconds until the icons started to jiggle, indicating that they were ready for rearrangement by dragging them into place. But now, with iTunes 9, you can arrange them more easily using your computer's mouse. When you dock your iPhone, you'll see it under “Devices” in iTunes. If you select it there and find the Applications tab, you'll see a new page that shows all your iPhone screens with the apps on them. Then it's really easy to arrange them in a logical order.

I discussed a few of the apps I added to my own iPhone. I have some for instant messaging, and some for finding restaurants, movies, or other businesses nearby to my current location. Knowing your location is one of the powers of having an iPhone as a portable computing device. My new current favorite app is NAVIGON which gives me turn by turn directions. It has a text to speech feature that can tell you the name of the street to turn on, not just “turn right in 500 feet.” The app requires at least an iPhone 3G which has the required GPS chip. To be effective you need a place to mount it so it's visible when you're driving, as it can show you which path to take at some more complicated intersections.

Since we were using iTunes 9 so we could see the different apps, I also briefly mentioned another iTunes 9 feature that doesn't require an iPhone. The new Genius playlist feature automatically generates 12 playlists based on all your music that fall into broad categories such as Pop or Rock or Latin, depending on what genres of music you might have.

Server and Networking. In October, we continued our pursuit of Drupal and CiviCRM for my high school class website. While this may seem like a trivial example, the requirements for this site are very close to what we need for DACS, so this project is very close to home.

This month we focused on my efforts to clean up the data. I have a complete list of my classmates direct from the high school's alumni office (yes, we have one even in a regular public high school) that even includes those who attended with my class but moved away before graduation. In addition, I have a file from past class reunions that has more up to date information on many classmates. This later information must be merged into the data from the school. I'm doing this data cleanup in Access. When complete, I'll produce a transfer file to import into MySQL on the website.

Meanwhile on the website, I need to add custom fields to CiviCRM. While the basic CiviCRM package looks very good for managing the people-related information and has all the tools we need for people to register and even pay for our fiftieth reunion (in 2013), it lacks buckets for very specific data. For instance, there is no field for “Graduated from LT” or even “Deceased”, so these need to be added along with a few others. When dealing with a high school class, approximately half of the classmates have changed their names – as in they got married. We need to orient searching to the women's maiden names, not their current name. It's fairly rare but we also need to allow for men to have changed their name (we have two that I know of so far).

Next month we'll discuss further progress and how much of this applies to DACS. If you are interested in working on the DACS version of this, please contact me by email before the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Server and Networking SIG will be Thursday, November 12 at 7 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center.

Mouse Cleaning

Install Those Updates

By Marjie Tucker

ARE YOU TAKING every precaution to safeguard the data on your computer? If you answer “yes” because you have turned on the Windows Firewall and use anti-virus and anti-spyware software, that’s great. However, you may be forgetting something very important - installing software updates.

Software usually contains bugs that are not found until the general public uses it. Because of this, all companies including Microsoft and Apple periodically make updates available to fix the bugs that have appeared. Many viruses and worms are written specifically to take advantage of holes that appear in operating systems and other programs. If you don’t install the latest updates to your computer, those holes will remain and your data will be vulnerable to the malware.

Both Windows XP and Windows Vista have the ability to automatically download the most important updates as they are posted. To ensure that this is happening on your computer use the Control Panel to go to the Windows Security Center and make certain that the Automatic Updates are turned on. If Automatic Updating shows a green On color, then the updates will be downloaded. If the function for Automatic Updates is disabled, use the setting available to turn it on.

When the updates have been downloaded to your computer you are notified of their presence. This usually occurs with a small golden icon in the lower right-hand corner of your taskbar that reads “Updates are ready for your computer.” If you click on the icon and give permission, the update will install immediately, usually in the background so you can continue working. After it is installed you may be asked to give permission for your computer to reboot.

However, if you tell the computer not to install this update, the message that it is available may stay on your computer permanently, as it waits for you to click that it can now be installed. If you see the gold icon on your taskbar, check to see if you have updates waiting right now so you can protect your computer.

There May Be Additional Updates

Sometimes there are optional updates available that won’t be downloaded automatically. For that reason it’s a good idea to check the Microsoft Update website periodically. The easiest way to check is to use the link you can find on your Start Menu.

That link will take you directly to the Microsoft Update site where you can choose between the Express or Custom method of installing available updates. Custom is preferable so you can determine if there are any updates you don’t want to install.

Click on the Custom button and then wait while the Microsoft site compares your computer’s software against the Microsoft database. Eventually you will see a list of updates that are missing from your computer. Any High-Priority (important for security) updates will already be selected to be downloaded. However, you need to look at the Optional Updates to choose the ones you want to include. Click on Software, Optional and choose all that are shown. You should need all of these. If any Hardware, Optional updates are shown, you should be a little choosier. If your hardware is working properly, you may want to skip these driver updates. But if you are suffering any hardware problems, these updates may solve your problems.

After you have chosen the updates you want to download, click on Install Updates at the top of the screen and the download will begin. This may take quite a bit of time, depending on the number and size of the updates being downloaded. This would actually be a good time to take a coffee break or make that important telephone call.

You can view a list of the updates you have installed on your computer at the Add or Remove Programs location on your Control Panel. At the top of the screen you will see a small box labeled “Show Updates.” Click in that box and all your Microsoft updates will be displayed.

This screen is very useful if you encounter difficulty after installing an update or service pack. You can always find

the update and uninstall it through this screen.

You can also easily see if your computer contains the latest Windows Service Packs by looking at the Properties of My Computer. Right-click over the My Computer icon and choose Properties. The most recently installed Service Pack will be listed on this screen.

Don’t Forget Your Anti-MalWare Programs

Of course, it’s also critical to constantly update your anti-malware programs. Viruses, worms, and spyware are constantly being developed and these protection programs work hard to provide fixes. When possible, also set these programs for automatic updates and regularly perform a manual update just to make certain that you don’t miss any patches or new program features.

And, Remember Your Other Software

We’ve spent most of our time talking about Microsoft software. Your other programs, such as Adobe Reader and Java also receive regular updates. Look at the settings for those to be sure they are updating automatically. This is especially important if you have any difficulty while working with a program. The solution may be as simple as installing the latest patch.

Apple Software Updates

Apple also frequently releases updates that you can download and install. To check your Mac for patches, use the Apple menu and choose Software Updates.

You can also set your Mac to get Automatic Updates by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Choose View and Software Update. One of the choices is Automatic and you can also choose a time for the computer to check the Apple website.

Stay Secure

Remember to set your operating system and programs for Automatic Updates, install those updates, and periodically check the websites manually to ensure that you have all the latest patches. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help protect your data.

MARJIE TUCKER IS NEWSLETTER EDITOR, MOUNTAIN COMPUTER *User Group*, *Georgia* - www.mcug.org; mcug@dnet.net.

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Ask DACS

October 2009

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.doc* and on *dacs.org*. Please provide as much information as possible, since we can't probe during the session.

Last month, I promised to have an installation of Windows 7 ready to demonstrate at the meeting so the AskDACS session began with that. I downloaded and installed both the Windows 7 Starter Edition, a minimal version with few features and the Ultimate Edition. The download files are the same size. A little investigation revealed that all Windows 7 installations are the "same" in that everything needed for any version is installed on the disk and then only selected features are enabled. In other words, you install the Ultimate Edition but Microsoft hides the features not included in your particular version. I plan to do a "Windows Anytime Upgrade" to see how this works. With my limited experience with Windows 7, I am not much of a demonstrator. We will have a meeting on Windows 7 sometime early next year.

Q – How do the hardware requirements for Windows 7 compare to those for Vista?

A – There was no clear answer to this at the meeting and the discussion centered on problems with the Vista "minimum" hardware requirements which may hold over to Windows 7.

Q – How do the administrator controls compare to Vista?

A – It appears that Windows 7 generates fewer "mother may I" prompts. One member said that there are account control settings in Windows 7 that control the "level of paranoia" and thus can increase or reduce the number of such prompts.

Q – In Vista is there more than one place where documents and downloaded files are stored?

A – From the floor: Documents can be stored in "Documents" or "Public Documents". To find these on Vista Ultimate, I clicked on Documents on the Start Menu which opened a Windows Explorer window. The Public folder was included in the

folder list in the tree-view pane on the left, but I had to scroll down to see it. In XP these are "My Documents" and "All Users" or "Shared Documents" depending on your version of XP.

Q – How long should I wait to upgrade to Windows 7?

A – The consensus was that it is wise not to upgrade the day that Windows 7 comes out. If there are widespread problems, they will be covered by the general media; lesser problems will be covered in the trade press. Personally I will wait until after I have completed my taxes, which should be adequate for major problems to surface. It has been normal practice at many large companies to wait until Microsoft releases the first service pack before beginning an upgrade cycle. This is a good guideline for the cautious.

Keep in mind that there is no direct upgrade from XP to Windows 7. The word is that the install program will reformat the hard drive and thus wipe out everything on an XP machine, while a Vista machine can be upgraded "in place" without losing documents or settings.

A member pointed out that there can be issues when upgrading from 32-bit Windows of any flavor to a 64-bit version. 64-bit drivers may not be available for older peripherals like printers and even if the printer remains connected to a machine running 32-bit Windows, it may not work when accessed over a network from a machine running 64-bit Windows. This problem will not go away no matter how long you wait to upgrade as it depends on the peripheral manufacturers to release 64-bit drivers for older gear. There is absolutely no incentive for them to do that, so you may need to add

the cost of a new printer to your Windows upgrade costs, even if your existing 32-bit machine will remain in use. At this point we do not know how well Windows 7 will accept Vista drivers. The consensus was that most Vista drivers will work, but only time will tell. My recommendation on this is to buy a new network-ready printer that includes both 32- and 64-bit drivers and be done with this issue for a few years. If you own a fancy color laser printer that does not have a built-in network connection (shame on you), then purchase a device called a print server that provides the connection. Such a print server will not solve the driver issue.

Q – I (personally) have a PowerMac 7100 that has a bad hard drive and cannot boot. Can I replace the drive with another narrow SCSI disk?

A – The consensus was yes with the suggestion to try installing Mac OS 9.

Q – My second Mac question involves a Mac Performa 200; this is a "classic" all-in-one Mac that looks like the original Macintosh. This machine which worked just fine about five years ago when I last turned it on, now displays vertical black and white bars interspersed with seemingly random characters.

A – Check the power supply. Since the meeting, someone on a vintage computer-oriented email list pointed me to an Apple document on how to repair the Performa.

A note on these notes: I have been trying different locations for placing my recorder on the stage with widely varying results. This month much of the recording was garbled so if your comments do not seem to be included, it is because I could not interpret much of the recording.

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 warrantee 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!

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Medical
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January*

Windows 7 OS
(Tentative)

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Hosting and
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